



Primož Bizjak
Negativ

Bunker I v parku Oeste/Bunker I del Parque del Oeste, Madrid (2022-26),
246x634cm (132 BW printov/prints 41x28,8 cm), © umetnik/artist in/and Gregor Podnar Dunaj/Vienna



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29. 10.–27. 11. 2026

































Negativ

V središču ustvarjalnega dela Primoža Bizjaka, mednarodno uveljavljenega fotografa, je raziskovanje krajine, ki se v času nenehno spreminja bodisi zaradi človekove prisotnosti bodisi zaradi delovanja same narave. Njegov pogled pritegnejo zlasti mejna območja in kraji, ki so zaznamovani s kompleksno, pogosto travmatično zgodovino. Zanimajo ga zapuščeni prostori, ki so izgubili prvotno namembnost ali so v procesu arhitekturne/urbanistične preobrazbe. Prikazuje pa tudi grobe človekove posege v naravno okolje in samoniklost narave, ki postopoma briše sledove človeške dominacije v prostoru.¹

Enako pomemben kot vsebina je formalni pristop Bizjakovega ustvarjanja, ki temelji na analognem fotografskem postopku. Pri svojem delu uporablja izključno kamero na meh, ki mu omogoča tisk fotografij velikih dimenzij. Njegovi posnetki so praviloma neobdelani. Pogosto nastajajo ponoči, z dolgimi ekspozicijami, ki lahko trajajo tudi več ur. S postopnim zajemanjem svetlobe namreč ustvarja specifično atmosfero in prikazuje podobe, ki jih človeško oko ne more neposredno zaznati. Specifičen je tudi njegov ustvarjalni proces, ki vključuje dolgotrajno opazovanje kraja posnetka in natančno premišljeno kadriranje, saj mora vsaka podoba, ki jo posname, najprej dozoreti v njegovem duhu.² Prav zaradi podrobnega, pogosto večletnega preučevanja motivov in velikoformatnih fotografij obsegajo njegove serije praviloma le majhno število del.

Bizjakove pretekle fotografske serije so zaznamovale predvsem nočne podobe, ki se tako po velikosti kot tudi atmosferi približujejo slikarstvu. V novejših delih – denimo v seriji *Zlata kletka* (*Golden Cage*, 2017–2023) – pa se pojavlja nekoliko drugačen fotografski pristop. Fotografije ostajajo monumentalnih dimenzij, vendar so pogosto sestavljene v diptihe ali poliptihe. Čas osvetlitve se krajša, zasledimo pa tudi črno-bele fotografije in negativne podobe, kar nakazuje, da avtor raziskuje ne le to, kaj vidimo, temveč tudi način, kako sploh podobe zaznavamo.

Na tokratni razstavi Bizjak predstavlja eno samo fotografijo – črno-beli negativ, ki se v galerijskem prostoru razgrne v monumentalni poliptih, sestavljen iz več kot sto lasersko natisnjenih analognih fotografij velikega formata.³ Delo se vsebinsko navezuje na travmatično zgodovino španske državljanske vojne, hkrati pa vsebuje izrazito intimno noto: prikazuje namreč fašistični bunker iz obdobja med letoma 1936 in 1939, ki stoji v isti madridski četrti kot akademija, na kateri je avtor študiral. V središču njegovega zanimanja je tako ponovno zapuščena arhitektura, toda tokrat jo dojamemo predvsem kot kraj spomina – mračno sled preteklosti, ki vztraja sredi narave: betonska struktura bunkerja se namreč v negativu spremeni v temno gmoto, preprejeno s svetlimi sencami dreves.

