

## THE MUSEUM NEEDS TO BE TUGGED, COME WHAT MAY

Writing in 1958 about the kinetic sculptures of Alexander Calder and the youths that gave them a good tug, the film director Dušan Makavejev noted that *people were angry at the young men for tugging that enlivened bear of black-coloured sheet metal, unaware that this was how the object was conceived: to turn and swing, stably unstable*.<sup>1</sup> Considering the relationship between works of art and its observers, Makavejev concludes – and creates a *methodological directive*<sup>2</sup> of sorts – *art needs to be tugged, come what may*. On this occasion, I follow his recommendation in thinking about museums and museum permanent displays – *stably unstable*, like Kolder's “mobiles.”

Previous “tugging” of the permanent display of the Museum of African Art – the Veda and Dr. Zdravko Pečar Collection (MAA)<sup>3</sup> dealt with different issues. The exhibition-installation of curator Dejan Sretenović, *Black Body White Masks* (2004) reconsidered the representations of the African continent through the travelogues of Serbian journeymen, the works of avant-garde artists, as well as the personage and endeavours of Josip Broz Tito. In 2006, the installation *Homage to Zdravko Pečar*<sup>4</sup> was presented in the unfinished dome of the MAA. With it the Cameroonian artist Barthélémy Toguo, by placing museum and market objects side by side, problematises the collecting phenomenon in the context of a socialist society. Reassessing the position of the MAA in a contemporary context by inscribing into the space is part of the 2005 installation by artist Zoran Naskovski (*Precious Memories*), and during 2011-13 (*AAA: The Sound I Saw*), curated by Narcisa Knežević Šijan. Finally, the palimpsest of *writing-over* the MAA's permanent display in 2017, curated by Ana Sladojević and Emilia Epštajn, is their recognition of a *museum within the museum* and reliance on the process of reproducing documents, audio and video materials, periodicals – all those, so

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<sup>1</sup> D. Makavejev, „Umetnost treba cimnuti (Građanin pred umetnošću i obratno)”, y: *Delo br. 3* (mart 1958), 393.

<sup>2</sup> P. Levi, *Cimanje slike*, Beograd/Zagreb, Fakultet za medije i komunikacije/Multimedijalni institut, 21.

<sup>3</sup> The permanent display of the MAA was conceptually shaped by anthropologist Jelena Arandelović Lazić in 1977, and the green-blue modular design was the work of Slobodan and Saveta Mašić. For more, see: E. Epštajn, A. Sladojević, *Nyimra kor ndzizi – Човек не може опстати сам. (Ре)концептуализација Музеја афричке уметности – збирке Веде и др Здравка Печара/ One Man, No Chop. (Re)conceptualisation of the Museum of African Art – the Veda and Dr. Zdravko Pečar Collection*, Београд, Музеј афричке уметности, 2017, 101.

<sup>4</sup> The installation was created unintentionally; the artist was a guest of the MAA, invited to prepare the exhibition *Transit(s)*, which was curated by Mihael Milunović, in the small gallery space of the MAA, however, having seen the permanent display and the dome's interior, he decided to create *Homage to Zdravko Pečar*, over the course of his five-day stay in Belgrade.

called, secondary museum objects, for the purpose of marking the permanent display as a passage to unrecognised values within and around the MAA.<sup>5</sup>

It seems as if the preceding curatorial-artistic interventions that divulge the *stable instability* of the permanent MAA display, determined also the subject of the first case-study for the *Unprotected Witness* project, initiated by Jelena Spaić, curator of the graphic arts collection of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade, in cooperation with Professor Milan Popadić, head of the Centre for Museology and Teratology (the Faculty of Philosophy – University of Belgrade). *Unprotected Witness No. 1: Afrodisiac* is an art intervention interpolated in the MAA permanent display, on view for the period from 17 October to 22 December 2019. The works included in the installation, upon our invitation (Jelena Spaić, Ana Knežević) are by Milica Josimov, Ana Adamović, Milica Rakić, Saša Tkačenko, Siniša Ilić, Ivana Ivković, Irena Kelečević and Ana Vujović.

