

70 let
Grafičnega
bienala
Ljubljana

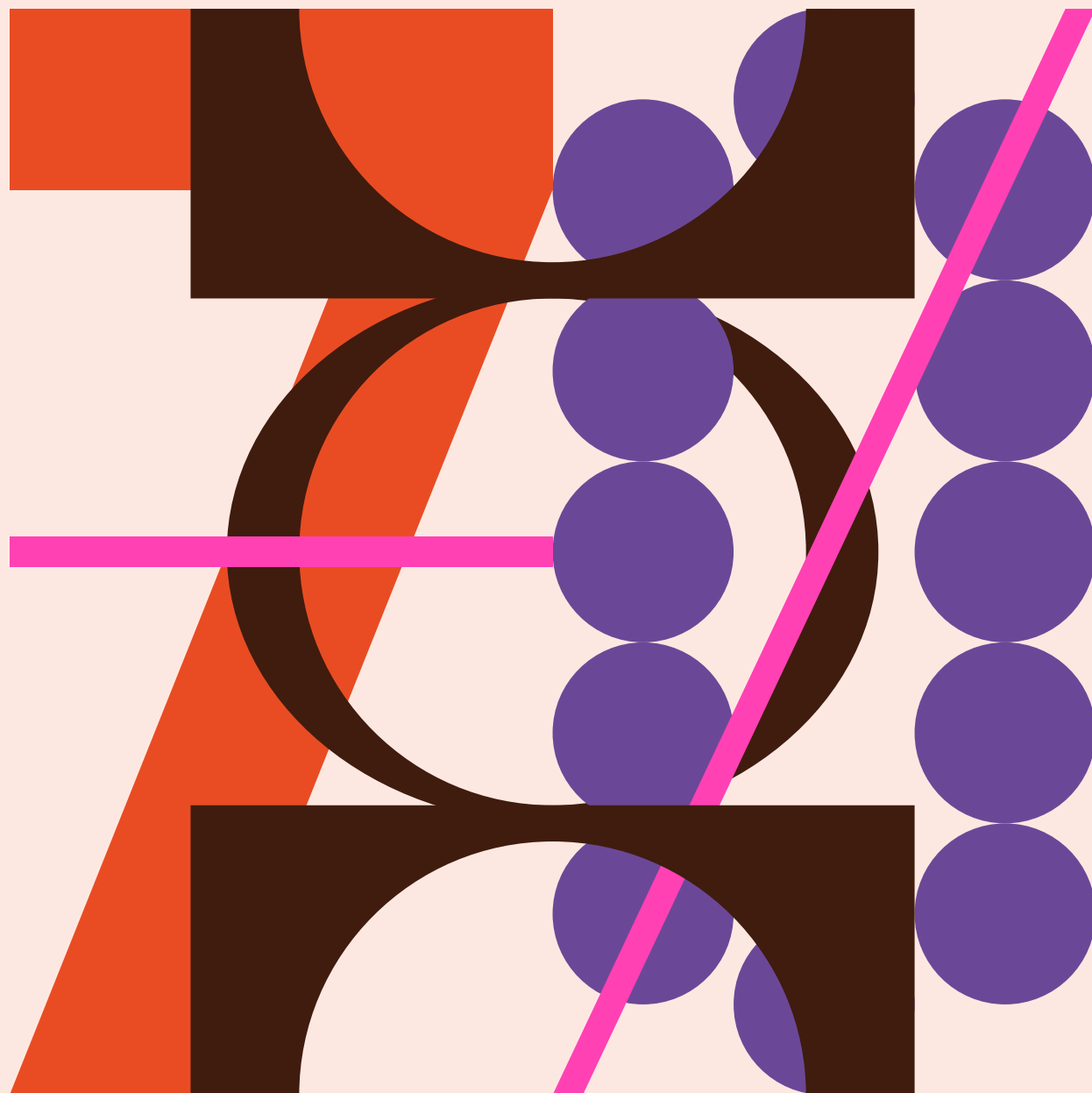
70 Years
of the Ljubljana
Biennale of
Graphic Arts

