

Subverzivni aspekti hibridnih umjetničkih praksi



Subversiveness in Hybrid Art Practices

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SAŽETAK

Tekst se bavi subverzivnim potencijalom hibridne umjetnosti na osnovi triju primjera. Tri su kontroverzna rada iz područja hibridne umjetnosti rad *ARTE_mis* Maje Smrekar, *GPT Bunny* Eduarda Kaca te *Disembodied Cuisine* umjetničke grupe Tissue Culture and Art. Sva se tri rada bave, svaki na svoj način, ljudskim odnosom prema životinjama. Analiza radova teorijski se temelji na postavkama filozofskog posthumanizma u širem smislu, potom na promišljanjima odnosa životinje i čovjeka Giorgia Agambena, na teorijama subverzivne umjetnosti te postojećim spoznajama o hibridnoj umjetnosti. Teza je teksta da hibridna umjetnost ima znatan subverzivni potencijal koji se temelji na upotrebi neočekivanih materijala i postupaka iz izvanumjetničkih, odnosno znanstvenih disciplina te njihovu prenošenju u javno polje, čime se gledatelj postavlja pred izazov suočavanja—umjesto s umjetničkim objektom—s umjetničkim živim bićima.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

subverzija, hibridna umjetnost, *bioart*, Maja Smrekar, Eduardo Kac, Tissue Culture and Art

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SUMMARY

This paper focuses on the subversive potential of hybrid art based on three controversial case studies: *ARTE_mis* by Maja Smrekar, *GPT Bunny* by Eduardo Kac, and *Disembodied Cuisine* by the art group Tissue Culture and Art. All of them, each in its own way, deal with the human attitude towards animals. In terms of theory, the present analysis is based on the premises of philosophic post-humanism in a broader sense of the term, Giorgio Agamben's considerations on the relationship between man and animal, various theories on subversive art, and the current insights on hybrid art. The author's main hypothesis is that hybrid art has a considerable subversive potential, which relies on the use of unexpected materials and procedures from extra-artistic, scientific disciplines, and on their transposition into the public field, which challenges the viewer by making him or her face living art creatures instead of artistic objects.

KEYWORDS

subversion, hybrid art, *bio-art*, Maja Smrekar, Eduardo Kac, Tissue Culture and Art

Olga Majcen Linn





Maja Smrekar, *K-9 topologija*, 1992. Foto: Anže Sekelj, Hana Jošič ↑
/ Maja Smrekar, *K-9 topology*, 1992. Photo: Anže Sekelj, Hana Jošič

HIBRIDNA UMJETNOST

Hibrid kao pojam u umjetničkom svijetu označava vrstu umjetnosti koja se koristi najrazličitijim nekompatibilnim izvorima za nastanak umjetničkog djela. Taj je pojam na velika vrata uveden 2005. na festivalu Ars Electronica posvećenom temi hibrida u umjetnosti, a nakon tog izdanja festivala u kategorizaciju umjetničkih radova trajno je uvrštena nova kategorija hibridne umjetnosti. Tema festivala, kako su je osmislili Gerfried Stocker i Christine Schöpf, bila je „hibrid—život u paradoksu”, pri čemu je termin hibrid podrazumijevao najbolju riječ za opis suvremenog društva koje karakteriziraju hibridne ekonomije, hibridni identiteti i kulture, hibridna bića i ekologije.¹

Originalno, taj se pojam odnosi na križanje živih vrsta i stvaranje novih. Povijesni su primjeri takve prakse povezani s razvojem poljoprivrede, pri čemu poljoprivredni hibridi predstavljaju općeprihvaćena dostignuća. U umjetničkom svijetu, međutim, hibridi se shvaćaju mnogo šire pa sežu, kako to navodi Carolyn Guertin, od digitalnih persona—naših elektroničkih sjena sazdanih od podataka ostavljenih na internetu, preko *queer* hibrida koji kreiraju nove transkulturalne zone unutar koloniziranih prostora,² do tzv. *bioart* projekata. Prema riječima Jensa Hausera: „... s demistificiranjem odricanja primata genetskoj paradigmi kao ultimativnim biblijskim Jakovljevim ljestvama, protagonisti u umjetnosti proširili su svoje horizonte te zašli i u druga područja i metode: tkivni inženjering, neuropsihologiju, biorobotiku, bioinformatiku, transgenetiku, sintezu umjetno proizvedenog DNK-a, mendelovsko križanje životinja i biljaka, transplantaciju, biotehnoško i medicinsko samoeksperimentiranje, subvertiranje vizualizacijskih tehnologija i molekularne biologije na načine kakvi nisu predviđeni u uputama za rad.”³ Iako je pojam hibridne umjetnosti daleko širi od pojma *bioarta*, upravo je ulaskom u laboratorije i odstupanjem od tradicionalnoga znanstvenog pristupa laboratorijskim materijalima bioumjetnost od svih suvremenih umjetničkih praksi najviše zaslužila odrednicu hibridne umjetnosti te također odrednicu subverzivne umjetnosti.

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HYBRID ART

In the art world, hybrid denotes the type of art that uses various incompatible sources to create an artwork. The term had its grand debut at the Ars Electronica festival in 2005, dedicated to the issue of hybrids in art: with this event, the new category of hybrid art was regularly included in the classification of artworks. The key topic of the festival, as conceptualized by Gerfried Stocker and Christine Schöpf, was *Hybrid—Living in Paradox*, whereby the term “hybrid” was used to describe the modern society, characterized by hybrid economies, hybrid identities and cultures, hybrid creatures and ecologies.¹

Originally, the term referred to the cross-breeding of living species and the creation of new ones. Historical examples of this practice have been linked to agricultural development, whereby agricultural hybrids have been generally praised as achievements. In the world of art, however, hybrids are understood far more broadly, including even digital personae, as observed by Carolyn Guertin—from our electronic shadows consisting of data we have left on the Internet to the queer hybrids creating new, trans-cultural zones within colonized spaces,² and further to the so-called “bio-art” projects. According to Jens Hauser: “... with the demystifying abnegation of the primacy of the genetic paradigm as ultimate Jacob’s Ladder, artistic protagonists expanded their horizon to take in other fields and methods: cell and tissue cultures, neuro-physiology, bio-robotics and bio-informatics, transgenesis, synthesis of artificially produced DNA sequences, Mendelian cross-breeding of animals and plants, xeno-transplants and homo-grafts, biotechnological and medical self-experimentation, and subverting the visualization technologies of molecular biology in the ways not foreseen in the users’ manuals.”³ Even though the notion of hybrid art is far broader than that of bio-art, it is by entering the laboratories and by abandoning the traditional scientific approach to laboratory materials that bio-art has deserved—more than any other contemporary art practice—to be called “hybrid” and subversive.

