



# Genski oltar

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18. november 2016–15. februar 2017

**Izdal in založil / Published by**

Kulturni dom Krško, zanj Darja Planinc, direktorica

**Zamisel in koncept razstave / Exhibition idea and concept by**

Damijan Kracina, Vladimir Leben, Jani Pirnat

**Risbe, objekti in instalacija / Drawings, objects and installation by**

Damijan Kracina in Vladimir Leben

**Glasba / Music by**

Sašo Kalan

**Postavitev razstave / Exhibition mounted by**

Damijan Kracina in Vladimir Leben

**Kustos razstave in spremno besedilo / Exhibition curation and texts by**

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**Koordiniranje razstave / Exhibition coordination by**

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**Lektoriranje / Text editing by**

Tatjana Habinc

**Prevod / Translation by**

Amidas d.o.o., Irena Duša

**Oblikovanje / Catalogue design by**

Nina Sotelšek, KDK, enota MMK

**Fotografije / Photographs by**

Nina Sotelšek, KDK, enota MMK

**Tisk / Printed by**

Kolortisk

Naklada / Print run 300

Krško, november 2016

Kulturni dom Krško  
enota **Galerija Krško**,  
Valvasorjevo nabrežje 4,  
8270 Krško  
[www.galerijakrsko.si](http://www.galerijakrsko.si)



## Genski oltar

Ideja o Genskem oltarju izhaja iz likovnih in raziskovalnih razstav novih življenjskih oblik in naravne raznovrstnosti, ki sta jih slikar Vladimir Leben in kipar Damijan Kracina v sodelovanju kreirala že od leta 2004. Njun prvi večji skupni projekt Galapagos se je razvil v potovalno razstavo Animal Tour, ki je krožila po Evropi do leta 2009. Ves ta čas je umetnostni zgodovinar in kustos Jani Pirnat tekstovno in konceptualno dodajal vsebine bitjem, ki sta jih izdelovala umetnika. Na eni pomembnejših predstavitev Galapagosa v umetniškem centru Le Colysee, maison Folie de Lambersart pri Lillu (2009) so obiskali tudi Gent na belgijski strani Flandrije. Močno jih je navdihnili verjetno najpomembnejša umetnina severnorenesančnega slikarstva, Gentski oltar (1432) umetnikov Jana van Eycka in njegovega brata Huberta v katedrali svetega Bavona. Veličastna impresija oltarja, mistična ikonografija in besedna igra so porodile zamisel o Genskem oltarju. Izhajajoč iz vsebine originala se je v idejni igri zgodil konceptualni prevzem krščanskih eshatolo-

ških vsebin, apokaliptičnih vizij o poslednjih stvareh, ki se je priredil vsemu genskemu. Vizijo vstajenja mrtvih in Jagnjeta božjega, ki ga žrtvujejo na oltarju, opazujejo vsi, ki so si na koncu vsega zaslužili večno glorio v nebesih. Vizija konca vsega je v viziji Genskega oltarja tako spremenjena v znanstvenofantastično dogmo o prihodnosti življenja, raztresenega in potujočega po vesolju ob koncu sveta, kjer ljudje, žal, niso uspeli. V zgodbi so povečana bitja, ki bi imela največ možnosti, da se zasejejo sama od sebe nekje drugje. Počasnike (tardigrade), nenavadne rastline, raznovrsten nanoplankton in nostalgичne predmete, ki se prepletajo z bitji, žogico za sladoleđ, plešasto barbiko, struno bas kitare, smoki, kinder jajček ... sta umetnika naslikala v svojem značilnem risarskem slogu v tehniki grisaille, ki je se je uporabljala tudi za upodobitev iluzionističnega kiparskega okrasja na srednjeveškem originalu.

Postavitev v galeriji smo si predstavljali kot oltar, ki je eksplodiral in potuje v prostor. Slike so kot izrezane kulise, ikone eksplozije, vidne s



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sprednje in zadnje strani. Spredaj blišč, zadaj golo ogrodje. Obrisi Gentskega oltarja je projiciran skozi kopreno na raztreščene oltarne dele. Ker je bila srednjeveška varianta tudi glasbena skrinja in razstavljava arhitektura, bogata tudi s kiparskim okrasjem, ki so ga v protestantskem ikonoklazmu uničili, je skladatelj Sašo Kalan, dolgoletni sodelavec Damijana Kracine in Vladimirja Lebna, za zamenjavo cerkvene glasbe skomponiral nekaj, kar bi lahko opisali kot zvočno mlakužo, notranji brum frekvenc teles zamrznjenega življenja, ki potuje skozi vesoljno tišino milijone let in čaka, da pade na rodovitna tla.

