**Other Centre of Circumstances**

Conversation with Space

*“At one time, according to Sir George H. Darwin, the Moon was very close to the Earth. Then the tides gradually pushed her far away: the tides that the Moon herself causes in the Earth's waters, where the Earth slowly loses energy.“[[1]](#footnote-1)*

When talking about the human intellect responsible for distinguishing and separating things and concepts, the French philosopher Henri Bergson compares it to a dream, or dreaming. When we dream, says Bergson, our self is scattered – things which really interpenetrate each other are seen as separate solid units: the extra-spatial degrades itself into spatiality.[[2]](#footnote-2) In their site-specific exhibition titled *Other Centre of Circumstances*, the artists Tomislav Hršak and Vladimir Novak engage in a somnambulist dialogue with the space of Meštrović's Pavilion. The gallery space is circular in form, and the exhibition's title ambiguously evokes this circular form of the gallery, as well as the exhibited works of these two artists. Hršak, thus, hangs his spatial installation in the form of a projection screen from the rim of the PM Gallery all the way to the bottom of the Bačva Gallery, following thus the circular “trajectory“ of both galleries. Once we step inside this cylinder, we encounter the scenes from the human life cycle, from birth to death, by which Hršak refers to yet another Meštrović's famous work – The Well of Life. In the video works a clear boundary between real and unreal becomes blurred and there is an almost imperceptible transition from one to another, as is the case with the stages of human life. The video work titled *San (The Dream)* gives us an insight into Hršak's understanding of the logic of life, according to whom life is oftentimes governed by the logic of dreams[[3]](#footnote-3), i.e. absurdity, fully in line with Bergson's beliefs. When dreaming, we are indifferent to logic, but not incapable of logic (Bergson).

Indifference to logic is also present in Vladimir Novak's interactive spatial installation titled *(No)Thing* - *Trokutov krug ((No)Thing* – *Trokut's[[4]](#footnote-4) Circle).* The installation consists ofa circle made of black stretch fabric, placed in the outer ring of the gallery, and a long rope in the very centre of the circle, or in this case, in “the centre of circumstances“ of both installations. The rope serves to “steer“ the installation and stretch the fabric in different directions, due to which the circular form transforms into a triangular shaped, pyramid-like one. Novak's installation becomes visible only upon entering the Hršak's one, and the observer's decision to interact and pull the rope creates a form in space and establishes a relationship between the sculpture and architecture of the gallery.

Besides engaging in a dialogue with space, the works of the two artists also engage in a mutual dialogue. And whereas Hršak is preoccupied with the stages of the human life cycle, in which every ending is inevitably also a new beginning, Novak's work is, among other things, also a kind of homage to a recently deceased artist Vladimir Dodig Trokut and his *black art,* and it represents the last station of this circular journey.

The work *(No)Thing -Trokutov krug ((No)Thing –Trokut's Circle)* reminds of the story of the search for *monolith[[5]](#footnote-5)*, the eternal human aspiration for the unattainable – immortality and reaching the absolute. This, almost alchemical search, also present in Novak's work, exists from the time when the Moon was so close to the Earth that it was possible to climb up on it using a long pole in search of the Moon-milk. [[6]](#footnote-6)

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1. *Italo Calvino, The Complete Cosmicomics*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014, p. 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Bertrand Russell, The Philosophy of Bergson*, The Monist, vol. 22, 1912., pp. 321-347. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Henri Bergson, O smijehu, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo 1958. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The word 'trokut' is both the last name of a recently deceased Croatian artist to whom Novak is paying homage and the Croatian equivalent to the word 'triangle'. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. 2001:A Space Odyssey [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Italo Calvino, The Complete Cosmicomics*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)