

Giovanni Rubino

Scuola Normale Superiore,
Pisa

LOOKING AT ZAGREB: THE PUBLIC GALLERY AS A POPULARIZER OF KINETIC ART AND THE NEO-AVANT-GARDE ATTITUDE

Abstract

Keywords: Kinetic Art, exhibition, public gallery, Neo-Avant-Garde, New Tendencies

*The essay sheds light on how Italian scholars' thoughts about public gallery engagement in the art world matched those of their Croatian colleagues throughout the mid-1960s, when, both in Rome and Zagreb, debate focused on the educational purposes and exhibiting practices of public galleries. Despite the different types of governments in the two countries, from 1961, in Italy, Yugoslav modernist art was shown as part of several events, while at the same time, in Croatia, international exhibitions entitled *Nove tendencije* (New Tendencies) led to the popularization of a neo-avant-gardist attitude under the umbrella-term "new tendencies". In both cases, artists and scholars united to proclaim a new mission for the public gallery and assumed the latter as a fundamental platform for endorsing freedom in art-making. However, around 1965, this kind of utopian vision was defeated for a range of reasons, above all, marketing and politics.*

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INTRODUCTION

When the third edition of the *Nove tendencije* (New Tendencies) exhibition opened in Zagreb in 1965, the eponymous art movement had reached its zenith. This was an accomplishment on the part of critics and artists who had played a crucial role in the spread of the New Tendencies on the European scene. It was possible thanks to the intense cultural exchanges that had taken place between Italian public institutions and their counterparts in the Socialist Republic of Croatia, which was then part of the Yugoslav Federation. Artists involved in this movement had rejected the poetics of Abstract Expressionism and chose to turn back to historical Avant-Garde theories. Thus, those artists branded themselves with the adjective "new" to signify the eclipse of painting as the unique path for artistic pursuits. They therefore went on to represent themselves as the Neo-Avant-Garde. The primary issue in this historical and theoretical debate focused on establishing the role of public galleries in popularising the modernist movement in the shape of Neo-Avant-Garde art, thus providing an aesthetic education to a mass audience.

Specifically, the Roman art historian Giulio Carlo Argan and Palma Bucarelli, the director of the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome, as well as Umbro Apollonio as curator of the Archives of the International Art Biennial in Venice, considered the kinetic-visual art of the New Tendencies

useful for transforming the traditional educational task of institutions, looking in particular at what was occurring in Yugoslavia and Croatia. Thus, in both these countries, we can see how many shared ideas and views converged with the emergence of the gallery establishment in Zagreb due to the personalities of Božo Bek, Radoslav Putar, Zdenka Munk and Vera Horvat Pintarić. By aligning the data on political and artistic exchanges, it is clear how, in different ways, one could no longer speak of State art, as during Fascism in Italy or in the Soviet bloc. On the contrary, in this specific context, the State was supposed to popularize and support modernist freedom and a neo-avant-gardist attitude through its galleries.

ITALIANS DISCOVER YUGOSLAV MODERNISM

In Italy, several art critics, scholars and artists became interested in the Yugoslav cultural milieu in general, and that in Croatia in particular,¹ thanks to the renewed agreements between Rome and Belgrade after 1954.² A pivotal first step in this direction took place in 1961 in Rimini, when the third biennial Morgan's Painting Prize, sponsored by the Colorificio Toscano in Pisa, promoted relations in painting and sculpture between Italy and Yugoslavia. The members of the jury were Giulio Carlo Argan for Italy and Zoran Kržišnik for Yugoslavia, while the award-winning Croatian artists were the sculptor Dušan Džamonja and the painter Oton Gliha, both of whom would achieve growing acclaim in Italy partly due to the contribution of the art historian Vera Horvat Pintarić.³ Džamonja and Gliha exhibited in Rimini not just for opportunistic political reasons, but also as an early signal of a renewed emphasis on the fact that the two Adriatic shores had both paid bitterly for their experience as recently "resurrected" nations after World War II, as Italian art critic Francesco Arcangeli stated in the exhibition catalogue.⁴ This key statement underlined how after World War II, during the Cold War years, Modernism in the visual arts became a common style that also occurred at an institutional level, playing a role in cultural exchanges.⁵