Za širjenje vpliva je zgodnje krščanstvo vključevalo ikonografijo narave, svetih dreves, vodnjake večnega življenja, rajske živalske vrste, sonaravno življenje in vsebine drugih kultov, povezanih z naravo. Naravo je prevzelo v teologijo, vendar bolj je postajala obrnjena v mistiko in Sveto pismo edina resnica, bolj so postajali odvetniki in posredniki narave razni svetniki, ki so ljudi ščitili pred njo ali jim pomagali to obvladovati. Oltarji so bili

glavni medij za posredovanje idej, razlagali so zgodbe cerkvene avtoritete. Še dandanes mitologijo kreacionizma njegovi žareči podporniki kljub neizpodbitnim dognanjem o naravi poskušajo postaviti za antipod znanstvenim raziskavam o nastanku in razvoju življenja. Človeška domišljija in predstava o življenju še zdaleč ne dosežeta razsežnosti in raznovrstnosti, ki nam jo ponuja narava.

Nekatere oblike življenja so neverjetno odporne proti temperaturam, pritiskom in fascinantne v sposobnostih preživetja, razmnoževanja in prilagajanja, kar jim omogočata njihova genetika in razvoj. Kako bo, ko zemlje več ne bo?

Ideja Gentskega oltarja je čakala na ugodno priložnost za celostno umetnino, ki prevzema cerkveni medij in ga izrablja za dogmatški obrat v sodobnejše znanstvene teorije o življenju iz veselja in umetniškem pogledu ustvarjalcev o prihodnosti življenja.



## **Genetic Altarpiece**

The idea for Genetic Altarpiece originates in fine-art and research exhibitions on new life forms and biodiversity by painter Vladimir Leben and sculptor Damijan Kracina, who began their collaboration in 2004. Their first major joint project, Galapagos, developed into a travelling exhibition titled Animal Tour, which ended its journey around Europe in 2009. Throughout this time, art historian and curator Jani Pirnat offered curatorial and conceptual support to describe creatures created by the two artists. During one of the more important presentations of Galapagos at Le Colysée, a maison Folie in Lambersart near Lille (2009), the artists visited Ghent, in the Belgian part of Flanders. They were greatly inspired by likely the most important piece of Northern Renaissance painting, the Ghent Altarpiece (1432) by brothers Jan and Hubert van Eyck in St Bavo's Cathedral. The magnificent impression wrought by the altarpiece, the mystical iconography and the possibility of wordplay all led to the idea of creating a 'Genetic Altarpiece' (Ghentski and Genski sounding the same in Slovenian). Taking the original iconography and developing

it further through toying with ideas, the material took a conceptual turn to Christian eschatological content and apocalyptic visions referencing the 'Last Things', appropriating the qualities and changing it to everything genetic. The vision of the resurrection of the dead and of the Lamb of God being sacrificed at the altar is observed by all those who earned their place in the glory of Heaven. In the Genetic Altarpiece, the vision of the end of the world is thus altered into science-fiction dogma about future life, scattered and travelling around the universe at the end of the world – where, unfortunately, the human race didn't make it. Altarpiece features creatures which would be most likely to take root somewhere else in the universe. Tardigrades, unusual plants, various types of nanoplankton and nostalgic objects which are incorporated among the creatures; an ice-cream scoop, a bald Barbie doll, a string from a bass guitar, cheesy corn snacks, a Kinder Surprise chocolate egg: these were painted by the artists in their characteristic artistic style using the grisaille technique, which was also used to depict the illusionistic sculptural decorative elements in the medieval original.