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1
Stocker, Schöpf, *Hybrid-living in paradox*, 10.

2
Guertin, „Queer Hybrids: Cosmopolitanism & Embodied Arts”, 166.

3
Hauser, „Bio Art – Taxonomy of an Etymological Monster”, 182.
[prev. O. Majcen Linn]

4
Šuvaković, *Umetnost i politika*, 11.

Hibridna umjetnost može biti zadivljujuća, pa čak i simpatična ako se bavi metaforama ili ako je prikazivačka po karakteru (poput, primjerice, fascinantnih imaginativnih portreta Daniela Leeja koji, temeljeći se na darvinizmu i teoriji evolucije, prikazuju utjelovljenja raznih fiktivnih kombinacija ljudi i životinja), no mnogi zaista zanimljivi primjeri hibridne umjetnosti imaju kontroverzni efekt, pa čak i subverzivni potencijal. U svojoj knjizi *Umetnost i politika* pišući o subverzivnim umjetničkim praksama Miško Šuvaković naveo je da su subverzivne one prakse koje za razliku od drugih političkih praksi djeluju destruktivno, tj. rušiteljski na postojeći poredak.⁴ Drugim riječima, u odnosu na kritičke i slične prakse koje problematiziraju neki politički fenomen ili cjelinu, subverzivne prakse djeluju, i to s energijom i namjerom da uruše ili sruše poredak.

Cilj je ovog teksta da putem tri važna primjera hibridne umjetnosti ukaže na subverzivne aspekte hibridnih umjetničkih praksi. Kriterij za odabir studija slučajeva bio je ne samo njihova važnost (višestruko su izlagani na prestižnim izložbama i festivalima, dobitnici su umjetničkih nagrada) nego i činjenica da predstavljaju izvrsne primjere „života u paradoksu“.

PRIMJERI SUBVERZIVNIH HIBRIDNIH UMJETNIČKIH RADOVA

EDUARDO KAC:
GFP BUNNY (2000.)

Jedan od dojmljivih ranih primjera *bioarta* predstavlja rad Eduarda Kaca (Brazil/SAD, 1962.) *GFP Bunny* iz 2000. godine. Prvi transgenetički rad nastao je u vrijeme vrhunca popularnosti genetičkih istraživanja, kada se predviđalo da će se istraživanjem genetike moći riješiti mnogi problemi suvremenog društva, od hrane (genetičke manipulacije vrstama kako bi se ostvario veći prinos) do zdravstvenih problema čovjeka. U to je doba klonirana i ovca Dolly te se počelo teoretski promišljati o klonovima, uzgoju klonova radi zamjenskih organa i sličnim temama, što je, naravno, nametnulo i niz etičkih dilema pa su mnoge države i zabranile takve eksperimente. Kac je tada kreirao *Albu*—fluorescentnu zečicu, nagovorivši istraživače u Francuskoj da stvore genetički modificiranog zeca unošenjem GFP gena meduze. GFP, zeleni fluorescentni protein (engl. *green fluorescent protein*), nalazi se u mnogim morskim životinjama, no najkarakterističniji je za meduzu koja, izložena ultraljubičastom svjetlu, zadobiva fluorescentni sjaj.

1
Stocker, Schöpf, *Hybrid—Living in Paradox*, 10.

2
Guertin, “Queer Hybrids: Cosmopolitanism & Embodied Arts,” 166.

3
Hauser, “Bio Art—Taxonomy of an Etymological Monster,” 182.

4
Šuvaković, *Umetnost i politika*, 11.

Hybrid art can be amazing and even appealing if operating with metaphors, or if presentational in its nature (such as the fascinating imaginative portraits of Daniel Lee, based on Darwinism and the theory of evolution, which show the embodiments of various fictitious combinations of humans and animals), but many of the truly intriguing examples of hybrid art are rather controversial and may have a subversive potential. In his book on *Art and Politics (Umetnost i politika)*, Miško Šuvaković has defined subversive art practices by stating that they, unlike other political practices, have a destructive effect, i.e. aim at undermining the established order.⁴ In other words, compared to the critical and other practices that problematize a political phenomenon or entity, subversive practices have the energy and the goal to destabilize or do away with the regime.

The aim of this paper is to use three crucial examples of hybrid art in order to indicate the subversive aspects of hybrid art practices. The criterion for selecting these case studies was not only their prominence (as they have been presented more than once at prestigious exhibitions and festivals, winning various awards), but also the fact that they are excellent examples of “living in paradox.”

EXAMPLES OF SUBVERSIVE HYBRID ARTWORKS

EDUARDO KAC:
GFP BUNNY (2000.)

A fascinating early example of bio-art is *GFP Bunny* by Eduardo Kac (Brazil/USA, 1962) from 2000. This first transgenetic artwork was produced at the pinnacle of popularity of genetic research, when it was expected to solve numerous problems in the modern society—from food shortage (genetic manipulation of species in order to yield better crops) to human health issues. At that time the sheep Dolly was cloned and the researchers began speculating on breeding clones in order to provide spare organs for transplantation and on various other related issues, which naturally brought up a variety of ethical dilemmas and led many countries to ban such experiments. That was the setting in which Kac created his *Alba*—a fluorescent hare—by persuading the French scientists to produce a genetically modified hare inserting the GFP (green fluorescent protein) from the jellyfish. The GFP is found in various marine animals, but is most typical for the jellyfish, which glows fluorescently when exposed to ultraviolet light. The new genetic element in the hare’s organism made *Alba*’s fur glow when exposed to the UV lights. Even though the experiment was successful, the scientists were disturbed by the use of bio-engineering in an art project and refused to reveal its results. This triggered a debate, which Kac aptly turned into two more art projects. The first was *GFP Bunny—Paris Intervention*, in which he published posters in the streets of Paris thematizing the hermeticism of scientific laboratories and the scientists themselves, who claim monopoly over knowledge and preserve its power for themselves.