On the other hand, in Zagreb, the *Nove tendencije* (New Tendencies) project, conceived initially by the Brazilian artist Almir da Silva Mavignier and Croatian art critics and art historians Matko Meštrović and Radoslav Putar, began as a way to bypass both the international art market and major

1 On this debate, see Ljiljana Kolešnik, "Geometric Abstraction in Croatian Art of the 1950s," in *Art and Ideology: The Nineteen-Fifties in a Divided Europe*, ed. Ljiljana Kolešnik (Zagreb: Croatian Society of Art Historians, 2004), 80–89.

2 On this issue, see more in Alessio Radosi, "Evoluzione interna della Jugoslavia 1955–1965" [Inner Development of Yugoslavia 1955–1965], *Quaderni*, no. 14 (2002): 7–126.

3 On this topic, see Vera Horvat-Pintarić, "Pittura jugoslava oggi" [Yugoslav Paintings Today], *La Biennale di Venezia*, no. 35 (1959): 20–29.

4 *Premio Morgan's Paint: III biennale internazionale per la pittura e la scultura, Italia-Jugoslavia: catalogo dell'esposizione* [Premio Morgan's Paint: III International Biennial for Painting and Sculpture, Italy-Yugoslavia: exhibition catalogue], ed. Eugenio Riccomini (Pisa: Colorificio Toscano, 1961).

5 See Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta. Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 61–104.

manifestations, such as the Venice Biennale, because they had become overly exploited by governments for political agendas and frequently pandered to the private gallery business.⁶ Accordingly, the *Nove tendencije* exhibition aimed to be a non-aligned event compared to those efforts such as Action Painting in the United States, Art Informel in Europe and Socialist Realism in the former Soviet bloc.⁷ Yet, this project was still in its beginnings, and attracted more and more international and Italian attention in the following years.⁸

In 1962, exhibitions focusing on Yugoslav art held in Venice and Rome increased in number. In Rome, a major show entitled *Contemporary Art in Yugoslavia* was held at the National Gallery in May, directed by Palma Bucarelli, albeit with the collaboration of Argan.⁹ This exhibition occurred under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Education and the Rome Quadriennale and within the framework of the Italian-Yugoslavian cultural agreements. The Executive Committee included Božo Bek in its ranks, whereas the painter Ivan Picelj, a former member of the Neo-Constructivist group EXAT 51 and a recent participant in *Nove tendencije*, created the graphic design for the catalogue. The involvement of Picelj, who was recruited as a graphic designer, was justified because of his previous participation with the architect Vjenceslav Richter in several Yugoslav world trade fair pavilions.¹⁰ Moreover, his participation established a powerful connection between Neo-Avant-Garde artists and public institutions appealing to the Italian art system, where scholars were debating the same questions at the time.¹¹

To appreciate the role of Ivan Picelj and other artists, it is necessary to look through two articles that the director of the Muzej za umjetnost i obrt (Museum for Art and Crafts) in Zagreb, Zdenka Munk, wrote between 1962 and 1963, where she mainly outlined her vision of museum communication

6 For more on *Nove tendencije*, see Armin Medosch, *The New Tendencies. Art at the Threshold of the Information Revolution 1961–1978* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2016).

7 Ongoing changes in both the political and economic course of Yugoslavia, beginning in 1961, led to a new range of interactions with both the Western and Eastern blocs under the well-known label of Non-Alignment. This also had consequential repercussions on the art world as a possible third way-approach to dealing with public and private institutions. On this topic, see Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Andrew B. Wachtel, *Making a Nation, Breaking a Nation. Literature and Cultural Politics in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 134–146; and, Bojana Videkanić, *Nonaligned Modernism. Socialist Postcolonial Aesthetics in Yugoslavia, 1945–1985* (Montreal: McGill's University Press, 2019).

