

# The 33<sup>rd</sup> Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts

**Curated by Slavs and Tatars**

**Curatorial Concept and Artist List Announced**

*Crack Up – Crack Down*

**Press Preview: Thursday, June 6th, 2019**

**Opens To Public: Friday, June 7<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

**The Ljubljana Biennial of Graphic Arts (Slovenia) announces the curatorial concept for their 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Biennial, curated by Slavs and Tatars and entitled *Crack Up – Crack Down*.**

*Crack Up – Crack Down* will take an expansive view of the genre of satire today, featuring works by historical and contemporary international artists, as well as interventions by activists, new media polemicists, performances by stand-up comedians, and others. For the 33<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Biennial, Slavs and Tatars consider ‘the graphic’ not as a medium, but as an agency. They question how graphic language engenders a form of infra-politics via irony and ridicule as a particularly resilient and contemporary form of critique. Purported to speak truth to power, satire has proven itself to be a petri dish in a world of post-truth bacteria.

Satire has been variably considered as a form of popular philosophy, biting critique, and a conservative genre prone to moralising inclinations. It thrives in periods of authoritarian rule: from the rich tradition of Communist humor in Central and Eastern Europe, to the many examples from the Middle East. Today, the return of strongman rule in the West has prompted a boom in various comedic forms. As the growth of print media brought about a proliferation of satirical periodicals in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Slovenia’s *Pavliha*, Germany’s *Simplicissimus*, the UK’s *Punch*, France’s *l’Assiette au Beurre*, and the Caucasus’ *Molla Nasreddin*, to name a few), so too has our digital age provided a particularly fertile graphic moment, via the meme and the protest poster. Today’s visual glut has spawned new aesthetic languages whose messages and discourse we often find distasteful. Though each enjoys a distinct history, both the graphic arts and satire claim to speak simultaneously for and to the people.

A publication will accompany the exhibition and serve as a compendium of the practices of satire and graphics acting both as a mediation guide and a reader on the topic with essays from leading scholars.

*“With the rise of populism across the globe (not to mention reductive and revanchist forms of identity politics), there has been vigorous debate over who constitutes ‘the people.’ For more than a millennium, satire has been a particularly contested genre to explore such questions, via varying degrees of serious invective or jocular teasing. Is each joke, as George Orwell maintained, a tiny*

*revolution? Or does laughter deflate the pressures and tension which could otherwise lead to political upheaval?" - Slavs and Tatars*