



50 mm

# Ahilova peta

Slaven Tolj





**Mutno sjećanje na jednu izgublenu fotografiju,**

**5. Subversive film festival: Hommage 1968., Zagreb, 2008.**

*u knjižici o galeriji L'Attico pronašao sam fotografiju performansa Don Quijote koji me je fascinirao jednostavnošću i istovremenom višeznačnosi. Osvijestio mi je vlastitu poziciju i nastojanja - ne samo u umjetnosti. Fotografija na kojoj Ontani gol jaše mehaničkog bijelog konja, u kojeg ubacuje kovanice da bi se kretao, istovremeno čitajući Don Quijotea, očistila me od iluzija o napredovanju. Istodobno mi je postalo jasno da moram raditi. Mislim da je to važno, jer je oslobađajuće i u ljudskom i u umjetničkom smislu.*

Iz razgovora sa Suzanom Majnarić i Višnjom Rogošić, Zarez, 28. siječnja 2005.

**Distant Memory of a Lost Photograph,**

**5. Subversive film festival: Hommage 1968., Zagreb, 2008.**

*in the brochure about L'Attico gallery I found a photo of a performance of Don Quixote which amazed me with its simplicity and multiplicity of meanings. It made me aware of my own position and my effort - not only in art. The photograph in which Ontani rides and white mechanical horse naked, throwing in coins to keep on moving and reading Don Quixote at the same time, has relieved me from illusions of progress. At the same time it made me clear that I need to work. I believe this matters, because it is liberating in both human and artistic sense.*

From an interview with Suzana Majnarić and Višnja Rogošić, Zarez, 28 January 2005

## AHILOVA PETA

Kada netko domovinu ili grad poistovjećuje s vlastitom sudbinom, što ga mora nagnati da odande dobrovoljno ode? Slaven Tolj je dvadeset i četiri godine bio apologetom i kritičarem rodnoga Dubrovnika, njegovih vrijednosti koje su potamnjele u tranzicijskom sutonu.

Transcendirajući regionalnost dubrovačkih događaja, umjetnik je neprekidno uspostavljao odnos prema univerzalnoj ljudskoj drami. Prisvojivši Dubrovnik kao trajno ishodište kreativnih aluzija i žustrog javnog angažmana, Tolj je u beskompromisnoj, arogantnoj maniri, kakvoj doista nije bilo alternative, preuzeo ulogu branitelja Grada. Cijena borbe za dom Art radionice Lazareti, vitalnog središta nezavisne kulturne scene, odgovarala je Toljevoj mjeri - odolijevanju materijalnoj oskudici, prijetnjama, lukrativnim ponudama i, naposljetku, sučeljavanju s razorenim privatnim životom. Kao u nekoj Harmsovoj minijaturi, konačnoj kapitulaciji heroja prethodila je groteskna epizoda s njegova Straduna. U kolovoškom krkljancu, nahrupjelom s opsadničkih kruzera, na njega se sručio bezazleni turist i noktom mu se zabio u Ahilovu tetivu. Slaven nije stradao na megdanu, ali ga je zato dubrovačko filistarstvo dovelo do štaka.

Izložbom nepogrešivoga lakonskog naziva Ahilova peta, Slaven Tolj je sučelio dvije oprečne situacije - Tolja, kolektivnog heroja, i Slavena, osujećenog zdravlja, koji u pustoši riječkoga predgrađa nastoji uspostaviti neki novi život.



**Ulica Branimira Markovića 1, Rijeka, 2013.**

*...nastojanje, potreba, želja, molba da se ostavi i napusti muška ideologija društva i obitelji - da se napusti, zaustavi, završi...*

*...effort, need, wish, plea to leave and abandon the masculine ideology in society and family - to abandon, terminate, finish...*

Slaven Tolj, 2002.

## ACHILLES' HEEL

When one identifies his homeland or hometown with one's own destiny, what could possibly make him leave the place on his own free will? For twenty-four years Slaven Tolj was both an apologetic defender and a critic of his native Dubrovnik and its tarnished values in the transitional gloom.