8 On New Tendencies as an international network, see Ljiljana Kolešnik, "The Transition of New Tendencies from Neo-Avant-Garde Subculture to Institutional Mainstream Culture. An Example of Network Analysis," in *Modern and Contemporary Artists' Networks. An Inquiry into Digital History of Art and Architecture*, eds. Ljiljana Kolešnik and Sanja Horvatinčić (Zagreb: Institute of Art History Online Editions, 2018), 84–122. On the cultural milieu of the period, see more in Ljiljana Kolešnik, ed., *Socijalizam i modernost: umjetnost, kultura, politika 1950–1974* [Socialism and Modernity: Art, Culture, Politics 1950–1974] (Zagreb: Institut za povijest umjetnosti, Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, 2012); Zvonko Maković, ed., *Šezdesete u Hrvatskoj – Mit i stvarnost* [Sixties in Croatia – Myth and Reality] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 2018).

9 *L'arte contemporanea in Jugoslavia* [Contemporary Art in Yugoslavia], ed. Majda Jerman (Roma: De Luca 1962).

10 See *EXAT 51. Synthese der Kunst im Jugoslawien der Nachkriegszeit* [EXAT 51. Synthesis of the Arts in Post-War Yugoslavia], eds. Katia Baudin and Tihomir Milovac (Dortmund: Kettler, 2017).

11 *Le funzioni del Museo. Arte, museo, pubblico nella contemporaneità* [The Functions of the Museum. Art, Museum, and Audience in the Contemporary World], ed. Stefano Chiodi (Firenze: Le Lettere, 2009), 133–134.

aimed at educating the public not only in terms of historical subjects but also in terms of visual education. In the first article, Munk argued for renewing the educational function of the museum, which would not only provide historical knowledge of the collections but also aspire to enlighten the public.¹² In the second essay, the author reflected on the ideal, efficient spatial arrangements of the museum through which the public could move and, according to Munk, appreciate the collections through the engagement of various artists as graphic designers and decorators. The posters, paintings and objects were supposed to be stimuli for a changed sensibility that one could experience in everyday life in socialist and industrial society.¹³ Consequently, the educational function of the museum was upgraded according to the latest standards of a specific art trend, both in Picelj's works and in those of his Italian colleagues, in which it was possible to recognise several significant traits: the revival of the constructivist tradition, socialist ideological engagement and an approach to industrial design for collective aesthetic education. In other words, as art historian Jerko Denegri stated, these ideas gathered around Yugoslav and socialist modernism.¹⁴

In conjunction with the 1962 Venice Biennale and under its auspices, the exhibition *25 Yugoslav Painters* opened in the lagoon at the Bevilacqua La Masa Opera Gallery. On the basis of this exhibition, the Slovenian painter Janez Bernik, the Serbian sculptor Olga Jevrić and the Croatian painter Oton Gliha achieved great acclaim.¹⁵ If the Rome-based show had established ties between Božo Bek and Palma Bucarelli, the lagoon event reinforced Bek's relations with Umbro Apollonio, art historian and curator of the Venice Biennale Archive (today the Historical Archive for Contemporary Arts – hereafter cited as ASAC).¹⁶ Like Argan, Apollonio was closely bound to milieux close to the Italian Socialist and Communist Parties and fostered knowledge of neo-avant-gardist art-making as a motor of collective education through public and private institutions.¹⁷ Furthermore, he was constantly in the foreground of the Yugoslav artistic scene. Apollonio moved from Ljubljana (as an Italian consultant for several editions of the Ljubljana Biennale of Graphic Art and the Forma Viva symposium) to Zagreb, where, since the end of the 1950s,

12 Zdenka Munk, "Materijal – Tehnika – Funkcija" [Materials – Technique – Function], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 112 (1962): 1–2.

13 Zdenka Munk, "Arhitektura muzejskih prostora" [On the Architecture of Museum Space], *Arhitektura*, no. 5-6, (1962–1963): 7–14.

14 Jerko Denegri, "Inside or Outside 'Socialist Modernism'? Radical Views on the Yugoslav Scene, 1950–1970," in *Impossible Histories. Historical Avant-Gardes, Neo-Avant-Gardes and Post-Avant-Gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, eds. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković (Cambridge: The MIT Press 2003), 170–208.

