

galerie frank elbaz.

Tomo Savić-Gecan

Untitled
1994
(Kapelica Gallery,
Ljubljana, 1994)

Entrances to the gallery are walled up and painted white.

Untitled
1996 / 2020
(Spaces Gallery,
Cleveland;
MSU Zagreb)

Part of the exhibition space is bordered by red tape.

Untitled
2011 / 2020
(Witte de With Center
for Contemporary Art,
Rotterdam);
MSU Zagreb, 2020

Changes in temperature in the city of Zagreb generate
the opening and closing of one of the exhibition spaces.

Untitled
2011 / 2020
(Witte de With Center
for Contemporary Art,
Rotterdam;
MSU Zagreb)

Each passenger in one of Zagreb's taxis affects
changes in humidity in the exhibition space.

Untitled
2011 / 2020
(Witte de With Center
for Contemporary
Art-Institute Berlage,
Rotterdam; MSU
Zagreb-Zagreb
Architects Association)

The passing of people through the Zagreb Architects Association causes a change of temperature in the exhibition space.

Untitled
2011 / 2020
(Witte de With Center
for Contemporary Art,
Rotterdam;
MSU Zagreb)

Telephoning the curator of the Retrospective 2020
exhibition changes the intensity of light in the space.

Untitled
2000 / 2020
(HDLU Zagreb;
MSU Zagreb)

The curators communicate with the audience
about the non-existent work of Tomo Savić-Gecan.

Untitled
2007 / 2017 / 2020
(Apexart, New York;
Kunsthalle Basel;
MSU Zagreb)

The value of the artwork is the artwork; the
value is in a constant state of devaluation.

Untitled
2002 / 2020
(MSU Zagreb,
Katarinin trg 2;
Avenija Dubrovnik 17)

Part of the exhibition space is closed by glass walls.

Untitled
1997
(Institute of
Contemporary Art,
Dunaújváros, Hungary)

A fictional space is drawn on the ground plan of the gallery.

Untitled
2001

Visitors passing through the BAK Gallery in Utrecht during the exhibition Common Ground caused the escalator in a shopping mall in Zagreb to stop.

Metal guardrails were exhibited in the gallery space that limited the movement of visitors. (St. Toma Gallery, Rovinj, 1996.)

The same guardrails were set up along the roadside near the city walls. They stood in that location for several years. (Project Island, Dubrovnik, 1996)

Within the gallery, a smaller space was built behind the walls that housed a replica of the guardrails. (Radnička galerija, Zagreb, 2014)

Untitled
1996 / 2014 / 2020

The guardrails are placed in an exhibition room whose entrance is walled up. (MSU Zagreb, 2020)

The gallery's windowpane was transformed into drinking glasses (Établissement d'en face, Brussels, 2005).

One of the drinking glasses was turned to glass powder, mixed with transparent wall paint and applied to a wall in an external location. ((ON)begane Grond, Antwerp, 2015).

The same process is repeated, by mixing the powder of one glass with wall paint and applying it to the walls of the exhibition space. (MMSU, Mali salon, Rijeka, 2017;MSU Zagreb 2020)

Untitled
2005 / 2015 / 2020

Untitled
2018

Some matter from an Amsterdam gallery was
transformed into antimatter in CERN in Geneva.

Untitled (Croatian Pavillon)
2022
Venice

Every day for the duration of the 59th edition of the Venice Biennale of Art, the lead story from a different, randomly selected global news source provides the data that feeds an artificial intelligence algorithm, which in turn prescribes the time, location, duration, movements, and thoughts of a group of five performers in the city of Venice to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan's *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)*, 2022.

Untitled
2023
Art Basel Unlimited

Every day for the duration of Art Basel 2023, a different, randomly selected art news article is analyzed in relation to the latest global art market report to provide the data that feeds an artificial intelligence algorithm; this, in turn, prescribes the times, locations and durations of the changes of intensity in selected lights inside Art Basel to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan's *Untitled*, 2023.

Untitled
2023
galerie frank elbaz

During the exhibition of Tomo Savić-Gecan at galerie frank elbaz, the gallery team will every day change the position of newly built walls, according to instructions from an artificial intelligence algorithm that is fed by data from press releases and the position of art objects of previous gallery exhibitions to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan Untitled, 2023.

Tomo Savić-Gecan

Born in Zagreb in 1967

Lives and works in Amsterdam, Netherlands

Education

- 1996 - 1997 Arnhem, the Netherlands: Ateliers Arnhem (MA)
- 1988 - 1993 Venice, Italy, Academy of Fine Arts & Milan, Italy, Academy of Fine Arts Brera

Solo Exhibitions

- 2023 *Untitled, 2022-2023*, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Rijeka
Untitled, 2023, galerie frank elbaz, Paris
Untitled, 2022-2023, Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb, Croatia
Untitled, 2023 Art Basel Unlimited, Switzerland
- 2022 *59th Venice Biennale of Art*; representation of Croatia, Venice, Italy
Towards Emptiness (with Julije Knifer & Goran Petercol), Galženica Gallery, Velika Gorica, Croatia
- 2020 *Retrospective 2020*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2018 Greta Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2017 Mali salon Gallery of Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, Croatia
- 2016 Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands & Zuidplein (public square), Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 2014 Radnička Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2011 VN Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2010 Jeu de Paume, Paris, France & Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway
- 2006 Testsite, Austin, United States
Croatian Architects' Association, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2005 Établissement d'en face, Brussels, Belgium

- Power of Emptiness (with Julije Knifer)*, PM Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2004 Isabella Bortolozzi Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2003 Ghetto Club, Split, Croatia
- 2001 Karas Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 2000 De Loge, Haarlem, the Netherlands
- 1999 *Blind Date (with Sanja Iveković & Kristina Leko)*, Škuc Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 1998 Gradska Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
PM Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
The Challenge of Space (with Goran Petercol & Vesna Pokas), PM Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 1997 Croxhapox Gallery, Ghent, Belgium
- 1996 St. Toma Gallery, Rovinj, Croatia
Spaces Gallery (with Yuri Solomko), Cleveland, United States
- 1995 M6 Gallery (with Dubravka Rakoci & Goran Petercol), Riga, Latvia
Studio of Gallery of Contemporary Art & sports hall, Zagreb, Croatia
- 1994 SC Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
Kapelica Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Kovačka 3 Gallery, Dubrovnik, Croatia

Group Exhibitions

- 2023 *Immerse!*, Tallin Art Hall, Tallinn, Estonia
- 2022 *Slavonian Biennial / New Paradigms of Happiness*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Osijek, Croatia
- 2020 *Sculpture Garden Biennale*, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2018 *Home Sequence*, private apartments, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 2017 *Ungestalt*, Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland
- 2015 *(ON)begane Grond*, Provincial Government Building under construction, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2012 Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia
8th Taipei Biennial: Death and Life of Fiction, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, Taiwan
- 2011 Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia

- Melanchotopia*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 2010 *Art Always Has Its Consequences*, former building of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia
Voda / Water, Štaglinec, Croatia
- 2009 *Take the Money and Run*, De Appel, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Mini theater, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- 2008 *Last Chance to See the Show*, Point Ephemere, Paris, France
Volume, vol. II, Badische Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany
Telephone, UK
- 2007 *Let Everything Be Temporary or When is the Exhibition?*, Apexart, New York, United States
- 2006 *El albergue holandés*, La Station, Nice, France
On Mobility, Trafó House of Contemporary Arts, Budapest, Hungary
On Mobility, De Appel, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Grey Zones, Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig, Germany
- 2005 *Low tech*, Arti & Amicitiae, Amsterdam, Netherlands
51st Venice Biennale of Art: Croatian pavillion, Venice, Italy
Les braves gars de Lianchanbo sont là, art3, Valence, France
Volume, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
The One, New General Catalogue Gallery, New York, United States
- 2004 *Visa for Thirteen*, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York, United States
Dollhouse, private apartment in Orchard Street, New York, United States
Mediterraneans, Museum of Contemporary Art of Rome (MACRO), Rome, Italy
Flipside, Artist Space, New York, United States
- 2003 *IF*, Bitola, Macedonia
Verboden op het werk te komen, De Brakke Grond & W139, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Re:Action, Home Gallery, Prague, Czech Republic
Portal II, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany
- 2002 *Project: Broadcasting, dedicated to Nikola Tesla*, Technical Museum, Zagreb, Croatia