### **The Workings of Afrodisiac in the Museum (of African Art)**

The object displayed in the museum is a witness whom is not allowed to stay a thing in itself;<sup>6</sup> therefore the first part of the title refers to the museum object being stripped of its protected status – the institutional one – and being exposed to artistic “attack.” Both the *Unprotected Witness* and *Afrodisiac* have a sound musical grounding<sup>7</sup> and the latter, inspired directly by the activist album of the Nigerian musician Fela Kuti, also provokes along the lines of the linguistic mechanisms of so-called *folk/people’s etymology*.<sup>8</sup>

The word *Afrodisiac* is etymologically linked to Aphrodite, the one who has *the ability to make gods and mortals lose their ‘minds’*,<sup>9</sup> which is visible in its written form in the English language. However, in the Serbian language, as well as in Kuti’s title, along the lines

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<sup>5</sup> А. Сладојевић, „МетаМАУ: „невидљиве” и непрепознате вредности”, у: *Nyimpa kor ndzizi – Човек не може опстати сам. (Ре)концептуализација Музеја афричке уметности – збирке Веде и др Здравка Печара*, Београд, Музеј афричке уметности, 2017, 227-229.

<sup>6</sup> М. Воџић Маројевић, *(Не)жельено наслеђе у просторима памћења. Словоне зоне болних успомена*, Београд, СмиН, 2015, 88.

<sup>7</sup> Више о томе у раду Јелене Спаић у овој публикацији.

<sup>8</sup> Folk or people’s etymology could be defined as a more or less spontaneous or accidental transformation of a foreign or outdated local word, sometimes only part of a word, by linking it vocally, and thus semantically, to a certain local or familiar word. For more, see: T. Talanga, „Pučka etimologija među nekim njemačkim posuđenicama”, у: *Jezikoslovlje 3.1-2* (2002), 199.

<sup>9</sup> С. Jendza, “The Etymology and Origins of Aphrodite”, <https://classicalstudies.org/annual-meeting/148/abstract/etymology-and-origins-aphrodite>, (Accessed: 29 October 2019).

of folk/people's etymology, it threatens to become *the lure of a prevalent understanding*,<sup>10</sup> that is, to lead to the slight semantic reliance on the word *Africa* (and its etymology is based on several other assumptions).<sup>11</sup> A different writing of the word *Afrodisiac*, as homage to Kuti's album, is purposely used on the occasion – in the framework of *Unprotected Witness*, *Afrodisiac* serves to shift the observer/reader from the usual and expected position and prompt the reconsideration of stereotypes, that *shortcut in thinking*.<sup>12</sup> Besides the etymological word-play, *Afrodisiac in the Museum (of African Art)* refers also to the arousal of curiosity, which in the *immobility of the museum-like museum* is performed by the *creative critics of inertia*, engaging in direct dialogue with historical museum discourse.<sup>13</sup>

### **The Exhibition as *Unravelled Calligram* or by the Ruses of a Writing at Play in Space**

The previous *tugging* of the MAA's permanent display were executed by writing between the lines/objects, through palimpsestic and displaced inscription on the museum space, while *Unprotected Witness No 1: Afrodisiac* can be marked as *a ruse of a writing at play in space*<sup>14</sup> or the form Foucault, writing about Magritte's *two pipes*, termed *unravelled calligram*. In such a sense, the motive behind or theme of this calligram is the MAA itself, and its ability to trap things in a double cipher visually created by the artworks which have literally been interpolated in the space of the permanent display (the use of identical labels for new, artworks, the intensely ambient art pieces, total social adaptation, submergence into the original blue-green design of the display, etc.).

The calligram places expression into the space of the image and makes the text *speak* what the drawing represents, and this exhibition calligram is unravelled because by being in mutual symbiosis with the MAA's permanent display, the art interventions communicate what the permanent display (unclearly) represents: an image of the (West)African world

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<sup>10</sup> G. Đerić, „Razvoj stereotipa – multidisciplinarni pristup”, dostupno na: [https://www.kas.de/c/document\\_library/get\\_file?uuid=fb7d688c-2849-a7be-4601-5dd212d983c0&groupId=252038](https://www.kas.de/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=fb7d688c-2849-a7be-4601-5dd212d983c0&groupId=252038) (pristup: 31.10.2019), 141.

