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**Miha Vipotnik**

# CELJSKI VČERAJ IN JUTRI

**Nomadski medijski umetnik Miha Vipotnik, slikar in videast, scenarist in režiser, avtor številnih instalacij in projektov na raznih koncertih sveta, je lani z razstavo Žovneški iz dežele Kijeni popeljal obiskovalce tamkajšnje Galerije sodobne umetnosti v Celju po sledih zgodbe najpomembnejše plemiške rodbine na območju Slovenije, letos pa je za Zgornji oziroma Stari grad nad mestom in Spodnji grad ali Knežji dvorec v mestnem središču oblikoval velikanski fasadni digitalno potiskani zavesi.**

**Besedilo: Igor Španjol   Fotografije: Nik Jarh**

Projekt je nastal v tradiciji praks, ki polje umetnosti razumejo kot relevantno prakso zgodovinjena. V njem je avtor posegel po specifični geografski in zgodovinski izkušnji, temeljito prečesal informacije, ki so se mu zdele potrebne za pripravo grafik, in zbrane podatke vzel kot podporo za novo delo, ki tudi obiskovalca vabi k sooblikovanju prostora in zgodbe.

Obe deli pripovedujeta o zgodovini celjskih knezov, ki so potem, ko so si v 14. stoletju namesto trdnjave na visoki skali zaželeli udobnejše palače v mestu, zgradili Knežji dvorec. Vipotnikova 520 kvadratnih metrov velika fasadna slika na tej edini reprezentančni srednjeveški palači na slovenskih tleh, kjer je bila dolga leta vojašnica, prekriva oluščeno pročelje dvoriščne strani dvorca.

Iluzionistično sestavljena digitalna podoba se nanaša na novo podobo dvorca. Vipotnik je risbo nadgradil in jo spremenil v virtualno zgradbo, kjer se rekonstruirana kamnoseška okna prepletajo z motivi obzidja Zgornjega gradu. Struktura poslikave je podobna igrivim sanjarijam, v katerih se plečejo neštete povezave zgodovin, geopolitičnega konteksta in družbenih razmer v srednjeveški Evropi. Transparentno

platno, pod katerim se kaže fasada, omogoča zlitje virtualnih in realnih vizualnih senzacij. V tako formuliranem presvetljenem prostoru ostankov in insinucij se Vipotnik igra s stavbarskimi znaki, tipografskimi simboli, načrti in risbami, ki segajo od Keltov in povečave antičnega kipa brezglave božanske Fortune iz niše obrambnega zidu v kleti dvorca vse do sodobnih računalniških animacij.

Na desni polovici zaves iluzija stavbe nenadoma preskoči nazaj v obstoječa okna bivše vojašnice, zid rimske vile in vhod na rimsko cesto. Pritličje krasita arkadna loka, v nadstropju je vrisana arkadna greda z lesenim hodnikom in kamnitimi gotskimi okni, zgornji del, predviden za rušenje, pa se oddaljuje v pokrajino Savinjske doline vse tja do Žovneškega gradu in nakazuje razgled, kakršnega so najverjetneje imeli Celjski v svojem času.

Od razvalin Starega gradu je najbolj ohranjen Friderikov stolp ali stolp lakote, v katerem je po legendi grof Friderik II, sin Hermana II. Celjskega, delal pokoro zaradi revne plemkinje Veronike Deseniške, v katero je bil nesmrtno zaljubljen. Digitalna grafična zavesa



na jugozahodnem pročelju stolpa je velika 230 kvadratnih metrov in operira z obstoječim slikovnim materialom, vsebinsko pa prepleta zgodovinsko pripoved z miti in legendami iz dramskega besedila Antona Novačana *Herman Celjski*. Pri vходу v spodnjem delu ponjave so v cerkveni rebrasti strop zarezana vrata v zgradbo stolpa. Medtem ko je v notranjosti stolpa samo kvadratni izrez neba, se vrata na sliki odpirajo proti površini reke Savinje. Slike na ponjavi tečejo vertikalno in povezujejo pomembni viteški figuri, za mogočno Barbaro Celjsko pa se skriva še sama Veronika. Pripoved teče od škofovske krone in cerkvenih reber do robnih kamnov stolpa. Med šivi in sponkami, s katerimi je slika pripeta na fasado, kaotično razpadajo kamniti bloki. V kamnitih škrbinah in obrobi v ponjavi ujetih ostalin se kaže Hermanova jeza nad neposlušnim sinom.