The New York Times
Arts & Leisure

MARCO JEFFERSON

Myth, Magic And Us Mortals



Mr. Jefferson on an old New York folktale and its ancient British origins.

Now that we read about politics and technology in our daily lives, it's not surprising that we're also reading about myth and magic. In a way, these stories are the most powerful of all. They are the stories that we tell ourselves to make sense of the world. They are the stories that we tell ourselves to make sense of the world.

In a time hungry for revelation, gods and other tricksters are back onstage.

Mythology is a powerful force in our lives. It is the stories that we tell ourselves to make sense of the world. It is the stories that we tell ourselves to make sense of the world.

The Wonders Of Genetics Breed A New Art



Want to Mean TV



Francis Jones from the TV show 'Mean TV'.



ELASMOBARI

Elasmobari is a new art form that combines traditional Japanese art with modern technology.

BAKKA

Bakka is a new art form that combines traditional Japanese art with modern technology.

MOSE

Mose is a new art form that combines traditional Japanese art with modern technology.

ARTJACKETS

Artjackets are a new art form that combines traditional Japanese art with modern technology.

Novi genski element u organizmu zeca proizveo je da Albino krzno svijetli kad je izloženo UV svjetlosti. Iako je eksperiment bio uspješno proveden, znanstvenici, uznemireni upotrebom bioinženjeringa u umjetničkom projektu, nisu željeli isporučiti njegov rezultat. Nakon toga razvila se rasprava koju je autor uspješno pretvorio u dva nova umjetnička projekta. Prvi je bio *GFP Bunny—pariška intervencija*, gdje je umjetnik lijepio plakate po pariškim ulicama, tematizirajući zatvorenost znanstvenih laboratorija i samih znanstvenika koji si uzimaju za pravo da sami raspoložu znanjima te zadržavaju njihovu moć. Nakon toga sve je medijske reakcije i etičku debatu koju je projekt izazvao kompilirao u projekt *Free Alba!*

Daphne Dragona, teoretičarka medijske umjetnosti, u svojem promišljanju subverzivnih umjetničkih praksi u kontekstu znanja kao moći dolazi do zaključka da prostor umjetničke subverzije ljudima upravo omogućava „da razumiju kompleksne mehanizme moći”.⁵ U tom smislu, kada umjetnik otvori javnosti znanstveni laboratorij i pokaže da djelatnost koja se tamo odvija i nije tako kompleksna te na neki način preuzme na sebe moć interveniranja u život, rezerviran isključivo za znanstvenike, njegov rad postaje nužno subverzivan.

GFP Bunny završio je na mnogim naslovnica, uključujući *Le Monde* i *Boston Globe*. Za razliku od intencionalno subverzivnih umjetničkih strategija iz šezdesetih godina 20. stoljeća poznatih pod pojmom *détournement* (zaokret) koji su plasirali Guy Debord i Gil Wolman,⁶ a koje su podrazumijevale zakupljivanje medijskog prostora poput *jumbo*-plakata za demonstraciju umjetničke poruke, Kacov rad sam se po sebi probio na prve stranice novina. Činjenica da je rad dobio takvu vidljivost omogućila je javni dijalog o etičkim dvojabama povezanima s umjetnošću odnosno znanošću. Što se događa s umjetnošću kada uđe u glavne dnevne vijesti? Što je uopće dopušteno umjetnicima, a što znanstvenicima?

Za Kaca ključno pitanje predstavlja pitanje odgovornosti. Umjetnik je odgovoran za nastanak novog bića, koje nije umjetnički objekt, već živo stvorenje čije potrebe moraju biti zadovoljene. Kao takvo, ono zapravo dobiva svoju društvenu subjektivnost. Objašnjavajući Kacov rad Jens Hauser stoga kaže: „Kacov rad *GFP Bunny* govori o konverziji iz laboratorijskog objekta u socijalni subjekt. U svim kontroverzijama i polemikama oko tog rada uvijek se potkradala primjedba da je riječ o znanstvenom *readymadeu*. Eduardo Kac svojim radovima želi naglasiti da znanost proizvodi znanja i značenja uz pomoć metafora koje same po sebi nisu tematizirane ni prepoznate. Kao umjetnik, preuzima te metafore jer zna odakle potječu te ih upotrebljava tako da ih pre naglasi do bolne mjere. Za mene je to trenutak spoznaje u kojem 'umjetnost predstavlja vlastitu produkciju'.”⁷

Iako je umjetnik doživljavao Albu lijepom, mediji su je proglasili čudovištem. Eduardo Kac, upotrijebivši u znanosti legitimitne postupke, proizvodi ekstremne situacije koje upozoravaju i metaforički ocrtavaju poziciju ne samo biološke nego i društvene drugosti.⁸

Eventually, the reactions in the media and the ethical debate triggered by the project were compiled into the *Free Alba!* project.

Daphne Dragona, a theoretician of media art, has concluded in her reflections on subversive art practices in the context of knowledge as power that the space of artistic subversion actually makes it possible to understand complex power mechanisms.⁵ In that sense, when an artist opens a scientific laboratory to the public and shows that the activities taking place there are not that complex after all, in a sense claiming the power to intervene in life itself—which is normally a prerogative of the scientists—his work necessarily becomes subversive.

GFP Bunny ended on various title pages, including those of *Le Monde* and *The Boston Globe*. Unlike the intentionally subversive art practices in the 1960s, described as a *détournement*, popularized by Guy Debord and Gil Wolman,⁶ which implied leasing media space such as billboards in order to divulgate the artistic message, Kac's project found its own way onto the headline pages of newspapers and magazines. The fact that it gained so much visibility made it possible to launch a public dialogue on ethical dilemmas linked to art and science. What happens with art when it becomes a sensation in the daily news? What are the artists allowed to do in the first place? And the scientists?