<sup>11</sup> For more, see: W. Fourie, "Four concepts of Africa" in: *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* | Vol 71, No 3, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> D. Antonijević, A. Banić Grubišić, „Mape stereotipa kao duhovito – opaki proizvod: folklorizacija i komercijalizacija etničkih predrasuda u internet prostoru”, y: *Antropologija* 13, sv. 1 (2013), 137-153.

<sup>13</sup> Д. Булатовић, *Уметност и музеалност*, Нови Сад: Галерија Матице Српске, 206.

<sup>14</sup> M. Fuko, „Ovo nije lula” (prev. Mirko Sebić), y: *Nova misao – časopis za savremenu kulturu Vojvodine* br. 3 (2009). 41.

conceived by two Yugoslav enthusiasts and public workers; the institutionalised, limited museum space, shaped within a *fragile* and *sensitive* architecture; the ambivalent position of the so-called African object<sup>15</sup> in the museum, etc.

### **Zdravko and Veda Pečar, *for Better, for Worse***

The image of the MAA's founders, Zdravko Pečar and Veda Zagorac, implicitly inscribed in the name and permanent display of the museum, appeared explicitly in the interventions, through the prism of archival video and photo documentation. By using a portrait of Zdravko Pečar after a trophy hunt, Milica Josimov, sculptor as well as MAA conservationist, reveals with her installation *Take A Shot*, another collection activity and a collection of the former Yugoslav ambassador.<sup>16</sup> With the title and selfie spot marked behind the sculpted, white antelope, left to the effects of time and decay, Josimov distorts the ubiquitous *museum selfie practice* of today, and with an uneasy *take a shot* prompts observers to think critically about (trophy) hunting in historical and contemporary contexts, as well as the visual culture that it produced. The very explicit iconography of the work, in which a wound on the neck of the animal, *bleeding* along a thread to a mount on which a museum object – a portrait of Pečar – is offered to observers for examination under a magnifying glass, is further emphasised by limiting the entire installation with a white *crime scene* outline (Figure \_). The procedure of allowing the clay to deteriorate with time, can be interpreted in two ways: one, as an indication of the inevitable vulnerability of an animal in a given situation, while the other poses the questions – does Josimov, as a conservation specialist at the MAA, disclose that *statues* (read, museum objects) *also die*?<sup>17</sup> In other words, by openly demonstrating the temporality of the objects, Josimov – it seems - visualizes Groys' observation that artificial longevity guaranteed to objects in a museum is always a simulation,<sup>18</sup> and it is precisely at this primary, material level that conservationists achieve it.

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<sup>15</sup> For more, see: A. Sladojević, *Muzej afričke umetnosti: konteksti i reprezentacije*, Beograd, Muzej afričke umetnosti, 2015.

<sup>16</sup> The work which is placed at the entrance of the small gallery space of the MAA, communicates with Josimov's exhibition *Hunting Culture – The Donso in Bamana Tradition*, which was opened while the *Unprotected Witness No. 1: Afrodisiac* was on view.

<sup>17</sup> *Statues Also Die (Les statues meurent)* is a short film by Chris Marker and Alain Resnais, from 1953.

<sup>18</sup> B. Groys, "On the New", available on: [https://www.kanazawa21.jp/act/r/03/pdf/boris03\\_e.pdf](https://www.kanazawa21.jp/act/r/03/pdf/boris03_e.pdf) (Accessed: 31 October 2019), 21.