- Fantasiëën over niets / Fantasies About Nothing*, De Loge & Nieuwe Vide, Haarlem, Netherlands
- New Art from Amsterdam*, Raid Projects, Los Angeles, United States
- Becomings. Contemporary Art in South-Eastern Europe*, Kosovo Art Museum, Pristina, Kosovo; City Art Museum, Ljubljana, Slovenia; House of Croatian Artists, Zagreb, Croatia; Chapelle de la Sorbonne, Paris, France
- Visite III, Arti & Amicitiae*, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- Here Tomorrow*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, Croatia
- Non – Members only*, Arti & Amicitiae, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 2001 *Freedom and Violence*, Krolikarnia, Warsaw, Poland
- Multiple meervoud*, De Parel, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Adriatico: Le due sponde*, Michetti Foundation, Francavilla al Mare, Italy
- Becomings. Contemporary Art in South-Eastern Europe*, National Gallery of Art, Tirana, Albania
- What, How and for Whom. On the occasion of the 153rd anniversary of the Communist Manifesto*, Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, Austria
- Common Ground*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht, the Netherlands & shopping mall, Zagreb, Croatia
- Institute of Contemporary Art, Dunaújváros, Hungary
- Conversations*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, Yugoslavia
- Interstanding 4: end repeat*, Rotermann Salt Storage, Tallinn, Estonia
- Borders 2001: Suspense*, Vladimir Bečić Gallery, Slavonski Brod, Croatia
- 20 Years of the PM Gallery*, House of Croatian Artists, Zagreb, Croatia
- Museum of Modern Art Dubrovnik, Dubrovnik, Croatia
- 2000 *Tandem Project*, Columbia Arts Center Gallery, Washington, United States
- What, How and for Whom*, House of Croatian Artists, Zagreb, Croatia

- Manifesta 3, European Biennial of Contemporary Art – Borderline Syndrome, Energies of Defence*, Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Chinese Whispers*, Apexart, New York, United States
- 1999 *BUG project*, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
- 1998 Hooghuis, Arnhem, the Netherlands
33rd Zagreb Salon, PM Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 1997 *VIII Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean*, Turin, Italy
Triple X, Westergasfabriek, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Who by fire? #1, Institute of Contemporary Art, Dunaújváros, Hungary
- 1996 *T.EST*, Flower Market, Zagreb, Croatia
Istrian Parliament, Poreč, Croatia
Absence, House of Croatian Artists, Zagreb, Croatia
Project Island, public space, Dubrovnik, Croatia
- 1995 *Checkpoint*, Modern Gallery, Zagreb, Croatia
- 1994 *Earth Day – Final Conflict*, old Printing house Vjesnik, Zagreb, Croatia
- 1992 *Students exhibition*, Accademia di Belle Arti, Milan, Italy
- 1991 *Students exhibition*, Accademia di Belle Arti, Milan, Italy
75 Mostra Collettiva, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice, Italy
- 1990 *Anima e Sottosuolo*, Corte Arco Vallarosso, Padua, Italy
- 1989 *74 Mostra Collettiva*, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, Venice, Italy

Residencies

- 2021 *Art Explora artist residency*, Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, France
- 2017 *Accelerate Croatia residency*, Arts@CERN, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2011 artist residency, 1646 experimental art space, The Hague, the Netherlands
- 2003 *PS1 artist residency*, New York, United States
- 1996 *ArtsLink Fellowship*, United States

Prize

- 1998 *AICA Award*, 33rd Zagreb Salon, Zagreb, Croatia

Press

TOMO SAVIC-GEKAN, UNTITLED, 2023 GALERIE FRANK ELBAZ, PARIS

By Toby Upson · 28 October 2023

During the exhibition of Tomo Savić-Gecan at galerie frank elbaz, the gallery team will every day change the position of newly built walls, according to instructions from an artificial intelligence algorithm that is fed by data from press releases and the position of art objects of previous gallery exhibitions to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan, *Untitled, 2023*.

Tomo Savić-Gecan, screen display of Untitled, 2023

It felt harrow. The weight of white-washed walls rising. Here, that is there, space was made thick, or disturbingly claustrophobic, through an empty, automated, ambience. Here, that is there, I stood within bareness, in anticipation, awaiting some kind of revelation. Not much arrived, but still, that nothingness resounds.

Tomo Savić-Gecan's solo exhibition *Untitled, 2023* (galerie frank elbaz, September 2nd –October 7th, 2023) was bare. A void, with minimal content—a vertical screen, three white walls and tools for a daily performance—the artwork shown inscribes itself within the series of AI-based, semi-performative artworks Savić-Gecan has made following his participation in the 59th Venice Biennale of Art—where he represented Croatia with a piece titled *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion), 2022*. As with that disparate performance-cum-pavilion, this new work follows a simple premise—a proposition or description, an artist agreement, instruction or score to be enacted. As the work's foundation (dare I say it's only 'tangible' existence), in the gallery, this premise is visible—typed in black sans-serif and displayed beaming out from the bare space of an otherwise white screen—it reads,

During the exhibition of Tomo Savić-Gecan at galerie frank elbaz, the gallery team will every day change the position of newly built walls, according to instructions from an artificial intelligence algorithm that is fed by data from press releases and the position of art objects of previous gallery exhibitions to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan Untitled, 2023.

And so I stood, at 3:55pm, between these monumental walls, unmoored and in suspense, surrounded by AI outcomes, just plain-looking, waiting.

For context, Savić-Gecan's artworks sit restively between the ephemerality of high-conceptualism, where ideas are the formal currency, and postmodernist approaches to artistic materials, where porous layers of meaning unfix objective knowings. In *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion), 2022*, for example, Savić-Gecan drew upon research into how individuals physically manoeuvre and interact within exhibition spaces to compile a data set of minimal choreographic steps. Over the course of the Venice Biennale, these steps were performed daily by a group of non-descript participants across the Biennale's constituting pavilions. Rather than a predictable or repetitive event—a wholly consumable spectacle—the exact locations, times and even the precise choreography of this itinerant pavilion-performance were determined by an artificial intelligence algorithm,

fed each morning by the 'lead story from a different, randomly selected global news source', to quote the written premise for that work in the series. In blurring the boundaries between what constitutes the architecture of a national pavilion and the ways bodies physically come to know of the world, be this through the lens of the museum or media, *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)* positioned itself as an anomalous gesture, both conceptual and material. Personally, in wobbling this compartmental line, *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)* demonstrates how idea and form are inseparable, and most importantly, how both innately constitute an ongoing existence—here, the temporal being of an artwork but this thinking could easily be applied, in a metaphorical way, to the interdependencies that sit central to human existence.

Every day for the duration of the 59th edition of the Venice Biennale of Art, the lead story from a different, randomly selected global news source provides the data that feeds an artificial intelligence algorithm, which in turn prescribes the time, location, duration, movements, and thoughts of a group of five performers in the city of Venice to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan's *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)*, 2022.



Tomo Savić-Gecan, screen display of Untitled (Croatian Pavilion), 2022.

As with *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)*, and indeed with all of Savić-Gecan's artworks, *Untitled, 2023* resists description; any summary, record or attempt at categorical elucidation is ultimately a futile act, one that directly contradicts the form and restive thinking prompted throughout Savić-Gecan's practice. As a writer, this knowledge troubles a normative way of doing things... so rather than stating 'what' *Untitled, 2023* is, prising this spatial activation as an object set in the world, here I want to talk about 'how' *Untitled, 2023* is; that is, how the artwork came into being, how I experienced this on October 7th 2023, and how the nothingness of my encounter led to some affect thinking.

Performance location: galerie frank elbaz, 66 rue de Turenne, 75003 Paris - France

October 7, 2023

Performances today:

4:04 pm Randomly selected previous galerie frank elbaz exhibition: Kaz Oshiro Diffuse Reflection April 4 - May 16, 2015

Screenshot from galerie frank elbaz's website.

As indicated in the premise above, the data directing the performance of *Untitled, 2023* is rooted in the galerie frank elbaz's exhibition archive. Here, press releases and curatorial plans from over 70 exhibitions held at the gallery since 2012 were fed into an artificial intelligence algorithm, becoming the raw data set that, once analysed by a ChatGPT-based system, provided the gallery's staff with the parameters for each day's performative activation—where the newly built white walls needed to be moved to within the empty gallery space and at what time. Unlike previous works in his AI-based series, in this piece, Savić-Gecan only uses one data source to return these daily instructions (in Savić-Gecan's pavilion, his data set was cross-read daily by a randomly selected media source). This focus on the context of galerie frank elbaz—the gallery site and its exhibition history—gives *Untitled, 2023* a sense of site-specificity. Indeed, to me, this specific situatedness roots *Untitled, 2023* in an art historical lineage of artists twisting the common sense sanctity of the modernist white cube—the hidden spatial neutrality which artworks are meant to shine out from, untampered by external life—into a porous medium that speaks subtly beyond itself. As a slight aside, it is interesting to consider the wider city of Paris in this art historic context.

As early as the 1950s artists such as Yves Klein were co-opting the formal space of the white cube to create radical exhibitions which challenged the modernist trajectory of art, its forms and functions; indeed exhibitions which, departing from the radical philosophies of figures such as John Cage, challenged modernist ideologies of life segmented and compartmentalised.

There is something unsettling about entering a seemingly barren space—perhaps one reason why Klein titled his empty exhibition of 1958 at Galerie Iris Clert LeVide [The Void], with its connotations of invalidity and vexatiousness. Personally, I find being exposed to white nothingness arouses a similar effect to being enclosed in a pitch-black room: a heightening of attention, a growing sense of claustrophobia, unease. Entering into galerie frank elbaz, this feeling was palpable. Indeed, surrounded by Savic-Gecan's new walls, these sly senses pulled me into the emptiness displayed. And, as I slipped into this disquiet, the ambient details abounding in this sanctified space—from the endless blare of the gallery's strip lighting to the footsteps and hushed whispers of other viewers—became ever louder presence reverberating in my mind.

