

# Boštjan Drinovec

## OBSERVATION STATION K23

22 December 2023–20 January 2024

MMC KIBLA/KiBela

The sculptor Boštjan Drinovec has already been a guest at KIBLA several times: in 2010 with a solo exhibition *Cacophonic Generator* at KiBela space for art and in 2019 he took part in the international group exhibition *Tense Present* at the exhibition and event venue KIBLA PORTAL, where he was presented as one of the referential artists at a public discussion. His entire oeuvre is characterized by original sculptural structures, for which he mostly uses metal, but also works with other sculptural materials in which he occasionally incorporates nature, for example fruit. His artistic poetics are exceptional, not only in Slovenia but also internationally, as I cannot remember seeing anything comparable in a European or world gallery. With a special approach to creation and many years of fruitful production, he has created a completely unique oeuvre that can be characterized as close to nature, environmentally conscious, committed and critical, as well as subtly ironic, most directly in figurative, but also in other works.

Perhaps it should be emphasized that he is the creator of *Metelkova Mesto*, as he writes in his biography, among other things. The copy of the statue of David on the facade of the Alcatraz Gallery is an iconic image by which we recognize Metelkova. His heterogeneous sculptures are a kind of alternative to established Slovenian sculpture, which still adheres to more traditional materials, but formally moves between figuration and abstraction or between fine art and conceptualism, which Drinovec overturns in each of his exhibitions. His sculptures indeed tell stories and act as realistic devices with specific functions, which are further characterized by their titles and depend on how they are placed in space, be it indoors or outdoors, in a public urban or natural environment. He constantly cultivates the »do-it-yourself« principle by selecting and assembling materials, combining them into individual formations, which he approaches with meticulous precision, so that one could call him a »sculpture engineer« when he builds bearings into the primarily visual elements of the sculpture and makes them moveable. When he adds an electric motor to them, they become kinetic, and sometimes he also equips them with light and video. Of course, he makes everything himself.

The last cycle, which is also presented in the current installation in Maribor under the title *Observation Station K23*, consists of devices, a kind of observation stations whose use we do not know. As they have different shapes, they can of course also have different functions and purposes. Impressive formations are transformed into kinetic sculptures whose (non) function depends above all on the energy they receive, but also on their location; outdoors, where they are powered by the wind, indoors they are usually connected to electricity. While in both cases they maintain their presence, outdoors they are conceived as a kind of weather station in perpetual motion and indoors as subtle structures made of stainless steel, bearings and a mechanism characterized by a subtle construction based on mechanics, usually with the addition of electronics, while the unplugged sculpture shows a video of how it works in nature when powered by the force of the wind.

Production: ACE KIBLA

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MMC KIBLA/KiBela, Ulica kneza Koclja 9, Maribor

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



In the decades of popularizing ecological thinking, however, the »ecology of mind« that we at KIBLA have promoted through numerous writings, programs and projects has unfortunately not caught on. Mainstream politics, numerous online social networks and also mainstream media channels are being used to pollute and stink up humanity, our being and our minds and treat us as easily manipulated beings. In recent years, it has become abundantly clear how humanity is polluted when people become nothing more than consumables for the goals of capital and its commodities, whose only role is to provide the political class with the legitimacy to decide on our behalf and in our stead how to capitalize as much as possible on their transient status. As we see, it chooses no paths, and while it continues to rant about the »green transition«, it shovels taxpayers' money into the pharmaceutical and military industries. Therefore, this »green transition« can also be seen as »killing as many people as possible«, which is what we have seen for many years, decades, centuries, in recent years first with the pandemic of the virus from the lab and dubious if not harmful vaccines and with the constant sparking of wars around the world. Instead of calling it »the green transition«, it would be more appropriate to call it »the green departure«.

Drinovec's kinetic sculptures stand completely outside this black hole into which we are mercilessly thrown, for they are not only elegant and graceful, but also superbly constructed and assembled. And they work. Both in themselves and in space. Seen together, they are both spectacular and vulnerable. They show their interdependence and their obvious fragility, but also emphasize their role and their permanence with their intended functions. It is as if the sculptures themselves take on the characteristics of their creator, or rather – the author transfers his own characteristics to the works. A thoughtful approach and intuition, complexity and simplicity, the processual and static nature of art-making are all integral parts of Drinovec's artistic universe. His recognizable esthetics and original forms not only deal with technical and technological composition, but with their "functionality" also indirectly examine our attitude towards nature and the environment, as well as energy and greening through one of the forces – wind – and electricity.

*You are invited to use the Observatorij app (<https://observatorij.rhiz0.me>) and enter the exhibition as an observer or actor. The link is valid during the opening hours of MMC KIBLA/KiBela until the end of the exhibition.*

App



Collaborators and assistance:

Jurij Podgoršek, programming – Observatorij K23

Borut Savski, electronics – Observatorij K23

Andrej Kamnik, video montage – Observation devices / video documentation of tests and performance 2020–2023

## BIOGRAPHY

**Boštjan Drinovec** (\*1973, Ljubljana) is an academic sculptor and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree. He has been teaching sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Ljubljana since 2008. He is involved in the Metelkova mesto Autonomous Cultural Zone project and is largely responsible for its visual identity. He is active in the fields of small sculpture (Small Rebels, Lego Thinker ...), gallery set-ups (Tree Particle, Dance of Wind, Fortyeighttimesaroundtheworld, Endless World, Light Station ...), kinetic (Moebius Strip, Cacophonous Generator) and sound installations (Kymatikon, Retrophony, Sonic Station – in collaboration with Primož Oberžan) and has created sculptures in public spaces.