Searching through the MAA archive for a photograph of the Pečar spouses as representative tourists, Ana Adamović creates in her two-channel video installation *ΦT000* (Figure 1) a counterpoint of safari and West African landscape. *ΦT000* is a medley of four private videos which, with very little artistic intervention, show Africa through Pečars' lens – a juxtaposition of calming bamboo forest landscapes and intense hunting scenes. Similar to the notions she is developing in her ongoing work *Theme Park*, Ana Adamović recognises here in the tourist experience of the MAA founders *the phantasms of the white traveller*<sup>19</sup> and *the multilayered conquering of Otherness* within an African landscape, placing emphasis, according to the artist, on the deep-rooted nature of such tourist collecting of Africa. In dialogue with the museum archive, the work repeats the documentation register number, its zero becoming a segment that is missing – in the documentation records literally, on the permanent display, metaphorically. By taking note of Zdravko and Veda Pečar's use of the film camera, Adamović presents the afore described image of Africa within the custom-made emblematic plinths of the MAA permanent display. Placed between the rows, between collected objects, the moving image observed in two planes and through *tight* 8 mm slits (in the plinths) is simultaneously *caught* and *musealised*. By moving the picture from an archival, private framework to a museum one, Adamović onsets a polemic with the MAA permanent display, provoking thought on collecting as *hunting for objects*.

The film by Milica Rakić titled *Non-Aligned* is presented in a rather dark area of the MAA permanent display where, and due to the artist's involvement, the museum space loses its *institutional light*.<sup>20</sup> In the film which is heavily musically layered, more do than than following a narrative, the artist amalgamates the private and public biographies of Zdravko Pečar and Veda Zagorac, cultivating the observation about the *MAA vernacular* in which by unpacking the Pečar archive one comes across a *detailed cross-section of the lives of two people*.<sup>21</sup> *In using fragments from the conversation* between Dragan Nikolić and Milena Dravić<sup>22</sup> about their love, by *writing over* archival materials, Rakić indicates the phenomena of remembering and forgetting within the binary male-female pair. The decades long perception of Veda Zagorac through the *prism of the role she played as Zdravko Pečar's spouse and remembrance of her in an all consuming practice, which is persistent and*

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<sup>19</sup> D. Sretenović, *Crno telo, bele maske*, Beograd, Muzej afričke umetnosti, 2004, 25.

<sup>20</sup> B. Groys, *ibid.*, 23.

<sup>21</sup> E. Епштајн, А. Сладојевић, *ibid.*, 30.

<sup>22</sup> Dragan Nikolić and Milena Dravić were famous Yugoslav actors who often starred together, besides being married to each other in real life. The extracts are from the Yugoslav film *How Two Fools Loved Eachother* (1972) directed by Aleksandar Đorđević.

*relentless, and which ignores, forgets, and blatantly erases the contributions of women in the social sphere*<sup>23</sup> is, in this work, reversed under the influence of the loving communication; in a fictitious lover's quarrel, Veda's voice is the one that relentlessly threatens to forget Zdravko – the male order that *does not look at all like the ones that are not forgotten*.<sup>24</sup> In a humorous inversion of standardised practices of remembering and forgetting through the love-game set within the sequences of a diplomatic, collecting, travelling – personal and public – perception of Africa harboured by the Pečars, the artist pays homage to Veda Zagorac, signifying her as the one that is *more than an MAA donor*.<sup>25</sup> The undermining of the historical habit to remember in such a way is further emphasized through the transfer of (a) women's speech into the private sphere, a space where women are expected to “naturally” reside.

By implying the *re-colonisation of Africa through socialism*,<sup>26</sup> scenes of packing objects in the film and the positioning of the work in a darkened scenography consisting of wooden museum crates (Figure \_\_) Rakić offers testimony to the ambivalent, non-aligned position of the MAA. In such a “situation” three iconographic elements are placed that also toy with memory within the mentioned binary pair: Pečar's doctoral thesis partly covered by the magazine *Woman [Žena]*, the mute, still, bust of Zdravko Pečar as the *figure of habitual/stale memory* and, finally, his typewriter “writing” Veda Zagorac's conjured text (Figure \_\_) as poetic collective manifest to a *women's history*.