For Kac, the key question was that of responsibility. The artist is responsible for the birth of a new creature, which is not an art object, but a living being with needs to be satisfied. As such, it actually acquires its own social subjectivity. Therefore, Jens Hauser has explained Kac's work in the following way: “Kac's work *GFP Bunny* is about the conversion of a laboratory object into a social subject. In all the controversies and polemics about this work there has often been the claim that it would only be a scientific ‘Ready-Made’. [...] Eduardo Kac wants to highlight in his works that knowledge is being produced through science, and that science produces meaning with the help of metaphors which are not being thematized or acknowledged as such. As an artist he knows where metaphors originate and reclaims them by exaggerating them so much that it almost hurts. For me, this is an epistemic moment—‘art that is representing its own production’.”⁷

5 Dragona, „What is Left to Subvert?”, 188.

6 Daniels, „Subversion as a Strategy today?”.

7 Silvestrin, „Dialogs on 'Bioart' #1. A Conversation with Jens Hauser”. [prev. O. Majcen Linn]

8 Kac, „What if art could truly create biological life?”.

9 Tissue Culture and Art, „Semi-Living Food: Disembodied Cuisine”. [prev. O. Majcen Linn]

10 Brajdoti, *Posthumano*, 182.

TISSUE CULTURE AND ART:
DISEMBODIED CUISINE (2003.)

Nagrađivani umjetnici, znanstvenici i kustosi Oron Catts (Finska, 1967.) i Ionat Zurr (Velika Britanija, 1970.) utemeljili su čuveni projekt Tissue Culture and Art. The Tissue Culture and Art Project umjetnički je istraživački i razvojni projekt koji se koristi tkivom kao umjetničkim medijem uzgajajući polužive (engl. *semi-living*, op. a.) organizme kojima propituju definiciju života i poziciju čovjeka u odnosu na druga živa bića. Smatraju se pionirima na polju tzv. bioumjetnosti. Od 1996. djeluju na Školi za anatomiju i ljudsku biologiju u australskom Perthu te su odigrali ključnu ulogu pri osnivanju projekta *SymbioticA* 2000. godine—jedinственoga umjetničko-znanstvenog laboratorija koji je ugostio brojne umjetnike na rezidencijama.

„Jedan je od univerzalnih načina tretiranja drugih živih organizama da ih se konzumira u vidu hrane. Tijekom povijesti ljudi su napravili određenu kategorizaciju živih bića na hranu i ostalo (ljubimci, živa bića za rad, ukrasna živa bića i sl.). Ta podjela nije uvijek sasvim jasna i moramo prakticirati određenu vrstu licemjerja kako bismo bili u stanju voljeti, poštovati živa bića, a ujedno ih jesti.”⁹ U instalaciji pod nazivom *Disembodied cuisine* (*Bestjelesna kuhinja*) Tissue Culture and Art bavi se pitanjem konzumacije drugih životinja uzgojem odreska *in vitro* primjenom stanica žabe. U tamnom izložbenom laboratoriju posjetitelji tako mogu promatrati kako se „uzgaja” odrezak i sami sudjelovati u procesu hraneći žabe biopolimerima. Instalacija *Bestjelesna kuhinja* kulminirala je „gozdom” u kojoj su članovi projekta Tissue Culture and Art i nekoliko hrabrih dobrovoljaca jeli „uzgojene” žablje odreske. Ovaj se rad bavi elementarnom interakcijom između ljudi i životinja, odnosno hranidbenim lancem, izazivajući snažan osjećaj nelagode—ljudi, naime, ne vole da im se „dira u hranu”. Ljudski odnos prema hrani životinjskog porijekla na današnjem stupnju industrijalizacije prehrane predstavlja jedan od najvećih etičkih paradoksa ljudskog načina života. S jedne strane industrijska produkcijska traka proizvodnje životinja izaziva zgražanje, ali istovremeno s lakoćom kupujemo odrezak kada je u trgovinama upakiran u plastiku. Braidotti smatra da se tim problemom iz perspektive postantropocentričnih premisa i egalitarnosti vrsta počinje baviti sve više disciplina.¹⁰ Jedan od diskurzivnih napada na taj problem također je rad Orona Catts i Ionat Zurr.

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 Dragona, “What is Left to Subvert?”, 188.

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 Daniels, “Subversion as a Strategy today?”

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 Silvestrin, “Dialogs on ‘Bioart’ # 1. A Conversation with Jens Hauser.”

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 Kac, “What if art could truly create biological life?”

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 Tissue Culture and Art, “Semi-Living Food: Disembodied Cuisine.”

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 Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 182.

Even though the artist considered Alba beautiful, the media proclaimed her to be a monster. By using procedures that are legitimate in science, Eduardo Kac has been producing extreme situations that indicate and metaphorically outline the position of biological as well as social Otherness.⁸

TISSUE CULTURE AND ART:
DISEMBODIED CUISINE (2003)

Two awarded artists, scientists, and curators, Oron Catts (Finland, 1967) and Ionat Zurr (UK, 1970), are the founders of the famous Tissue Culture and Art Project. It is an artistic research and developmental project that uses tissue as an artistic medium, growing semi-living organisms that question the definition of life and the position of man in relation to other living beings. The two artists are considered as pioneers in the field of bio-art. They have been active since 1996 at the School of Human Sciences in Perth, Australia and played a crucial role in establishing the *SymbioticA* project (2000)—a unique scientific-artistic laboratory hosting a number of artists-in-residence.

“Another way of treating living systems is by consuming them as food. Throughout history, many humans have practiced some kind of division among living entities which are categorized as food or others (such as pets, ornaments, work etc.). These divisions are not always clear, and we must practice some kind of hypocrisy in order to be able to love and respect living things, as well as to eat them.”⁹ In their installation called *Disembodied Cuisine*, Tissue Culture and Art addressed the question of consuming other animals by growing a steak *in vitro* using frog cells. In a dark exhibition laboratory, the visitors could observe the steak being “grown” and take part in the process by feeding the frogs with biopolymers. The installation culminated with a “feast” in which the members of Tissue Culture and Art and a few daring individuals could eat the “grown” frog steaks. This artwork was about the elementary interaction between humans and animals, or rather the food chain, and aimed at producing a powerful feeling of uneasiness—since humans resent anyone “messing with their food.” Man’s attitude towards the food of animal origin is today, at the present level of industrialization, one of the greatest ethical paradoxes of human lifestyle. On the one hand, the industrial production belt causes consternation when it comes to animals, but on the other, we tend to buy steaks in shops without a second thought when it is neatly packed in plastic. Braidotti has indicated that an increasing number of disciplines begin to address this problem from the perspective of post-anthropocentric premises and the equality of species.¹⁰ The discursive assaults on this issue include the work of Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr.

