

tent, which is inscribed in it. Still, as Benjamin remarks in the next sentence, the theory “(...) must do justice to these relationships, for they lead us to an all-important insight: for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual” (Ibid.). Not only by the turn from spectator to creator art “leaves behind the neutral horizon”, but it also becomes involved in the social context as it produces signifiers, which are in the last instance political, since in any form or whichever presentations they unavoidably address the public. And the public, as a phenomenon of the bourgeois era, when the notion of society designates a formation, which had left behind a “phase” of organic community, has always been targeted by politics and *vice versa*. The very word “politics” invokes meanings like power, domination, and nation and of course, as also Benjamin points out, war. However, there are also many other aspects of politics, especially when we take into account some categories of social dynamics like economics, development, emancipation, redistribution, welfare, equality, community, freedom, population, and let us not forget biology. The bio-politics as it was conceptualised by Michel Foucault³ is, for instance, reflected in the modern and postmodern art by representations of the body in various kinds and genres of art: from theatre performances to gallery installations. Well, one must accept that back in history perceptions of art (and of reality in general for that matter) were different, although we cannot know exactly what the authentic (“auratic” in Benjamin’s terms) perception of the art has had been. However, we know the reason about the difference, which happened to be a product of many interacting developments, involving notions such as society, technology, history and revolution.

What kind of politics does art really represents? The answer to this, not just a rhetorical question, cannot be simple since art *is* – no matter how very special – a political agency; sometimes it mimics politics, sometimes it succumbs to a dispute with it, and of course, it likes to mock politics. Therefore, it seems almost impossible to grasp all the complexity of the relation between art and politics. Undoubtedly, politics produces a social space for art in many imaginable ways, and probably the bulk of art is being (re)produced in a rather active collaboration or at least in an attitude of pretence or forthright neutrality towards politics. One just has to think about all the music played in the settings of a semblance of a ritual, canonised theatre

3 See a number of Foucault’s lectures, published in: Foucault Michel (1997). *Il faut défendre la société*. Paris: Seuil/Gallimard