

galerie frank elbaz.

## Collages: Tomislav Gotovac, Julije Knifer, Mangelos and Mladen Stilinović curated by Branka Stipančić

April 29 - June 17, 2023  
Opening Saturday, April 29

galerie frank elbaz is pleased to present *Collages* curated by Branka Stipančić. The exposition will feature rare works from the 60s and 70s by Tomislav Gotovac, Julije Knifer, Mangelos, and Mladen Stilinović.

The links between these four artists from the Zagreb conceptual scene are different: Julije Knifer and Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos were members of the neo-avantgarde group Gorgona (1961 – 1966); Tomislav Gotovac and Mladen Stilinović started as experimental filmmakers, and both later expanded their practice to photography, actions, performances, and installations. While Knifer and Mangelos rarely made collages, Gotovac and Stilinović did so quite often throughout their careers. And all four of them, as promoters of free thinking and behavior, influenced future generations of artists with their work and charisma. Yet, as for many other artists who lived in Eastern Europe, a lot of time had to pass before their works gained international recognition and were admitted into renowned museums such as The Centre Pompidou, MoMA, Tate Modern, Van Abbemuseum, MuMOK, Reina Sofia and others.

Julije Knifer's *Meanders* (1924 – 2004) are well known in France, where the artist lived since 1991, but the ensemble of 30 small *Untitled collages* (1959 – 1961), reveals the origin and evolution of his key motif. With an interest in the logic of simple and powerful compositional relations, vertical and horizontal, expressly rhythmical, Knifer explored different variations with rectangular black pieces of paper until he discovered the meander, a motif that stayed with him throughout his career. The recently published book *Collages for Meanders* (Osmos, New York, 2022) thematizes these extraordinary collages, which served as a starting point for many of Knifer's paintings.

Dimitrije Bašičević Mangelos (1921 – 1987), critic, curator, and artist, was like Julije Knifer devoted to the concept of anti-painting and developed his idea of the negation of paintings by creating them from words. He used words to shift the focus from viewing to thinking. He also introduced philosophical and scientific discourse into his practice and found his mode of working somewhere between artistic practice and theory. His collages belong to the series

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entitled *Phenomenon Picasso* and are part of the integral thematic exhibition (1972) in which he confronted both Picasso and his critics.

The majority of Tomislav Gotovac's (1937 - 2010) collages were created in 1964. He incorporated different elements and words from everyday life into them, he "grabbed" them from everyday life in the same documentary way as he used simple situations in his films or later in his performances. Fragmentation, recording, and cataloging reality were Gotovac's primary activities, but they were also powerful, suggestive visual symbols. Gotovac, whose work was close to Fluxus, combined art and reality in a very direct and clear manner and expressed the ideas and emotions of a generation that radicalized their attitude to art and life. Exhibited for the first time, the audience is invited to discover his artist's books filled with collages (1970).

Mladen Stilinović's (1947 - 2016), first works were experimental films and collages. Some of his collages display his poems, which are inserted among clippings from fashion and other magazines. He was also interested in experimenting with transparent backgrounds that make the different layers visible, he realized a number of his books on plastic bags (1972 - 1974); flipping through the pages, one has the impression to be watching a small animation.

The artist's books by Tomislav Gotovac and Mladen Stilinović have been photographed, to allow the public to browse through all the pages.

- Branka Stipančić

You can scan the QR code below to view translations of the works.

