Artist Statement

After several sporadic collaborations, Fokus Grupa was founded in 2012, when our joint work became our only operating paradigm. By virtue of naming, we tried to emancipate Fokus Grupa’s activity from the biographical, individual connotations of its members, thus freeing up the space for involvement with various topics without the use of first person singular. By taking over the name¹ of a questionable qualitative research method, which by studying the patterns of interactions among smaller groups aims to anticipate the reactions of larger groups, we additionally emphasize this departure from a unique authorial position, seeing Fokus Grupa as both the manipulator and the manipulated in a broader artistic and social context. Generic name for a method, Fokus Grupa, becomes a construction, a fictional author that takes credit and responsibility for our artwork.

Fokus Grupa uses text, objects and images, acting both within and outside the gallery. The outcomes are mainly spatial installations and interventions, which consist of drawings, texts, photographs, videos or (usable) objects. Along with more conventional forms of writing, our work with text also includes various appropriative and collaging methods, where we use the text as a material, in printed or digital form. Taking usable and political objects (e.g. monuments) as our starting point, we create works that, in deviation from their sources, establish a critical position. Work with images (as with text) is closely related to our work with archives, both institutional archives and archives created as a result of our collecting or producing archival material. Regardless of the media, our working process is often performative, although performance in the strict sense is rarely the outcome.

Content-wise, Fokus Grupa points to the power relations within the art system, as well as within the broader economic and social context, and we are especially interested in the role of art within those relations. We are interested in the relations between art and the nation state, art and (mass) market, art and labour.

Fokus Grupa’s work extends over the neighbouring disciplines and borrows and learns from design, architecture, curating and literature. This manifests an attempt to initiate communication, exchange and dialogue between related disciplines, as well as the transgression of their borders. Therefore, Fokus Grupa also works with occasional collaborators, be it with specialists for a specific discipline or for a specific topic.

Fokus Grupa is active within the art community; in 2008 it co-founded a self-organized collective Kružok (group for discussions and production of discursive events), which operated intermittently until 2015. It participated in the work of the Autonomous Cultural Centre Medika in Zagreb, and after moving to Rijeka it co-founded a collective artist-run space Delta 5 in 2013. Fokus Grupa is also an active member of the artist-run space SIZ in which it has regularly co-organized exhibitions of regional and international artists since 2012.

¹ Fokus Grupa = Focus Group in English, TN