Tissue Culture and Art addresses an intriguing ethical dilemma: even though food has been grown in a way that bypasses the sacrifice of animal life, its generic otherness and the artificiality of its origin makes it subversive. Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr have understood the potential





Projekt Tissue Culture & Art (nositelj: SymbioticA, Škola za anatomiju i ljudsku biologiju, Sveučilište u Zapadnoj Australiji), instalacija *Bestjelesna kuhinja*, Nantes, Francuska, 2003. Foto: Axel Heise / The Tissue Culture & Art Project (Hosted @ SymbioticA, School of Human Sciences, University of Western Australia), *Disembodied Cuisine* Installation, Nantes, France, 2003. Photo: Axel Heise

Projekt Tissue Culture and Art postavlja zanimljivu etičku dilemu; premda je hrana nastala na način koji zaobilazi žrtvovanje života životinje, njezina generička drugost, artifičijelnost njezina podrijetla, čini je subverzivnim. Oran Catts i Ionat Zurr shvatili su potencijal tkivnog inženjeringa za prehrambenu industriju i ekonomiju hrane. U idealnoj svjetskoj ekonomiji eksperiment predstavlja budućnost u kojoj bi „mesa”, odnosno hrane bogate životinjskim proteinima moglo biti i za vegetarijance, odnosno one koji se odriču tog načina prehrane iz ideoloških razloga. Nadalje, ekološki i ekonomski problemi povezani s industrijom hrane (uzgoj žitarica za prehranu životinja i držanje u ekonomski racionaliziranim uvjetima) mogli bi se drastično smanjiti. Performans/događaj/večera rezultirao je i razmišljanjima koja su sezala do uzgoja odrezaka od ljudskog (vlastitog) mesa. No proizvodnjom hrane na ovaj način stvaraju se i nove vrste etičkih problema koji propituju dokle sežu granice živućeg i njegovih prava, otvarajući, naravno, mogućnost i za nove vrste eksploatacije.

MAJA SMREKAR:
ARTE_MIS (2017.)

Rad slovenske umjetnice Maje Smrekar (Slovenija, 1978.) počiva na premisama promišljanja obitelji kao jezgre društva i jednog od glavnih oblika života oko kojeg se konstituira društvena kontrola. Pišući o tome kako je oduvijek doživljavala psa kao brata prisjeća se iskustva iz djetinjstva: „Kad su mi u vrtiću rekli da nacrtam svoju obitelj, nacrtala sam tebe, svojeg voljenog brata. Nisam te mogla izbrisati, iako sam imala samo pet godina i prvi bolni kulturni susret s konceptom neodobravanja bliskosti s drugim vrstama počeo je raditi kada mi je teta u vrtiću strogo saopćila da pas nije i nikada ne može biti dio ljudske obitelji!”¹¹

Naslanjajući se na radove Olega Kulika i Josepha Beuysa Maja Smrekar u svojem radu nastavlja istraživati pitanje „životinjske etike”, baveći se odnosom vuka/psa i čovjeka. Međutim, njezin rad se, za razliku od radova dvojice slavni prethodnika, bavi temom ravnopravnosti vrsta. Koncept Maje Smrekar proizašao je iz takozvane tanatopolitičke dimenzije u suvremenim biopolitičkim praksama.¹² Smrekar smatra da se društvo mora preobraziti kroz promišljanje ljudskog u zajedničkom kontekstu s drugim bićima—životinjama, biljkama, ostalim organizmima i organskim sustavima, ali i neživim inteligentnim sustavima, pa i samim predmetnim svijetom kao dijelom cjelokupnog ekosustava.

Rosi Braidotti u svojoj teoriji posthumanog stanja, pozivajući se na Elizabeth Grosz i njezinu knjigu *Životinje i ljudska imaginacija*, u kojoj je iznijela teoriju jednakosti vrsta, zastupa ravnopravnost svih živih vrsta i tvrdi da antropocentričnoj perspektivi humanizma, u kojoj je čovjek mjerilo vrijednosti svih živih bića, dolazi kraj.¹³ Maja Smrekar, kao i Braidotti, smatra da je to ispravan put humanistike koja mora mutirati i postati posthumana.

Subverzivna je u radu Maje Smrekar prvenstveno sama ideja o razlikovanju ljudi od životinja, koja potkopava konzervativnu,

of tissue engineering for food industry and the economy of nutrition. In an ideal world economy, this experiment would be the future in which “meat,” that is, food rich in animal protein, would be available to the vegetarians as well, or anyone who renounced at it for ideological reasons. Moreover, the ecological and economic problems related to food industry (growing grains for animal feeding and keeping animals in economically rationalized conditions) could be drastically alleviated. The performance/event/dinner also resulted in speculations reaching as far as growing steaks made of human (one’s own) meat. However, this sort of breeding raises new types of ethical problems, as it questions the boundaries of the living and its rights, and naturally creates the possibilities for new types of exploitation.

11 Smrekar, „I hunt nature and culture hunts me”.

12 Smrekar, „ARTE_mis”.

13 Braidotti, *Posthumano*, 183.

14 Agamben, „Otvoreno: čovjek i životinja”, 52.

15 Smrekar, „ARTE_mis”.

16 Agamben, „Otvoreno: čovjek i životinja”, 73.

17 *Isto*, 95.

tradicionalnu, konvencionalnu teoriju s kojom je čak i utemeljitelj moderne taksonomije Carl von Linné (18. st.) imao problema, svrstavajući ljude u skupinu primata zajedno s majmunima, pritom objašnjavajući kako je teško s motrišta prirodnih znanosti ustanoviti specifične razlike antropomorfnih majmuna i ljudi.¹⁴ No subverzivnost rada ne krije se samo u temi, već prije svega u konceptualizaciji načina izvedbe. Dobitnica Zlatne Nice na festivalu Ars Electronica 2017. godine za rad u kategoriji hibridne umjetnosti, Smrekar je u svojem radu *ARTE_mis* dala izvaditi, naime, svoju zrelu jajnu stanicu i spojila je sa stanicom svojeg psa fuzionirajući time svoj molekularni materijal sa životinjskim.