By transcending the regional character of Dubrovnik events, the artist incessantly tried to establish a relationship with universal human drama. By appropriating Dubrovnik as a permanent source of creative allusions and fervent public involvement, Tolj took up the role of the city's defender in an uncompromised, arrogant manner to which there was no alternative. The price of struggle for the Art Workshop Lazareti, a vital centre of non institutional cultural scene, corresponded with Tolj's value system - resisting material scarcity, threats, lucrative offers and, finally, confronting with his personal destroyed private life. As though in Harms' miniature, the final decline of the hero was preceded by a grotesque event that occurred in his beloved Stradun street. During August tourist crowds, swarming in from the siege of cruisers, a harmless tourist tripped and fell over him, ramming his nail in Tolj's Achilles' tendon. Slaven was not killed in action, but Dubrovnik's petite bourgeoisie reduced him to crutches.

With the exhibition of impeccable laconic title Achilles' Heel, Slaven Tolj contrasted two opposing situations - Tolj the collective hero and Slaven the damaged man who is trying to re-establish some kind of life in the wastelands of Rijeka's suburbia.



**Grafit, Pula, 2010.**

*Nekad je stvarno potrebno ići glavom kroz zid, to je ta strast i ta odluka da se ide do kraja bez obzira na konzekvence, u umjetnosti i životu.*

**Graffiti, Pula 2010**

Sometimes it is really necessary to take the bull by the horns, it is the passion and the determination to go all the way, regardless of the consequences, in art and in life.

Slaven Tolj, 2012.

Sukladno autorovom prozeduru, uliksovskoj potrebi za sagledavanjem iz različitih perspektiva, i ovaj je kontrapunkt transcendiran ne bi li se predočio jedini mogući i, naizgled, paradoksalan način da čovjek ovlada spoznajom o svojoj determiniranosti – dekonstrukcija vlastite uloge. Slavenovo antiprogramatsko “libero progettarsi” i osebujno variranje žanra memento mori, za kojim trajno poseže, zrcale egzistencijalni apsurd i bijedu strategija kojima se od njega branimo. Ne mogavši podnijeti svijest o smrtnosti, “animal rationale” odabire “herojsku ulogu” koja ga zarobljava i udaljava od autentičnoga života i okusa stvarnosti. “Da bi transcendirao sebe, on (čovjek) mora srušiti ono što mu je potrebno kako bi mogao živjeti. Poput Leara, on mora odbaciti sve svoje ‘kulturne prosudbe’ i stajati gol na oluji života.”<sup>1</sup> Toljevo trivijaliziranje pozicije u kojoj ga vidi društvo spektakla, i koju je sam prisvajao, nipošto nije neka stilska figura. Štoviše, njegova predaja, nestanak na beskonačnih “pet minuta” (aluzija na instalaciju iz 2010.), može značiti i uništenje životne paradigme, simbolički suicid, što je razvidno iz njegovih ranijih akcija prilikom kojih je ugrožavao vlastito zdravlje i život.

Conforming to the author’s procedure, the Ulyssean need to put things into different perspectives, this counterpoint is transcended in order to portray the only possible and seemingly paradoxical way for a man to overcome the notion of his own determination – deconstruction of his own role. Slaven’s anti-programmatic “libero progettarsi” and exceptional variation of the memento mori genre he has perpetually resorted to reflect existential absurdity and misery of our strategies when we try to shelter from them. Unable to bear the awareness of mortality, “animal rationale” chooses “the heroic role” which captures him and alienates him from authentic life and taste of reality. “In order to transcend himself, he (man) needs to demolish what he needs to survive. Like Lear, he needs to reject all of his ‘cultural judgments’ and stand naked in the storm of life.”<sup>1</sup> Tolj’s trivialisation of the position that the society of the spectacle sees him in and that he himself had appropriated, is most definitely not a figure of speech. Moreover, his surrender, disappearance for endless “five minutes” (allusion to his 2010 installation), can refer to the destruction of the paradigm of life, a symbolic suicide, which is evident from his earlier actions when he put his life and health in jeopardy.



**Srd je naš, 1. Lüften Festival, Frankfurt, 2012.**

Performans posvećen inicijativi Srd je naš, uperenoj protiv pretvaranja brda iznad Dubrovnika u golf naselje. *Dubrovnik je grad koji je izgubio mjeru, grad na čijoj se baštini parazitira i kojemu svakodnevno krađu dušu u ime profita.*

**Srd Belongs to Us, 1st Lüften Festival, Frankfurt, 2012**

A performance dedicated to the initiative Srd Belongs to Us, directed against turning the hill above Dubrovnik into a golf settlement. *Dubrovnik is a city which has lost a sense of measure, a city whose heritage is beset by parasites, stealing its soul in the name of profit.*

Slaven Tolj, 2012.