15 *25 pittori jugoslavi* [25 Yugoslav Painters], ed. Pietro Zampetti (Venezia: Stamperie di Venezia, 1962).

16 On Apollonio and the Venice Biennale, see Vittorio Pajusco, "Umbro Apollonio e l'Archivio della Biennale di Venezia (1948–1972)" [Umbro Apollonio and the Archive of the Venice Biennale (1948–1972)], in *Storie della Biennale di Venezia*, eds. Stefania Portinari and Nico Stringa (Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari 2019), 149–168.

17 On this topic, see Umbro Apollonio, "Principi Stato Industria Arte" [Principles State Industry Art], *Esso Rivista*, no. 5 (1955): 6.

Horvat Pintarić became his personal and professional correspondent for the *La Biennale di Venezia* magazine.¹⁸

NOVE TENDENCIJE AS A NEO AVANT-GARDE EXHIBITION IN A TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY

According to Argan's criticisms, another open issue related to public institutions such as the Venice Biennale or the Rome National Gallery was whether they should play a didactic role and act as promoters of the New Tendencies because, in technologically advanced society, the general audience's capacity to enjoy contemporary artworks is not yet strong enough.¹⁹ Moreover, Argan and Apollonio were both looking at abstract-kinetic art trends not only in reaction to, for example, US Pop Art, which had flooded the art scene, but as a medium for an aesthetic didactics focused on the theory of visual perception.²⁰ Therefore, with the near lack of an independent art market in Croatia (unlike in Italy), they assumed that the model embodied by New Tendencies combined public patronage and the Neo-Avant-Garde.

In addition to the Venice-Rome axis, the Republic of San Marino also emerged alongside Rimini as an important site. In 1963, for the 4th San Marino Biennale entitled *Beyond the Art Informel*, the organising committee included Apollonio, Argan, Bucarelli and Kržišnik, as well as Italian artists such as Group N, Getulio Alviani, Enzo Mari and Group T. The Croatian participants, beyond the aforementioned Dušan Džamonja, Oton Gliha and Ivan Picelj, were Julije Knifer and Vojin Bakić. Džamonja and Gliha were among the awarded artists, while first place was assigned *ex aequo* to Groups N and Zero – though their success was controversial.²¹ Bucarelli's statement in the catalogue stressed that a new aspect of the fourth edition of the Award was the fact that its jury members were museum directors and that the selection would take place via "public discussion". Furthermore, Bucarelli pointed out how in the contemporary context, burdened by the "growing pressures of the market", the museum should carry out an "educational function" and the mission of "selecting authentic values and introducing them to the knowledge of the general public." Lastly, as Bucarelli argued, this exhibition achieved a whole cycle of education, selection and judgement, thus finally closing the gap

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18 See an extensive reconstruction of this relationship in Giovanni Rubino, "Jedan kritički i umjetnički projekt između Italije i Hrvatske: Nove tendencije kroz korespondenciju Vere Horvat Pintarić i Umbra Apollonija" [A Critical and Artistic Project between Italy and Croatia: New Tendencies by Way of the Correspondence between Vera Horvat Pintarić and Umbro Apollonio], in *Imago, imaginatio, imaginabile. Zbornik u čast Zvonka Makovića*. [Imago, Imaginatio, Imaginabile. Festschrift in honor of Zvonko Maković], eds. Dragan Damjanović and Lovorka Magaš Bilandžić (Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, 2018), 341–361.

19 See Giulio Carlo Argan, "Musei d'arte moderna" [Museums of Modern Art], in *Museo perché Museo come*, ed. Pietro Romanelli (Roma: De Luca Editore, 1980), 39–45.

20 On this topic, see Frances Follin, *Embodied Visions. Bridget Riley, Op Art and The Sixties* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 47–61.

21 See a chronicle of the San Marino Biennial in Matko Meštrović, "Presedan-za sad bez presedana" [An Unprecedented Precedent for Now], *Čovjek i prostor*, no. 128 (1963): 4.

between exhibition practice and the museum's educational role.²² Even though the event took place thanks to the collaboration of private galleries, the public institutions involved included the Venice Biennale Archive, the National Gallery in Rome and Zagreb's Gallery of Contemporary Art.

