

glossary
of
common
knowledge

Vol.2

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Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 2022

Beyond the conventional usage of the language in contemporary art.

Terms associated with referential fields, as proposed by narrators in the course of seminars,
to negotiate various positions, contexts and local narratives about contemporary art.

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On Making the Glossary

In the Curatorial Statement to the first edition of the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* (*GCK*), the curators of the glossary wrote: “Unlike an encyclopaedia, makes no attempt to unite all the world’s knowledge in a single totalising system, or to assemble a variety of viewpoints under the roof of tolerance and inclusion. What makes the glossary different from similar efforts is that it does not make just one list of terms but is instead concerned with multiple lists. Each of its terms is always associated in different ways with terms from other lists and other contexts. Families of terms are thus created, and these families are the core of the glossary. Every term in the *GCK* has its own story, and every story has a narrator(s)¹, a narrator who is uttering their own situated knowledge. Many contributions are written with an engaging personal undertone and subjective assertions of a life lived, creating oral histories and sometimes speaking with the voice of a collective. Their international accent is pronounced in the written form, informed by the lived experience of their work in the field of contemporary art – from artistic practices, curatorial research, socio-political analysis, etc. that address nonconventional or even deviant ideas. Their living voices are central to the *GCK* and the choice of the terms is entirely left to their deliberation as “authentic gestures – subjective positions within a world of international languages. [...] The point is not that we believe in the factual truth of oral histories, but rather that, with the help of such narratives, we try to change the existing order of things. Here oral histories interest us not primarily as alternative forms of historicising that are privileged over writing, but as a way to introduce multiple histories and truths, including the kind of psychological truths expressed in the imagination, symbols, and desire. [...] Our glossary relies on the differential credibility of memory, and shows more transparently the relationship between histories and their protagonists. [...] It stands in opposition to the institutions, classes, and elite practices that have dominated writing. Or, to put it better, it tries to create a model that offers greater possibilities for dialogue with those whose collective memories are yet to be written.”²

The over fifty terms by more than fifty narrators presented in this volume were discussed and written between 2019 and 2022. They seek to find common knowledge to speak about less visible stories in contemporary art and to address systems that govern our ways of thinking in art and beyond. The project has been ongoing since 2014, and it was conceived and curated by Zdenka Badovinac, Bojana Piškur and Jesús Carrillo in the context of L’Internationale confederation of museums as a method of addressing the so-called referential fields during seminar meetings to bring together diverse knowledges from the museums as well as the so-called global family of artists, thinkers, curators and so on. The first series of discussions was published in 2018 and contained six referential fields and over eighty terms. For this second edition, we repeated the same referential fields to re-examine how the conditions in our cultural landscape have changed in the drastic raptures of pandemic, war, climate catastrophes, a conservative turn and political upheavals. For this volume, we choose four fields of discussion: Geopolitics, Commons, Subjectivisation and Constituencies, each unpacked by narrators invited by the

1 *Glossary of Common Knowledge*, ed. Ida Hiršenfelder, curated by Zdenka Badovinac, Jesús Carrillo and Bojana Piškur (Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 2018).

2 *Ibid.*, 6.

curators as members of the global family as well as by members of the L'Internationale Confederation. Both the structures and semantics of these referential fields are subject to certain deformations. Each term may be connected to any other in an unpredictable manner, often surpassing cultural and geopolitical borders in order to form new contexts, which nevertheless include, and depend on, the very function these fields have within the structure of the dominant art world. One of the more significant processes undertaken by the method proposed by the *Glossary of Common Knowledge* is a shift from the act of selection to the act of combination, resulting in an intratextual crossing of cultural boundaries. This may be especially visible in acts of translation and the propositions of neologisms and indigenous concepts that introduce a radically new cultural perspectives such as *mOther(ness)*, *Ruåttvuõttåd*, *In/vested*, *Şkl*, or *Translation* with the call for greater *Epistemic diversity*, *Negotiated imagination*, and the need for *Re-dit-en-un-in-(a)-learning*.

One of the most obvious shifts in this volume compared to the previous edition is a clear need to address the growing urgency of climate change – with terms such as *Air travel*, *Being ecological*, *Earth*, *Ecofeminism*, *New extractivism*, and *Rewilding*, and to stress the anthropogenic colonial origin of the cataclysmic events, moreover, to entangle this continuous crisis through troubled thinking, for example in *Disappointment*, *Choice*, *Shipwrecks*, *Southern constellation*, *The crowd of the dead* or *After*, and propose not to resign but to *Raised fists*, *Revolt*, use *Emancipatory propaganda* and make a firm *Anti-fascist* stand. This volume is also signified by the COVID-19 pandemic and the implications it had on escalating power struggles and injustices. Many speak of fragility while pointing to the structural violence of the existing social, political and economic contest in terms such as *Care is conflictual*, *Direct action*, *Decommodification*, *Empathy*, *Hapticality*, *Interdependence*, *Lucid interval*, *Performance of care*, *Solidarity* and *Vulnerability* and so on. The clusters of words that are interconnected, whether they are words with surpassed meanings or semantic demarcations transgressed by the narrative, are inseparably linked. They inscribe themselves into one another, every word becomes dialogic, and every intratextual semantic field is doubled by another sketching out the contours of our reality. Through this multi-voiced discourse, every utterance carries something else in its wake, and thus the acts of combination unfold a space between them. What is said ceases to mean itself, so that what is not said can thus gain presence. The multiple meanings of words that depend on the cultural, social and temporal environments they emerge from and are used within are thus joined together in an unfamiliar way, and related through the different influences they have upon one another.

Note: The compilation of the terms in this book resulted from discussions in four seminars: Geopolitics 2 at the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, +MSUM in Ljubljana; Commons / Solidarity which took place online and was co-organised with the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana and other members of the L'Internationale confederation³; Subjectivisation 2 which also took place online and was co-organised with the Valand Academy, and last but not least Constituencies 2 co-organised with the Van Abbemuseum, bringing us all together again in a physical space for the final chapter of discussions in Eindhoven.

3 The confederation is presented on page 276.