

IVAN MOUDOV

Born 1975

About the Artist:

Ivan Moudov (b. 1975, Sofia) graduated from the National Academy of Art in his hometown in 2002. That same year he participated in Manifesta 4 in Frankfurt and has been an active part of the global art scene ever since. In 2007 he became one of Bulgaria's representatives at the Venice Biennale. He has presented his work at numerous solo and group exhibitions: Moderna Museet (Stockholm), Cabaret Voltaire (Zürich), Kunstverein Braunschweig (Braunschweig), the 1st Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, and Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig - MUMOK .

Ivan Moudov's earliest works were often interventions into city situations, such as the performance "One Hour Priority", where he drove on a roundabout in the centre of Sofia for an hour, taking advantage of the priority the traffic regulation was giving him. He then used this interest in diverting the codes of a system against itself, in the reality of the art world, which he was quickly beginning to integrate.

In his simulation of a museum of contemporary art in Sofia (2005), his wine tasting session at the opening of the Venice Biennale (2007), and other works, including the creation of entirely new collections such as "The Romanian Trick" (2008), all the elements of the institution of art are played out again, but with an altered set of rules.

Moudov's attitude evidenced a new type of institutional critique, which has been developing in the last decades with the inclusion of more and more "peripheral" artists within the discourse and system of Western art. Coming from countries where historically the social role of art has been often different from the one in the Western tradition, this new critique addressed not only the art institution as a power structure but the dominant position of the Western notion of critique itself.

It is, therefore, not surprising that the gestures of Ivan Moudov appear to be controversial, even scandalous. Moudov purposefully and resourcefully attacks the apparatus of self-critique practiced by Western artists as an attempt to respond to the feeling of guilt resulting from their participation in the existing market and power systems. "Fragments" (2002–2007), for example, is a collection of stolen fragments from artworks owned by some of the most prestigious art institutions in the world. In this work the artist questions the history of Western art collections (many of which were assembled from artifacts acquired during war conflicts and archeological expeditions) and raises the issues of authorship and value attribution.

Moudov's interest in art institutions is such that he has created several ones himself, as artistic projects. This is the case of "MUSIZ" – a fake museum of contemporary art in Sofia, which later became an actual foundation; of the "Bulgarian Institute of Culture" in Hamburg – an always closed art space, which the public could not enter; or his fully functioning "One Night Stand Gallery" in Sofia, where he curates exhibitions which last only for the opening night.

Ivan Moudov has been the leading artist of his generation in Bulgaria, who managed to gain international recognition, while remaining close to his artistic community and never losing his eye for the absurd. His own artworks are not spared in this, but are seen as another element in the system, which can be played against themselves.

IVAN MOUDOV

1. *Certificate of Authenticity*, 2015

Installation. 276 print A4 pages, 29,7cm x 21cm; 1 framed voucher, 45cm x 45cm

Edition: Unique

Ownership history: The Artist



IVAN MOUDOV, *Certificate of Authenticity*, 2015

About the work:

The work was the result of Ivan Mouldov's residence at the Tobacna 001 CC, in Ljubljana and was a retrospective exhibition in the form of a catalogue of the artist's work to date. Every page of the the mock-up for the catalogue was exhibited as an original work of art available for sale to the Gallery's visitors at an affordable price.

Each page of the catalogue was for sale - those representing one of the artist's works, as well as the pages containing texts written by different authors. By purchasing a page the new owner was officially approving the publication of the page in the catalogue. The name of the page owner and consequentially the owner of the work of art was then published in the colophon, excluding the cases where the buyer wished to remain anonymous.

The project had the time limit of a year: after its initial presentation at Tobačna 001 in Ljubljana, the exhibition was staged in Kunstverein (Milano) in Milan, tranzitdisplay in Prague, Artists Club / Coffre-Fort in Brussels, Kluckyland in Vienna, and ICA- Sofia, ending in late 2015.

The printed version of the catalogue was published at the beginning of 2016, and the pages that no one has purchased by then were not be included in the actual catalogue.