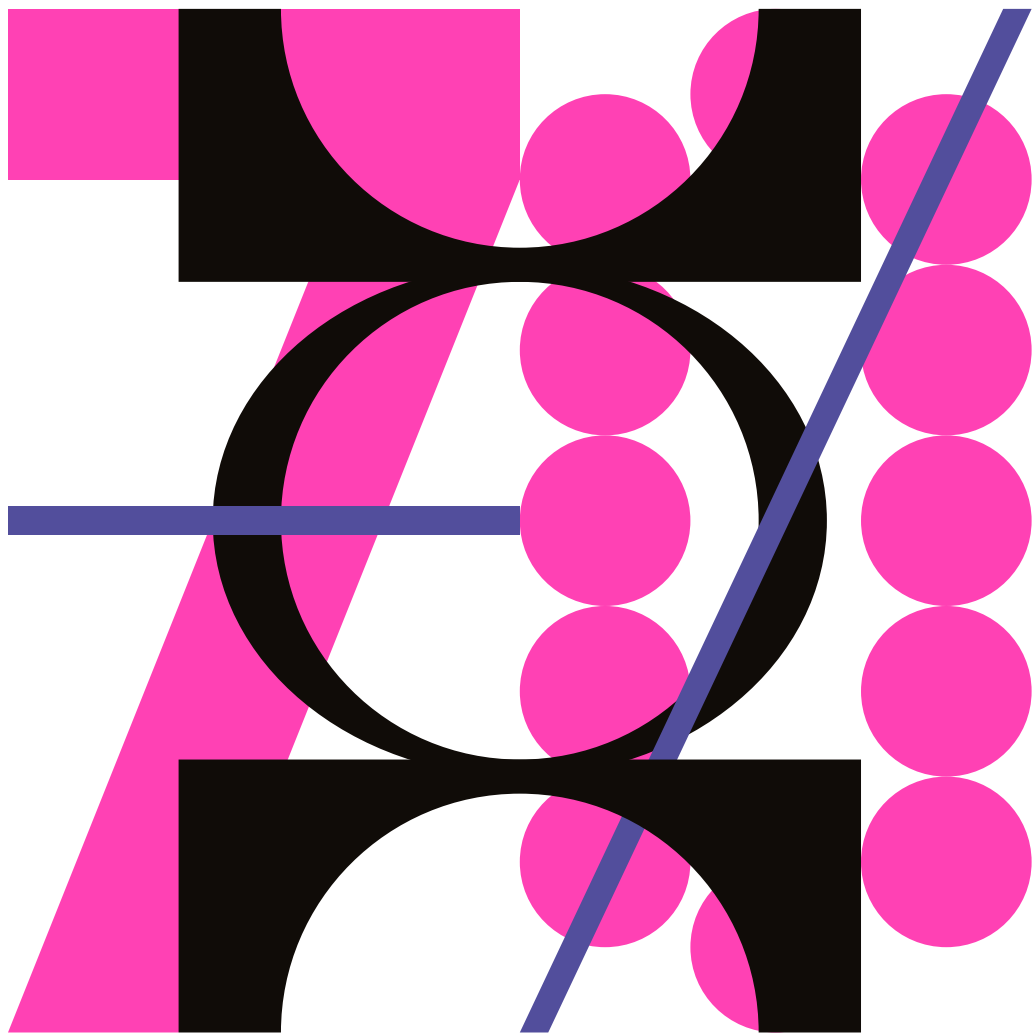
Uredila / Edited by

Nevenka Šivavec
Gregor Dražil

Zbornik

A Reader





70 let Grafičnega bienala Ljubljana
Zbornik

70 Years of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts
A Reader



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Pričujoči zbornik, posvečen 70. obletnici Grafičnega bienala Ljubljana, je osrednja publikacija, s katero v Mednarodnem grafičnem likovnem centru obeležujemo bienalsko jubilejno leto. Z njim želimo dopolniti obstoječo literaturo o bienalu in spodbuditi nove smeri razmisleka o tej dolgoživi prireditvi – tako o njeni preteklosti, sodobnosti kot prihodnosti.

Čeprav obsežna publikacija kronološko sega v najrazličnejša obdobja bienala, vse od začetkov leta 1955 pa do današnjih dni, ni preglednega značaja. Njen namen ni interpretacija posamičnih bienalskih razstav in obdobj ter podatkov, dogodkov, osebnosti in procesov, povezanih z njimi, temveč je poudarek na zelo specifičnih in raznolikih pristopih piscev različnih strokovnih profilov in interesov k zgodovini bienala. Avtorji bienale postavljajo v širše teoretske kontekste, izpostavljajo prelomne dogodke in pomembne osebnosti ter opazujejo premene v razvoju razstave od leta 1955 pa vse do zadnjih edicij.

Namen uredništva zbornika je bil k publikaciji pritegniti avtorje iz mednarodnega prostora in s tem pridobiti zunanji, svež in neobremenjen pogled na preteklost bienala. Večina piscev se tako v preteklosti z njim ni konkretnije ukvarjala oziroma ni pisala o njem. Da bi tujim piscem ponudili priložnost, da se z bienalom podrobneje seznani, smo nekatere že leta 2024 povabili na raziskovalno rezidenco v Ljubljano. Med enomesečnim bivanjem v rezidenčnem centru, MGLC Švicariji, so se lahko intenzivno ukvarjali vsak s svojo temo, pridobivali literaturo, raziskovali bienalski arhiv, ki ga hrani MGLC, in intervjuvali osebe, povezane z bienalom, in ne nazadnje pripravljali besedila.