As the moment of performance arrived, 4:04pm, two nonchalant gallery staff walked softly into the main exhibition space. Meticulously, they set about their work; "trois deux un", armed with cranks and widgets, with cuboid arms of industrial-looking steel, with wheels, a laser pointer, and a handy jar of Prosain's Risotto d'Automne filled with screws and the sound of tingles. It was an elegant manoeuvre, an opera writ in architecture; with shuffles and whispers, with taps that became thuds, and slight paper turning; "parfait". Labouring with a careful cadence, click by click, here the pair demonstrated a level of physical and mental attention needed to install a monumental artwork. As they returned to their daily gallery duties, my attention was brought back to the ambience of my surroundings. What has changed here, really? The gallery's lights are still beaming down, filling this shadowless space with an unflinching glow, other viewers are still whispering, their footsteps dust sounding. Yet I feel newly present, as my disquiet returns.

Post performance, this active anti-climax lingers in my mind, like a souvenir; as something wholly subjective and indicative of a time, place or moment had. Indeed as something through which I can make out a personal understanding of Savic-Gecan's restive choreography. Here, I could speak about how Untitled, 2023 is a grand critical gesture, one reflective of our changing socio-political infrastructure—about the automation of human life that comes with AI programmes, about increasingly hierarchical chains of labour associated with this digital outsourcing, and about how, in our technologically driven age, our cognitive lives are becoming evermore segregated from the empathy of the physical world. Rather than using Savic-Gecan's to read a more general surround, here I want to end with a quick thought on his affective blurring of formalities.

Untitled, 2023 fundamentally disturbs my presence; it is a strange feeling to be provoked by such nothingness. Made thick and restive and almost auratic, to me this sensation lies in the way Savic-Gecan blurs ephemeral thinking and material methods; conjoining AI automation and the physicality of the gallery's constituting parts—its architecture, its archive, and the active bodies that oversee its artworld operations—to demonstrate how an existence is always more than a singular, compartmentalised thing. In other words, how an existence is never just conceptual nor just a material thing but something composed of numeral relational layers, apparent and otherwise; something wholly interdependent. In activating the gallery's emptiness, Savic-Gecan gives its interdependent layers a new sense of primacy, allowing me to feel all that is overlooked in the very nature of its being. And, in this way, Untitled, 2023 not only inverts a modernist logic of segmentation but co-opts it, making the nothingness which constitutes a being newly resonant.

Author



Toby Upson

Toby Upson is an art writer currently based in London.

Art Basel 2023, imperméable aux secousses du monde

La foire, qui a lieu du 15 au 18 juin, accueille 284 galeries venues d'Afrique, d'Amérique du Nord et latine, d'Asie et d'Europe.

Par Roxana Azimi et Harry Bellet

Publié le 15 juin 2023 à 18h00 · Lecture 5 min.

Article réservé aux abonnés



« Jam Proximus Ardet, the Last Video », de l'artiste franco-algérien Adel Abdessemed, exposé à la foire Art Basel à Bâle, en Suisse, le 13 juin 2023. FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP

Bâle, c'est une ville en Suisse. Art Basel, c'est une marque. Celle d'une foire d'art, plus que cinquantenaire, qui est devenue rapidement la meilleure du monde – et l'est restée – avant d'essaimer, d'abord à Miami, puis à Hongkong et enfin à Paris. Une marque avec une particularité : les produits – les œuvres d'art – qu'on y trouve s'adaptent aux goûts locaux : plus bling-bling en Floride, plus français (ne serait-ce que par la surreprésentation de galeries hexagonales par rapport aux autres pays) à Paris.

Bâle, la cité mère, accueille plus large : 284 galeries venues d'Afrique, d'Amérique du Nord et latine, d'Asie et d'Europe... Plus international, il n'y a pas, ce qui est vrai du public aussi. C'est ainsi devenu un passage obligé, non seulement pour les collectionneurs, mais aussi pour les professionnels qui, en quelques jours, vont rencontrer autant le gratin que les figures montantes du métier.

Lire aussi : [La foire Art Basel Miami Beach a redessiné le paysage culturel de la ville en vingt ans](#)



On y trouve un large éventail des pratiques artistiques, du tableau de maître moderne à la création la plus récente, des œuvres monumentales – soixante-seize pièces cette année, regroupées dans la section Art Unlimited – à d'autres plus intimistes, comme Lucas Arruda, dont les tout petits tableaux de paysage, proposés par la galerie Mendes Wood à 150 000 euros pièce, ont été rapidement vendus, pas seulement parce qu'ils sont beaux, mais parce que certains ont été exposés au préalable par la Collection Pinault à Paris, celle de Carmignac, à Porquerolles (Var), et la Fondation Beyeler, à Bâle. Avec de telles lettres d'introduction, le client n'hésite pas longtemps...

Mais l'œuvre la plus furtive d'Art Basel est passée sous les radars des visiteurs pressés : il s'agit d'à peine une centaine de secondes de variation d'intensité lumineuse. Ces légers grésillements sont générés chaque jour à partir de données sur le marché de l'art, digérées par ChatGPT, ce nouvel outil de l'intelligence artificielle. De cette œuvre immatérielle imaginée par l'artiste croate Tomo Savic-Gecan, il ne restera aucune image, « *juste un souvenir* », précise son galeriste parisien, Frank Elbaz. Et également un contrat permettant à son acheteur de la réactiver, moyennant 75 000 euros.

Mao et Warhol réajustés

A la Foire de Bâle, on trouve donc de tout, du conceptuel pur sucre, au plus échevelé, jusqu'au kitsch parfois, comme ces astronautes de Jean-Marie Appriou déclinés dans toutes les tailles et tous les prix. Et surtout des œuvres rarissimes que les marchands réservent pour cette occasion, car leur sélection est en jeu : si on encourage les expériences bizarres, on n'admet pas la médiocrité et la liste est longue des galeries ayant payé ce genre d'erreur d'un exil souvent définitif. Cela sur toute la durée de la foire : le comité d'admission passe quotidiennement sur les stands pour vérifier que les œuvres qui remplacent celles vendues la veille sont de même niveau.

Le rez-de-chaussée du lieu, consacré aux œuvres plus historiques, regorge ainsi de pépites : comme l'accrochage de l'artiste dadaïste Hannah Hösch chez 1900-2000 ; le stand de Michel Rein entièrement consacré à l'artiste Piero Gilardi, le guérillero de l'arte povera, mort en mars ; ou encore les sculptures minimalistes de Richard Nonas chez Christophe Gaillard ; sans oublier les dessins de Sonia Delaunay, vendus comme des petits pains à la galerie Zlotowski.

Lire aussi : [Le galeriste Emmanuel Perrotin choisit Colony IM pour se développer](#)



« On vit des temps incertains, mais si Art Basel marche, c'est qu'on y trouve de la qualité », se félicite Vincenzo de Bellis, ancien conservateur du Walker Art Center de Minneapolis, devenu le numéro deux d'Art Basel. Rien pourtant n'était gagné et, avant l'ouverture, certains marchands étaient nerveux. Les grandes ventes aux enchères de mai à New York s'étaient révélées laborieuses, avec des adjudications souvent bien inférieures aux estimations et des lots retirés in extremis pour ne pas plomber les bilans.

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Découvrir

« Le marché est plus calme, c'est indéniable, reconnaît le marchand américain Jeffrey Deitch. C'est le moment idéal pour les vrais collectionneurs qui ne sont pas prêts à acheter à n'importe quel prix. » Sentant le vent tourner, il avait réajusté à 10 millions de dollars (9, 2 millions d'euros) le prix d'un portrait de Mao par Warhol, soit 4,5 millions de moins (4,1 millions d'euros) que lors de son dernier passage aux enchères en 2015 : cette année, on solde...

Pour éviter les déconvenues, la plupart des exposants avaient verrouillé les transactions sur photo quelques jours avant l'ouverture de la foire. La galerie allemande Max Hetzler avait ainsi cédé treize pièces, avant de concrétiser de nouvelles ventes aux premières heures du vernissage.

« De très bonnes surprises »

Heureux de voyager après des années de confinement, les visiteurs asiatiques, plus nombreux que jamais, mais aussi de forts contingents latino-américains, brésiliens en particulier, n'étaient pas là pour faire de la figuration. Les collectionneurs nord-américains en revanche n'étaient pas aussi nombreux qu'espéré, même si nombre d'entre eux avaient dépêché leurs conseillers artistiques. « Nos plus grands collectionneurs américains ont dit qu'ils n'allaient pas traverser deux fois l'Atlantique, et nous ont donné rendez-vous à Paris, en octobre », confie Samia Saouma, directrice de Max Hetzler.

L'argent allant à l'argent, si certains galeristes peu rentés faisaient grise mine, les stands des poids lourds du marché n'ont pas désempilé. « Une excellente foire, avec de très bonnes surprises », se réjouissait le marchand suisse Iwan Wirth, qui a cédé une grosse araignée de Louise Bourgeois, dont il demandait plus de 22 millions de dollars (20,2 millions d'euros) et concluait sa première journée sur un bilan d'environ 65 millions de dollars (60 millions d'euros).