At the same time, the San Marino Biennial coincided with *Nove tendencije 2*, the exhibition in 1963 that definitively launched Zagreb on the international Neo-Avant-Garde scene.²³ Aside from the divisions that arose among the artists that caused an inner split, the exhibition curators, whose approach to the didactic function of the gallery was similar to Bucarelli's, aimed to encourage their visitors to engage in an open discussion about New Tendencies.²⁴ The event thus signalled a strong liaison between Italian and Croatian milieus and set the stage for the 1964 Venice Biennale, when Pop Art became a counterpart to the international breakthrough of the New Tendencies. The latter were turned into a sort of "abstract" pop and categorized rapidly by the North American art scene under the label of Optical Art.²⁵ Against this mainstream understanding of the New Tendencies, both Italian and Croatian scholars rose to assert the leftist European origins of the Neo-Avant-Garde movement.²⁶ At the Venice Biennale, Argan suggested an exhibition that, for the first time, was devoted to museums in the world that are separate from the art market. Among the museums involved was Zagreb's Gallery of Contemporary Art, which was hailed as an outstanding institution for the achievements – outlined above – of the *Nove tendencije* exhibitions.²⁷

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Argan's speech at the 1964 Convention of Rimini also clarified the political sense of the involvement of the Zagreb-based Gallery, which was also his focus in Verucchio and San Marino in September. The theme was *Technique and Ideology*, and the artists of the New Tendencies exemplified these two principles of the debate. Technique or technology, historically the flagship of Marxist, socialist and Soviet principles, featured in the abstract-kinetic artworks, whereas the ideology balanced out the anti-humanist mindset of technologically advanced capitalist culture.²⁸

22 See *IV Biennale Internazionale d'arte della Repubblica di S. Marino* [Fourth International Art Biennial of the Republic of S. Marino], ed. Gerardo F. Dasi (Rimini: Grafiche Mattei, 1963), 15.

23 See more in Ivana Bago, "Case Study 1: Nove Tendencije 2 (New Tendencies 2)," in *Contemporary Art and Capitalist Modernisation. A Transregional Perspective*, ed. Octavian Esanu (New York: Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 121–138; and George W. Rickey, "The New Tendency (Nouvelle Tendence – Recherche Continue)," *Art Journal*, vol. 23, no. 4 (1964): 272–273; *Nuove Tendenze 2 [New Tendencies 2]*, *Marcatré*, no. 4–5 (1964): 81–90.

24 "Izložba 'nove tendencije 2' u Galeriji suvremene umjetnosti i rasprava o tome u Muzeju za umjetnost i obrt [New Tendencies 2 at the Gallery of Contemporary Art and a Discussion about It at the Art and Crafts Museum]," *Večernji list*, August 1, 1963: 3.

25 Jon Borgzinner, "Art: Op Art: Pictures that Attack the Eye," *Time*, October 23 (1964): 42–44.

26 On this topic, see Radoslav Putar, "Pop Art, Op Art," *15 Dana*, no. 9–10 (1965): 12–13; Giuseppe Gatt, "Pop e op verso l'integrazione" [*Pop and Op Towards Integration*], *Marcatré*, no. 23–25 (1966): 102–103.

27 *XXXII Biennale 1964. Mostra "Arte d'oggi nei musei,"* File 133, Visual Arts Series, Historic Fund, ASAC, Venice; *XXXII Biennale 1964, Folder Galerija suvremene umjetnosti Zagreb*, File 124, Visual Arts Series, Historic Fund, ASAC, Venice.

28 On this topic, see more in Jerko Denegri, *Exat-51 and New Tendencies. Constructive Approach to Art*, trans. Vesna Mahečić (Zagreb: Horetsky, 2000): 276–282.

Argan thus argued that the development of technique was effectively carried out by an ideologically enhanced nation, Yugoslavia. According to him, in that country ideological dilemmas were felt less strongly because they had mostly been resolved, therefore allowing attention to the subject of technique.²⁹ The participants at the conference included the already mentioned Apollonio and Bucarelli, as well as Meštrović, Horvat Pintarić and Richter for Croatia, Aleksa Čelebonović from Belgrade and Kržišnik from Ljubljana. A conspicuous number of participants from both parties was another essential factor in setting up the third edition of *Nove tendencije*.