Medijske podobe v javnem prostoru na način reklamnih panojev razblinjajo predstave o univerzalnosti linearne zgodovine in resničnosti našega trenutka. Miha Vipotnik razume socialno, politično in umetnostno zgodovino kot škatlo za orodje: situacije iz preteklosti uporablja zato, da lahko uprizoni nove. Zato njegovega dela ni mogoče imeti za podaljšan instrument v projekt vključenih strok ali zgolj za ilustracijo obravnavanih zgodovinskih dogodkov. V resnici seže njegovo delo daleč preko tega. Celjanom, ponosnim na svoje privlačno staro mesto, in njihovim gostom ga je s tem pokazal v novi in še lepši luči.

## CELJE YESTERDAY & TOMORROW

**Text: Igor Španjol   Photography: Nik Jarh**

With last year's exhibition *Saamekh People from Elsewhere*, the nomadic media artist Miha Vipotnik – painter and video artist, writer and director, the author of numerous installations and projects in various parts of the world – led visitors to Celje's Gallery of Contemporary Art on the trail of the most important noble family in Slovenia. This year, he has designed two giant digitally printed façade screens for the Upper Castle (or Old Castle) above the city and the Lower Castle (or Prince's Hall) in the old town centre.

The project came into being within the tradition of practices that understand the field of art as a relevant practice of historicification. In it, the artist has taken a specific geographical and historical experience, thoroughly sifted the information that he considered necessary for the preparation of the prints, and taken the collected data as a support for a new work that also invites the visitor to play a part in shaping the space and the story.

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Both works tell the story of the Counts of Cilli (Celje), who in the fourteenth century decided to exchange their fortress on the high cliff for a more comfortable palace in the town and so built the Prince's Hall. Vipotnik's 520 m<sup>2</sup> façade painting on this magnificent medieval palace – unique in Slovenia – which for years served as a military barracks, covers the bare façade of the courtyard side of the building.

The illusionistic composition of the digital image relates to the new appearance of the palace. Vipotnik has added to the drawing and turned it into a virtual structure where the reconstructed masonry of the windows blends with motifs from the walls of the Upper Castle. The structure of the painting is like a playful fantasy into which are woven the countless connections of histories, geopolitical context and social conditions in medieval Europe. The transparent canvas, under which the façade appears, enables a fusion of virtual and real visual sensations. In the illuminated space of remains and insinuations thus formulated, Vipotnik plays with architectural signs, typographical symbols, plans and drawings ranging from the Celts and an enlargement of an ancient statue of the headless goddess Fortuna (from a niche in the defensive wall in the palace basement), right up to contemporary computer animations.

On the right half of the screen the illusion of the building suddenly jumps back into the existing windows of the former barracks, the wall of a Roman villa and the entrance to a Roman road. The ground floor is adorned by two arches; an arched beam with a wooden passage and stone Gothic windows is drawn into the first floor; the upper part, scheduled for demolition, recedes into the landscape of the Savinja Valley all the way to Žovnek (Saaneckh) Castle, and suggests the view that the Counts of Cilli probably saw in their day.

The best conserved part of the ruined Old Castle is Frederick's Tower or the Tower of Hunger, in which according to legend Count Frederick II, the son of Herman II of Cilli, did penance on account of the poor noblewoman Veronika Deseniška, with whom he had fallen hopelessly in love. The digital screen on the southwest façade of the tower measures 230 m<sup>2</sup> and uses existing pictorial material. In terms of subject matter, it interweaves historical narrative with myths and legends from Anton Novačan's play *Herman of Cilli*. By the entrance, doors into the castle structure are incised into a churchlike ribbed ceiling in the lower part of the screen. While inside the tower there is merely a square section of sky, on the painting the doors open onto the surface of the Savinja River. The paintings on the screen run vertically and connect two important chivalric figures. Behind the powerful Barbara of Cilli hides Veronika herself. The narrative runs from the bishop's crown and the church ribs to the edging stones of the tower. Between the seams and the clips that hold the painting in place on the façade, stone blocks crumble in chaos. In the jagged stones and the edging of the remains caught in the screen, Herman's anger at his disobedient son appears.

Media images in a public space in the style of advertising billboards shatter concepts about the universality of linear history and the reality of the moment we live in. Miha Vipotnik sees social, political and art history as a toolbox: he uses situations from the past in order to stage new ones. This means that his work cannot be considered an extended instrument of the disciplines involved in the project, or merely as an illustration of the historical events under consideration. In fact his work reaches far beyond this. For the people of Celje, proud of their attractive old town, and their visitors, he has shown the city in a new and more beautiful light. ✨