### **Wounded Emblems in the Space of the MAA**

Reconsiderations of the museum space, its emblems and architecture in the *Protected Witness No. 1: Afrodisiac* are realised by *site-specific* installations and highly ambient works. Close to the MAA entrance, on the glass of a fixed window as material *presenting the*

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<sup>23</sup> E. Epštajn, „Tragom Vede Zagorac u Muzeju afričke umetnosti”, y: *Feministička teorija je za sve*, Zaharijević, Adriana i Lončarević, Katarina (ur), Beograd, Fakultet političkih nauka i Institut za filozofiju i društvenu teoriju, 2018, 172-174.

<sup>24</sup> Excerpt from **a fragment of the love-talk** between Dragan Nikolić and Milena Dravić.

<sup>25</sup> E. Epštajn, *ibid.*, 173.

<sup>26</sup> D. Sretenović, *ibid.*, 25.

invisible, but **material censorship** that stops the real opening towards the world,<sup>27</sup> Saša Tkačenko inscribed a lyric from the music he listens to – *I don't fear nothing unless it's broke* (Figure \_\_). By appropriating such a verse and inscribing it in a spot that allows visual but not literal entry into the MAA, the artist refers to the perception of the museum institution from the *outside*, where its wellbeing is feared for only at a point when it is literally *broken*. On the glass, as a rhythmic break in the concrete architecture and in symbolic dialogue with the outside world, the engraved sentence also points to the broader context of the lethargy of modern times. Tkačenko deals with the outside-inside and accessible-inaccessible relations also in the second segment of his intervention, which is set in an architecturally equally sensitive place – the interior of the MAA dome. There he displays an invisible and inaccessible flag, formed by the rotation of a chart showing the statistics of the world population living in extreme poverty (Figure \_\_), thus pointing to the indifference of modern man. On the other hand, by exhibiting in the space created after years of neglecting the *fragility and vulnerability of the MAA building*, on a semantic level, this intervention joins the ephemeral writing on the glass, testifying to the “nature” of concern and fear for cultural institutions in our country.

By way of creating a fluid, *site-specific* installation that includes the video *On Tools and Weapons*, Siniša Ilić marks the permanent display of the MAA as a *time capsule* through the interpolation of used museum plinths.<sup>28</sup> As part of the permanent display, Ilić's installation is an *unexpected excursus* from museum discourse stasis and its *certainty of temples*<sup>29</sup>, which de-fetishises its aura and belief in its longevity. Torn away, alienated from their function, the old plinths in Ilić's abstract sculpture (Figure \_\_), although non-objective, are eloquent and brimming with the passage of time. By displaying within a display, the artist conjoins and emphasises the temporality of MAA's emblems by *adding transient to the transient*, i.e. by accentuating the limited life span of the historical museum discourse. In a similar way to Josimov's work *Take a Shot*, Ilić unravels the illusion of a museum's eternal nature and lets us peek into the fragile materiality of the system on which the museum institution is based. By doing so, Ilić reminds us that museums also have their own instruments, *tools and weapons* that belong to the *machinery of the museum world*, but also

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<sup>27</sup> Ж. Бодријар, *Систем објеката*, as cited in: A. Winton, Alexa, "Inhabited Space: Critical Theories and the Domestic Interior", in: *The Handbook of Interior Architecture and Design*, edited by Lois Weinthal and Graeme Brooker, 40-9. London and New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2013, 44.

<sup>28</sup> C. Bishop, *Radical Museology*, London, Koening Books, 2013, 24.

<sup>29</sup> T. Šola, "Vrijeme za teoriju", у: *Eseji o muzejima i njihovoj teoriji*, Zagreb, Hrvatski nacionalni komitet ICOM, 2003.

that their durability is constructed precisely through our habit of considering the museum as an eternal temple. The museum is historicised in his work also through film – the circling of the camera around a “freshly unwrapped” physical model of the MAA, which alludes to the circulation of different cultural and political phenomena surrounding the history of the MAA. Paying homage to Oskar Davičo, *the once-white man*,<sup>30</sup> yet another traveller through West Africa is made possible in the film via abstract sequences about the *dilution of the white man’s colour*,<sup>31</sup> symbols of mining wealth and the well-established understanding of Africa as an inexhaustible resource. In a dialogue with Davičo, who *wishes to bear a concise history of his country on his lapel* when meeting Africans, the dysfunctional fragments of the permanent MAA display, the once implied bearers of his *country’s history*, today, like wounded emblems, bear witness to the sediments of times past and the (in)visibility of that history.

