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INTRODUCTION TO ALAIN BADIOU'S INAESTHETICS

This paper presents the philosophy of art of the contemporary French philosopher Alain Badiou. Badiou termed his own concept of art-philosophy relationship as "inaesthetics" and presented it through his whole opus, but mainly in the *Handbook of Inaesthetics*.

After a brief discussion on his ontology, which is necessary for understanding his terminology, both philosophical and mathematical, given that mathematics is the foundation of his whole philosophy, his arguments and his use of the concepts of subject, event, situation and truth, the paper analyses his main points and his conclusions from considering art as a procedure of Truth, given that there isn't really the Truth, but only truths. The paper asks what it means to define art as a procedure and each of many artistic truths as a generic set of 'configured' works made by 'faithful' and determined artists who only together, but not necessarily in cooperation, produce it.

If we summarize Badiou's philosophy of art presented in his introductory essay in his *Handbook of Inaesthetics* we get the following: in one of the arts or in one of the branches, genres, etc. of an art, which is at the time clearly defined and identifiable, a set of works appear. They are so radically different that there is no way of deciding even whether these works belong to art or not. Through different but unpredictable, even random, transformations of the initial set of works, a more extensive one occurs – a configuration. It is true (or, better, it is a truth) because it shows the difference between what is only present in a given situation, not belonging to anything, with anything connected, and what is really involved and represented in that situation, what is in one way or another structured with other of its elements. In that way, a configuration testifies to the Being whose only 'property' in Badiou's ontology is that it is multiple and without any positive attributes, a set of unrelated and mutually indifferent elements, pure inconsistency. What is more, the configuration is one truth also, because it is a set of methods for creating something new - in a unique and coherent manner - from that difference. The former should provide universality to that particular truth, and the latter is a guarantee of the plurality of truths.

The truth appears through permanent, but fully autonomous, revolutionizing of an art form. Then philosophy finds parallels and analogies of these art acts in science, politics, etc. Therefore, we must ask how to determine that a work of art belongs to a particular configuration and how to define the limits of that 'configuration', given that such groups are not self-evident and obvious. The only thing that Badiou's theses argue is that one particular set of works is the bearer of a truth, and that each work is a differential point of that truth. This circular explanation could not be used in practice, because it entails that a recognition of an artistic truth can be only an act of intuition, philosophical speculation, or simply decision. However, there is a conclusion which comes from the above - the most important one – that there is no unique artistic truth, but only specific truths that are gradually produced in different ways and in different artistic practices.

The third part of this paper deals with Badiou's essays about a particular set of poets and poems, i.e. about 'The Age of Poets', which is Badiou's Heideggerian term for the poetry of Hölderlin, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Trakl, Mandelstam and Celan. The poetry Badiou talks about is poetry which, by its very emergence, 'cut through' the consistent and oriented set of representations of the epoch, i.e. it has created a 'space' for inconsistency or space inconsistent with the situation in which it was created. (The inconsistency is the only attribute of Being in Badiou's ontology, the only difference between the Being and a situation as a consistent multiple.) The main feature of this poetry, which sets it apart, is that it creates a new, non-cognitive, non-epistemological attitude toward the being, which abandons the categories of object and subject and abolishes the subject-object bond. The poetry in question succeeds in giving permanence to the moment of appearance or disappearance and in maintaining 'the

thing' it shows in the state when it is really neither present nor absent, on "the verge of extinction" and undecidable. As he made distinction between art as a process and the work of art as a 'fact', the differential point of that process, Badiou distinguishes poetry – poetization of what passes, and a poem – a place of passage. Its truth is that it forces the thought moving toward inconsistency, toward what is undecidable, unrecognizable, which cannot be identified, which is unclear at the level of significance. A poem does not discern, but brings about what is indiscernible. The reader does not, in fact, learn a truth, but it is, so to speak, passed on; he experiences it, co-thinking with the poem. In that way, we think, Badiou suggests eventness of a poem at the level of its reception. This kind of poetry and its specific truth, the truth that there is no sense of senses, no meaning above all other meaning, no superior thought of thoughts – considered as a truth of our time – Badiou made a cornerstone of his own philosophy, implementing it and transferring it on the ethical and practical level. Because of that, his readings of above mentioned poets are more valuable as poetics or po-ethics, than as an interpretative tool.

Key words: *Alain Badiou, inaesthetics, event, situation, subject, truth.*