

## **Interview: Jernej Šimec**

### **1. How do you perceive the interweaving of media within your artistic practice, and what role does photography play in it?**

Photography still holds the greatest significance in my artistic practice. Nearly all my works originate from it – at the very least, the process begins with research and documentation, as in the project *Un banc per a València*. Initially, it is often just documentary photography. However, when I am looking for a way to present the work, I focus more on the materiality of the space and start thinking about which materials can connect the location with the photography. In this way, the photography becomes embodied in the material. So the starting point is almost always photography, probably also because that's what I had studied, and it's still somehow deep inside me.

### **2. What does your creative process look like? Do you follow a predetermined concept, or do you allow the process to shape the final result?**

For a long time, I had trouble developing my approach. I have noticed among my colleagues that two approaches often emerge in artistic practice: the first is based on a predetermined concept that you follow consistently, and the second is more process-oriented, allowing the project to evolve as it progresses and letting the process itself guide you.

I find it difficult to follow the first approach because I find it to be too restrictive – any deviation from the initial idea can quickly turn into a mistake, taking me away from the set goal. I prefer a process-oriented way of working, where you do not see mistakes as obstacles but as opportunities to build on or even direct, so that the project develops into something else.

### **3. Would you say your practice has a defined methodology, or does it vary from project to project?**

I would say that my practice follows a defined methodology that began to take shape in 2020. At that time, I created the video *Memory Induced* in Poland, as part of the *Art Made by Walking* workshop. There, we explored Guy Debord's situationist theory of *dérive*/drifting, and how, while walking through a space, you respond to things that attract or distract you, and how these deviations guide you forward. Through drifting as a deviation from established paths in the city, we also tested different media to capture this process of moving through space. This was new to me, and it suddenly gave my way of working a lot of meaning. Since then, I have made many projects this way: the first impulse is to walk, observe, and photograph. I draw from a specific space, and later I try to make a certain turn – something that returns to this same space from which I came.

### **4. How do you interpret the transient nature of your artwork in light of the historical understanding of art as something eternal?**

I see transience as the most valuable aspect of an artwork because it allows the piece to live and develop its own life. Ultimately, nothing is eternal anyway. I like the idea of documenting decay. I also touched on this in my graduation thesis, where I built bivouacs in the forests of Snežnik and documented their collapse over the years. The work never ends; it just changes, which is what I particularly like about the bench project. The fact that the bench was washed

away is the best part of the project; my only regret is that I did not install a locating device on it.

**5. In the project *Un banc per a València*, you placed a bench in a dried-up riverbed. Could a different object have occupied this space, or do you think the bench is crucial because of its symbolism?**

I did not even consider other objects because I could almost picture a bench standing there. A chair would not be suitable because a bench is better for sharing space. The terrain is raised, providing a view, and benches are usually placed in such locations. It seems to me that the project also raises the question of what a landscape is. There is some irony in this – benches are usually placed at beautiful viewpoints, but there you only see an ugly »man-altered« landscape. On the other hand, it is a very peaceful environment. People driving on the highways around can see you, but only for a second, then they move on.

The interview was conducted by Ana Jazbec and Marta Novak.