Inverzija tonov seveda ruši ustaljene predstave o prostoru, svetlobi in značilni tonski lestvici črno-bele fotografije, s tem pa gledalcu odvzame gotovost pogleda. Podoba postane tuja, težje berljiva.⁴ Podoben učinek ustvarja tudi nekonvencionalna prostorska predstavitev poliptiha, ki se razteza čez dve medsebojno ločeni galerijski steni in bunker razpolavlja na dva dela. Podoba je monumentalna in fragmentirana hkrati. Gledalec je ne more zaobjeti z enim pogledom, temveč jo mora sestavljati med premikanjem skozi prostor. Fotografija tako ni več zgolj podoba prostora, ampak sama postane prostor.

¹ Izbrana dela, nastala med letoma 2004 in 2020, je predstavil na pregledni razstavi z naslovom *Sivi svet je moder in zelen* v Obalnih galerijah Piran (2025).

² Povzeto po besedilu *Alpe Apuane*, ki ga je napisal Simone Menegoi ob razstavi v Mestni galeriji Nova Gorica in Galeriji sodobne umetnosti Celje leta 2021.

³ V takšni obliki poliptiha, sestavljenega iz 42 delov, je prvič razstavil delo *München/Munich n°* na razstavi *Zlata kletka/Golden Cage* v Galeriji Podnar na Dunaju (2024). Isto kompozicijo je predstavil tudi na skupinski razstavi *Prostor s potencialom premika* v ljubljanski Moderni galeriji (2024).

⁴ Negativ se sicer, kot pravi Geoffrey Batchen, povezuje z Drugim: temno stranjo in ženskostjo.

Bizjakovo odločitev, da predstavi eno samo fotografijo, lahko obenem razumemo kot nasprotje sodobni hiperprodukciji podob in površnemu vizualnemu branju, ki ga spodbujajo enormne količine posnetkov na družbenih omrežjih in svetovnem spletu. Enako velja za uporabo negativa, ki od gledalca zahteva to, kar sodobni način življenja pogosto ne dopušča: čas. Zahteva, da se pred podobo ustavimo, jo sestavimo in se vanjo poglobimo. *Negativ* v tem primeru ni zgolj fotografski postopek, ampak zaznamuje način *gledanja*, po drugi strani pa je tudi metafora spomina. Fragmentirana podoba bunkerja namreč govori ne le o napetosti med naravo in kulturo, temveč tudi o načinu, kako se pred nami pojavlja preteklost. Tako kot negativ obrne razmerje med svetlobo in temo, se tudi Bizjakova podoba ne kaže kot dokument zgodovine, temveč predvsem kot opomin, ki gledalca nagovarja k refleksiji o trenutni družbeni stvarnosti.

Nataša Kovšca

Negative

At the heart of the art practice of internationally established photographer Primož Bizjak lies an exploration of the landscape as it continually changes over time, whether due to human presence or the workings of nature itself. His gaze is particularly drawn to border areas and places marked by a complex, often traumatic history. He is interested in abandoned spaces that have lost their original purpose or are undergoing architectural or urban transformation. But he also portrays the harsh impact of human intervention on the natural environment and the self-regenerative power of nature, which gradually erases the traces of human dominance in the landscape.¹

Just as important as the content is the formal approach to Bizjak's creative practice, which is based on the analogue photographic process. He works exclusively with a bellows camera, which allows him to produce large-format photographs. His images are, as a rule, unprocessed. They are often taken at night, using long exposures that can last for several hours. By gradually capturing light, he creates a distinctive atmosphere and produces images that the human eye cannot perceive directly. His creative process is also distinctive, involving prolonged observation of the shooting location and carefully considered framing, as every image he shoots must first mature in his mind.² Precisely because he studies his subjects in depth, often over many years, and uses large-format photography, his series generally comprise only a small number of works.

Bizjak's earlier photographic series were marked primarily by night-time images that resemble paintings in both scale and atmosphere. However, a somewhat different photographic approach appears in his more recent works, as seen in the series *Golden Cage* (2017–2023). The photographs retain their monumental dimensions but are often arranged as diptychs or polyptychs. Exposure times become shorter, and black-and-white photographs and negative images appear, suggesting that the artist is exploring not only what we see but also the ways in which we perceive images in the first place.