« Accumulation Renault n° 101 ou la victoire de Salmotrice » (1967), d'Arman. GALERIE GP & N VALLOIS

Dans un communiqué publié le 13 juin, David Zwirner se félicitait dès le vernissage d'un chiffre d'affaires supérieur de 30 % à celui de 2022. « *Il y a une tension énorme* », semblait s'étonner Andreas Lange, directeur de la galerie allemande Sprüth Magers, qui ne savait plus où donner de la tête. Chez Georges-Philippe et Nathalie Vallois, le collectionneur Jean-Claude Gandur a fait une razzia, emportant une accumulation historique d'Arman, ainsi qu'un spectaculaire *Camouflage*, d'Alain Jacquet.

Bulle dorée

« *J'ai la sensation qu'on vit dans une bulle* », analyse Nathalie Vallois. Une bulle dorée que ne secouent guère les bruits de bottes en Ukraine, ni l'inflation ni le dérèglement climatique, du moins à en juger par le nombre de jets privés qui se posent en une semaine sur l'aéroport de Bâle-Mulhouse : même si une vidéo d'Adel Abdessemed montrant un bateau en flammes pourrait symboliser ce qui nous attend, on a entendu une Américaine se plaindre du fait que le patio n'était pas climatisé... Mais la marque Art Basel a des clients fidèles, qui ont des villas, voire des musées privés, dont les murs réclament d'être garnis, et aussi d'autres dont les entrepôts ne demandent qu'à recevoir les nouvelles valeurs montantes, dans l'espérance d'une jolie plus-value.

Même si l'époque semble révolue où la cote d'un artiste débutant passait de 10 000 à 100 000 dollars (voire beaucoup plus) en quelques mois, l'histoire est là pour les y encourager. Pour ne prendre qu'un exemple parmi des centaines, il y a vingt ans, une photo de Shirin Neshat coûtait environ 12 000 dollars (11 000 euros). Aujourd'hui, la galerie Marian Goodman les vend 275 000 dollars (253 000 euros)...

Certes, cela ne fonctionne pas à tous les coups, et nombreux sont les artistes surestimés dès leurs débuts qui ont rejoint les poubelles du marché, voire celles de l'histoire de l'art. Mais, en spéculateurs habiles, les acheteurs savent répartir les risques. Les Américains nomment cela le *spray and pray* : on en achète vingt, il y en a bien un ou deux qui monteront si haut qu'ils rembourseront les autres, lesquels trouveront, avec un peu de chance ou d'entregent, place dans un musée local, un don fiscalement déductible dans bien des pays.

📍 Art Basel, du 15 au 18 juin, Messe Basel, Messeplatz 10, Bâle, Suisse, artbasel.com

Roxana Azimi et Harry Bellet

Untitled (Croatian Pavilion), 2022

A conversation with Elena Filipovic

Tomo Savić-Gecan
Venice Biennale 2022
Croatian Pavilion

On the occasion of artist Tomo Savić- Gecan's representation of Croatia at the 59th International Art Exhibition — La Biennale di Venezia with his palimpsestic project *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)*, 2022, Curator of the Pavilion Elena Filipovic engages in conversation with CURA. New Media Special Projects Editor Giulia Colletti.

Since its first iterations, Savić-Gecan's practice comments on the vicious and insidious potential misuse of technologies but also on the consequences of the increase in mechanisms to manipulate and control through news stream and data tracking. Given that we are controlled, it is not by technology but by the logo- and visual-centric strategies adopted to play a pivotal role in extracting profit from us. *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)* is a fugitive commentary on how to acknowledge to be part of someone else's strategy and to re-learn how to shift the scheme.

Editor's note: Savić-Gecan never circulates any visual representations of his artworks, but instead has always come up with a concise sentence describing each of his projects as its 'image'. The one below is the image related to *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)*.

Every day for the duration of the 59th edition of the Venice Biennale of Art, the lead story from a different, randomly selected global news source provides the data that feeds an artificial intelligence algorithm, which in turn prescribes the time, location, duration, movements, and thoughts of a group of five performers in the city of Venice to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan's *Untitled* (Croatian Pavilion), 2022.

GC: In your essay, you point that «[Tomo Savić-Gecan's] works are called *Untitled*, followed by the year of their making, no matter that he at times makes more than one work in a year. The artist's decisions about seemingly negligible 'management' aspects of the artwork—including its titling and reproduction, but also its commodification and afterlife, which he tightly constrains if not altogether denies—hardly make the critic or historian's task easy.» He does this in a paradoxical time, when we tend at once to store, archive, and label any fact, occurrence, detail but we often struggle to trace data back due to the information overload. How do you interpret the notion of "untitled" embraced by Tomo Savić-Gecan?

EF: It's interesting that you pit his admittedly austere titling protocol against the context of our moment, when we are indeed in an information overload, but also, specifically, in a clickbait overload. For the latter, sensationalist headlines, spectacular, attention grabbing soundbytes, and the reduction of complexity to something sexy and "sellable" is the norm. What place is there for rigorous conceptualism in this context? The 1970s might have seemed like the last moment when this was possible. Yet, from the start of his practice, Tomo has been extremely interested in expanding certain conceptual legacies for the present, and I think immediately of the resonance in his work of the dematerialized practices of the Gorgona group in the former Yugoslavia or Michael Asher in the US. For his part, Tomo insists on the reduction of certain aspects around the work (say, documentation and titling) and, on the other hand, in leaving the piece itself as open as possible to interpretation. A title often predetermines the reading of an artwork, which can be good or bad, depending on the artist's intention. By reducing his titles to nothing, effectively, except the uniform declaration that they bear no title, and the year of their making, he allows the work to be filled and interpreted with every projection we might put upon it.

Within an oeuvre like his that is systematically posing questions about the nature of an artwork and our experience of it, it's logical that he would also address the role of the title in that experience. And by simultaneously refusing to allow an image to stand in the place of the artwork, he further entrenches the artwork in its experience (or in the experience of the idea of it, which is also an experience), rather than in any one, partial, visual record of it. In doing so, his art is also the diametrical opposite of the art that circulates so well in an Instagram selfie.

GC: Despite being an advertising company, not a reliable information source, Google Search plays the role, as Safiya Umoja Noble states, that was traditionally fulfilled by philosophy and religion. It is a machine that regulates our dialogue with the world by substituting "vague" metaphysical presuppositions with strictly formalized and universally applicable rules of access. According to these rules, every question has to be formulated as one key word or a combination of key words. What kind of buzzwords have you encountered the most?

EF: In the period when the algorithm that drove Tomo Savić-Gecan's Untitled (Croatian Pavilion) was being programmed, Russia invaded Ukraine, which is what most Western news sources and social media overwhelmingly focused on for months on end. And one easily understands why: what is happening, still, is a shocking and catastrophic show of force. But, as it happens, simultaneously, the United States bombed in Somalia (again), and air strikes continued unabated in Syria and Yemen, the climate crisis reached new heights, right wing pro-life fundamentalists were actively laying new groundwork for abortion rights in the US to be dismantled, gun violence rose, and any number of scandals around the world raged. These were all eclipsed in the news cycle and social media outlets, and you start to see that one war is deemed to be more "worthy" of outrage and attention than another, one people (as it happens: white, Western, European) are deemed more "threatened" than another, one catastrophe taken to be more vital than another. More than buzzwords like "war" or "invasion," it was instructive to witness to what extent the complexity of our contemporary political and social landscape was being directed by algorithmically-driven "feeds" that celebrated the demonstrative posting blue and yellow as some kind of surrogate for meaningful questioning or engagement of some sort. The particularity of Tomo's project is that it puts its finger on exactly these paradoxes. By focusing on randomly selected lead news stories from one news source from around the world each day, and making it the catalyst for his performances, one could literally see in the articles how much the news focus and the interpretation of events remained varied across a wide political and geographic spectrum. But one could also see how much certain regions and news sources doubled down on certain issues, not swaying from a topic for long stretches, although much else was happening simultaneously. His project invited me to look at the news each day, but not from my own regular news source but from a source in Luanda one day and in Tripoli another because that is where the algorithm and in turn the performers were getting their instructions from each day.

GC: The scale of imperceptible, invisible, and unobtrusive shifts in Tomo's works, seems to be inversely proportional to the very observable effects on the environment due to the climate crisis by now. How far the absolute threshold needs to be stretched and stressed to provoke a reaction in us?

EF: If one takes *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)* as an example, to observe it is to witness something like the evocations of Judson Dance Theater's dance everyday or, say, the secret language of a sports team's hand codes. Discreet, unobtrusive, the opposite of the spectacular, you are right there. Conversely, they sometimes so discreetly insinuate themselves into the audiences and spaces to which they are sent that you might stand before them and not notice them at all. But, having seen them or not, the fact that you know about the piece, as you read this interview, or come across the catalogue, or read about it online, might prompt you to ask: Who controls whom?

Who or what decides? And what does a news item or the technologies that circulate it tell us about perception, power, and the interests of the corporations or nation-states behind them? Whatever is happening in the world at any given moment, global networked information flows penetrate practically every aspect of our daily lives. And yet, as we know all too well, there is no such thing as "neutral" news, no such thing as unbiased reporting.