The installation in the gallery imitates an exploding altar, with bits of it travelling through space. The drawings are presented as cut-out backdrops, icons of explosion visible from front and back: a flash in front and a bare frame behind. The outline of the Ghent Altarpiece is projected onto a vent cloth veiling the smashed altar components. Since the medieval version was also a musical box, rich in sculptural elements that were later destroyed by Protestant iconoclasts, composer Sašo Kalan, a long-time collaborator of Damijan Kracina and Vladimir Leben, composed a music piece, that could be described as a sound puddle, the interior hum of the frequencies of bodies of frozen life which travel through the silence of space for millions of years and wait to fall on fertile ground.

To extend its impact, early Christianity incorporated the iconography of nature, sacred trees, fountains of eternal life, heavenly animal species, life in harmony with nature and elements from other nature-based cults. It subsumed nature into theology, but the more the latter turned towards mysticism and the Holy Bible became the sole truth, the more the scribes and agents of nature became

saints who protected people from it or helped them control it. Altarpieces were the main medium for disseminating ideas and interpreting stories of the Church authorities. Even today, ardent creationists are attempting, despite incontestable findings with regard to the natural world, to counterpose the mythology of creationism to scientific research into the origin and development of life. Human imagination and our conception of life still fall far short of the scope and variety that nature has to offer.

Some forms of life are incredibly resistant to temperatures and pressures, and possess a fascinating capacity of survival, reproduction and adaptation, all courtesy of their genetic make-up and development. What will be when the Earth ceases to be?

The idea behind the Genetic Altarpiece waited for the right opportunity to embody itself as universal artwork (Gesamtkunstwerk), which that takes an ecclesiastical medium and dogmatically reverses it through artistic views towards more modern scientific theories on life in the universe and the future of life.



## **Damijan Kracina Vladimir Leben**

Kipar Damijan Kracina in slikar Vladimir Leben sta se rodila leta 1970 oziroma 1971. Oba sta obiskovala Srednjo šolo za oblikovanje in fotografijo v Ljubljani ter Akademijo za likovno umetnost in oblikovanje v Ljubljani. Poleg samostojne umetniške poti sta ustvarila kar nekaj skupnih projektov. Njuno prijateljevanje traja že tri desetletja. Spoznala sta se v prvem letniku srednje šole, kamor je prvi prišel iz Kobarida, drugi pa iz Sevnice. Čeprav sta vse od takrat »Ljubljančana«, v svojem delu ohranjata mističnost in duhovitost, ki sta ju prinesla vsak s svojih hribov. Njun prvi odmevni skupni projekt Galapagos (2004) je poleg Slovenije obiskal tudi Avstrijo, Italijo, Slovaško, Francijo, Hrvaško in Srbijo. Tako kot izvirni arhipelag je bil tudi Kracinov in Lebnov Galapagos fantazijski svet, ki se je razvijal in rasel neodvisno in ločeno od okolice, tekstovno pa ga je podprl in umestil Jani Pirnat. Sledila je nadgradnja Galapagosa, turneja Animal Tour. S skupno razstavo Slike in kipi (2010) sta najprej nasto-

pila v Galeriji Equrna v Ljubljani, potem pa še v Sokolskem domu v Škofji Loki. Leta 2012 sta znova združila moči za festival Svetlobna gverila. Zanj sta skupaj z glasbenikom Sašem Kalanom ustvarila postavitev 2Πr, še en vase zaprt svet, ki se je v omejeni osvetlitvi razkrival v loopu, pozneje pa še v animaciji. Leta 2014 sta sodelovala pri zasnovi in realizaciji galerije Nočna izložba Pešak v AKC Metelkova, inovativnega razstavnega prostora, ki deluje kot izložba in/ali peep show.

V omenjeni galeriji sta postavila razstavo Spanje razuma (2014). Z Genskim oltarjem se v ekipo znova vračata Jani Pirnat in Sašo Kalan.



*Sculptor Damijan Kracina and painter Vladimir Leben were born in 1970 and 1971 respectively. Both studied at the Secondary School of Design and Photography in Ljubljana and at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, also in Ljubljana. While each having a prolific independent artistic career, they have created a number of projects together. Originally from small towns of Kobarid and Sevnica, they relocated to Ljubljana three decades ago and have been friends ever since. Although they now both live in the capital, the mystical and witty heritage remains inherent in their work.. Their first high-profile joint project, Galapagos (2004), toured Austria, Italy, Slovakia, France, Croatia and Serbia, in addition to Slovenia. Just like the original archipelago, Kracina and Leben's Galapagos was a fantastical world, one that developed and grew independently and separately from its surroundings. Art historian Jani Pirnat joined the team as conceptual and theoretical backup. Galapagos was followed by Animal Tour, an expansion of the original project. It was first exhibited as Paintings and Sculptures (2010) at Galerija Equrna in Ljublja-*