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF THE GALLERY'S ROLE IN MODERN ART

Throughout the Summer of 1965, the third exhibition *Nove tendencije*, mainly planned by the artist Enzo Mari, saw more significant participation on the part of Italian scholars and artists.³⁰ This edition was named *Nova tendencija* in the singular (New Tendency) to emphasise the new tendency of art-making as a possible strategy in contrast to Pop Art and, after the New York-based exhibit *The Responsive Eye*, to the commodification that occurred with Optical Art. Bucarelli played a decisive role in this as the director of National Gallery, which proposed itself as a promoter of New Tendency artists. Bucarelli's main point was to demonstrate the counter-market value of her gallery, mainly due to its role as a centre not only of information but also of aesthetic education. She stressed the need for up-to-date artistic information that would coincide with the need for security and stability of social values.³¹ Bucarelli claimed that New Tendencies, according to the logic of their discourse, intentionally avoided the art market, which in turn allowed the possibility of becoming a primary agent of communication between the institution and the audience. Concerning the general practice of educating, Bucarelli first pointed out a methodological line shared between the engaged Italian and Yugoslav institutions. Secondly, she suggested increasing the production of multiple artworks by artists such as the GRAV or N groups. Lastly, she supported the introduction of innovative display techniques. Thus, didactics, Neo-Avant-Garde and public galleries would have reshaped the education of the public toward a more critical perspective. Specifically, considering the advancement of studies in Croatia, Bucarelli also concluded her agenda with the explicit call for a meeting of museum directors that would be held in 1965, if possible, in Yugoslavia. The speech was met with a considerable degree of enthusiasm in the Yugoslav milieu, prompting Božo Bek to endorse the Italian scholar's proposal to involve the museum directors

29 Giulio Carlo Argan, "Tecnica e ideologia in un convegno a Rimini" [Techniques and Ideology at the Rimini Conference], *Le Arti*, no. 10 (1964): 32–33.

30 "Bando di concorso per Nova tendencija 3" [Competition Notice for Nova tendencija 3], *Domus*, no. 423 (1965): 2, 56.

31 Radoslav Putar, ed., *Nova tendencija 3* (Zagreb: Interpublic, 1965).

of Belgrade and Ljubljana, respectively, in a future conference on the same theme.³²

This scenario can be evaluated in light of two chief directions of research corresponding, on one hand, with a general focus on the technical and scholarly status of the museum as an offshoot of the State's educational aims in the 1960s and, on the other hand, with the much stronger specific connection between the Croatian or Yugoslav cultural establishment and Bucarelli. The latter topic is specifically related to the influence of Zdenka Munk, whose writings reflected the sort of an updating of museological studies that Bucarelli had previously identified in Yugoslavia.³³ In 1965, Munk, as president of the Yugoslav section of International Council of Museums (ICOM), attended an official congress held between Skopje and Ohrid in Macedonia, where guidelines for the management and educational activities of Yugoslav museums were discussed. In her conference proceedings, she highlighted a positive attitude toward interchanges between museums, industrial design production and the applied arts.³⁴

Similarly, as scholars have widely recognised,³⁵ the missionary enthusiasm with which Bucarelli backed Neo-Avant-Garde art-making tried to turn the traditional gallery into a living organism, thus encouraging a transition toward an avant-gardist attitude popularised by a public institution. Unfortunately, because the market and politics were stronger than the ideological and theoretical assumptions that had allowed the organization of *Nova tendencija 3*, New Tendencies failed to develop according to the aspirations of Bucarelli and Argan, either in the West or the East.