We also now know that algorithmically driven systems effectively guarantee the burial of objective facts under an avalanche of rumor, emotion, and disinformation, even as our response to these is mined and monetized. In the catalogue and press material for the project I ventured that in context of this total

condition, *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)* is an artwork conceived in and for a "post-truth" era. And in that sense, it does what any great artwork can do: it doesn't claim to change the world, but it can and should and does help us look at it more clearly, all the better to raise questions about the systems that control us and the people and powers that control those very systems.

Elena Filipovic

Discreet, unobtrusive, the opposite of the spectacular, you are right there. Conversely, they sometimes so discreetly insinuate themselves into the audiences and spaces to which they are sent that you might stand before them and not notice them at all.

GC: Where does haphazardness stand in a system, which in fact is a finite sequence of rigorous instructions and causal actions?

Have the AI given instructions polarized the five performers' both actions and intentions? If so, how?

EF: If one speaks of haphazardness, there is, first of all, the randomness of the selection of the news article, then, once it is processed and converted into instructions for action, there is the interpretation of the dancers, which has a level of freedom specifically built into it. While the AI directs where and when and for how long the piece is performed, and even selects the specific entry and exit pattern for the performers (randomly, as casual visitors, or as a group), it offers only loose parameters for their gestures and thoughts. What happens within these parameters is not wholly determined: partly as a result of the human factor (never free of slippages or "mistakes") and partly by design (built as the program is with a modicum of freedom for the taking). It also anticipates that the dancers might walk into the same pavilion on two different days, but where the audience is congregated will be different, and so in turn, the performers can and will need to adapt to that. In the "construction" of the protocols for the project—for which Tomo involved the technologist Tomislav Pokrajčić and the choreographer Irma Omerzo—I found this creation of this margin for individual interpretation on the part of each dancer really interesting and important. They are not robots, not machines merely executing acts, but they are controlled to some extent. Of course, one might read the modicum of personal freedom built in as the piece's insistent hope, which leaves open the door, if only a crack, for some autonomy and even minute acts of sabotage by its human agents. Alternately, it could be read as a scathing analysis of our reality, which deludes us into thinking we operate within parameters of our own devising. In that sense, Tomo really did image something that would act as a commentary on our contemporary condition.

GC: What's the room for your agency in Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)?

EF: The question you are asking has larger implications, it asks what agency a curator has in most artistic production, actually. I would say that I try to be, where there is the need for it or the desire for it on the part of the artist, a kind of sparring partner to the ideas they generate. And Tomo and I have actually worked together on a number of projects over the last 15 years, so you could say we almost have a vocabulary together, which obviously makes collaborating on such an ambitious project a bit easier. Tomo called me about a year and a half ago and asked if I would agree to submit a proposal for the pavilion with him. From the start, we shared the conviction that in the present moment it was imperative to have an absolutely radical project, and indeed even to try to dispose of the bricks and mortar of the physical pavilion, in an age when the 19th century notion of the "national" in a national pavilion needs to be pressed.

GC: As there is no such thing as "neutral" news, what algorithm bias have you spotted over the process?

EF: Vladan Joler, an author who contributed to the pavilion's catalogue, points out—and this is something that others have been saying as well—there is also no such thing as a "neutral" algorithm. As is becoming increasingly clear, predictive policing algorithms are racist and last year Twitter created a much-vaunted image cropping algorithm that is racist too, but also ageist and ableist. By electing to use an algorithm and the news, Tomo quite decisively created a project that tackles exactly these issues of presupposed neutrality, of bias, of the myriad ways in which the technologies that we increasingly rely on actually further entrench us in the supremacist logics that have for too long divided cultures. In the case of his algorithm, we knew very well that no matter how well-meaning or careful the humans who worked on the tool that "reads" the news, their human biases, their fallible human decisions, and their personal human classifications would be inevitably brought into the statistical model. To give you a very concrete example, instead of classifying migration as a crisis and refugees as a social burden, which are some of the specific understandings of migration that the humans built into Tomo's algorithm, what if those training the AI had searched articles for indicators of how migration might solve problems associated with an aging population, or the lack of laborers in certain segments of the economy? The outcome would have been quite different.

GC: Can you expand on Vladan Joler's diagrammatic dissection of the project?

EF: It was great to be able to make visible the intricate workings of a system that remains so crucial to the project but remains totally behind the scenes. More than it being a technical illustration of the artificial intelligence behind Tomo's project, how it processes data and translates it into the code that drives the performers, I found it particularly interesting because it makes points to the incredible complexity to other algorithmic systems that are increasingly behind the scenes of our daily life.

GC: How do the invisible structures and protocols that subtend the supposed neutrality of art exhibition spaces affect the work?

EF: Tomo's practice for several decades now which is to say, from the very start of his work as an artist, has been fervently questioning the institutional sites in which he shows— how we perceive them, how their power emanates, how audiences are directed, how bodies can be controlled. Additionally, and this is also connected to the above, he has asked how an art experience is created and where is located—often separating out the aesthetic experience from the (white cube) sites where you typically encounter it or revealing aspects of the white cube that went otherwise unnoticed. Sometimes, over the years, that took the form of barricading entrances or mechanizing ordinary looking walls, creating small scale disruptions of the everyday in the form of escalators that stopped moving or public pools whose temperatures modulated (seemingly inexplicably, but actually controlled by the movement of visitors in an exhibition space) or exhibition space humidity levels that rise and fall according to data culled from somewhere else. So, in that way, what he ended up proposing for Venice with Untitled (Croatian Pavilion) is both perfectly in line with what he has been thinking about and doing for decades and yet taken to its most chilling logical conclusion.

GC: In your text you brilliantly state;
«Algorithmically driven systems effectively guarantee the burial of objective facts under an avalanche of rumor, emotion, and disinformation [...]» On the flip side, in the digital age we experience an inability of the system to forget, despite our internetnesia. How to navigate the contemporary inability to recollect and the right to forget?

EF: I know what you mean. To start with a personal anecdote, a rather silly one, there is a picture of me that I particularly detest and it appeared somewhere on the Internet and then got picked up and used by a site or two when they needed a picture of me and didn't bother to ask me directly for one and, because it was recirculated, it, in turn, circulated even more because others thought that if it appeared so many times then I must be "approved." And now it feels like it would be virtually impossible to scrub it from the internet, although I might want to.

Cry me a river, right? I know in the grand scheme of things it's nothing, but it demonstrates in nutshell how the Internet doesn't quickly enough forget what you might want it to. Despite this experience first-hand, I'm not sure what you describe as the "inability of the system to forget" is actually the case for all things. I think those that are invested in making these systems want to give us the impression that they are forever and will remember forever, but just as the 8-track cassette tape seemed like it was a durable and universal way to listen to music, technology so quickly becomes outmoded, and, in many cases, the things recorded on any particular technological form are in danger of being lost. How many websites that we used regularly just ten years ago are now defunct? How many links (with so much content once on them) are dead? Where has all this gone? I know there are active projects to archive the Internet, but what an inexhaustible task that is...and at a certain point, how will be able to actually find what we are looking for when any search might come up with countless hits. More is sometimes not more.

GC: I am truly appreciative of the exchange we had about the project, which personally stroke a few chords on the transformation of life into big data and the new digital epistemic regime we are globally experiencing while speaking. Prior saying goodbye for now, I would provocatively like to ask you how do you interpret Tomo's unwillingness to give us an interview?

EF: Since almost the beginning of his practice, already in the late 1990s, Tomo has had a rigorous conceptual practice that, for instance, refuses to use installation views or documentation of his artworks/actions/events (for me, it is interesting that one is never quite sure how to classify them). And, alongside this, he refuses to release artist's statements or conduct interviews. If he did, he reasons, these would be taken as an authoritative reading on his work, as somehow more definitive or accurate than someone else speaking on the work (this is so often the case, where an artist's words are trotted out as an almost biblical truth). He thus lets others speak instead, with their inevitable biases or interests or layer of interpretation being at least transparent.



Elena Filipovic and Tomo Savić-Gecan
Photo by Jasenko Rasol

Croatian Pavilion 2022

Untitled

Tomo Savić-Gecan

curated by Elena Filipovic

La Biennale di Venezia 2022

ArtReview

Tomo Savić-Gecan's Quiet, Extreme Reconsideration of Artmaking

Martin Herbert Features 20 April 2022 ArtReview

If you're hoping for a glimpse of the Croatian artist's work at the 59th Venice Biennale – look anywhere *but* the Croatian Pavilion



Tomo Savić-Gecan at CERN, Geneva, 2017. © 2017-2022 CERN. Photo: Sophia Elizabeth Bennett

If you visit the Venice Biennale this year and want to see the work of Tomo Savić-Gecan, who represents Croatia at the storied event, here's a tip: look anywhere *but* the Croatian Pavilion. That venue is likely to be closed, or at least empty. Instead, Savić-Gecan's project

will locate itself unpredictably in other pavilions and exhibition spaces, and you may experience it without even realising it. Four times a day, five performers will be given instructions by an AI algorithm – which is in turn responding to information in the lead news story from a randomly chosen news outlet somewhere on the planet – about where to position themselves, how long to stay there, how to move, even what to think about. They won't be shouting or dancing; expect subtle, but not quite natural, movements like head-tilting, pretending to be touching a wall or moving in slow motion: humans impelled by artificial overlords, maybe.

