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Dead Sea of Forgetfulness

Reflections on "Exhibition of Forgotten Works by D.M." Split, 22 August 2025

AI is a technosphere synthesizing reason and intuition as the highest level of artificial memory in the form of the dispositif of life itself. When dementia or Alzheimer's sets in and erodes the memory that enables one to find logical-historical bearing in space-time, a fundamental problem emerges for modern philosophy, science, culture, and the meaningful life of the individual as the subject of events. Thus arises, mythopoetically speaking, a dead sea of forgetfulness. In its implosion of information, AI defines why Alzheimer's is a central issue of our time:

"Alzheimer's disease is a philosophical issue because it cuts to the heart of questions about identity, personhood, the connection between mind and body, and the ethics of caring for individuals with cognitive decline. It challenges traditional notions of what it means to be a person, explores the philosophical implications of memory loss, and forces society to confront complex ethical dilemmas regarding care, rights, and the definition of a 'good death'."

Only two "diseases" are more than diseases, because they affect the psycho-physiology of human sensibility that underpins the traditional metaphysical concepts of thought and feeling, spirit and soul. They are also uncanny (*Unheimlich*) fractures of the brain, without which the world as the horizon of meaning cannot exist.

One is schizophrenia, and the other is Alzheimer's. The first refers to the loss of self or "I" as a stable subject that perceives and experiences objects in space-time, and can manifest as 75 heteronyms in Pessoa's poetry, or Norman Bates, evil incarnate obsessed with mother in Hitchcock's *Psycho*. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari's crucial works, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, which examine the rise of the control society in the era of neoliberal info-cognitive capitalism, are jointly subtitled *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. The second involves the gradual "disconnecting" from the world as a network of human and nonhuman relations, reducing the individual to the level of a single-celled organism or a mere plant in vegetative agony. Schizo-and-Alz states of what belongs to the concept of consciousness are ambiguous phenomena of modernity, marking the final clash between biological evolution and technological singularity, as AI cannot be "mad" and "forgetful" unless it becomes entirely human by some other means. To be-as-Other and to be-as-a-plant withering in the process of desubjectivization and desubstantialization means no longer being the "self" that functions in the world of, paradoxically, capitalism as a schizo-and-Alz state of dizzy "infinite speed" of what remains of this world.

Transmedia artist Dalibor Martinis, in his quest and experimental analysis of whether it is still possible to open a space-time passage beyond the boundaries of the work and the event through

conceptual-visual contemplation of the limits of contemporary art, directs his focus toward what remains the paramount problem of contemporary philosophy and art in general: the problem that Heidegger, engaging with Plato's allegory of the cave and the world's appearance as shadow or simulation, called the *forgetting of being* (*Vergessenheit des Seins*), while defining truth as unconcealment or openness in accordance with the ancient Greek word *aletheia*. Time "temporalizes" itself in the flow of the ecstases – the dimensions of temporality that form the triad of past, present, and future. When the "age of forgetfulness" arrives, the human beings, as those who unconceal the truth of the world in the self-showing of phenomena, lose orientation, for they no longer know when an event occurred, if it occurred at all, or what in fact occurred, because they cannot differentiate between the object and its shadow.

Forgetting is linked to the concept of recollection which belongs to the innate articulation of language; not to memory, which, as Freud notes, belongs to the superego - the rule of state and society, nature and culture, craft, technology, and technosphere over the fragile knowledge of the individual subject. We forget simply because we are human, and our cognitive ability to recognize signs and traces of the real world is limited by our biology and lifespan. Memory is thus a step forward in the objectification of consciousness, functioning as a dispositif of a highly developed culture that archives its recollections in databases containing infinite information.