Mit humanizma koji se temelji na ideji o ljudskoj posebnosti u odnosu na druge žive vrste nužno je diskriminatoran—isključiv i u odnosu na specifične društvene skupine jer podrazumijeva i uvijek je podrazumijevao vrijednosne razlike unutar kategorije ljudskog, vezane uz rod, rasu, klasu, kulturu, nacionalnu pripadnost i sl. Maja Smrekar, pozivajući se na Donnu Haraway koja postavlja pitanje o tome što antikolonijalna feministička reproduktivna sloboda u našem svijetu mnogih i disparatnih vrsta uopće znači, postavlja isto pitanje iz perspektive tridesetosmogođišnje žene, koja nije majka, koja živi između razvijenog zapadnog i Trećeg svijeta te smatra da njezina obitelj nije isključivo ljudska.¹⁵

Prema Giorgiu Agambenu, razlika čovjeka i životinje kako je postavlja Heidegger nije konzistentna.¹⁶ Razlog tome jest činjenica da je životinja dio čovjeka. Ljudsko se proizvodi preko suspenzije i zatočenja neljudskog, tvrdi Agamben. Kao što i rad Maje Smrekar pretpostavlja, odnosno zaziva sustav u kojem pas ili vuk mogu biti dio ljudske obitelji bez društvene osude, tako i Agamben smatra da je drugačiji poredak moguć: „Možda još ima načina kako se živa bića mogu posjesti za stol gozbe pravednih, ne preuzimajući povijesnu zadaću i ne puštajući u rad antropološki stroj. Razrješenje *mysterium coniunctionis*, iz kojega se pokazalo ljudsko, još je jednom išlo uz pomoć neviđena produbljenja praktično-političkog odvajanja.”¹⁷

MAJA SMREKAR :
ARTE_MIS (2017)

The art of Slovenian artist Maja Smrekar (Slovenia, 1978) is based on rethinking family as the core of the society and a fundamental form of life around which social control is constituted. Writing on how she always considered her dog as a brother, she recalls a childhood experience: “Once they told me to draw my family at the kindergarten, and I drew you as my beloved brother. I could not erase you, even though I was only five years old, and my first painful cultural encounter with the rejection of intimacy with other species came up when the kindergarten nurse harshly admonished me that a dog is not and could never be part of a human family!”¹¹

With references to the art of Oleg Kulik and Joseph Beuys, Maja Smrekar has continued her research on the “animal ethics” by focusing on the relationship of man and wolf/dog. However, unlike the work of her two famous predecessors, her own work deals with the issue of the equality of species. Smrekar’s concept has originated in the so-called thanato-political dimension in the contemporary bio-political practices.¹² She believes that the society should be transformed by rethinking the human element in a common context with other creatures—animals, plants, other organisms and organic systems, as well as non-living intelligent systems and the very objective world as part of the eco-system as a whole.

In her theory on the posthuman condition, Rosi Braidotti refers to Elizabeth Grosz and her book *Animals and the Human Imagination*, in which she forwarded her theory on the equivalence of species, endorsed the equality of all living beings, and claimed that the anthropocentric perspective of humanism, which considered man as the measure of all living creatures, is about to experience a downfall.¹³ Maja Smrekar agrees with Braidotti in considering this as the right course for the Humanities, which must mutate and become posthuman.

The subversive aspect of Maja Smrekar’s work is first and foremost in her notion of the human-animal distinction, which undermines the conservative, traditional, and conventional theory, where even Carl von Linné, the 18th-century founder of modern taxonomy, experienced trouble when he classified men among the primates together with apes, explaining that it was difficult to identify the specific difference between anthropoid apes and humans from the point of view of natural science.¹⁴ However, the subversiveness of Smrekar’s art is not only in her topic, but also and primarily in her conceptualization of performance. At the Ars Electronica 2017, namely, she fertilized her own mature egg cell with a cell from her dog in her work titled *ARTE-mis*, thus merging her own molecular material with that of an animal, for which she won the Golden Nice award in the category of hybrid art.

11 Smrekar, “I hunt nature and culture hunts me.”

12 Smrekar, “*ARTE_mis*.”

13 Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 195.

14 Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, 23.





Maja Smrekar, *ARTE_mis*, 2017. Foto/Photo: Mika Fras ↑





Maja Smrekar, *ARTE_mis*, 2017. Foto/Photo: Mika Fras ↑

Zaključimo; ono što čini rad Maje Smrekar toliko subverzivnim upravo je njezina posvećenost problemu hijerarhijske vrste, odnosno subordinaciji psa u odnosu na čovjeka. Kako bi postavila pitanje ponovnog promišljanja antropocentričnog stava prema drugim biološkim vrstama i ukazala na distopičnu biotehnošku budućnost miješanja vrsta, umjetnica prolazi kroz rizične susrete s vukovima, izlaže svoje tijelo hormonima lažne trudnoće i organizira laboratorijsku infrastrukturu potrebnu za izvođenje kompleksnoga biotehnoškog protokola spajanja ljudskih i životinjskih stanica. Biopolitička poruka ovog rada izaziva mnoge polemike jer remeti konzervativni poredak.

ZAKLJUČAK

Termin subverzivna umjetnost od šezdesetih godina pa do suvremenih umjetničkih izričaja mijenjao se u skladu s promjenama u umjetnosti. Prema neobuhvatnoj klasifikaciji Dietera Daniela, subverzivne metode i strategije u drugoj polovici 20. stoljeća vrlo su heterogene. Subverzivne metode počinju s pojmom *détournement* (zaokret) Guya Deborda i Gila Wolmana (1956.), nastavljaju se s Ecovim pojmom „semioleške gerile“ (1967.), nastavljajući i konceptom „dezinformacija“ (koncept *Mindfuck/fnord*, Robert Anton Wilson i Robert Shea, 1975.). Na toj liniji umjetničkih strategija valja još spomenuti aproprijaciju i dekontekstualizaciju, subverzivnu afirmaciju, prekomjernu identifikaciju, aktivizam, taktičke medije, hakiranje kulture (engl. *adbusters*) i komunikacijsku gerilu (projekt Luther Blissett¹⁸).¹⁹ I dok su se situacionisti koristili novim urbanim javnim oglasnim površinama za svoje umjetničke poruke, umjetnici hakeri u devedesetima i početkom 21. stoljeća koristili su se mogućnostima interneta da bi promaknuli fiktivne identitete i time proizveli medijsku konfuziju.