Ideja o publikaciji je dolgo zorela in je na neki način vrhunec pisanja o zgodovini bienala, s čimer se v MGLC v obliki razstav in publikacij ukvarjamo že vrsto let, intenzivneje pa ravno v zadnjem času. Bienale je bil prvič

monografsko obravnavan v magistrskem delu Brede Škrjanec, ki je v založništvu MGLC leta 1993 izšlo tudi v knjižni obliki. Pomemben prispevek je tudi zbornik *Mnemozina: čas ljubljanskega grafičnega bienala* iz leta 2010, razstavo in istoimensko pregledno besedilo o zgodovini bienala z naslovom *Grafični bienale, z vami vse od leta 1955* pa je leta 2013, v okviru 30. grafičnega bienala, pripravila Petja Grafenauer. Leta 2019 so bili pripravljeni dokumentarna razstava, simpozij in zbornik z naslovom *Japonska, Jugoslavija, grafični bienale: dokumenti sodelovanja*, leto kasneje pa razstava in katalog *Premene v kanonu: značaj in pomen nagrad mednarodne žirije na ljubljanskem grafičnem bienalu*. V istem letu smo v MGLC ob 100. obletnici rojstva Zorana Kržišnika izdali knjižico z naslovom *»Menedžer da sem? Sem.«*, posvečeno zgodnjim mednarodnim razstavnim in drugim projektom soustanovitelja in gonilne sile ljubljanskega grafičnega bienala v njegovem prvem obdobju.

Najobsežnejši del publikacije sestavlja osem esejskih besedil. Pet je posvečenih prvemu obdobju bienala, torej času od leta 1955 do konca devetdesetih let. Takrat je bil bienale razstava (bolj ali manj tradicionalne) grafike, dela so bila v galerijskem prostoru razporejena po nacionalnem ključu. Bienale je opredeljeval utečen sistem, zapisan v bienalskem pravilniku, po katerem so bila dela na razstavo uvrščena bodisi prek javnega natečaja bodisi z vabilom umetnikom. Prireditelj je vodil Zoran Kržišnik, sekretar bienala in direktor obeh institucij, pod okrilje katerih je v teh desetletjih sodil bienale: Moderne galerije (do leta 1986) in Mednarodnega grafičnega likovnega centra (od leta 1986).

Besedila v prvem sklopu publikacije se zgodnjega obdobja bienala lotevajo iz širšega postkolonialnega vidika in obravnavajo specifične in tudi zagate ene od pomembnih identitet bienala, njegove mednarodnosti oziroma neuvrščenosti (Anthony Gardner, Ana Sladojevič), ali pa se ukvarjajo s konkretnimi

umetniki, procesi in dogodki. Stefana Djokic tako obravnava ozadje odmevne podelitve nagrade Robertu Rauschenbergu na bienalu leta 1963, Jennifer Noonan se ukvarja z zanimivo in premalo raziskano zgodovino izmenjav razstav grafike med ZDA in Jugoslavijo v obdobju hladne vojne, Andre Pitol pa bienalsko zgodovino v istem obdobju raziskuje in prepleta z življenjem in umetniško kariero brazilskega umetnika Edivala Ramose.

Prve večje konceptualne spremembe, ki so preoblikovale bienalski format in izpostavile vlogo ključne figure v sodobni umetnosti – kuratorja, so se zgodile s 24. grafičnim bienalom leta 2001. Na tej razstavi je bilo v ospredje postavljeno razširjeno pojmovanje grafike, razmnožena podoba pa je bila umeščena v širši družbeni in politični kontekst ter izpostavljena tudi kot komunikacijsko sredstvo. O tej transformaciji bienala, aktualnem dogajanju na slovenski likovni sceni, iz katere je med drugim izšla sprememba v konceptu bienala, ter povezavah med 24. edicijo bienala in 3. edicijo Manifeste, ki je leto poprej, leta 2000, gostovala v Ljubljani, v zborniku piše Annosh Urbanke.

Osrednjo razstavo omenjenega 24. bienala, *Svet grafike*, je kurirala Breda Škrjanec, sicer dolgoletna kustosinja v MGLC. V pogovoru z Gregorjem Dražilom med drugim razmišlja o svoji vlogi pri tej prelomni ediciji. Božidar Zrinski, prav tako kustos v MGLC, pa se v svojem prispevku ozira na bienalske edicije v prvem desetletju novega tisočletja, med letoma 2001 in 2009, v katere je bil tudi sam intenzivno vpet.

