

Galerija Rab
Donja ulica 3, Rab

Damir Šegota

Mekoća postojanja i/ili metaverzum – metafizika onostranog The Softness of Being and/or the Metaverse – The Metaphysics of the Beyond

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Mekoća postojanja i, ili metaverzum-metafizika onostranog

Svijet, a i svijest, postojanje, jest često ili gotovo uvijek dualitet prirodnog i umjetnog. Okruženje u miljeu u kojem obitavamo i živimo je kaotično, bez ili s krajnje malo etičkih i moralnih normi, s „izvnutim“ vrijednostima.

Vrijeme kada ova civilizacija dodiruje dno postanka, a time i opstanka.

Tehnologija uvjetuje način razmišljanja. Ljudskoj vrsti nudi se umjetna inteligencija pod krinkom prosperiteta, bržeg i lakšeg savladavanja svakodnevnih i inih zadataka (Zašto bi bilo brže i lakše? Naprotiv, treba biti teže i sporije kako bi bilo dublje i pamtljivo.).

Nude se i daleki svjetovi metaverzuma (proširene stvarnosti), kao da nije dovoljno ovo što postoji. Praćenje, „pranje mozgova“, glorificiranje svijeta zabave, manipulacija putem tehnologije i medija...je ljudska svakodnevica.

Umjetno izazvane migracije, migracije izazvane ratovima, stigmatiziranje klimatskih promjena, zelena agenda, mnogi algoritmi koji ljudskoj vrsti ukazuju i pokazuju krive upute agresivno nudeći polovično točna rješenja kako doći bliže svetom gralu. Sve navedeno je svakodnevica življenja.

Moć materijalnog nad duhovnim je dosegla ili će ubrzo dosegnuti svoju kulminaciju.

To nije moj svijet.

Moj svijet je u mekoći postojanja; on je prirodan, duhovan, on ima svoj put, drugačiji put. On je van normi, anarhičan i svoj.

I zato...mekoća postojanja unatoč metaverzumu – metafizici onostranog.

Damir Šegota

The Softness of Being and/or the Metaverse – the Metaphysics of the Beyond

The world, as well as consciousness and existence, is often – or almost always – a duality of the natural and the artificial. The environment in the milieu in which we dwell and live is chaotic, lacking or possessing only the bare minimum of ethical and moral norms, with “twisted” values.

This is a time in which this civilization is touching the very bottom of its origin, as well as of its survival.

Technology shapes the way we think. Humanity is offered artificial intelligence under the guise of prosperity, faster and easier accomplishment of daily and other tasks (why should it be faster and easier, on the contrary, it ought to be harder and slower in order to be deeper and memorable).

We are also offered the distant worlds of the metaverse (augmented reality), as if what already exists is not enough. Surveillance, “brainwashing“, the glorification of the entertainment world, manipulation through technology and the media...all of this is part of everyday life.

Artificially induced migrations, migrations caused by wars, the stigmatization of climate change, the green agenda, countless algorithms that point humanity toward false directions, aggressively offering partially correct solutions for approaching the holy grail – this, too, is daily reality.

The power of the material over the spiritual has reached, or will soon reach, its culmination.

This is not my world.

My world is in the softness of being; it is natural, spiritual, it has its own path – a different path. It exists outside norms, anarchic and its own.

And therefore... the softness of being despite the metaverse – the metaphysics of the beyond.

Damir Šegota

U sjeni posredovane stvarnosti

Riječki umjetnik Damir Šegota u Galeriji Rab predstavlja recentan rad pod naslovom *Mekoća postojanja i/ili metaverzum – metafizika onostranog*, u kojem promišlja o fenomenu virtualne proširene stvarnosti spram aktualne realnosti kao njezinog dosljednog surogata. Riječ je o ambijentalno specifičnoj instalaciji koncipiranoj kao prostorna kompozicija s elementima performansa koji dijelom izvodi u galerijskom, a dijelom u javnom prostoru. Započinje ga spaljivanjem pojma *metaverzum* i prosipanjem pepela iz urne okolnim ulicama i u more, s popratnim simbolički-obrednim čitanjem kritički intoniranog teksta Mirjane Lenči Pernar. Performans završava vraćanjem urne u interijer galerije, na postolje posred televizora koji više ne emitiraju sliku, a pažnja je usmjerena na drugi asemblirani dio postava – zelenu travu, klupu i lovor u tegli. Mizanscena parka u protuteži je s ugašenim crnim ekranima, kontemplativno-meditativna metafora prirodne sredine i zbiljskih interakcija naspram onih posredovanih monitorom. Sadržajni i estetski kontrapunkt dviju cjelina, dva čina narativa, umjetnikov je glas protesta pretpostavljenom prosperitetu suvremenog društva u smjeru računalno generiranog okruženja koje, među ostalim, dokida neposrednost međuljudskih odnosa jer se komunikacijski kanali odvijaju u imaginarnim topografijama putem novostvorenih tehnoloških identiteta – avatara. U umjetničkoj se izjavi referira i na niz drugih, kako ih detektira, negativnih stanja današnjice, poput globalizacije, ekološke krize, uspona iskrivljenih vrijednosti, nedostatka etičkih normi ili empatije – nepobitnih znakova novih ideoloških temelja društvenog poretka. Beskompromisno se odriče takvih egzistencijalnih polazišta, zagovarajući autonomiju pojedinca i slobodu odabira u skladu s duhovnim i moralnim vrijednostima te prirodnim načelima, deklarirajući dignitet života prema vlastitom humanističkom habitusu i okrenutost čovjeku u tehnološkom dobu. Takva je uostalom i priroda Šegotinog dugogodišnjeg stvaralaštva u kojem formalno apartno kreira djela u sinergiji vizualne i izvedbene prakse, sugestivno prenoseći nadahnuće, introspektivni sadržaj, kontekst i značenje. To ga ne čini eskapistom, već svrstava u red s drugim umjetnicima – anticipatorima i propagatorima ljudskih sloboda.