*na, and later at Sokolski Dom cultural centre in Škofja Loka. In 2012 they again joined forces for the Svetlobna Gverila (Lighting Guerrilla) festival, creating the 2Πr installation in collaboration with musician Sašo Kalan. 2Πr was again a private and mysterious world which was originally revealed in a loop under low lighting and later on as animation. In 2014 they collaborated on development and realisation of Nočna Izložba Pešak (Pešak Nocturnal Gallery) at AKC Metelkova, an innovative exhibition space that functions as a display case and/or peep show. There they presented their exhibition Sleep of Reason (2014). The Genetic Altarpiece project welcomes the return of Jani Pirnat and Sašo Kalan to the team.*



## **Jani Pirnat**

Kurator sodobne umetnosti (1974, Ljubljana) je diplomirani umetnostni zgodovinar, ustanovni član Društva za domače raziskave, kuratorsko umetniške skupine, ki jo od leta 2004 vodi skupaj z umetnico Alenko Pirman in kiparjem Damijanom Kracino. Kot kurator oziroma sodelavec je v preteklosti sodeloval z Zavodom SCCA Ljubljana, Narodnim muzejem Slovenije, Galerijo Škuc v Ljubljani, Centrom za sodobno umetnost Celje, Društvom Ljudmila. Vmes je živel v Osaki na Japonskem. Od 2016 pa je zaposlen kot kurator sodobne umetnosti v Galeriji Vžigalica v Ljubljani.

*A graduated art historian, Jani Pirnat is also a founding member of the Domestic Research Society, a curatorial art group he has been running together with artists Alenka Pirman and Damijan Kracina since 2004. In the past, he was curator for or otherwise collaborated with SCCA, Center for Contemporary Arts, Ljubljana, the National Museum of Slovenia, Škuc Gallery in Ljubljana, Center for Contemporary Arts Celje and Ljudmila Digital Media Lab in Ljubljana. He spent some time living in Osaka, Japan. Since 2016 he works as a curator at the Match Gallery in Ljubljana.*

## Sašo Kalan

Odraščanje v različnih družbenih okoljih je precej vplivalo na ustvarjanje Saše Kalana, ki se je rodil leta 1974 v Montrealu, pozneje nekaj let živel v Ljubljani, potem pa se preselil na Dunaj, kjer je končal študij zvočnega oblikovanja ter tam nekaj let tudi živel in ustvarjal. Trenutno deluje v Ljubljani, kjer je leta 2005 ustanovil zavod Sonolab, v okviru katerega deluje kot svobodni umetnik. Ukvarja se s komponiranjem avtorske glasbe, oblikovanjem zvoka in produkcijo sonoričnih vsebin. Njegova računalniška glasba, prepletena tudi z improvizacijo na klasičnih glasbilih, je nekakšen odprt zvočni prostor, sinergija glasbenih idej in zamisli. Zaradi svojega specifičnega odnosa do zvoka sodeluje z zelo različnimi umetniki in ustvarja na raznovrstnih področjih. Podpisuje se pod avtorsko glasbo za gledališke predstave, balet, sodobni ples, oblikovanje zvoka za film, pa tudi zvočne inštalacije in (v soavtorstvu) zvočno-pesniška dela.

*Growing up in a variety of social environments had a significant impact on the creative work of Sašo Kalan, who was born in Montreal in 1974, later spent several years in Ljubljana and then moved to Vienna, where he completed his studies in sound design and continued to live and work there for a number of years. He currently works in Ljubljana, where he set up the Sonolab studio in 2005 to provide a context for his work as a freelance artist. He works as composer, sound designer and producer of sonoric material. His computer-generated music is laced with improvisations on classical instruments and produces an open sonic space and a synergy of musical ideas and concepts. His specific approach to sound has led him to collaborate with a wide variety of artists and create in a range of different fields. His work includes original music scores for theatre, ballet and contemporary dance performances, film sound design sonic installations and sonic poetry (in collaboration).*





