

ON NOVAK'S WORK

"The social criticism of Maja Novak is not narrowly Slovene but much wider, thoroughly humane. [...] A literary masterpiece which fills the reader with an icy chill! By this work alone, Maja Novak earned herself the title of the 'first lady of horror'."

Jana Kolarič, Revija o knjigi

"In this light, the work of Maja Novak offers us much more than just a story about petty criminal intrigues. The crime of utmost dimensions can only be compared with the machinations of a demiurge playing with the God-created substance. And the fact that the book appeared in the year when the world was supposed to come to its end which the book reinvented in its own way was by no means a coincidence."

Uroš Črnigoj

THE FELINE PLAGUE

"Ergo, the author of *The Feline Plague* has not only read Borges, but understood him as well."

Marko Golja, Primorska srečanja

"But all of the above can only be (partially or fully) realized if we read *The Feline Plague* in a gender-sensitive manner, by recognizing and evaluating the many dimensions of its subversive force."

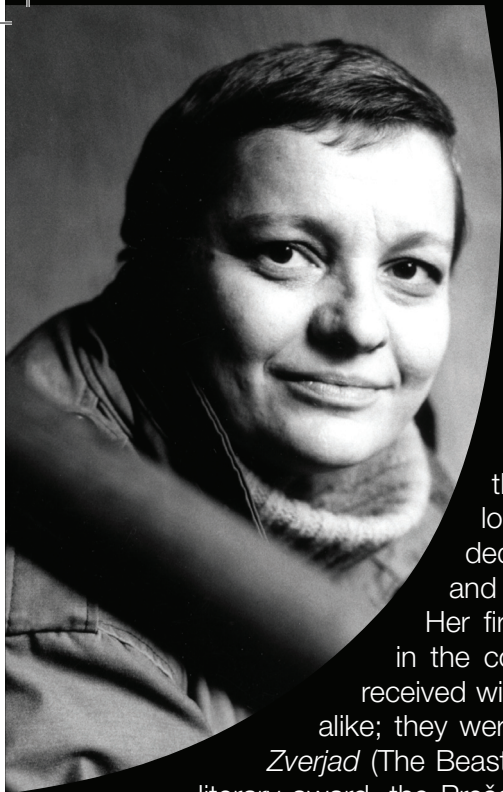
Ana Sobočan, Apokalipsa

photo by Jože Suhadolnik



MAJA NOVAK

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MAJA NOVAK

was born in a town she never visited afterwards, graduated in law which she never practiced, worked for a while in the public administration which she hated and after a brief spell living in Jordan joined, as one of the first, the ever-growing ranks of the unemployed. Therefore it seemed only logical that she should, in order to survive, dedicate herself to full-time freelance writing and translating.

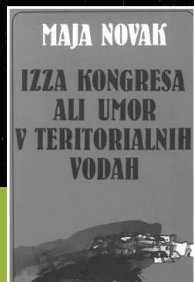
Her first two books were crime novels, a rarity in the contemporary Slovene prose, and as such received with wide acclaim among readers and critics alike; they were followed by a collection of short stories *Zverjad* (The Beasts) which won the most important Slovene literary award, the Prešeren Foundation Prize in 1997. Becoming, by then, thoroughly addicted to literature, she went on to write her best works: *Karfanaum*, a novel dealing with, among other things, exploitation of construction workers on Slovene-managed building sites in the Middle East, and *The Feline Plague* which deals with, well, pretty much everything.

As a translator, she translates Eco and Baricco from Italian, the philosopher Levinas and the theologian Marion from French and Terry Pratchett as well as Neil Gaiman from English, while as a columnist she occasionally contributes acid-tongued articles to the notoriously critical Slovene political magazine *Mladina*.

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SOME BOOKS BY MAJA NOVAK

Izza kongresa ali umor v teritorialnih vodah

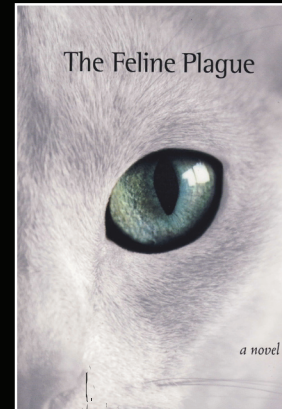


Mačja kuga



THE FELINE PLAGUE

The book was translated by Maja Visenjak-Limon



Around the turn of the century, Slovenes took blithely to the capitalism like lemmings to the sea; most of them were going to drown, but in the nation-wide ecstasy, no-one wanted to believe it or even hear about it. Not surprisingly, in 2000 the latest and probably the best novel of Maja Novak, *The Feline Plague*, went largely unnoticed. It's about capitalism. It's against it.

It's also a book about "crazy women" walking in and out of each other's dreams, about a second-rate climacteric female divinity clumsily trying her hand at the newly-fanged entrepreneurship, about a hopelessly blind painter falling desperately in love with a despairing man, about gods and betrayals, it's a book about books and paintings and it's a book about the prettiest cats in the world.

According to the latest survey, 55,000 Germans own cats and spend a yearly average of 3,600 Euros on their upkeep. If those cats could read, *The Feline Plague* would be one of their favourite books, along with Marquez, Kafka, Stephen King and similar books which influenced it.

"In the train of runaway progress, the only thing to do, the last thing possible, Walter Benjamin writes, is to pull the emergency brake. Novak pulls it down hard, savaging what Naomi Klein calls disaster capitalism with the storytelling skills of Scheherazade, the brio of Thomas Pynchon, and the manic originality of Ishmael Reed."

From the foreword by Robert Buckeye