Sabrina Žigo

Bilješka o autoru

Damir Šegota vizualni je umjetnik rođen u Rijeci 1960. godine. Diplomirao je kiparstvo u klasi profesora Josipa Diminića na Sveučilištu u Rijeci te je studirao na Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia – kiparski smjer. Bavi se ambijentalnim umjetničkim instalacijama, performansima, hepeningom, ready-madeom, kiparstvom, grafičkim dizajnom i scenografijom.

Osnivač je i suosnivač nekolicine formalnih i neformalnih umjetničkih grupa te autor samostalnih i sudionik grupnih izložbi. Autor je i niza projekata.

Dugogodišnji je ravnatelj Škole za primijenjenu umjetnost u Rijeci (umirovljen 2025. godine), predsjednik Hrvatskog društva likovnih umjetnika Rijeka te član Upravnog vijeća Muzeja moderne i suvremene umjetnosti u Rijeci.

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In the Shadow of Mediated Reality

Rijeka-based artist Damir Šegota is presenting a recent work at the Rab Gallery titled *The Softness of Being and/or the Metaverse — the Metaphysics of the Beyond*, in which he reflects on the phenomenon of virtual augmented reality in relation to actual reality as its consistent surrogate. It is a site-specific ambient installation conceived as a spatial composition with elements of performance, carried out partly inside the gallery and partly in public space. It begins with the burning of the term *metaverse* and the scattering of its ashes from an urn across the surrounding streets and into the sea, accompanied by a symbolically ritual reading of a critically inflected text by Mirjana Lenči Pernar. The performance ends with the urn being returning to the gallery interior, placed on a pedestal set in the middle of the televisions that no longer display an image, while attention is redirected to the second assembled part of the installation — green grass, a bench, and a potted laurel. The park mise-en-scène stands in contrast to the turned-off black screens, a contemplative and meditative metaphor of the natural environment and real interactions as opposed to those mediated by a monitor. The conceptual and aesthetic counterpoint of these two units, the two acts of the narrative, is the artist’s voice of protest against the presumed prosperity of contemporary society moving toward computer-generated environment which, among other things, eliminate the immediacy of interpersonal relations because communication channels unfold within imaginary topographies through newly created technological identities — avatars. In the artistic statement, he also refers to a number of other negative conditions of the present day, as he identifies them, such as globalization, the ecological crisis, the rise of distorted values, the lack of ethical norms or empathy — undeniable signs of the new ideological foundations of the social order.

He uncompromisingly rejects such existential starting points, advocating for the autonomy of the individual and freedom of choice in accordance with spiritual and moral values and natural principles, affirming the dignity of life according to one’s own humanistic outlook and orientation toward the human being in a technological age. Such, after all, is the nature of Šegota’s long-standing artistic practice, in which he creates formally distinctive works in synergy between visual and performance practices, conveying inspiration, introspective content, context, and meaning with evocative clarity. This does not make him an escapist; rather, it places him among those artists who anticipate and promote human freedoms.

Sabrina Žigo

About the Author

Damir Šegota is a visual artist born in Rijeka in 1960. He earned a degree in sculpture under Professor Josip Diminić at the University of Rijeka and continued his studies at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia. His work encompasses ambient art installations, performances, happenings, ready-mades, sculpture, graphic design, and stage design.

He is the founder and co-founder of several formal and informal art groups, as well as the author of numerous solo and group exhibitions and various art projects.

A long-time principal of the School of Applied Arts in Rijeka (retired in 2025), he is also the president of the Croatian Association of Artists Rijeka and a member of the Governing Council of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka.

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Kada bi bili baš doslovno doslovni onda bi riječju metaverzum rekli da nadilazimo svemir. Vau! Koliko je to samo moći u tih 10 slova. Ima vlastitu presliku u digitalnom obliku svatko tko klikne.

Ali ta riječ buni i sebe samu pa kako onda neće i svakog tko virtualnu stvarnost klikne. Zavodljiva muza je taj avatar jer virtualno znači i snažno, znači i odvažno. Stvarno je ustvari stvarno bez obzira je li virtualno ili stvarno. Uvijek je stvarno na neki način. Ta riječ koja tako često leti zrakom uspije ispremetati sve naše već ionako samima sobom isprepletene unutrašnje stvarnosti. Svi naši slojevi duše, i nespješni i oni koji to nisu, svemiri su za sebe. Svi mi imamo puno verzija sebe samih. Sada smo dobili i svoju digitalnu verziju. I igramo se s time i radimo što hoćemo. Doslovno. No limit. Hm... Pa zar je grijeh željeti biti nešto ili netko tko će se moći nadići? Zar je grijeh htjeti biti dalje od sebe, željeti biti i nakon sebe? Ipak izgleda da smo prekardašili. Taj nas je *starogrčki* „meta“ pretvorio u mete sebe samih. Kreirali smo što treba i što ne treba. Nadmašili sebe u kreaciji. I postigli savršenstvo destruktivnog. Pa nas je autor jednostavno kremirao! A što je drugo mogao? Svi gledamo sebe same u toj prozirnoj urni. Tu smo svi obični kremirani ostaci. Možda smo i dobro prošli. Kao da nas na neki način pošteduje što nas ne stavlja u lijes koji gnjili, zaudara, zaražava... Ipak je pepeo neki fini prah. Čak i polenom ga zovu. Ima svjetla i odsjaja u toj prašini koja ima moć da zdravo čisti i da ratarevoj zemlji služi. Tim „sjeti se čovječe“ autor ostavlja otvorena vrata nadi. Kažu znalci da ljudsko oko razlikuje pet stotina različitih sivih svjetlucanja. U pepelu ima i od najcrnjeg još više crnjeg ne-sjaja. No, ipak nije baš svaki tako dramatičan. Vidimo i živo srebro. I sivu perlu. I Pepeljugin pepeo. Je li se to prozirno staklo urne pred našim očima istapa u kalup njezine staklene cipelice? Je li to sanjam ili je stvarno tako lijepo? Već znamo da znamo biti virtualni i kad smo stvarni. Pa kad nas autor razasipa ♪ *Ulicama moga grada* ♪ i svemirom, čekat ćemo u srebro odjevenog Princa. Da se zaljubi u nas. Da ponovno postanemo. I vjerovati da ćemo znati osjetiti da nas ne ljubi i miluje u srebro odjeven Andro-Id. Koji razlikuje više od pet stotina...

Mirjana Lenči Pernar

If they were to be completely, utterly literal, then by the word *metaverse* we would be saying that we are surpassing the universe. Wow! So much power is contained in those nine letters. Everyone who clicks acquires their own digital copy.

But the word confuses even itself, so how could it not confuse anyone who clicks into virtual reality. That avatar is a seductive muse, because virtual also means strong, it means bold. What is real is, in truth, real – whether virtual or actual. It’s always real in some way. This word, that so often flies through the air manages to stir up all our already self-entangled inner realities. All the layers of our soul – both the unconscious ones and the ones that are not – are universes of their own. We all have many versions of ourselves. And now we have gained our digital version as well. And we play with it, and do whatever we want. Literally. No limit. Hmm... so is it a sin to want to be something or someone capable of surpassing itself? Is it a sin to want to be beyond oneself, to wish to exist even after oneself? It seems we’ve gone too far. That ancient Greek “meta” has turned us into meta-targets of our own selves. We created what needed to be created and what never should have been. We have outdone ourselves in creation. And achieved perfection in the destructive. So, the author simply cremated us! What else could he have done? We all look at ourselves in that transparent urn. There we are – nothing but ordinary cremains. Perhaps we even got off lightly. As if, in a way, it spares us by not placing us in a coffin that rots, reeks, spreads decay... Ash, after all, is a kind of fine powder. Some even call it pollen. There is light and shimmer in that dust, that has the power to cleanse and to nourish the farmer’s soil. With that “remember, human”, the artist leaves the door to hope open. Experts say the human eye can distinguish five hundred different shades of shimmering gray. In ashes, there are tones darker than the darkest non-shimmer. And yet, not each one is so dramatic. We can also see mercury. And gray pearl. And Cinderella’s ash. Is the transparent glass of the urn melting before our eyes into the mold of her glass slipper? Am I dreaming, or is it truly that beautiful? We already know we can be virtual even when we are real. So, when the author scatters us through ♪ *the streets of your town* ♪ and across the universe, we will wait for the Prince dressed in silver. To fall in love with us. To make us become again. And believe that we will be able to feel when it is not silver-clad Andro-Id kissing and caressing us. The one who can distinguish more than five hundred...

Mirjana Lenči Pernar