

## Put yourself in my place

Ida Hansson & Milijana Babić

An introduction by Davor Mišković

Depending on our social background, we attribute different values to artworks, but also to different behavior patterns and to biological traits such as race, or sex. The consequence of this is always, inequality. Milijana Babić and Ida Hansson are two artists who developed their own methodologies for understanding differences in how society approaches art, through a specific continuous three weeks performance of swapping lives. By entering the life of the other, they did not play some kind of mimetic game, but brought their own personalities into a different context.

They have remained same persons examining how this new environment affected both them, and their work. By doing so, they did not hide the fact that their life inside a new community was their artwork. They made communities involved in the project aware of the fact that this is a temporary situation with a particular purpose, yet they could not avoid life as none of us can avoid it regardless of the type of work we are doing.

In artistic work, which is on a certain level always related to the production of meaning, life itself becomes full of manufactured meanings. Life threads of one artist, in this case, became interwoven with the life threads of another artist.

Different value systems unequivocally shape the art belonging to that system. These values are learned by chance, half consciously, as one would learn to speak language, but they entirely influence our experiences. It's like an apparatus through which we understand art, but whose design we cannot understand, or even notice.

Key art standards are those that define the relationship between the performer, the work presented, and the audience. In this work, however, those standards are completely

decomposed, and neither artists nor the audience can tell the boundaries to this performance. Which is art, and which is life?

This artwork defies definition, and is only formatted in artistic sense through a conventional exhibition presentation. Depending on how artists decide to organize the exhibited elements, i.e. documents in this case, we gain insight into their lives/art.

This opens up many questions about contemporary art and artwork that is inseparable from the artist (in this case, as in many other cases). The key question here is how to separate public from private life, and personal from business affairs. Can they be separated at all?

Contemporary life loses difference between how and when we handle our personal and business affairs, which makes us wonder if they can be separated at all. We are in entirety colonized by the economy, immersed into a system that constantly produces something, which forces us to adjust all aspects of our life according to production of work. Whatever we do in life is, almost unmistakably, work. How we socialize – is work. Those reality glitches that free us from our work are so rare, but precisely because of this, so precious.

It is possible to read differences in social relations through the presented documentation of this work. A scene of dinner with friends, for instance, makes these differences visible, and reveals relationship between different cultures and foreigners, especially through language. In such moments, the complete design of our social life is being reflected in myriad ways and we can interpret them according to our experiences.

The social status of an artist is influenced by his/her artistic field, his/her choice of themes, his/her place of work, his/her presentation etc. The demand to establish differences between each artwork under a single paradigm is, however, common to all artists, at least in Europe. Artists are thus expected to comply to a set of learned values, and at the same time to break these values while creating their

artwork. This is also reflected in our social lives, but unlike artistic work which each time redefines the relationship between same and different, work in other fields of life functions within already set definitions of same and different. The work of Ida and Milijana at the same time uses predefined practices and redefines same and different, simply by artists swapping places. Everything is the same, but in redefining the subject that performs the action, everything is different.

PUT YOURSELF IN MY PLACE uses a simple procedure to uncover complex relationships between an individual and group, and different ways of how we adjust our needs to social expectations. The exhibition itself that includes scenes from surrogate lives is a fragmented image of our sociability, framed differently each time and open to interpretation, according to our lives.