Every day for the duration of the 59th edition of the Venice Biennale of Art, the lead story from a different, randomly selected global news source provides the data that feeds an artificial intelligence algorithm, which in turn prescribes the time, location, duration, movements, and thoughts of a group of five performers in the city of Venice to constitute Tomo Savić-Gecan's *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)*, 2022.

The artist never circulates documentation or representations of his artworks, but instead has always used a concise sentence describing each of his projects as its 'image'. This is the image for Tomo Savić-Gecan's *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)*, 2022

You can, if you like, cheat a little by visiting an information kiosk on the via Garibaldi, where someone will tell you where the performances are happening that day. Or you can drift through the biennale and hope you see something. But if you don't see anything, that doesn't mean you haven't, in a way, partaken in Savić-Gecan's *Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)* (2022) – all the Dutch-Croatian artist's works since he left art school in Milan in the mid-1990s have been effectively untitled – and if you do see something, that doesn't necessarily mean you've experienced his artwork. If that sounds contradictory, bear with me and buckle up. Savić-Gecan's practice is one of the most quietly – an appropriate word – extreme reconsiderations of the practice of artmaking you're likely to find today. In some ways it intersects with classic 1960s conceptual strategies of dematerialisation, since his art is primarily not object-based or permanent; and yet it's also strongly materialist (it needs people, places, all kinds of other things). The fact that there are no illustrations for this article – Savić-Gecan's preference, in catalogues, magazines and elsewhere, is for a blank space where an image should be, or an image-text that describes the artwork's operations – doesn't mean that there's nothing to see in his art, though sometimes there's not much and often you might feel like you're standing in the wrong place. Instead, there's another place to think about.

For example: 17 years ago, when Savić-Gecan made an earlier appearance at the Venice Biennale, he presented a line of text on a gallery wall that informed the viewer of a relationship between the number of visitors entering an art space in Amsterdam and the temperature of a public swimming pool in Tallinn. Also in 2005 Savić-Gecan 'showed' at a Brussels gallery by removing the front window, sending it to Slovenia to be powdered and turned into 150 glasses, and in turn offering these as drinking vessels for the show's run. By this point he'd put in a decade's worth of reductive, evasive gestures. In 1994 he covered a gallery entrance in Ljubljana with a white wall; in 1996 he sealed off an area of exhibition space in Cleveland with hazard tape. For institutional exhibitions in 2011 and 2020, any phone calls received by the curator triggered changes in the temperature of the gallery space. Such interventions verge on the infinitesimal; as when, in 2006 in Austin, Texas, visitors were informed that Savić-Gecan had collaborated with a Dutch art magazine to publish an issue that was exactly 1mm smaller than its usual size. Meanwhile, the viewers were in an American city just over 8,000 kilometres away.

With each airplane from Los Angeles that lands at Taiwan's Taoyuan International airport for the duration of the Taipei Biennial in 2012, the level of humidity in one of the biennial's exhibition spaces will change slightly.

This is the image for Tomo Savić-Gecan's project at the 2012 Taipei Biennial

You're cued, then, to ask who is having the art experience. The answer, in ontological terms, flip-flops. If you're holding the art magazine in Amsterdam, you're not standing in the show in Austin, thinking about Savić-Gecan's philosophical ideas. In such a way, and in various manners, the artist has raised the possibility of creating works of art that are impossible to fully experience (and thus, not at all irrelevantly, commodify even as a document) – a part of his works tends to be already gone by the time you show up. In 2005 Savić-Gecan participated in a group show in Brooklyn, for which he used a hidden gizmo to record visitors' entries and exits; two years later he used that information to adjust the controls on a thermostat in another show he was participating in; and then, a decade later, he used the data again on another thermostat, in another gallery, to adjust the humidity in

the space. Hands up if you saw all those shows. If you did, maybe Savić-Gecan will use the info again, in a show you'll miss.

Anyway, this is just part of it. Savić-Gecan also absents himself from the interpretative process of his work. It's a self-erasure that constitutes an enlargement, since Savić-Gecan accordingly opens the readings of his art while at the same time destabilising them. He encourages curators to promulgate their own interpretations, and as they do so, something fundamental – the 'truth' of what his art means – is seemingly allowed to escape, to dissolve. Instead, the art is populated by the beliefs of the curators at hand; and then, in turn, those of the viewers. The art, as with a number of his projects, becomes a marked-out empty space. It could be, as the pavilion's curator, Elena Filipovic, has suggested, that 'the "exhibition" might not be the name for a location and duration to show anything at all, but instead the name for a place where a public has come together to both individually and collectively allow an aesthetic experience to be created'.

During the 51st Venice Biennale of Art, the entries of visitors to W139 Center for Contemporary Art in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, determines the change of the water temperature in a public swimming pool in Tallinn, Estonia, by 1°C.

This is the image for Tomo Savić-Gecan's participation in the 2005 Venice Biennale

The more you think about Savić-Gecan's art, the more the contradictions both proliferate and sit in counterpoise. Sometimes it feels like there's nothing to look at; and yet the work occupies space (and time). On the other hand, the art's maker – or instigator – refuses to have it documented, so once the timeframe is over, it's gone. Then again, it may be revived, albeit differently. It would be foolish to miss the playfulness in all this, also the absolute seriousness, and the continual inventiveness. Savić-Gecan, after all, is – as far as I know – the only artist who has taken a sample of air from a gallery in Amsterdam, had it sent to the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) in Geneva, where it was then turned into antimatter. Is the art in this case the air, the antimatter, the process, the idea? Make a choice, and *Untitled* (2018) slips through your fingers.

Untitled (Croatian Pavilion) partakes of all the intersecting angles on Savić-Gecan's art. It is also, of course, open to curatorial interpretation. To me, Filipovic framed the project in technological terms: as well as exploding the concept of a national pavilion, she said, "it comments on the strange and insidious ways technology increasingly controls us (and our passive acceptance of it), but also, in our own post-truth era, it is an incredible commentary on the news and its relationship to power, nationhood, distribution channels, etc." However persuasive that view, of course, it's just Filipovic's opinion, which in turn constitutes a structural component of the work. The latter waits to be filled in by the viewers who see it, who may in turn think of those who experience it as a rumour, which may not be a lesser mode of reception. And, of course, if you see someone moving a little robotically in a national pavilion this year, that means you're not standing in another national pavilion, seeing another performer. In that moment Savić-Gecan, and his art, have slipped into freedom once more.

From the April 2022 issue of ArtReview

Martin Herbert Features 20 April 2022 ArtReview

Market (<https://news.artnet.com/market>)

At a Post-Crypto-Crash Art Basel, Tech-Based Art Is Trying Hard to Blend in and Look Like... Painting?

Buyers are more cautious, even as buzz about A.I. and blockchain continue in the background.

Kate Brown (<https://news.artnet.com/about/kate-brown-671>), June 14, 2023



Art Basel in Basel 2023 Courtesy of Art Basel

Where did all the crypto-art go?

After the big busts of 2022, seemingly everyone buying and selling at the *uber*-chic Swiss fair [Art Basel](https://www.artbasel.com/?lang=en) (<https://www.artbasel.com/?lang=en>) has closed their digital wallets. The NFT-based art that shot onto the scene in 2021 was a notable absence from the stalls of all but a few of the 284 exhibitors this year. And Tezos, once the crypto-currency darling of the art world, was also absent as an official partner at the marquee Swiss fair (unsurprising, since it has lost 56 percent of its value year-over-year).

Given the uncertainty swirling in the art market in general (the Swiss have their own banking scandal on their hands as UBS, a major sponsor of Art Basel, sweeps in to take over Credit Suisse), can anyone really be blamed for a bit more caution? A sense of risk-aversion was felt among buyers here—and crypto is especially risky. And yet, perhaps now that the froth of speculation has gone, the blockchain experiments that remain are more sustainable and meaningful.

“What we’ve learned is that an art fair is not necessarily the best place to debut an NFT,” said one gallery director who had previously brought NFT-based works to this fair. “Transactions for them happen online, so if we do bring them it is to show them, not for a point-of-sale.”



AI Data Paintings by Refik Anadol were among the prominent projects incorporating artificial intelligence. NFT-based art was few and far between. (Installation view of Jeffrey Deitch's booth with *Neural Paintings* by Refik Anadol. Image: Stefan Altenburger.

In 2021, Kenny Schachter debuted NFT-based art for Art Basel with a special project at Galerie Nagel Draxler called “[NFTism \(https://news.artnet.com/market/nfts-art-basel-2011438\)](https://news.artnet.com/market/nfts-art-basel-2011438),” packing the booth with curious, confused, and excited onlookers. This year, he said he was not surprised by the sudden lack of crypto-art on the fair floor. “The crypto market crashed, so no one here wants anything to do with it,” he said, sitting inside the atrium of the fair with some friends. He rolled up his sleeve to show me his famous “NFT” tattoo, which he recently updated to add the word “post” above it.

