

## **Letter of Support for the Users of the Autonomous Factory Rog on the Occasion of Their Forced Eviction from Rog on 19 January 2021**

We, the undersigned curators and staff of Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, strongly condemn yesterday's violent forcible eviction of the users of the Autonomous Factory Rog from the premises of the former factory Rog. Despite the years-long conflict between the users of the Autonomous Factory Rog and the City of Ljubljana, which has unfortunately not resolved in a consensus regarding the use of the premises, we believe that use of such excessive force as we witnessed yesterday during the forced evacuation of the premises is utterly inadmissible.

The very fact that the eviction of the users of the Autonomous Factory Rog was carried out at the peak of the pandemic, in midwinter, during lockdown, at a time when any public gathering at all (let alone protests to express dissent) is forbidden by law, is an indication of a gross abuse of power and of repression, which are totally inadmissible, inhuman and brutal under the conditions of a state of emergency. During the violent eviction, several people were detained, and the possessions and property of the users of Rog that were on the premises were disposed of.

The disposal included a temporary confiscation of a great deal of art materials, production means, technical equipment, tools and instruments, as well as personal belongings and pets the users of Rog kept on the premises. Some of the site-specific works of art, i.e. graffiti and murals, which had been a trademark of the Autonomous Factory Rog and represented authentic and valuable urban culture in Slovenia's capital, have been irreversibly destroyed during the eviction process.

We do not make distinctions between art produced in self-organized cultural centers such as the Autonomous Factory Rog and that from more traditional environments – spontaneous settings are equally conducive to the production of first-rate, outstanding artworks that form part of the pinnacle of contemporary (visual and other) art production. In recent years we have presented a number of artworks produced by artists working in Rog at survey exhibitions of contemporary Slovenian art as examples of the best current art production in Slovenia.

In addition to that, Moderna galerija had collaborated extensively with various collectives in Rog since the formation of the autonomous zone in 2006; together with the Social Center we reflected on new forms of institutions, alternative forms of knowledge, society of solidarity, and we also collaborated with the Embassy Rog and other collectives engaged in setting up new communities of migrants and excluded social groups.

We believe that the cultural and social activities of the Autonomous Factory Rog are in their integrity a vital part of a solidary and open capital and state. An attack on such a place is an attack on the freedom of all.

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