

Kontakt Video Klub

Videoklub is inspired by the Croatian organization Kinoklub, which translates as “Cinema Club.” The Kinoklub was founded in Zagreb in 1928 as one of the earliest amateur film clubs in the region. The 1950s saw it become an important venue for screenings and discussions—one that was frequented by renowned Croatian filmmakers like Mihovil Pansini as well as by the performance artist Tomislav Gotovac. As part of the exhibition “The Cynics’ Republic” at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and on the occasion of Kontakt’s 20th anniversary, the Kontakt website is featuring its own “Video Klub” with a number of videos and films selected by Pierre Bal-Blanc that will alternate on a weekly basis during the exhibition’s three-week run from 13 November to 1 December 2024. The exhibition is situated in the context of performative practices from antiquity to the present that reevaluate forms of ancient cynicism—truth, self-sufficiency, endurance, sobriety, and free sexuality, principles that also relate to the selected videos and films.

The Cynics Republic – week 1

Dishonor – A critical alternative to competitiveness

For the cynic, the systematic practice of dishonor is invaluable, arming him with resistance to others’ opinions, beliefs, and traditions. To hold out one’s hand, a gesture infamously tied with poverty, of dependence in its most unbearable form, confronts the beggar with themselves as insulted, despised, and humiliated by others. Ultimately dishonored.

When asked why he was begging alms of a statue, Diogenes replied: “To practice being turned down.”

With Igor Grubić, Tibor Hajas, Hans (Ashley) Scheirl, Roman Stańczak, Slaven Tolj, Ivan Ladislav Galeta, Karol Radziszewski, Vătămanu/Tudor, Geta Brătescu, Ion Gregorescu, Raša Todosijević, Mladen Stilić, Cezary Bodzianowski, Mara Mattuschka, Norbert Pfaffenbichler, Mark Ther, Sanja Iveković, Stuart Brisley, Želimir Žilnik.

The Cynics Republic – week 2

Shamelessness – Anticipating a state of nature

Shamelessness is expressed not solely through the exposed body, but also at the level of speech, delivered in the brutality of intimacy. Applying the principle of non-dissimulation, a sort of radical candor, the cynic blows up the code with which cultural life is, implicitly or explicitly, upheld.

When Crates asked Hipparchia for her hand in marriage he disrobed in front of her and said: “This is the groom and these are his possessions, choose accordingly.”

With Mara Mattuschka, Anna Daučíková, Hans (Ashley) Scheirl, Lois Weinberger, Roman Stańczak, Artur Żmijewski, Friederike Pezold, Hans Scheugl, Ion Grigorescu, Constantin Flondor, Tomislav Gotovac, Josef Dabernig, Sanja Iveković, Karol Radziszewski, Mark Ther, Miodrag Milosevic.

The Cynics Republic – week 3

Destitution – Autarky, an ethic of animality

To the cynic, true happiness comes from being self-sufficient, from surviving on the barest necessities, from living the life of the dog. Possessions are considered a burden to the expression of freedom. Training in hardiness of both mind and body, the cynic becomes destitute of all luxury.

When Diogenes observed a child drinking out of its clasped hands, he instantly cast away his own cup with the words: “a child has beaten me in plainness of living.”

Mladen Stilić, Karol Radziszewski, Dalibor Martinis, Anna Jermolaewa, Paul Neagu, Ivan Ladislav Galeta, Hans (Ashley) Scheirl, Vătămanu/Tudor, Dóra Maurer, Roman Stańczak, Tomislav Gotovac, Constantin Flondor, Roman Ondak, Slaven Tolj, Mihovil Pansini, Mark Ther, Želimir Žilnik, Adrian Paci, Petar Fradelić, Karol Radziszewski, Clemens von Wedemeyer