

Meta Grgurevič

GRAIN OF GOLD

20 October–18 November 2023

MMC KIBLA/KiBela

Meta-gold and meta-devices

Meta Grgurevič has presented her works at Kibla twice so far: in 2010 in KiBela in a duo with Marko Požlep in the exhibition *Queens and Criminals*, and in 2013 at Portal in the large-scale and exceptional international group exhibition *Materiality*. Although this is the first time she is exhibiting solo, it seems as if she is consistently continuing the path of “queen” and “material” with the title *Grain of Gold*. What could be more appropriate than “gold” in our Kibla context... Meta is known for her collaboration with other artists and researchers; in this project she has collaborated, among others, with the Jožef Stefan Institute.

Her sophisticated and humorous “devices”, in the simplicity of their forms and the complexity of their structures, reveal themselves as exquisitely designed and precisely made objects, which, with their direct yet multi-sensory message, draw on the experiential, the empirical, and derive from the scientific, the exploratory, the searching, the intellectual and the physical. The grain of gold, of course, as a metaphor for possessions and human desires, which are the domain of everyone and everybody, and the wealth shared by the 1% of homo sapiens on Earth, is a demythicization of consumerism, with an ironic deviation in the general, popular and populist, the popular system, addressing the masses.

Gold as a symbol of prestige, the basis for currency and (long-)durability, which is why it is also used in modern electronics, computers and mobile devices, as it does not oxidize easily and at the same time it is simple and rewarding to work with. Gold can be very easily forged into very thin sheets due to its ductility (the ability of a material to withstand plastic deformation without breaking). It is possible to produce particularly thin gold foils, only 2000 layers of atoms thick. In its elemental state, this precious metal is yellow in color and has a strong luster, it is soft, very stretchable, heavy (relative density 19.3). The melting point of gold is 1064.76 °C; it is one of the fixed points for calibrating thermometers. Gold is composed exclusively of one stable isotope and is one of the 22 monoisotopic elements. Unless alloyed, this heavy metal is as soft as tin. Since gold can be alloyed with many metals very easily, its physical properties can be altered accordingly.

So in a technologically defined and digitally encoded world, there is no person who does not have some gold. Everyone with a modern electronic device owns gold and throws it away when they replace their mobile phone, in a way not only devaluing its value but also nullifying its symbolic meaning. Gold as modern technological waste. It was once the cause of the gold rush, of gold miners killing each other for its possession, of gold being washed out of rivers in droves, of migrations, wars and invasions, of empires expanding and colonizing other nations, countries and entire continents in order to get hold of it, of even stealing it from the mouths of their slain enemies, and of transporting it back to their own homes, irrelevant of its origins. It used to mean: the more gold you have, the more you are worth.

Production: Cukrarna Gallery in collaboration with Jožef Stefan Institute, 2022; KID KIBLA, 2023

Technical assistance: Simon Sedmak

Mechanism construction: France Petač

Artistic overview: Jaša

Narrator: Barbara Kukovec / Jaša / Bowrain

Sound design: Bowrain

Chemical Process: Institute Jožef Stefan: Dr. Gašper Tavčar, Peter Frkal

Video: yoy production

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Opening hours: Monday–Friday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Saturdays: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Today, gold is just another necessary part of our user-defined and common-need legitimized environments or ecosystems, if we want to embellish the truth. Quite simply, it is part of our daily lives, work and play, and our legacy, the rubbish that we throw away without prejudice and dump in landfills. Precious electronic devices are turning into the greatest waste of humanity. Beloved mobile phones, tablets and laptops are becoming worthless, and perhaps they do not deserve to be, after all, they are gold. Our fetishized attitude towards them is suddenly transformed into an ignorant one, sublimated by a new, better, more advanced "golden" device. Not only do we fail to recycle these appliances, but we drive them away from us, dumping them as surplus around the world, in Africa and elsewhere.

Meta Grgurevič also took these facts as a starting point for designing her project and gathering the material for it. Like a gold miner, she collected and opened mobiles and took out their precious core, extracted their golden heart, which she then fused into a grain and assembled into an aestheticized, shining yellow point of view, and materialized it, realized it, visualized it. The metaphysical object of desire is meta-stationed from a gloomy ambience into a glowing mass, a primary homogeneous whole, which reveals our (in)significance in the mirror of smallness. As we desire, grasp, accept the fragment of the material and the valued, yet the minimal and the insignificant without added values among our belongings, we exploit the utility, purpose and intentionality of the created, where the useful value recapitulates the other values and determines the subject and the thrust of the exhibition concept.

The peculiar interplay of fiction and reality is presented through various (but not numerous) media and materials, which are carefully selected and designed natural materials. Meta Grgurevič sums up the visualizations of imagined three-dimensional worlds into various antagonistic artistic dynamics and merges them into unified, coherent and dedicated spaces of our essence and being. Even if she does not mean it so seriously. Her works have a romantic touch, the visualized mechanisms are additions and subtractions, but at the same time expectations, time is elementary and abstract, space is actual. Historical parallels and comparisons are meaningless, as they have no other grip than the material-metric and conceptual-contextual. The state of things.

When her sculptures are grouped in a spatial arrangement, the visual images of the objects merge into a single installation. Like a clock or a working machine. In the process of interaction, the individual components, their materials and shapes and functions are key to the overall fusion of all the elements into a miraculous machine, which could also be attributed to Professor Balthasar's questioning of the human impulse and action in the production process. The extent to which these processes can and cannot be controlled is questioned in the exploration of combinations of interdependencies of elements and their assembly into a functional whole, with an emphasis on the dialogical relationships of exhibition-collector, buyer, when looking for a way to the natural environment, while scratching for gold is more indicative of the artist's interest in human responsibility towards the social, which Meta Grgurevič does with artistic coding and with artistic involvement and distance at the same time.

– Peter Tomaž Dobrila

BIOGRAPHY

Website



Meta Grgurevič (1979) lives and works in Ljubljana. In 2007, she completed her postgraduate studies in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice. Her practice explores the relationships between science, metaphysics and the effects of magic, developing kinetic objects and multidimensional scenes as fully functioning mechanisms that act as metaphors for utopian systems of exchange. The artist has exhibited her work in numerous group and solo exhibitions at home and abroad. Among others, she held a solo exhibition *Scratching for Gold* (Cukrarna, Ljubljana, 2022), a major survey exhibition *Impossible Mechanisms* (UGM, Maribor, and Künstlerhaus, Graz, 2020), and received the Audience Award at the 31st Ljubljana Graphic Biennial for her project *Timekeepers* (Ljubljana, 2015).