In the exhibition at hand, Bizjak presents a single photograph – a black-and-white negative that unfolds across the gallery space as a monumental polyptych composed of more than one hundred large-format, laser-printed analogue photographs.³ In terms of content, the work refers to the traumatic history of the Spanish Civil War, while also retaining a distinctly intimate note: it depicts a fascist bunker from the period between 1936 and 1939, located in the same Madrid neighbourhood as the academy where Bizjak studied. Abandoned architecture is once again at the centre of his interest, but this time we perceive it primarily as a site of memory – a sombre trace of the past that persists amid nature: in its negative, the bunker's concrete structure is transformed into a dark mass threaded with the pale shadows of trees.

The inversion of tones, of course, unsettles established notions of space, light and the characteristic tonal range of black-and-white photography, thereby depriving the viewer of the certainty of their gaze. The image becomes unfamiliar, more difficult to read.⁴ A similar effect is produced by the unconventional spatial arrangement of the polyptych, which extends across two separate gallery walls, dividing the bunker into two parts. The image is at once monumental and fragmented. The viewer cannot take it in at a single glance but must piece it together while moving through the

¹ He presented a selection of works created between 2004 and 2020 in an overview exhibition entitled *The Grey World is Blue and Green* at the Piran Coastal Galleries (2025).

² Adapted from Simone Menegoi's text *Alpe Apuane*, written to accompany the 2021 exhibition at the Nova Gorica City Gallery and the Celje Gallery of Contemporary Art.

³ He first exhibited *München/Munich n°* in this form, as a polyptych composed of 42 parts, in the exhibition *Golden Cage* at the Gregor Podnar Gallery in Vienna (2024). He also presented the same composition in the group exhibition *Space with a Potentiality for a Shift* at Moderna galerija in Ljubljana (2024).

⁴ As Geoffrey Batchen puts it, the negative is associated with the Other: the dark side and femininity.

space. The photograph is thus no longer merely an image of space but becomes space itself.

Bizjak's decision to present a single photograph can also be understood as a counterpoint to the contemporary hyper-production of images and the superficial visual consumption driven by the enormous volume of images on social media and the World Wide Web. The same applies to the use of the negative, which demands something from the viewer that the contemporary way of life often does not allow: time. It requires us to pause before the image, piece it together and study it in greater depth. In this case, *Negative* is not merely a photographic process but marks a way of *seeing*, while at the same time also serving as a metaphor for memory. The fragmented image of the bunker speaks not only of the tension between nature and culture but also of the way in which the past appears before us. Just as a negative reverses the relationship between light and dark, Bizjak's image presents itself not so much as a historical document but rather as a reminder that invites the viewer to reflect on the current social reality.