“People here are so conservative, they want to have what their friends have,” Schachter added. “The art world has its finger up and the wind is blowing away from NFTs, especially with the onslaught of the SEC.” (U.S. regulators are currently knocking on the doors of big crypto exchanges such as [Coinbase \(https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/06/business/sec-coinbase-lawsuit-cryptocurrency.html\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/06/business/sec-coinbase-lawsuit-cryptocurrency.html) and [Binance \(https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/technology/binance-sec-cryptocurrency.html\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/technology/binance-sec-cryptocurrency.html).) The fizzle of interest was felt already at Art Basel Miami Beach last fall, he noted. “There has been no change from December to June. As soon as things cool down, the art world will be back in no time.”

Galleries that had been quick to charge into the crypto space were taking a pause this year, including Galerie Nagel Draxler and Pace, the latter of which presented Jeff Koons's first-ever NFT project, [Jeff Koons: Moon Phases \(https://news.artnet.com/market/jeff-koons-moon-nft-2090923\)](https://news.artnet.com/market/jeff-koons-moon-nft-2090923), last year. Now, both continue to work in the crypto space, but in the expanded fields beyond the Messeplatz (Pace is still active online and Nagel Draxler has a dedicated gallery called a Crypto Kiosk in Berlin that is presenting all kinds of works that engage with blockchain). In their Art Basel booths, paintings and sculptures and art historical classics dominate.

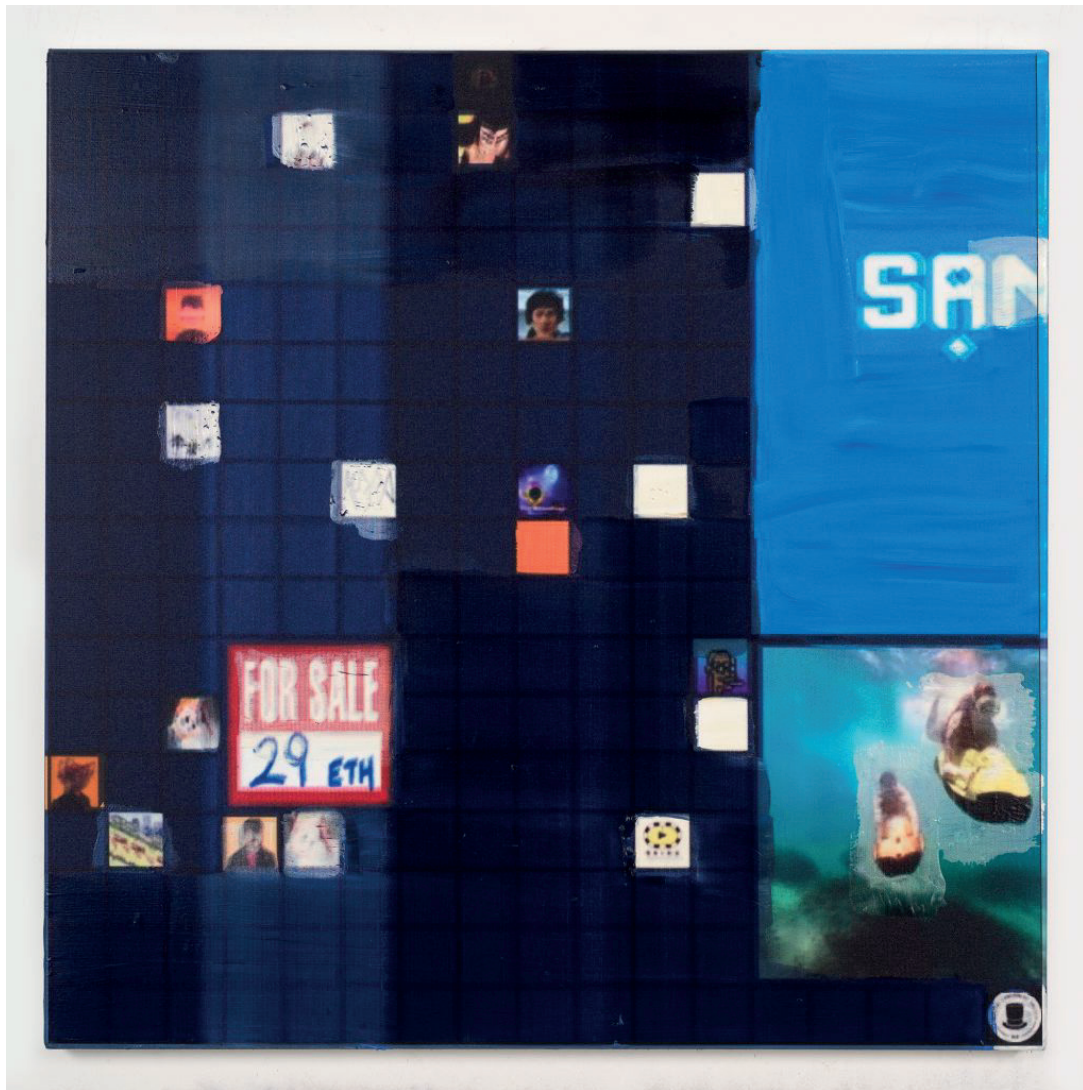


Kenny Schachter at the Crypto Kiosk at Nagel Draxler Gallery in Basel in 2021.

A spokesperson from Pace said they may consider presenting some works later in the week at Art Basel, but that depends on what gets changed out at the booth when sales close.

However, work that engaged NFTs was present in a few places, if you really looked. Simon Denny, who has long engaged with emergent technologies in his practice, was perhaps the only NFT-based work at the main art fair, and it was designed to blend in: His painting on view at Petzel, from the new “[Metaverse Landscapes](https://www.petzel.com/viewing-room/simon-denny3#tab-1:thumbnails;tab-2:thumbnails;tab-3:thumbnails) (<https://www.petzel.com/viewing-room/simon-denny3#tab-1:thumbnails;tab-2:thumbnails;tab-3:thumbnails>)” series, appears on the surface like a traditional work on canvas featuring fragmented images. It was nestled next door to a massive, €1.65 million painting by Martin Kippenberger.

Denny’s work only reveals its full meaning when you notice that there are QR codes on its side, one of which shows you a piece of private property in the metaverse that the work is representing. Denny minted a bit of virtual real estate as an NFT that you get with the painting, conjuring questions about property ownership in virtual space. Still, the work cleverly borrows from landscape painting and classic conceptualism to make its point—crypto-art designed to give the art-historically inclined something to hold onto (literally).



Simon Denny's *Metaverse Landscape 8: The Sandbox Land* (-196, 23) (2023). Oil on canvas, UV print, Ethereum paper wallet, dynamic ERC-721 NFT. Photo: Nick Ash. Courtesy: the artist

“People are looking for things secure in value and crypto and NFTs are quite insecure,” the artist told me. “This project addresses the viewers here because it is a painting first and speaks about art history. Plus, you do not need to be literate in crypto to buy it.” Of note: Implanted on the back of the painting is a chip with a crypto wallet so that whoever buys the piece may access the NFT without having to learn how to set one up. It seems to be a winning strategy. Denny’s work, which has a price tag of €30,000, was on reserve by 4 p.m. on preview day.

Meanwhile, galleries have made moves towards using the technology for actual concrete business strategies. Arcual, now an official partner of Art Basel, was set up near the champagne in the collectors’ lounge on the third floor, presenting talks and artworks. The company uses blockchain technology to create ownership chains that benefit both artists and dealers, hoping to change the way business as usual is done in the art market. They are creating NFTs for any and all works of art.

“I am a strong believer in what blockchain can bring to the industry, but I was always skeptical of the speculation we were seeing,” said Bernadine Bröcker Wieder from [Arcual](https://news.artnet.com/market/a-new-blockchain-company-from-art-basel-and-the-luma-foundation-2203428) (<https://news.artnet.com/market/a-new-blockchain-company-from-art-basel-and-the-luma-foundation-2203428>). “We want to focus on the art again.” She noted this current moment in crypto is less of a wild ride than 2021 when NFT-based art prices went soaring. “We follow some of the standards of what was set with the NFT boom, but have helped it evolve to work seamlessly in the art world within the way the art world already works.”

