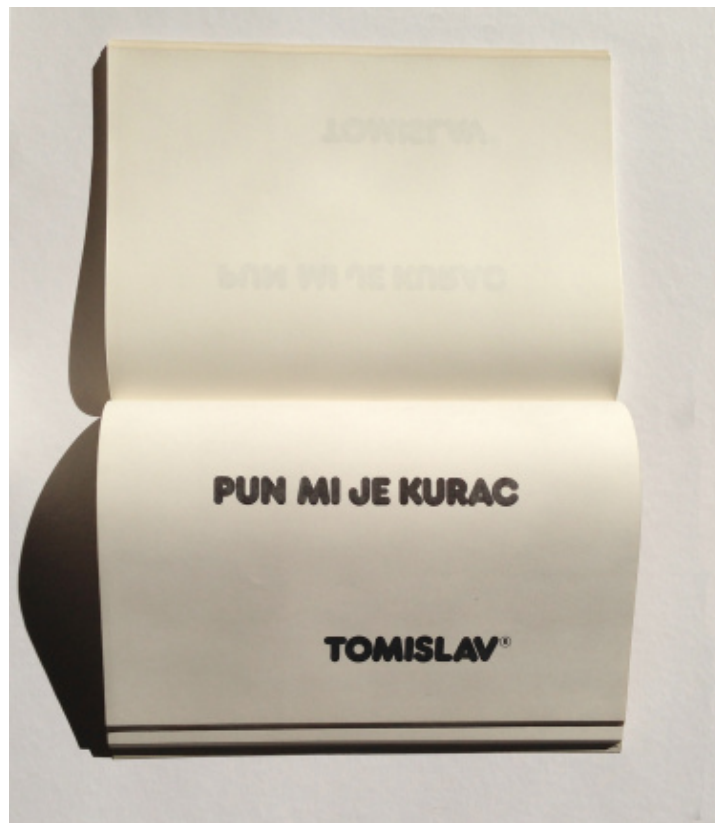


# ArtGuideEast

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## PURE WORDS, NAKED TRUTH – exhibition of Tomislav Gotovac in Vienna

July 30, 2014 · by barbaradudas · in Exhibition review ·



Tomislav Gotovac, PUN MI JE KURAC, artist book, silkscreen on paper, 1978  
Courtesy Galerie Michaela Stock / Collection Sarah Gotovac, Zagreb

Tomislav Gotovac was a legendary figure of Croatian art in the second half of the 20th century. He was famous for his naked actions and performances in Zagreb, as Ana Ofak once described (<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/gentleman-next-door-antonio-g-lauer-a-k-a-tomislav-gotovac-and-the-man-undressed->

in-times-of-socialism/), in the early 1960s he was “this guy taking a stance for nudity in art when Marina Abramović was still a teenager.”

The current exhibition at the Galerie Michaela Stock (<http://galerie-stock.net/en/areas/gallery/279-tomislav-gotovac-pure-words>) entitled *Pure Words* displays works from the late 1970s to 1990s. The exhibited artworks challenge traditional assumptions that text (language) is the primary and most efficient communication medium. Words are abstract visual forms as well as forms that represent written (or spoken) language. They represent an irrepressible urge to picture language and evidence of the writer’s use of words and images to amplify the form and effect of a message.

Tomislav Gotovac (<http://galerie-stock.net/en/tomislav-gotovac>) is a perfect example of a conceptual, multimedia artist who used words in various media. He has produced works in which words are not the form, but the content of his expression. In the 1960s – in his early collages – Gotovac started using words from collected posters, newspapers, used tram tickets or daily papers as a visual and semantic field of his pictures. The collages are a kind of intimate diary, since Gotovac used things from his everyday activities.

After his death, his apartment became the center of the Tomislav Gotovac Institute in Zagreb, where everything remained as it were, as Gotovac left it (<http://performingtheeast.com/tomislav-gotovac/>).

Within his oeuvre newspapers also played an important role and appeared f. i. in “Showing The Elle”, “Reading the paper” or “Sarah”. In the language of the Croatian gutter he inscribed words to create sentences that became sharp tools of expression for his artistic attitude; they were written by hand or printed on a drawing, on prints or directly on the wall, and these works are pure words that have an unambiguous meaning and message. Gotovac’s best-known statement in various media (poster, book and lecture-action) is *Pun mi je kurac* (I’ve fucking had it). This series of works is presented at the gallery. In 1978 the artist published a triptych of prints with the text: *Pun mi je kurac* (I’ve fucking had it), *Jebe mi se* (I don’t give a fuck) and *Jebo me bog* (So screw me God). In the same year he published a book with all the pages bearing the same printed text: *Pun mi je kurac*.



Tomislav Gotovac, Wrigley’s Spearmint Chewing gum, print on aluminium, signed, 1978, 55 x 74 cm  
Courtesy Galerie Michaela Stock / Collection Sarah Gotovac, Zagreb

At the 6th New Tendencies exhibition he performed a lecture-action with the same title. And incidentally in the same year he also created the work “Wrigley’s Spearmint”. The logo of the American chewing gum company offers us different ways of translating and understanding this work. It creates a sensitivity and

powerful emotion and one can assume that the artist's demands got satisfied in the end. Gotovac used his body as a kind of ready-made, as his direct means of expression. His work as a performer in the exhibition is indicated through the static medium of photography.

The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. Gotovac explained his view on life through his concentrated words and fierce attitude. Sadly Gotovac passed away 2010 but his work and spirit lives in his work and pure words.

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TOMISLAV GOTOVAC | PURE WORDS

27.6. – 30.8.2014

Galerie Michaela Stock,

Schleifmühlgasse 18, 1040 Vienna