



Breathing the Air (1962), silver gelatin photograph, edition of 5 with 1 AP, 23.6h x 16.5w in

Tomislav Gotovac: Public and Intimate

May 22 – June 21, 2014

Curated by Zarko Vijatovic

Organized in conjunction with Galerie Frank Elbaz, Paris; Tomislav Gotovac Institute, Zagreb

Alexander Gray Associates presents its inaugural exhibition of Tomislav Gotovac (b.1937, Sombor, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, now Serbia – d. 2010, Zagreb, Croatia), featuring works in a variety of media that span five decades; emblematic of his transgression between public and intimate spaces. Gotovac was a multi-disciplinary artist, considered the precursor of performance art in Croatia and former Yugoslavia; a pivotal figure in the development of the artistic avant-garde in Eastern Europe during the 1960s and 1970s.

Like his international contemporaries bridging performance and visual art forms, Gotovac approached his body as a readymade in the Duchampian tradition. In the early 1960s he began staging photographs of himself blurring the line between public and personal spheres which continued throughout his career. The work *Zagreb I love you!* (1981), performed in Zagreb's city center, expressed Gotovac's personal affection for his hometown, while publicly serving as an outcry for cultural recognition. Also on view are a series of early collages, including *Tamara* (1964), which further the artist's interest in urban life and cinematic editing principles. In these small-scale works, Gotovac accumulated traces of his personal life using objects he culled from shops and restaurants he frequented, including tram and theater tickets; bills; sardine cans; and paper wrappers.

Through his work Gotovac publicly shared his thoughts and life stories. One of the most representative works is *Striptease* (1976), a series of 20 photographs taken by the artist of his then-pregnant wife Zora as she undressed for the camera. In *Rovinj* (1975), a series of photographs titled after the Adriatic seaside town where Gotovac spent the summers, the artist appears nude as he poses for his wife's camera.

Tomislav Gotovac's artistic vision was strongly influenced by his assiduous lifelong passion for film. Cinema was his temple of knowledge, as well as a mirror in which he saw himself as both actor and viewer, as he aptly proclaimed: "when I open my eyes in the morning, I see a movie." In the 1960s he directed experimental films that made use of continuous repetition of images to reveal personal stories. Through his cinematic work Gotovac paid tribute to film directors such as Carl Theodor Dreyer, Rudolph Maté, and Jean-Luc Godard. Influenced by structuralist film theory, Gotovac created *Straight Line* (1964); this homage to film director George Stevens transformed a short sequence from Stevens' *Palace on The Sun* (1951) into the theme for his entire film. The eponymous film *Tomislav Gotovac* (1996), a 59 second-long sequence, narrates Gotovac's entire life through a progression of images including personal photographs and documents.

Tomislav Gotovac's work has been exhibited extensively throughout Europe and the United States. In 2003, he was the subject of a retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia. His work has been featured in institutions such as the New Museum, New York (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, Slovenia (2014); Kunsthalle Wien Karlsplatz, Vienna, Austria (2013); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain (2013); Ludvig Múzeum, Budapest, Hungary (2012); Leopold Museum, Vienna, Austria (2012); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (2012); Musée d'art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine, France (2012); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands (2011); and Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej Warszawy, Warsaw, Poland (2011). In 2011, he represented Croatia in the 54th Venice Biennale. His work is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, Serbia; Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, Slovenia; Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia; and the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, Croatia.

About the curator

Zarko Vijatovic (b.1952), artist, curator and photographer based in Paris, holds a MA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Croatia. In 1988 he co-founded the group ViGo, along with Tomislav Gotovac, to generate art and ideas. Vijatovic documented Gotovac's performance work for over 20 years. From 1981 through 1991, Vijatovic was director of Salon Dom JNA Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia. Among his many research projects, he has curated exhibitions on Gorgona Group, Tomislav Gotovac, Julije Knifer, Mangelos, and Josip Vaništa, among others. He recently curated a solo exhibition of the work by Julije Knifer at Mitchell-Iness & Nash, New York.

Alexander Gray Associates is a contemporary art gallery in New York. The Gallery presents exhibitions focused on artists who emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Influential in political, social and cultural spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Alexander Gray Associates is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America. Gallery hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 11:00 AM – 6:00 PM.