



VLADO MARTEK

*1951

The base of Martek's artistic praxis - or as he would say, its underground - consists of writing, poetry, and language. By vocation, he is a multimedia conceptual artist, poet and writer, and his oeuvre includes actions, agitations, ambiances, murals, graffiti, texts on his own art, prints, art postcards, sculptures, poetic objects, paintings, art books and staged photography. Since the 1970s, he has worked across different mediums in order to re-negotiate and find new forms of language. Martek is not a quiet observer. Through his work, he offers analytical, critical, ironic and humorous comments on societal structures and constructs. Typically he engages in linguistic subversion, oscillating between the visual arts, poetry and his own artforms of pre- and post-poetry.

Martek's work can be viewed through the lens of avant-garde poetry. Many of his own interventions in language are inspired by early experimental poets. Rejecting the lyrical paradigm of emotive language and the lyrical I dominant in European literature at the time, they experimented with sound and spatial arrangement of individual letters instead. Following the notion that a poem is made and not written, Martek breaks the poem down to its sheer material components of paper, pencil and the occasional word. The artist sees the alphabet, the foundation of language and thus also of (classical) poetry, as the symbolic source of all knowledge. Between the first and the last letter "everything that can be said" takes place.

*Vlado Martek (*1951) lives and works in Zagreb, Croatia. His work has been featured in numerous exhibitions internationally, including shows at the Musée d'art Moderne, Nimes, MoMA, New York, MACBA, Barcelona, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Rijeka, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig - MUMOK, Vienna, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. A retrospective of his work was held at the Modern Gallery in Zagreb in 2008.*