Nataša Kovšca

Primož Bizjak (1976, Šempeter pri Novi Gorici) se je leta 1999 vpisal na Akademijo lepih umetnosti v Benetkah, kjer je leta 2005 diplomiral iz slikarstva pri profesorju Luigiju Violi. Svoja dela je predstavil na samostojnih in skupinskih razstavah doma in na tujem, predvsem v Španiji, Nemčiji, Avstriji, Sloveniji, Hrvaški in Italiji, kjer je sodeloval na 54. beneškem bienalu (2011). Med njegovimi zadnjimi razstavami so: *Sava, Donava in Drina* (Muzej sodobne umetnosti Metelkova, Ljubljana, 2015), *Mudanzas y reflejos* (Tasman Projects, Madrid, 2016), *Alpi Apuane* (CAP – Centro Arti Plastiche, Carrara, 2018; Galerija Gregor Podnar, Berlin, 2018; Center sodobnih umetnosti Celje in Mestna Galerija Nova Gorica 2019/2020), *Hospital de Carton, Carlos Bunga in Primož Bizjak* (galerija Elba Benitez, Madrid, 2020), *Imagenes desde Retrovisor* (skupinska razstava, kurator Carlos Garaicoa, CentroCentro, Madrid, 2021), *Photomenta1* – pregled sodobne fotografije v mediteranskem prostoru (MUSA, Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, Izrael, 2021/2022), *Encuentros, una mirada multiple sobre fotografía contemporánea* (kuratorici Maria in Lorena Coral, Centro de Arte, Alcobendas, Španija, 2022), *Brave World* (kurator Tevž Logar, Telegraph, Olomouc, Češka, 2022), *(Everything Is) Not What It Seems* (Mestna galerija Piran in Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norveška, 2022/23), *Festival Internacional de Fotografía de Castilla y León* (kuratorica Maria Milan, Palencia, Španija, 2023), *Golden Cage* (Galerija Gregor Podnar, Dunaj, Avstrija 2024/25), *Prostor s potencialom premika* (Moderna galerija Ljubljana, 2024/25), *Sivi svet je moder in zelen* (Mestna galerija Piran, 2025).

Njegova dela so vključena v javne in zasebne zbirke doma in tujini, kot so Moderna galerija Ljubljana, Obalne galerije Piran, Kunsthalle Praga, Fundacion Cristina Masaveu, Madrid, Fundacion Ernesto Ventos, Barcelona, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Italija.

Leta 2020/2021 mu je dežela Bavarska podelila delovno štipendijo in rezidenco v Villi Concordia v mestu Bamberg.

Primož Bizjak (born 1976 in Šempeter near Nova Gorica) enrolled at the Academy of Fine Arts in Venice in 1999, where he graduated in painting in 2005 under Professor Luigi Viola. He has presented his work in solo and group exhibitions at home and abroad, primarily in Spain, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Croatia and Italy, where he took part in the 54th Venice Biennale (2011). His most recent exhibitions include: *The Sava, the Danube, and the Drina* (Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, 2015), *Mudanzas y reflejos* (Tasman Projects, Madrid, 2016), *Alpi Apuane* (CAP – Centro Arti Plastiche, Carrara, 2018; Gregor Podnar Gallery, Berlin, 2018; Center for Contemporary Arts Celje, and Nova Gorica City Gallery, 2019/2020), *Hospital de Carton, Carlos Bunga and Primož Bizjak* (Elba Benitez Gallery, Madrid, 2020), *Imágenes desde Retrovisor* (group exhibition, curated by Carlos Garaicoa, Centro Centro, Madrid, 2021), *Photomenta1* – a survey of contemporary photography in the Mediterranean region (MUSA, Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2021/2022), *Encuentros, una mirada multiple sobre fotografía contemporánea* (curated by Maria and Lorena Coral, Centro de Arte, Alcobendas, Spain, 2022), *Brave World* (curated by Tevž Logar, Telegraph, Olomouc, Czech Republic, 2022), *(Everything Is) Not What It Seems* (Piran City Gallery and Nitja Centre for Contemporary Art, Oslo, Norway, 2022/23), *Castilla y León International Photography Festival* (curated by Maria Milan, Palencia, Spain, 2023), *Golden Cage* (Gregor Podnar Gallery, Vienna, Austria, 2024/25), *Space with a Potentiality for a Shift* (Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, 2024/25), *The Grey World is Blue and Green* (Piran City Gallery, 2025).

His works are included in public and private collections at home and abroad, such as the Moderna galerija, Ljubljana, the Piran Coastal Galleries, the Kunsthalle Prague, the Cristina Masaveu Foundation, Madrid, the Ernesto Ventos Foundation, Barcelona, and the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Italy.

In 2020/2021, the State of Bavaria awarded him a working scholarship and a residency at Villa Concordia in Bamberg.



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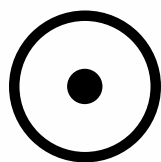


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