No polje iznimnog potencijala za subverziju početkom 21. stoljeća preselilo se upravo na hibridne umjetničke prakse. Jer dok je internet postao polje u kojem svi rade subverzije—od država, preko korporacija pa do aktivista—subverzivnost hibridnih umjetničkih praksi počiva upravo na tome da umjetnici preuzimaju neočekivane materijale i postupke iz zaštićenih, profesionalno zatvorenih područja djelatnosti i disciplina te ih prenose u javno polje umjetnosti i aktivizma. Na taj način subvertiraju očekivani fiksni poredak i zahtijevaju od društva ono što je vrlo neugodno, a to je da se bavi etičkim problemima pomicanja ustaljenih kategorizacija i hijerarhija. Kao i umjetnici hakeri devedesetih godina koji su lažnim identitetima subvertirali internetske identitete od pape i Vatikana pa do velikih korporacija (101.org, RTmark, Luther Blissett, Ubermorgen i drugi), tako i umjetnici hibridne umjetnosti, uzimajući život u svoje ruke i kreirajući „čudovišta“, manipuliraju ljudskim strahovima, puneći medijske stupce.

Tri odabrana umjetnička primjera govore o tome da je trenutačno na snazi novi oblik, odnosno nova faza subverzivne umjetnosti—faza koja je napustila prostor interneta i ušla u područje kreiranja novih formi života koje subvertiraju

The myth of humanism based on the idea of human superiority with regard to other living beings is necessarily discriminating and also exclusive with regard to specific social groups, since it implies and has always implied value distinctions within the human category—in terms of gender, race, class, culture, ethnicity, and so on. Referring to Donna Harraway, who asked about the meaning of anti-colonial feminist reproductive freedom in our world of numerous and disparate species, Smrekar has asked the same question from the perspective of a thirty-eight years old woman who is not a mother, who lives between the developed West and the Third World, and who believes that her family is not exclusively human.¹⁵

According to Giorgio Agamben, the difference between human and animal as posited by Heidegger is inconsistent,¹⁶ since animal is a part of man. The human is produced by suspending and imprisoning the non-human, Agamben argues. Just as Maja Smrekar's work presupposes or invokes a system in which a dog or a wolf could be part of a human family without social stigmatization, thus Agamben also believes that a different order is possible: "Perhaps there is still a way in which living beings can sit at the messianic banquet of the righteous without taking on a historical task and without setting the anthropological machine into action. Once again, the solution of the *mysterium coniunctionis* by which the human has been produced passes through an unprecedented inquiry into the practico-political mystery of separation."¹⁷

To conclude: what makes Maja Smrekar's art so subversive is her dedication to the problem of the hierarchy of species, of dog's subordination with regard to man. In order to call for a rethinking of the anthropocentric attitude towards other biological species and indicate the dystopian biotechnological future of mixed species, the artist has subjected herself to hazardous encounters with wolves, exposed her body to the hormones of false pregnancy, and organized the laboratory infrastructure needed to carry out a complex biotechnological protocol of merging animal and human cells. The biopolitical message of this artwork has triggered numerous debates as it disturbs the conservative order.

18

Ime Luther Blissett posuđeno je od poznatog igrača nogometa i njime su se koristile stotine umjetnika i aktivista u Europi i Americi od 1994. do 1999. godine. Ime se upotrebljavalo za aktivističke medijske i urbane projekte koji su zahtijevali skrivanje identiteta i kolektivni rad. Talijanski aktivisti iz Bologne koji su započeli projekt izvršili su ritualno samoubojstvo—*seppuku* identiteta Luthera Blissetta 1999.

19

Daniels, „Subversion as a Strategy today?“.

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Silvestrin, „Dialogs on 'Bioart'“ #1. A Conversation with Jens Hauser". [prev. O. Majcen Linn]

21

Kac, *Signs Of Life: Bio Art and Beyond*, 9.

postojeći poredak vrsta. S obzirom na razvoj raznih teorija unatrag posljednjih tridesetak godina, koje su drastično dovele u pitanje stabilne društvene identitete koji osiguravaju društvenu reprodukciju—od postkolonijalne, preko feminističke i *queer* teorije, do studija invaliditeta (engl. *disability studies*)—evidentno smo zakoračili u smjeru posthumanizma, koji podrazumijeva transnacionalne, transrodne i druge perspektive, otvarajući pitanja drugosti i različitosti i u odnosu ljudi prema drugima vrstama, umjetno stvorenom životu, pa i neživim inteligentnim sustavima. Kada govori o *bio-artu* i hibridnoj umjetnosti Jens Hauser upotrebljava termin *co-corporo-reality* (sutjelesnost), smatrajući da stvaramo potpuno drukčiji odnos spram potencijalnog biološkog objekta nego spram simulacije. Ono što je, prema njegovu mišljenju, važno za hibridnu umjetnost jest činjenica da stvara tenziju između onoga koji čini umjetničko djelo i onoga koji promatra to umjetničko djelo—jer obojica su potencijalno subjekti. „Naime, umjetničko je djelo živo ili se barem koristi elementima ili karakteristikama koje su vezane uz život. Generički termin *bioart* često kreira iluziju da se referira samo na estetski objekt, no važan je aspekt tih djela upravo u napetosti koju se kreira između gledatelja i viđenog.”²⁰ Eduardo Kac u svojem uvodniku za knjigu o bioumjetničkim praksama također se dotaknuo jedne važne teme: „Od vizualizacije dvostrukog heliksa do oplodnje *in vitro* (IVF), od onkomiša do glodavca koji je rođen s dvije mame i bez tate, upravo je instrumentalizacija života i njegovih procesa omogućena atomizmom klasične znanosti, one koja je lansirala od ljudi proizveden vrlo novi svijet hibrida, klonova, mutanata, sintetičkih bića, transgenike. U svjetlu tih događaja, suvremena umjetnost ne može automatski opraviti ta nova bića iz roga izobilja i svrstati ih u tradicionalnu kategoriju groteske, jer ono što je nekad bilo iznimno (iskrivljen i neusklađiv imaginarij) danas je ili norma ili u najmanju ruku integrirano u *mainstream* umjetničku praksu... Grotesknost kao epistemološka kategorija može biti operativna samo u opoziciji s podrazumijevajućom tipologijom.”²¹

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Smrekar, “ARTE_mis.”

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Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, 59.

