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WHO IS ANTONIO LAUER?

Antonio Lauer is new person in Zagreb art scene. He is 69 years old and he is one of the best underground filmmakers and performance artists in the whole ex-Yugoslavia. He is more famous as Tomislav Gotovac, and A. Lauer is his new name, which he claims is not an artistic performance, but part of his search for real identity.

Tomislav and Gotovac come from his father side, who is from the part in Dalmacia, where there is just 'sperm and rocks' and where the feet of the men stink. Antonio and Lauer are from his mother's side, who was from Hungarian aristocratic family.

This adapting of European identity is very common in the Croatian cultural scene, but Antonio's project is not just about this.

He is enfant terrible of Zagreb avant-garde, who is visible in everyday life of city with his crazy looking, strange clothes and loud performances in streets. On the occasion of meeting with him, he performed one of his actions for us.

It supposed to be a simple repetition of Vostel's 'Decollages'¹ performance, but it ended up as a public farce comedy. First the woman working in the cafeteria next to the lamp post, where Antonio Lauer was performing his action, started to shout to him asking who will clean the mess and if he is normal or crazy. Lauer replied with 'fuck off, I don't care of your mediocrity', and with many graphic words like 'shit, fuck bitch' and so on, but concluded his performance. Policeman had to intervene. Lauer explained to the police that he is an artist and he has audience of two people, of which one is from Finland. Policeman then started to be gentle to the artist sympathizing his action against the 'villagers', who cannot understand anything related to culture, as the waitress in the

¹ The performance 'Decollages' is to 'clean' with a knife the facades of buildings and lamp-posts of posters and other advertisement placed on the public.

cafeteria. Simple logic of the policeman that Finland is in EU and there was a Finnish person in the audience made the policeman to be sympathetic to the street performance, the high art.

At the same time there was cleaning happening performed by the city officials against the terraces of cafeterias by the Britanski Square, where all the intellectuals, artists and bohemians have traditionally been meeting for decades. The excuse is that the lives of the waiters and waitresses serving the terraces are in danger when having to cross the street, but the obvious real reason is the better and faster flow of capital, and cars.

Also, while around the Britanski Square, just when we met Lauer he was giving an interview to the local TV explaining how current state officials are total idiots not understanding any social gatherings of people other than in the shopping street or the supermarket. This is how we met Antonio Lauer, and understood that he as radical and non-compromised performance artist has problems in the everyday life of Zagreb. During the ten hours that we spent with him we watched his brilliant movies, where he combined among other things, Glenn Miller, the movie A Place In the Sun, porno movies, Hitler, Tito and radical underground films. We were impressed how Lauer, as almost 70 years old, doesn't want to be one of the relics of the avant-garde History of Croatia and still wants to resist to actual problems. We are very happy that we met one of the most important, and undermined, figures of the art scene of Croatia and Ex-Yugoslavia.