At the very “doorstep” of the MAA, with *HEAVEN #14* Ivana Ivković opens the museum entrance as *space that institutionalises the metaphor of play/game or theatre*.<sup>32</sup> Thus, the artist marks the MAA as *the theatre of many different Africas* at the intersection of several images: that of the exoticised image of a *devastated heaven on earth*, inspired by the films (Bertolucci’s *The Sheltering Sky*, 1990 and Seidls’ *Paradies: Liebe*, 2012); that of the anticolonial, which is a clear symbol of solidarity and non-alignment in Nikola Kolja Milunović’s sculpture,<sup>33</sup> and the image legible through the Zdravko Pečar and Veda Zagorac collection. In the series of aforementioned *theatrical museum* images, *HEAVEN #14* represents a visual synecdoche – the figure of a partial relationship by which a whole is expressed by a part of that whole, reminding us that this is the way the continent is perceived through film heritage and tourism, and that this image – like a postcard or souvenir – is brought home in memory. By walking through the curtain, one passes through an image of Africa – a desert enriched with occasional oases, built together by *HEAVEN #14* and a palm tree, planted at the opening of the MAA, in its vicinity (Figure \_\_), thus domesticating the museum space. Playing with the museum space as being both domestic and theatrical, the

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<sup>30</sup> О. Давичо, *Црно на бело*, Београд, Просвета, 1962, 13.

<sup>31</sup> О. Давичо, *нав. дело*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> М. Попadić, „Fragmenti ilustracije o totalitetu baštine”, u: *Muzeologija, nova muzeologija, nauka o baštini*, Београд, СмиН, 2013, 228.

<sup>33</sup> Close behind the *HEAVEN#14* curtains there is a sculpture-installation by Nikola Kolja Milunović. The map of the continent, whose surface Milunović used to imply the borders of liberated state and which is set within a cage/bars – or modernist *grid*, is a unique object of the MAA permanent display in several ways: it explicitly visualises MAA’s anticolonial politics and is the only object of contemporary Yugoslav art present in the permanent display, commissioned specifically for the opening of the MAA.

artist further underscores through the performance of *HEAVEN #14: Unprotected Collector* (Figure \_\_), which took place at the opening of the exhibition and involved a performer, ignorantly strolling through the MAA as if it was his own home, alluding to the historic walk of Europeans across the African continent.

### **The So-Called African Object and Unknown African within the Museum**

The ambivalent status of so-called African artwork in museums is the topic of intervention by Irena Kelečević and Ana Vujović. The floor graphic, titled *Passage* (Figure \_\_), melds the form and function of the Senufo people's filafani cloth. On a formal level, Kelečević distorts discipline in the expression present in the visual solution of the aforementioned cloths and *masses* of animal and human figures onto a “musealized” green-blue background. On a functional level, Kelečević indicates the multifaceted transfer of a museum object’s function, from “authentic” cloth for initiation, burial ceremony and as hunting amulet-/protective-clothing, to tourist object, a hybrid from the town of Korhogo<sup>34</sup> also used to decorate the walls of hotels. By condensing the history of this object’s legacy into a single work-intervention, Kelečević creates a contemporary object of usage, typical nowadays in shopping malls and cinema complexes, thus opening the door to thinking about the “authenticity” of the so-called African object and its museum aura. In other words, the difference in the use of motifs that once had a ritual and apotropeic function for the purpose of producing interior decorations is minimal between *this work* and e.g. *hybrids from the town of Korhogo*. However, the difference in the visual solution *which is tread on* is more noticeable, and we can therefore wonder whether Kelečević is suggesting that by the act of walking over such a drawing, we symbolically tread upon a well-established notion of an African artist as infantile, primitive, inferior, as one that is at the root of human civilization.