**Nema slobode bez vlasništva.**

*Slobodan čovjek, koji nema ništa nije slobodan čovjek. There is no freedom without ownership. A free man who owns nothing is not a free man.*  
A. V., 2013.

<sup>1</sup>E. Becker, Poricanje smrti, Zagreb, 1987, str. 106.

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**Ulica Branimira Markovića 1, Rijeka, 2013.**

Došlo je vrijeme da napravim distancu.

**Branimir Marković Street, Rijeka, 2013**

The time has come to make distance.

Slaven Tolj, 2012.

Poništenom, ogoljenom biću, koje je napustilo kolektivnu obranu od nepodnošljive perspektive postojanja, preostaje jedino pronaći samosvojni smisao svijeta, učiniti "od svojeg života drukčiji vrt nego što je vrt mojih otaca".<sup>2</sup> U tome se nastojanju ogleda kreativni tip ličnosti, umjetnik koji je u stanju srušiti društvene i estetske konvencije, a time i vlastiti ego. Tako stvaralaštvo postaje njegova "privatna religija".<sup>3</sup> Ona mu ne može ponuditi trajnu utjehu pred spoznajom o smrti, ali dokidanje romantične predodžbe o sebi i prizor ponora otvaraju pogled u beskonačno.

Slaven Tolj je, pripremajući izložbu, prije koji dan, u kožu dao upisati znak riječkoga muzeja kojemu je danas ravnatelj, kao što se davno žigosao silhuetom Lazareta. Ponekad je moćniji od vlastite sudbine u pristanku da isti kamen gura dalje, sa sviješću o besmislu nove situacije.

<sup>2</sup>M. Barbery, Otmjenost ježa, Zagreb, 2009, str. 206.

<sup>3</sup>O. Rank, Art and artist : creative urge and personality development, New York, London, 1989, str. 86.



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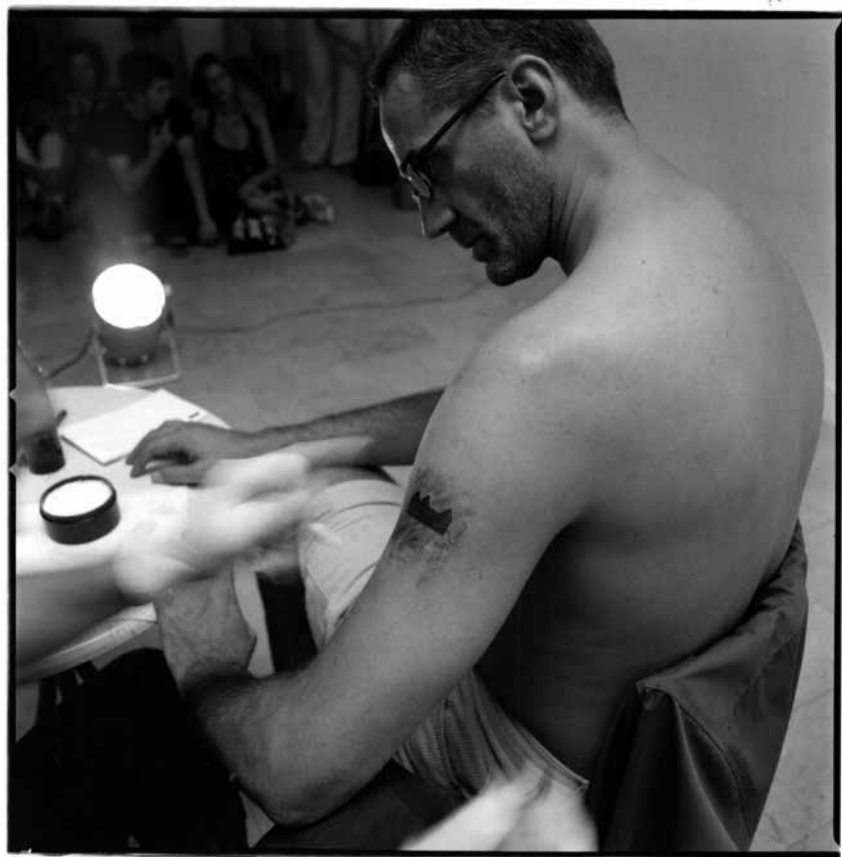
Slaven Tolj, 2012.