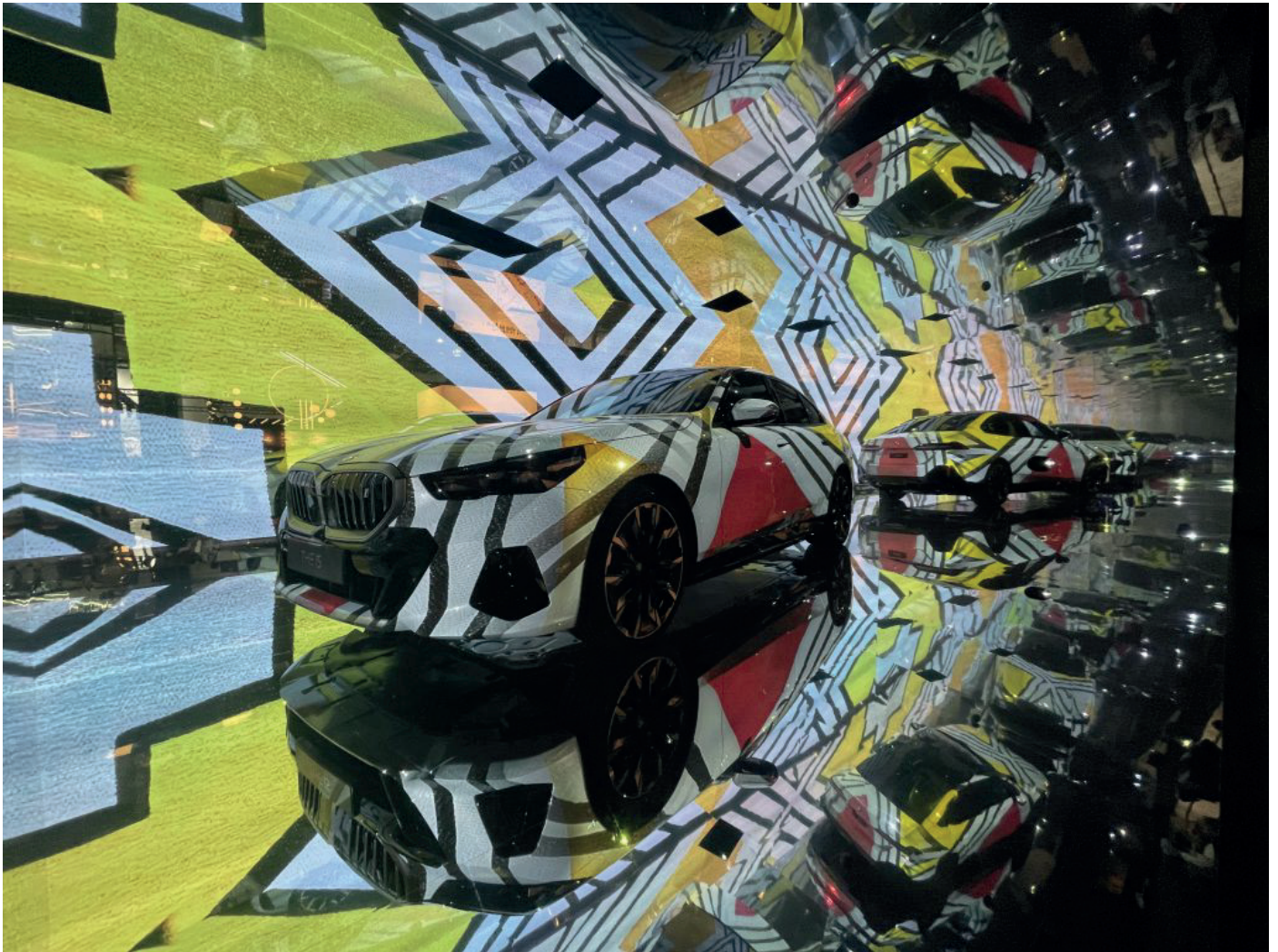


Phoebe Cummings at the Arcual Booth, Art Basel in Basel, 2023, photos by Gloria Soverini Photography.

The hot topic in tech has clearly moved on to artificial intelligence. Vast public anxiety looms over this field, and so art has felt a new sense of urgency to engage. Digital paintings by Refik Anadol, who was subject of a [major exhibition at MoMA earlier this year \(https://news.artnet.com/art-world/refik-anadol-unsupervised-moma-2242329\)](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/refik-anadol-unsupervised-moma-2242329), were front and center at Jeffrey Deitch's booth—though the dealer was emphasizing how easy to understand they were in ordinary art terms.

“Our market is conventional,” said Jeffrey Deitch when asked about the appetite for collectors when it comes to digital art. “People are buying these works as ‘living paintings,’” he emphasized, a reference to the title of the ongoing series. Anadol's triptych (on sale for \$300,000) had a prominent space at the front wall of Deitch's booth. Though still available at 4 p.m. on preview day, it had a seemingly ever-present cluster of VIPs in front of it.

In the foyer of Unlimited, BMW's annual art car this year brought a high-tech spin to artists who do not typically work in the digital space. The South African artist Esther Mahlangu's boldly geometric abstract paintings were among those featured for a spectacular generative art piece.



The Electric AI Canvas at Art Basel in Basel 2023. An installation inspired by the new BMW i5. Featuring Esther Mahlangu, 2023. © BMW AG

Also inside the fair's Unlimited section was a work by Croatian artist Tomo Savić-Gecan. Basically, what you saw there was a large screen explaining its own premise; the real show was throughout the fair, and could even be a joke about tech-based art trying to blend in with the environment and speak using the symbols people know.

For the piece, selected lights all around Art Basel were made to vary in intensity at certain times. These changes were governed by an algorithm, fed by data based on randomly selected art news articles which are analyzed in relation to the latest *Art Market: An Art Basel and UBS Report*.

The various locations of the piece are announced daily on the project website as well as on large screens situated at Unlimited and the booth of galerie Frank Elbaz. The public is invited to go to those locations and observe their surroundings—thereby becoming part of the performance themselves.

It's a fun work. But even Elbaz's reps noted the learning curve is steep for digitally engaged art in general. "It is a type of artwork that collectors are not familiar with, but it's also ephemeral," said a spokesperson from the Paris-based gallery. "You really do have to accompany collectors and educate them about the work, but also about conceptual art in general." (There are two versions for sale, priced at €70,000 and €95,000.)

For now, the overall emphasis on painting-like objects seems telling. It may be that the recent spectacle of the crypto bubble has dampened appetites not just for crypto-art but for the more adventurous forms of tech art in general. Once the markets feel more sure of themselves, maybe more works similar to Savić-Gecan's data-based environmental work, which feels as if it is relevant to changes that are sweeping across society as a whole, will make a more overt return to the art fair floor.

As for crypto-art, plenty of people are still betting that it is due for a comeback. "NFTs are revolutionary," Schachter said. "It is here to stay. The dust just needs to settle."

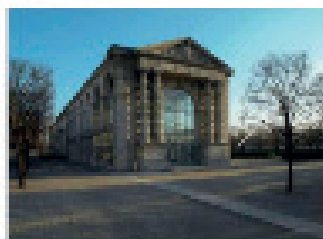
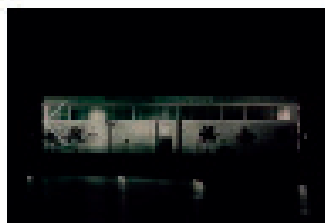
Untitled, 2010, Tomo Sovic-Gecan

JEU DE PAUMES

Muriel Denet

25 Oct 2010

Occupant le foyer et la mezzanine du Jeu de Paume, l'artiste croate Tomo Sovic-Gecan déconstruit et réagence les matériaux spatiaux et temporels du dispositif d'exposition. Ce qui le rend à la fois, paradoxalement, doué d'ubiquité et insaisissable.



Dans le foyer et la mezzanine du Jeu de Paume, l'artiste croate Tomo Sovic-Gecan propose deux stations apparemment opposées: l'une blanche, lumineuse et vide, l'autre noire, à peine éclairée par un plan fixe sur écran plasma.

Le foyer est en effet une traduction littérale du fameux cube blanc de la galerie d'art, dans lequel, contre toute attente, il n'y a rien à voir. Un texte lapidaire informe préalablement le spectateur que son entrée influera sur les dimensions d'une autre salle d'exposition située à la Bergen Kunsthall, en Norvège.

Et qu'inversement, les visiteurs de la Bergen Kunsthall influenceront sur celles du cube blanc du Jeu de Paume.

Les volumes des deux salles devraient donc diminuer au fil de l'exposition sans que les agents déclencheurs de ce phénomène puissent le percevoir. Mais seulement le savoir. L'expérience esthétique est ainsi découplée de la sensation. Et cantonnée à sa seule dimension intellectuelle. Le spectateur intègre le processus d'existence de l'œuvre, est un élément décisif de son accomplissement, qui reste de l'ordre du virtuel, et échappe à toute représentation. Une fois la durée de l'exposition épuisée, il ne restera de l'œuvre que les textes qui en témoignent.

Et même lorsque Tomo Sovic-Gecan utilise des moyens voués à la représentation, comme la vidéo, ce qui est montré masque la pièce maîtresse du dispositif: toujours le cube blanc de l'exposition d'art.

Dans la mezzanine, salle obscure, un plan fixe, projeté en boucle, cadre ce qui semble être l'écran d'un cinéma de plein air, la caméra ayant pris la place du projecteur. Mais la nature reprend ses droits sur ce lieu désaffecté, l'écran est rongé par l'humidité, la végétation menace de l'engloutir. Rien ne se passe.

Il faut lire le dépliant d'information, pour apprendre que le cube blanc est accroché au verso de cet écran. Invisible, imperceptible, et pourtant bien là. Le redoublement du dispositif de représentation, loin d'être une finalité, est juste le moyen de rendre visible l'aveuglement du spectateur par l'écran blanc de la projection. Tomo Sovic-Gecan déconstruit et réagence les matériaux spatiaux et temporels du dispositif d'exposition. Ce qui le rend à la fois, paradoxalement, doué d'ubiquité et insaisissable.

- Tomo Sovic-Gecan, Untitled, 2010. Installation au Jeu de Paume à Paris, et à la Bergen Kunsthall en Norvège.
- Tomo Sovic-Gecan, Untitled, 2010. Vidéo. 12 min.