The issue of the African artist is central to the dispersed triptych-intervention by Ana Vujović, entitled *The Unknown African*. Inheriting the observation of the MAA permanent display as anticolonial and solidary in its meta-narrative, however in its basic narrative as being *atemporal* and *anonymous*<sup>35</sup> – therefore colonial, Vujović interpolates three intruders in the midst of exhibited museum objects. A contour that casts neon light on one of the objects

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<sup>34</sup>A. Продановић Бојовић, Г. Наумов, *Духови Африке: ритуална западноафричка уметност*, Београд/Скопље, Музеј афричке уметности и Музеј Северне Македоније, 2018, 82.

<sup>35</sup> A. Sladojević, *n.d.*, 29.

(Figure \_\_), emphasizing the aesthetic quality of *the work by unknown hands*, warns of the negation of authorship and the dangers it carries when based on a simplified and exposed view of *Otherness*. By animating the Dogon mask with experimental sound (Figure \_\_), the artist activates the thoughts of visitors on the subject of silent museum objects and – by being taken out of the world they belonged – their inability to speak clearly about themselves. The editing of sounds implemented in the display, bear witness to the cacophony of voices that speak about African arts throughout history. The intruder (Figure \_\_), specially protected with an *emergency* blanket (astro-blanket, thermal blanket) alludes to the powerful fetishization of objects within the historical museum dioscourse. Interpolated between two sculptures, this object, *like a mirage*, stays hidden from sight leaving no room for a response to the question what sort of *museum treasure* is hidden with such care and so selfishly beneath this *gold*. By covering this work with a thermal blanket Vujović *measures the MAA's temperature*, which is marked in her triptych as a *cold museum* – the one that draws the audience centripetally<sup>36</sup> into dialogue. By asking the questions about value, authorship and meaning of so-called African objects in the MAA, Vujović writes her triptych into the space of the permanent display, arousing the Barthesian pleasure by which the new text *authorizes itself by virtue of its increase over previous texts*, slows down the senses and the steps of the visitors, inviting participation in an interactive conversation.

### ***Ceci n'est pas Musée de l'art africain – collection de Veda et dr Zdravko Pečar***

*The Museum Needs to Be Tugged, Come What May* – is a method that in the past fifteen years or so, through *sudden short circuits*<sup>37</sup> - artists and curators, from outside and from within, observe and reconsider the mission of the MAA, with a tendency for it to develop *critical self analysis* and *de-institutionalised conscious*.<sup>38</sup> By *tugging* the permanent display, the MAA is exposed/exhibited yet again, however, this time through interventions of eight artists themselves (that is, their original works). As an *unprotected witness No.1*, the MAA becomes a concrete instrument of cultural politics<sup>39</sup> open to creative criticisms. The artists' interventions bear the character of art *in situ*, born in precisely such a manner – *in the*

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<sup>36</sup> J. Glusberg, *hladni' i vrući' muzeji – k muzeološkoj kritici*, Zagreb, Muzejski dokumentacioni centar, 1983.

<sup>37</sup> Ž. Kler, „Herostat ili muzej pod znakom pitanja”, *y: Kultura br. 41* (1978), 37.

<sup>38</sup> T. Šola, *нав. дело, 304*.

<sup>39</sup> J. Denegri, „Kritički odnos umetnika prema muzeju”, *y: Kultura br. 41* (1978), 63.

*unprotected spaces* of the permanent display, archive and dome of the MAA as one specific art studio.

Through this art intervention the permanent display takes on the qualities of *ready-made*, and the MAA is recognised as the bearer of manifold testimony potentials through complex *images of the Other and Africa* in it and around it, *wounded museum emblems* then and now, as well as the *ambivalent (re)presentation* of the so-called African object and artist. In other words, like Magritte's *Les Deux Mystères* this exhibition calligram is unravelled – through the symbiosis of two living exhibitions: the permanent one, which represents in this case that *stably unstable*, framed drawing, signed *The Museum of African Art – the Veda and Zdravko Pečar Collection*, and this short-term, fluid one, whose subtext might just be Magrittian: *Ceci n'est pas Musée de l'art africain - collection de Veda et dr Zdravko Pečar/This is not the Museum of African Art – the Veda and Zdravko Pečar Collection*.

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