



Roman Ondak: *SK Parking*, 2001/2021, intervencia do verejného priestoru, photo: archive KHB / Martin Marenčin

## Roman Ondak: *SK Parking*, 2001/2021 Solo exhibition at Kunsthalle EXT

Curator: Lýdia Pribišová

Duration: 27. 1. – 14. 3. 2021

Kunsthalle EXT, Treskoňova Street, Bratislava

**Twenty years on, Roman Ondak has reinstalled his cult work *SK Parking*, which consists of a constellation of seven parked Škoda cars. He invites us to consider the following questions: in what way is this work still topical today, and right here on this street? Is there a still-existing abyss between East and West, remaining part of our geographical space, and indeed mirroring the state of the building before which the work is found (and of certain institutions within it)?**

The Škodas were originally exhibited in 2001, as part of *Ausgeträumt... (End of a Dream...)*, curated by Katrin Rhomberg in the Viennese *Secession*. That exhibition mapped the art of Eastern Europe ten years after the fall of the Iron Curtain. The parked Škodas (dating from the late 1970s to the first half of the 1990s) in the centre of Vienna unsettled the nerves of passers-by, calling up associations of danger, illegality, black market and smuggling (which was flourishing at that time on Vienna's periphery). They awakened a latent, slumbering xenophobia.

Ondak here radically, yet at the same time discreetly, stressed the unequally divided power relationships dominating the entire geopolitical reality, within which the countries of the former West have enjoyed, and still enjoy to this day, higher status and privileges.

*“That the entire event made its way successfully is also thanks to the help of my friends, who helped me to find the Škodas and drive them to Vienna. On the other side there was a group of friends from the Vienna Secession, who supported this idea and gave it a space. We had to experience small revolutions together almost every day if we wanted things to change for the better. And that would still seem to hold true to this present day,”* Roman Ondak recalls.

There is also an interesting parallel to *SK Parking*, not outdated even today in contemporary Bratislava: cars park in a highly visible, privileged place in the centre of the city, where parking is permitted only to the elect. This also used to be the case in Vienna, and precisely for this reason the Škodas evoked questions and ill-feeling, but also curiosity. The work is controversial right here in the centre of Bratislava on Treskoňová Street — this time round, in the light of public discussion of the city's parking policy.

*SK Parking* is also topical in terms of the functioning of state cultural institutions in our country, which often act as if they were from the socialist period or just after it. *“And this is also the case of Kunsthalle Bratislava, residing in a House of Art which is linked with the practices of the former regime par excellence. The Kunsthalle itself functions in a framework of cumbersome bureaucratic limitations set by public administration, which are often difficult to reconcile with the needs and*

*ideals of the dynamic, progressive operation that it is expected to achieve. Hitherto, the heritage of the old socialist regime has not departed even from the Kunsthalle's building. Many of its corners, and much of its functioning, breathe the atmosphere of those times when the currently exhibited Škodas were actually made,"* says Lýdia Pribišová, curator of the exhibition.

ROMAN ONDAK (\*1966, Žilina, Slovakia) is today regarded as one of the most notable representatives of neo-conceptual strategies. His unusual creative stance makes him one of the most striking artists of the past decade. In his visual art Ondak makes new use of the world's reality, by staging it or employing contextual shifts. He grips the viewer's attention with incessant contradictory transpositions of meanings, in places where we are accustomed to expect something stereotypical. Precisely by this quality of mutability, his works and installations address the viewers with great intensity.

Roman Ondak studied at the *Academy of Fine Arts and Design* in Bratislava (1988 – 1994, Prof. D. Fischer) and completed many studies, stays and residences, for example at *Slippery Rock University* in Pennsylvania (1993). He has been a stipendiary of *DAAD Berlin* (2007 – 2008). He lives in Bratislava. His projects have been presented at solo exhibitions in the *Köln Kunstverein* (2004); *Tate Modern* in London (2006); *Pinakothek der Moderne* in Munich; (2007); *MoMA* in New York (2009); *Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris* in Paris; *Deutsche Guggenheim* in Berlin (2012); *Museo Reina Sofia* in Madrid (2013), etc. He has exhibited at the *Berlin Biennale* (2010); he was twice included in the principal international exhibition at the *Venice Biennale* (2003, 2011); there also, he realised an exceptionally successful project for the Czech and Slovak pavilion, *LOOP* (2009), leading to his nomination for the prestigious *Hugo Boss Prize* (2010). Of the international exhibitions we may mention: *Manifesta 1*, Rotterdam (1996); *Aspekten – Positionen* (1949 – 1999), *Museum moderner Kunst*, Vienna; *After the Wall. Moderna Musseet*, Stockholm (1999); *Manifesta 3.*, Ljubljana (2000); *Promesses du Passée. Une histoire discontinue de l'art dans l'ex-Europe de l'Est. Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne*, Paris (2010); *Documents*, Kassel (2012); *Une histoire, art, architecture et design, des années 80 à aujourd'hui Paris, Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne*, Paris (from 2014) etc. Representation in collections: *MoMA*, New York; *Guggenheim Museum*, New York; *Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne*, Paris; *Pinakothek der Moderne*, Munich; *Tate Modern*, London; *Slovak National Gallery*, Bratislava; *Bratislava City Gallery*; and private collections at home and abroad.

## Contact for the media:

**Lila Rose | PR and fundraising manager**

**[lila.rose@kunsthallebratislava.sk](mailto:lila.rose@kunsthallebratislava.sk) | + 421 918 817 126**