17
Ibid., 92.

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Luther Blissett was the name of a famous soccer player, borrowed and used by hundreds of artists and activists in Europe and the US from 1994 to 1999. The name was used for various media and urban projects that required secret identities and collective action. The Bologna-based Italian activists who launched the project performed a ritual *seppuku* suicide of Luther Blissett’s identity in 1999.

19
Daniels, “Subversion as a Strategy today?”

CONCLUSION

The term “subversive art” has changed since the 1960s as a result of changes in artistic expression. According to an overview classification of Dieter Daniels, the subversive methods and strategies of the second half of the 20th century were very heterogeneous. Starting from the *détournement* of Guy Debord and Gil Wolman (1956), they continued with Eco’s notion of “semiological guerrilla” (1967) and the concept of “misinformation” (*Mindfuck / Fnord*, Robert Anton Wilson and Robert Shea, 1975). Along this line of artistic strategies, one should also mention appropriation and de-contextualization, subversive affirmation, over-identification, activism, tactical media, culture hacking (*adbusters*), and communicational guerrilla (the Luther Blissett¹⁸ project).¹⁹ And whereas the Situationists used new public advertising surfaces in the cities to communicate their artistic messages, hacker-artists in the 1990s and the early 21st century have been using the possibilities offered by the Internet to promote fictitious identities and thus cause media confusion.

However, the field of exceptional potentiality for subversion in the early 21st century has shifted mainly to the hybrid art practices. Whereas the Internet was an area where anyone could engage in subversion—be it regimes, corporations, or activists—the subversiveness of hybrid art practices is based on the fact that the artists adopt unexpected materials and procedures from the protected, professionally hermetic fields and disciplines, and transfer them to the public field of art and activism. In this way, they subvert the expected, fixed order and demand something very unpleasant from the society, which is to deal with the ethical issues of shifting the established categorizations and hierarchies. Similar to the hacker-artists in the 1990s, who used false identities to subvert Internet-based identities, e.g. that of the Pope and the Vatican, or of various large corporations (101.org, RTmark, Luther Blissett, Ubermorgen, and others), the protagonists of hybrid art play with human fears and storm media headlines by taking life into their own hands and creating “monsters.”

The three selected examples show that we are currently witnessing a new form or phase in subversive art—one that has abandoned the space of the Internet and entered the field of creating new forms of life, which subvert the established order of species. Regarding the development of various theories in the past three decades, which have drastically challenged the stable social identities that ensure social reproduction—including the postcolonial, feminist, and queer theories, as well as disability studies—we have evidently taken a step in the direction of post-humanism, which implies transnational, transgender, and other new perspectives, raising the questions of otherness and diversity in human attitude towards other species, artificially created life, and even non-living intelligent systems. Speaking of bio-art and hybrid art, Jens Hauser has used the term “co-corporo-reality,” arguing that we are

Tri različita *bioart* rada analizirana u ovom tekstu aktivistički pristupaju svojim temama. Na mjesto umjetničkog djela umjetnici postavljaju materijalizirane forme života u Agambenovu smislu. Prema Agambenu, suvremena zajednica konstituira se ponajprije kroz biopolitiku—preko isključujućeg odnosno uključujućeg odnosa života i suverene moći.²² Problemi kojima se bave svi umjetnički primjeri tiču se upravo područja biopolitičke kontrole života. Kac uzima laboratorijskog *readymade* zeca transformiranog genom meduze, subvertirajući instituciju i ustaljene mehanizme funkcioniranja znanosti kao potpuno neutralnog teritorija u kojemu je, u ime civilizacijskog razvoja, sve dopušteno. Članovi projekta Tissue Culture and Art subvertiraju postojeći poredak, nudeći rješenje za generiranje hrane bez žrtvovanja života, ali nas također izlažu i novoj dilemi potencijalnog uključivanja u poredak novih formi života. Smrekar pak zamišlja i prikazuje mogućnost reprodukcije s drugom vrstom, subvertirajući tradicionalan koncept obitelji. Sva tri *bioart* rada, manipulirajući mogućnošću „dizajniranja” novih bića, utoliko dovode u pitanje postojeće granice društvene prihvatljivosti živućeg.

building a completely different relationship with the potential biological object than it would be the case with a mere simulation. What he considers crucial in hybrid art is that it creates a tension between that which constitutes a work of art and the one who observes it—since both are potential subjects. “[T]he artwork... is alive itself, or at least shows elements or characteristics that are being associated with the living. The generic term ‘Bioart’ often creates the illusion of referring only to an aesthetic object to be concerned, whereas the important aspect of these artworks lies much rather in the tension created between the viewer and the viewed.”²⁰ In his foreword to a volume on bio-art practices, Eduardo Kac has tackled another important issue: “From the visualization of the double helix to IVF, from the oncomouse to the rodent born from two mothers and no father, it is precisely the instrumentalization of life and its processes enabled by the atomism of classic science that has spawned the brave new world of human-produced hybrids, clones, mutants, synthetics, and transgenics. In light of these developments, contemporary art cannot automatically relegate this new biota cornucopia to the traditional category of the ‘grotesque’, since what once was exceptional (distorted and incongruous imagery) can now be said to either be the norm or at least be entirely integrated into mainstream art practice... The ‘grotesque’ as an epistemological category can only be operative in opposition to an assumed typicality.”²¹

The three bio-artworks analysed in this text take an activist approach to their topics. Traditional art has here been replaced by materialized forms of life in the Agambenian sense of the term. According to Agamben, the modern community is primarily constituted through biopolitics—the inclusive or rather exclusive relationship between life and the sovereign power.²² The issues that our examples focus upon belong precisely to this field of biopolitical control over life. For Kac, it is the laboratory ready-made hare transformed by inserting a jellyfish gene, in which he has subverted the institution and the established mechanisms by which science functions as a completely neutral territory in which everything is allowed in the name of civilizational progress. Tissue Culture and Art have subverted the established procedure by offering a solution to food production without sacrificing lives, yet they have also imposed a new dilemma of the products’ potential inclusion in the order of new life forms. Smrekar has envisioned and presented the possibility of reproduction with a different species, subverting the traditional concept of the family. By manipulating the “design” of their new creatures, the three bio-artworks have thus challenged the existing boundaries of social acceptability concerning the living beings.

22

Agamben, *Homo sacer: suverena moć i goli život*, 14.

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