What is DM trying to show with this "exhibition"? The "author", undergoing a creative loss of recollection of events that belong to his "forgotten works" claims that he seeks to affirm an *authorially documented condition*, while wondering what remains of what we have forgotten. At this point, we must pause and ask: are objects as things or artifacts the same in their non-forgetting, as a kind of Kantian *thing-in-itself* (*Ding-an-sich*)? What remains of the world - as a work of both nature and human creativity - is not self-evident without the author. Even when we see, in a virtual museum of sorts, iconic objects linked to artists and philosophers - like Joyce's glasses and hat, Picasso's brushes, Wittgenstein's neurotic signature, or Deleuze's crumpled shirt - we sense that their "bearers" linger as ghosts above the dead sea of forgetfulness, guarding them from the final fall into nothingness.

In his "exhibitions," DM ties his own experience of remembering the forgetting of an object or event with the idea that the so-called works on display emerge from the realization that recollection precedes forgetting, not the other way around. Negation may be the end of the world, but not its beginning. The "author" frames this as an act of juxtaposition that inscribes into the space-time of contemporary art something almost "fateful" and "inevitable": the threshold at which humanity marks the "end of history", and the arrival of a posthuman reign of artificial memory as the archive of this interlude, in which "forgotten works" once again become "works of forgetfulness," not as lost letters recovered from the dead sea of forgetfulness, but as the return of what can never truly be lost. What astrophysics calls "information at the event horizon," we shall call the creative energy of life beyond the boundaries of selfhood, the "I," the subject.

Dalibor Martinis

Born in Zagreb in 1947. Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb; has exhibited since 1969 and works as a video artist. He has had numerous personal shows, performances and video screenings, and participated in many international exhibitions (Biennales: Sao Paolo, Venice, Kwang-ju, Thessaloniki, Cetinje, Cairo, Ljubljana; Dokumenta/Kassel, and so on). His films and video works have been shown at film/video festivals in, for example, Berlin, Tokyo, Montreal and Locarno, Oberhausen and Bogota in 2014, Vienna and Seattle in 2015, and in 2022 at Montreal Independent Film Festival, Ciudad de México International Film Festival, FEKK – Ljubljana Short Film Festival, Tokyo International Short Film Festival and others.

He has had grants from the Canada Council (1978) Jaica (Japan 1984), and ArtsLink (USA, 1994, and 2010).

He was guest professor at the Academy of Dramatic Art/Zagreb in 1987/91, and at Ontario College of Art/Toronto in 1991/2 and was a full professor at the Academy of Applied Arts of Rijeka University, 2007-2012. He has won a number of international prizes and awards (Tokyo Video Festival 1984; Locarno 1984; Alpe Adria Film Festival/Trieste 1996; Best Experimental Film Award at Bogota Short Film Festival 2014); Honorable Jury Mention/Mumbai Film Fest. 2017), and in Croatia (the Josip Račić Award for 1995; the City of Zagreb Award for 1998; the HDLU Annual Award for 2009; Vladimir Nazor Award 2018; T-HT Awards for 2013 and 2018; Special Award for Contribution to The Art of Moving Images, Split Festival 2023; HDLU Lifetime Achievement Award 2023.

His works are in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art/Zagreb, the Museum of Modern Art/New York, Stedelijk Museum/Amsterdam, ZKM Karlsruhe, New York Public Library, Kontakt/Erste Bank, Fundación Otazu Collection/Navarra Vienna etc.

Dalibor Martinis lives in Zagreb.

List of works:

1. **THIS WORK I FORGOTT, 2024**

Rubber stamp and imprint, 50x70 cm, paper (3 pcs)

2. **IZRAVNI PRIJENOS, 1980**

Photo paper (exposed directly on the TV screen)

3. **CAGE, 1990**

Video installation, variable dimensions
television (cathode ray tube), black cloth

4. **VIDEO SELF-PORTRAIT (Empty Heads), 1979**

Photograph

5. **THE WORK I FORGOT, 2025 (and/or "The Work I Forgot, 2025")**

Stamp imprint on paper, 70x100 cm (3 pcs)

6. **WORK FORGOTTEN 14.08.2024.**

PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH!

3 stainless steel museum posts, 3 red velvet ropes.

Label with text: WORK FORGOTTEN 14.08.2024.

PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH!