

## Vlado Martek

### *Read Mallarmé*

Curated by Branka Stipancic

Exhibition from September 10<sup>th</sup> to October 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 Tuesday-Saturday 11am-7pm

Opening on Saturday, September 10th

Vlado Martek believes a contemporary artist must take a stand with respect to the resources at his disposal. Given that he arrived in the sphere of visual art from poetry, he invested efforts to purify poetry of everything that was superfluous, and subjected it to his creative will. For this reason Martek's "pre-poetry", as he terms one sphere of his work, is re-examination and "cleansing" of poetry to such an extent that he reduces it to examining the material quality of the elements he uses to achieve the physical feature of a poem: letters, poetic forms (often sonnets), surface, pencil, etc. Martek also raises the level of awareness of a state of mind preparing to write poetry: "Every act of picking up a pencil is an act of integrity" or "I am not a poet because if I want to I could be", are just two in a series of slogans entitled *Pre-Valuation of Poetry*. Rebelling against the linear in a text, he created poetry in situations and actions that he performed on the streets of various cities. Poetic agitations "read Mayakovsky's poems", "Read Rimbaud" and the others, started at 1978 in Zagreb he has been working until today. "Read Mallarmé in Paris, is homage to the poet who in "Un coup de dés" introduced innovation into the visuality of poem.

Martek dismissed the poem to give its place up to the "elementary processes in poetry" – the synergy of the concrete material elements used to write poetry and the idea of tautology at that time characteristic for Conceptual art. He used these processes to render "violence onto poetry", but also to put it into action, breaking up its immanent static form and opening up new possibilities. Martek is also a postmodernist – in his works and actions he often refers to works from various areas of culture. His references go in all directions, but mostly towards the ideas of writers and poets. Martek, who has spent his entire working age employed in a library, is a connoisseur and enjoyer of literature, philosophy and art. He is an obsessive reader and his art is largely "derived" from the world of the written word – which has always been a haven for this romantic rebel. His work alludes to specific ideas of Surrealism, a certain concept of the world from which special methods are derived, an irreconcilable attitude to life, rebellion, the striving for a new state of mind and different world. He does not call on the power of dreams, but chance carries special significance. His encounters with various elements result in unusual combinations, and when looking at his poem-objects and drawings, books and actions, the rational and irrational need to be mutually taken into consideration. As his imagination is poetic, Martek is unpredictable in the visual arts. Poetic images and metaphors are in the background of his works and the constant exchange between the utterly concrete and the metaphoric makes his work that much more intriguing.

Branka Stipancic

Born in 1951. Lives and works in Zagreb, Croatia.

**Solo exhibitions (selection) :** 2011 : *Vlado Martek – Jezik u slobodi*, Studio Tommaseo, Trieste ; 2010 : *Vlado Martek – Poezija u akciji /Poetry in Action*, Galerija P – 74, Ljubljana ; *Vlado Martek - Retrospektivna izložba*, Moderna galerija, Gliptoteka HAZU, Zagreb ; 2004 : *Vlado Martek - Mala izložba*, Mala galerija / Moderna galerija, Ljubljana ; 1988 : *Vlado Martek - Arbeiten auf Papier*, Galerie Ingrid Dacić, Tübingen.

**Group exhibitions (selection) :** 2011 : *In Future everyone will be anonymous for 15 minutes* - Georg Kargl Fine arts, Wien ; *The International* – MACBA, Barcelona ; 2010 : *You are kindly invited to attend* – Aanant & Zoo / Kunstsaale, Berlin ; 2009 : *Gender Check - Rollenbilder in der Kunst Osteuropas* - Museum Moderner KunstStiftung Ludwig - MUMOK , Wien ; 2006 : *Kontakt... aus der Sammlung*, der Erste Bank-Gruppe, MUMOK, Wien ; 2006 : *In den Schluchten des Balkan*, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel ; 2002 : *In Search of Balkania*, Neue Galerie Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum, Graz ; 2000 : *Chinese Whispers*, Apex Art Gallery, New York; 1993 : *The Horse who Sings*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.