Sledi esej Kaje Kraner, ki razvoj bienala v novem tisočletju raziskuje skozi tri vstopne točke oziroma bienalske razstave: 24. oziroma 25. bienale, še en prelomni, 29. bienale z naslovom *Dogodek* iz leta 2011 in 34. bienale *Iskra Delta* iz leta 2021. Publikacijo zaokrožuje zapis pogovora med Nevenko Šivavec, direktorico MGLC in umetniško vodjo Grafičnega bienala Ljubljana od leta 2011, ter Majo Vardjan, aktualno direktorico Muzeja za

arhitekturo in oblikovanje (MAO), ki organizira Bienale oblikovanja (BIO). Njun pogovor, ki se vrti okoli transformacije obeh bienalov v zgodovini, nakazuje tudi njuno usmeritev v prihodnosti.

Poleg besedil sta ključna elementa publikacije slikovno gradivo, ki kaže dogajanje na in ob bienalskih razstavah, ter poglavje *Bienale v infografikah*, v katerem so prikazana zanimiva dognanja, ki jih ponuja statistika iz bogate bienalske zgodovine.

Zahvaliti bi se želela majhni, a izjemno zavzeti ekipi, brez katere realizacija tega obsežnega projekta ne bi bila možna. V prvi vrsti gre zahvala asistentki uredništva Blažki Kirm za predano in natančno delo na vseh stopnjah nastajanja te publikacije, kustosinji dokumentalistki v MGLC Karli Železnik za veliko pomoč pri pridobivanju slikovnega gradiva in avtorskih pravic, prevajalcem Urbanu Belini, ki je iz angleščine v slovenščino in iz slovenščine v angleščino prevedel večji del besedil v tem zborniku, Katji Zakrajšek in Arven Šakti Kralj, lektoricama Ani Čavić in Moni Malovrh za preglede angleških oziroma slovenskih besedil ter oblikovalcem Aljažu Veselu in Anji Delbello (AA) za analizo podatkov in oblikovanje poglavja *Bienale v infografikah* in Grupi Ee za celostno oblikovanje publikacije. Zahvaljujeva se tudi vsem umetnikom in drugim lastnikom avtorskih pravic za dovoljenje za objavo fotografij.

Nevenka Šivavec
in Gregor Dražil,
urednika



This Reader, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts, is the principal publication with which the International Centre of Graphic Arts (MGLC) marks the Biennale's jubilee year. Its purpose is to complement the existing body of literature on the Biennale and to encourage new ways of reflecting on this enduring event – its past, its present, and its future.

Although the extensive publication reaches chronologically across the many different periods of the Ljubljana Biennale, from its beginnings in 1955 to the present day, it is not conceived as a survey. Its intention is not to interpret individual Biennale exhibitions and periods, nor to catalogue the data, events, personalities, and processes associated with them. Rather, the emphasis is on the highly specific and varied approaches of writers from diverse professional backgrounds and interests to engaging with the history of the Biennale. The authors place the Biennale within broader theoretical contexts, draw attention to pivotal events and significant figures, and trace the transformations in the exhibition's development from 1955 to its most recent editions.

The editorial team's objective was to involve authors from the international sphere in order to gain an external, fresh, and unencumbered perspective on the Ljubljana Biennale's past. In most cases, the contributors had not previously engaged with or written about the Biennale. To provide these foreign authors with the opportunity to acquaint themselves more fully with it, we invited several of them in 2024 to undertake a research residency in Ljubljana. During their month-long stay at the MGLC Švicarija, they were able to devote themselves intensively to their chosen subjects, consult literature, explore the Biennale archive held by the MGLC, conduct interviews with individuals connected to the Biennale, and, finally, prepare their texts.

The idea for this publication had been maturing for a long time and in many ways represents the culmination of writing on the history of the Ljubljana Biennale, a subject the MGLC has engaged with for many years through exhibitions and

publications, and more intensively in recent times. The Biennale was first treated in monographic form in the master's thesis of Breda Škrjanec, which was also published as a book by the MGLC in 1993. Another important contribution is the volume *Mnemosyne: The Time of Ljubljana's Biennial of Graphic Arts* from 2010. In 2013, within the framework of the 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts, Petja Grafenauer curated the exhibition and authored the accompanying survey text on the history of the Biennale, entitled *The Biennial of Graphic Arts – Serving You Since 1955*. In 2019, a documentary exhibition, symposium, and proceedings were prepared under the title *Japan, Yugoslavia and the Biennial of Graphic Arts: Documents of Collaboration*. A year later followed the exhibition and catalogue *Shifts in the Canon: The Nature and Significance of the Prizes Awarded by the International Juries of the Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts*. That same year, on the centenary of the birth of Zoran Kržišnik, the MGLC published the booklet "*Am I a manager? Yes, I am.*", dedicated to the early international exhibitions and other projects of the co-founder and driving force of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts in its initial period.