"Printouts of all the potential catalogue pages were hung on the walls, translating the logic of reading a catalogue into that of viewing an artifact (an object-book) in a gallery space Exhibiting the catalogue in this way formed the basis for the following stages of the project, in which Moudov further reflected on the editing and publishing of catalogues and other museum/gallery publications, pointing out also the financial constraints that often hamper their production

Exhibited behind glass, hard copies of individual pages were on sale to the exhibition visitors By purchasing a page for a small amount of money, a visitor selected it for publication in the final book version of the retrospective catalogue In addition to financially supporting the publication of the catalogue, the buyer thus also became its co-editor, since a page would only be included in the book if it was bought The buyers' or collectors' involvement did not end there, though; their purchase also made them the owners of all of the full stops on "their" pages That is why there are no full stops in this book Instead, the artist marked them on all purchased exhibition copies, preventing their replication with a gesture that made every printout a unique, one-off work At art fairs or in commercial galleries, artworks are marked with red dots to let potential buyers know that a work has already been sold or reserved In the case of Moudov's retrospective catalogue, the omission of full stops announced that the owner of the hard copy of a page was first and foremost the owner of the full stops on that page, thus

giving the piece of paper meta-value In accordance with the rules of art dealing, the buyer was also issued a certificate that stated the exact number of full stops owned by the buyer, aka the owner of the page, aka the co-editor of the book

To further complicate the purchase procedure, Moudov introduced vouchers This beloved invention of consumerist society that brings all sorts of discounts served in Moudov's world to enable a person to purchase the desired page at a higher price A mix-up? Not at all A game?

Possibly A limited number of vouchers were on sale for €1 When a coupon was redeemed and a page purchased at a 25% surcharge, the redeemed coupon could be purchased back for €5 and the artist would sign it, making the "calculating" buyer the owner of yet another signed artwork This detail shows the true value of Moudov's tricks, which one should simply play along with, since only by understanding all levels of a project can we gain an insight into his critique and thus be able to "win the game" Those who quit before the end of the game walk away empty-handed, although as a rule unaware of their loss

All the purchased pages were published in the catalogue you're holding, and those that did not find a buyer were not included Emulating the currently popular crowdsourcing paradigm, Moudov left the final structure of the book up to the exhibition visitors, or rather, the buyers among them, who validated a certain artwork or text by purchasing the page on which it was reproduced, securing its place in the catalogue Thus it was the viewers who decided what should reach readers and what be relegated to oblivion, what should be printed in book form and what remain unpublished We might conclude that this is a form of self-criticism or evaluation of one's work through attempted crowd-editing, or perhaps a cynical spoof of crowdsourcing projects that get a lot of media coverage, or else simply a way of scraping up enough money to publish a coveted retrospective catalogue

Alenka Gregoric,
"A Certificate Of Authenticity, Or, How To Trick The System (Again)"

IVAN MOUDOV

2. 14:13 Minutes Priority, 2005

Video documentation of a Performance. "Tatort und Phantombild", Schiller Festival, Weimar

DVD, Time 7'01 min

Edition: 1/5+2

Ownership history: The Artist and Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani



IVAN MOUDOV, *14:13 Minutes Priority*, 2005

About the Work:

14:13 Minutes Priority is the video documentation of a performance that took place in Weimer, Germany. The title is the duration of the performance, which was stopped by the police on the 14th minute after its beginning. The performance consisted of seven cars organized by the artist to drive in circles at the roundabout that connected the downtown, suburbs and shopping mall area of Weimar. Using the rule that at roundabouts the circulating traffic has priority over the entering traffic, the number of cars involved in the performance was enough to effectively block the traffic for all those who tried to enter the roundabout at the rush hour.

Through a perceptive and ingenious analysis of power relations and the rules regulating the urban (and art space) environment, the works of Ivan Moudov explore human (inter)actions as affected by the laws, regulations, social rules, and customs dictating our everyday life. Art world rituals and rules, acquired taste and accepted behaviour are all challenged in the Ivan Moudov's work. *14:13 Minutes Priority* is part of a series of performances that also go to the real outside world and undermine our reliance on order, influencing the course of events. Moudov's works are often designed to give an active role to random participants or connect individuals or groups in the audience so that their reactions become (a part of) the art.

Video link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lc9EWbAmwTM&embeds_referring_euri=https%3A%2F%2Fivanmoudov.com%2F&source_ve_path=Mjg2NjY&feature=emb_logo

Exhibition history:

2005 "Tatort und Phantombild", Schiller Festival; "Hot Testing", Exit, Peja, Kosovo;
"Play Sofia", Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna

2006 "On Difference #2", Wurttembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart

2008 "Rondpoint (Roundabout)", La BF15, Lyon; "Welcome", prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan; "Trick Or Treat", Kunstverein Braunschweig, Braunschweig

2009 "Performing the East", Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg

2013 "Stones", Casa Cavazzini Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Udine

2014 "Episode 6: Blank Page", Insitu, Berlin

2017 "Crossroads between Eastern Europe and the River Plate region", Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Montevideo, Montevideo; "The Other Hand", Galerie Coucou, Kassel