Concerning the Western art world, at the 14th Convention of Rimini, Verucchio and San Marino in the September 1965, Argan pointed out art should serve a collective educational mission. Its tools were the museums of modern art, i.e. the legitimate source of aesthetic education, but there was a crisis in the art system because public institutions had shrunk to the market level.³⁶ After 1965, in fact, and because of the popularity of the kinetic art and the counter-cultural struggles of 1968, the ideological and institutional solidity

32 Božo Bek, *Letter to Miodrag B. Protić, Belgrade Moderna Galerija, and to Zoran Kržišnik, Ljubljana Moderna Galerija*, Folder NT3, no. 89 from 251 to 699, Fund NT, Muzej suvremene umjetnosti (hereafter as MSU), Zagreb.

33 Bucarelli replied to inform her colleague about an impediment to attending the conference in Brezovica, arranged for *Nova tendencija 3*, in Palma Bucarelli, *Letter to Zdenka Munk*, Folder Suradnici_a-d, Folder Bucarelli, Fund NT, MSU Zagreb.

34 "O radu saveza muzejskih društava Jugoslavije od aprila 1962. godine do maja 1965. godine" [On the Work of the Union of Museum Societies of Yugoslavia from April 1962 to May 1965], ed. Zdenka Munk, *Muzeji: časopis za muzeološka pitanja*, no.18 (1965): 39–48.

35 Sandra Pinto, "Quale modernità: un secolo di ordinamenti sullo statuto contemporaneo e sulla sede" [What Modernity: A Century of Regulations on the Contemporary Statute and on the Office], in *Galleria Nazionale d'arte moderna. Le collezioni. Il XX secolo [The National Gallery of Modern Art. Collections. The 20th Century]*, ed. Sandra Pinto (Milano: Electa, 2005), 13–37.

36 Giulio Carlo Argan, "14 Convegno internazionale artisti, critici e studiosi d'arte" [The Fourteenth International Conference of Artists, Critics and Art Scholars], *D'Ars Agency*, no. 3 (1965): 1–5.

of the New Tendencies initially faltered and then declined. A new direction also arose in 1969 through the transformation of the public gallery's mission away from total State involvement. For example, the exhibition *Living in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form* at the Bern Kunsthalle demonstrated this due to its sponsorship by the Philip Morris corporation.³⁷ On the Eastern side, it was not only the general art system that went into crisis but also the specific Zagreb framework, in which the New Tendencies had developed since 1961. Art critics began to criticise this framework by showing how the political officialdom of the Communist Party employed the art-science connection of kinetic art as propaganda in *Nove tendencije*.³⁸

CONCLUSION

All of the above-mentioned exhibitions from 1961 to 1965, held in both Italy and Croatia, could be considered pivotal events in the light of two conceptual frames. The first, most prevalent frame is associated with the educational and scientific role of the public gallery as an agent of State. The second, more specific frame is related to the ties that Giulio Carlo Argan, Umbro Apollonio and Palma Bucarelli had with the Croatian cultural milieu. Bucarelli played a leading role in breaking the ground for a specifically Italian way to institute a new museum as a State Body involving academia, in the figure of scholars such as Argan or Apollonio. Furthermore, Bucarelli believed that a public gallery should be a hub for collecting, disseminating and developing the latest art-making research, as was the case in Zagreb. In addition to its preservation aim, a new public gallery should focus its activities on teaching art history and the theory of visual perception in order to become a vehicle for a specific cultural, aesthetic and political message not intended for an elite.

In Zagreb, Croatian scholars built a system of international collaborations to emancipate artists from the market's influence and private galleries' monopoly. The State, via museums, would be a promulgator of popular aesthetic commodities, while the museums themselves would be not mere containers but places to promote the dissemination of more advanced artistic trends. However, this utopian vision became unviable due to the socio-cultural transformations that occurred from 1968 onwards, as was obvious when a relatively new community of artists and scholars met in Zagreb for the exhibition entitled *Tendencije 4* (Tendencies) – without the word “new” – in 1969. Effectively, the change in the name corresponded to the demise of the Neo-Avant-Garde idea as such. In other words, the artistic Avant-Garde would not change everyday life unless it turned into politically engaged aesthetic research, as would happen in the 1970s.

37 On this topic, see *Harald Szeemann. Individual Methodology*, ed. Florence Derieux (Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2007).

38 Donald D. Egbert, *Social Radicalism and the Arts* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 715.