To a nullified, stripped creature which has abandoned collective defence from the unbearable perspective of being, nothing else remains but to find a personal meaning of the world, make "his life a garden different from the garden of my fathers."<sup>2</sup> In that effort a creative personality is reflected, an artist capable of dismantling social and aesthetic conventions, including his own ego. Thus his work becomes his "private religion."<sup>3</sup> It cannot offer permanent comfort before the notion of death, but abolishing a romantic image of the self and a scene of an abyss open up a view into infinity.

Preparing this exhibition, a few days ago Slaven Tolj inscribed on his skin the logo of the Rijeka museum he now runs, just like long time ago he branded himself with the stamp of Lazareti. Sometimes he is more powerful than his destiny by accepting to push the same stone farther and farther, with an awareness of the senselessness of the new situation.

<sup>2</sup>M. Barbery, Otmjenost ježa, Zagreb, 2009, p. 206.

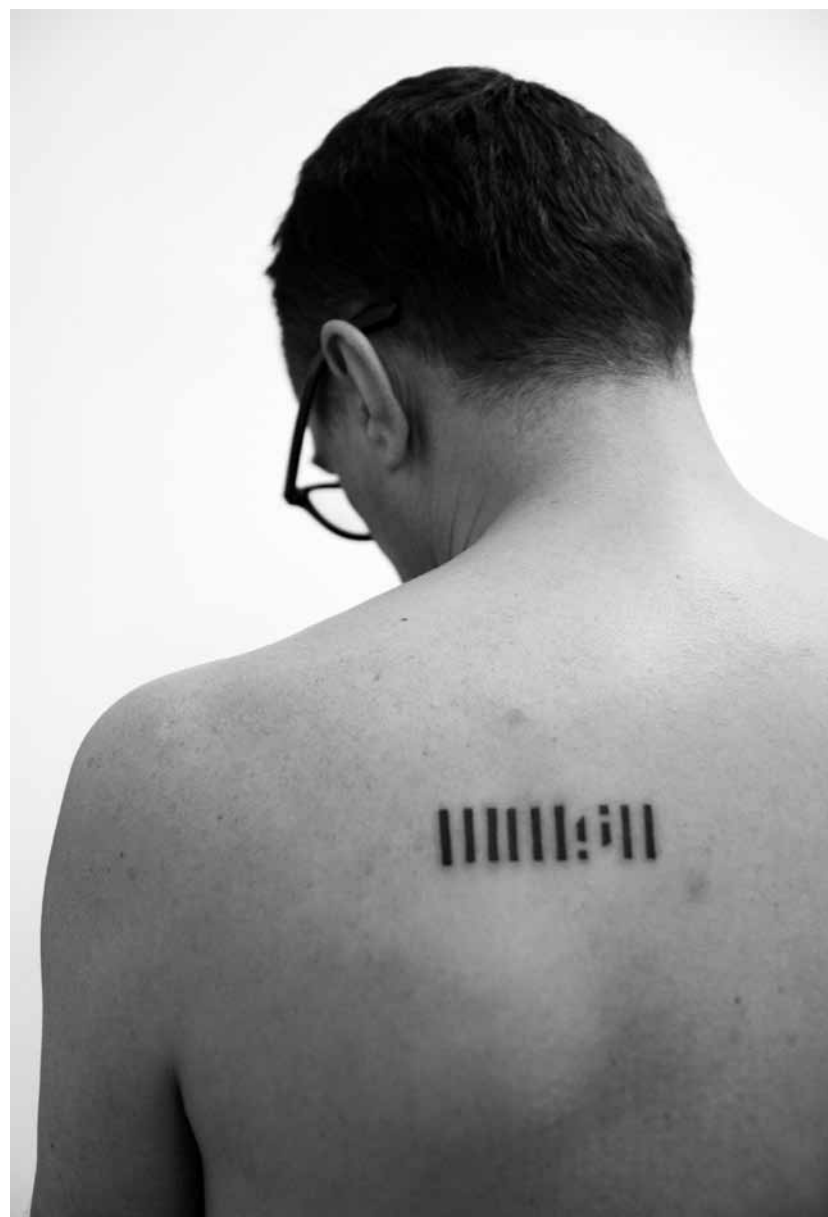
<sup>3</sup>O. Rank, Art and artist : creative urge and personality development, New York, London, 1989, p. 86.



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Koordinacija, Dubrovnik, 2004.  
Coordination, Dubrovnik, 2004



Tetovaža logotipa Muzeja moderne i suvremene umjetnosti, Rijeka, 2013.

A tattoo of the logo of Rijeka's Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, 2013

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