The largest section of the publication consists of eight essays. Five of these are devoted to the Biennale's early period, spanning from 1955 to the late 1990s. At that time, the Biennale was an exhibition of (more or less traditional) graphic art, with works displayed in the gallery space according to a national framework. The Biennale was defined by a well-established system, set out in its regulations, under which works were admitted either through an open call or by invitation. The event was led by Zoran Kržišnik, Secretary of the Biennale and Director of the two institutions under whose auspices the biennial fell during those decades: the Moderna galerija (until 1986) and the International Centre of Graphic Arts (from 1986 onwards).

The texts in the first part of the publication address this early period of the Ljubljana Biennale from a broader postcolonial perspective, examining both the specificities and the challenges of one of its defining identities – its internationalism and its position of non-alignment (Anthony Gardner,

Ana Sladojević). Other contributions focus on individual artists, processes, and events. Stefana Djokic considers the background of the much-discussed award to Robert Rauschenberg at the 1963 Biennale; Jennifer Noonan examines the fascinating and under-researched history of the exchanges of graphic art exhibitions between the United States and Yugoslavia during the Cold War; while André Pitol explores the Biennale's history in the same period in parallel with the life and artistic career of the Brazilian artist Edival Ramosa.

The first major conceptual changes, which reshaped the Ljubljana Biennale format and highlighted the role of a key figure in contemporary art – the curator – took place with the 24th International Biennial of Graphic Arts in 2001. This exhibition foregrounded an expanded notion of graphic art, situating the reproduced image within a broader social and political context and emphasising its function as a medium of communication. Annosh Urbanke writes in this Reader about this transformation of the Biennale, the current developments on the Slovenian art scene from which the shift in the Biennale's concept partly emerged, and the connections between the 24th edition of the Ljubljana Biennale and the 3rd edition of Manifesta, which had been hosted in Ljubljana the previous year, in 2000.

The central exhibition of the 24th Ljubljana Biennale, *Print World*, was curated by Breda Škrjanec, a long-standing curator at the MGLC. In conversation with Gregor Dražil, she reflects, among other things, on her role in this landmark edition. Božidar Zrinski, also a curator at the MGLC, contributes an essay looking back at the Biennale editions of the first decade of the new millennium, between 2001 and 2009, in which he himself was deeply involved.

This is followed by an essay by Kaja Kraner, who examines the Ljubljana Biennale's development in the new millennium through three key entry points – the 24th and 25th Biennales, the 29th edition, *The Event*, in 2011, another watershed moment – and the 34th edition, *Iskra Delta*, in 2021. The

publication concludes with the transcript of a conversation between Nevenka Šivavec, Director of the MGLC and Artistic Director of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Arts since 2011, and Maja Vardjan, current Director of the Museum of Architecture and Design (MAO), the organiser of the Biennial of Design (BIO). Their discussion, centred on the historical transformations of both biennials, also points towards their future orientations.

Alongside the essays, two further elements form an essential part of the publication: the visual material, which documents events at and around the Biennale exhibitions, and the chapter *Biennale in Infographics*, which presents intriguing insights derived from statistical analyses of the Biennale's rich history.

We would like to express our gratitude to the small yet exceptionally dedicated team without whom the realisation of this extensive project would not have been possible. First and foremost, our thanks go to the Assistant Editor, Blažka Kirm, for her devoted and meticulous work at every stage of the publication's preparation; to the MGLC's Curator of Documentation, Karla Železnik, for her invaluable assistance in securing visual material and copyright permissions; to the translators – Urban Belina, who translated the majority of the texts in this volume both from English into Slovene and from Slovene into English, as well as Katja Zakrajšek and Arven Šakti Kralj; to the proof-readers, Ana Čavić and Moni Malovrh, for reviewing the English and Slovene texts respectively; and to the designers, Aljaž Vesel and Anja Delbello (AA), for the data analysis and design of the *Biennale in Infographics* chapter, and to Grupa Ee for the overall design of the publication. We also extend our sincere thanks to all the artists and other copyright holders for granting permission to reproduce the images.

Nevenka Šivavec
and Gregor Dražil,
Editors