

The background of the entire image is a close-up, high-resolution photograph of dark red soil. The soil has a granular, crumbly texture with some small clumps and fine particles. There are scattered bits of organic matter, such as small twigs, dried leaves, and bits of plant matter, embedded in the soil. The lighting is somewhat uneven, with slightly darker areas in the shadows and brighter areas where the soil is more exposed.

IN SEARCH OF A COMMON GROUND 2

CONTEMPORARY MACEDONIAN ART



IN SEARCH OF A COMMON GROUND 2

CONTEMPORARY MACEDONIAN ART

JANESLIEVA SLAVICA / NANEVSKI GOCE
OPA (STEVČESKA SLOBODANKA, SARAGINOVSKI DENIS)
PRLJA NADA / SEKOVSKI IGOR / SHEMOV BORIS
SPASOSKI ALEKSANDAR / STOJANOVSKI KRUNISLAV
TOSEVSKI IGOR / ZERNOVSKI VELIMIR

STÄDTISCHES ATELIERHAUS AM DOMAGKPARK HALLE50 DOMAGKATELIERS

IN SEARCH OF A COMMON GROUND 2

'...as dictators they have taken our autonomy, as beasts they have gnawed our critical thought...' Marija Grubar, a student and an activist in the student protest in Macedonia in 2015

In search of a common ground 2 continues to question the social, political, cultural positions and repositions reflected in the Macedonian art scene. The local confinement as a result of the continuous transition from one political system to another seems endless and unsolvable, and the complexity of a small and young state surfaces discourses of identity, nationalism, cultural products, history or building of new hegemonic history, sustainability, art policies, social awareness, human rights, freedom of speech, independent media, feminism, marginalized groups, etc. According to the American economist and Nobel prize winner Joseph Stieglitz, the transition of the former communist countries towards the market economy is a big experiment with an open expiry date. The contemporary art in the country follows the same rules, meanwhile we ask when this process will end, and we argue that the promotion of art should not be via the market, but should and might find other ways of evolution. Exhibited art for the 'non-buyers' is a hybrid foundation stone of the artistic scene that can renew and redirect the relationship between the artist, the public, and the market. The contemporary art addresses, reacts and communicates directly with the public avoiding the market.

One perspective of the current local discourses is given in the interesting paragraph of Anastasija Gjurchinova: *"... in Macedonia and the Balkans, the centuries do not come in a logical sequence, but live and exist parallel to each other."* Hence, mass antiquisation occurred in the 21st century in Macedonia, prevailing in the capital city Skopje (with countless gigantic sculptures and buildings set in an atmosphere of horror vacui), where the rape of the public space without consent of the intellectual and critical masses became hideous, and Macedonia became famous tourist destination owing to the parade of kitsch, and stylistic and historical discrepancies. Therefore, the economic and social crisis grew deeper and the authoritarian regime - dictatorship of the governing right wing brought the state to a boiling point, so the revolt and the street revolution became way of showing accountability and participation.

Another upsetting fact is the condition with the media freedom and the right of independent journalism as major public opinion shaper. Now, the evil does not try to hide behind the manipulateness, and advertises its terror holding the main strings in the major media outlets. *"The task of the ministers of propaganda is to make the citizens like their slavery!"* (Ana Jovkovska). In the region, the situation is similar..., yet our own pain seems the greatest. A person cannot be interested with everything else around if s/he isn't purified from inside. We cannot be 24 hours revolutionaries if we cannot pursue our personal injustice. In the 'Sigmund Freud Sister' Goce Smilevski points out to the fact that even if each of us is alone and determined by its own destiny, each person can build an original and deep interpretation of life and find common ground.

Which approach in the search of a common ground the Macedonian artists choose to address the current conditions?

The artists have responsibility, as progress bearers, and have an attitude expressed as a relation between the artistic product and the political power, and influenced by the new technologies and the social networks, the ethnocentrism vs the cosmopolitanism, the digital age, the engaged art ...

The exhibition *'In search of a common ground 2'* is trying to give a visual outlook and to answer current aspects through different individual approaches of the selected artists. Some of them are engaged, some of them are just giving a comment, some of them are participatory, but all of them have an approach that defines the artists as socially included individuals. They address different aspects of the socio-political life that frustrates them and provokes them artistically.

Ana Frangovska and Bojana Janeva-Shemova, the curators



Slavica JANESHLIEVA

Still Hunt, 2016, 18 embroidered pillowcases (each 40 x 40cm), 120 x 240cm



In *'Still Hunt'* (2016) Slavica Janeshlieva makes comparison between the major medieval witch-hunt based on labeling and judging features that were outside the set social norms, and the present seduction of the masses leading to divisions based on political affiliation. Since most of the outcasts were women, the female principles are integrated in this artwork, starting from the material – fabric, the needlework, to the epithets and words good enough to be convicted. The pillow, as the base, represents intellect, as well as dream, a subconscious idea generator. The broom is the symbol of the witches, but also refers to the sweeping of all problems in the society under the carpet, and cleaning and degrading of the thinkers and the ones that disagree with the general opinion.

Born in Skopje, 1973. Lives and works in Skopje. BFA, Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje, Printmaking Department, 1996. MFA, Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje. 1998. Since 2006 she is teaching at the Faculty of Fine Arts - Skopje, Printmaking Department. Solo exhibitions: New York, 2011, 2005; Skopje 2012, 2009, 2007, 2004, 2002, 1999, 1998, 1997; Veles 2009; Kavadarci 2009; Kumanovo, Macedonia 2009; Utrecht, The Netherlands 2006; Strumica 2004; Bratislava 2001; Boswil, Switzerland 2000; Bitola 2015, 2013, 1996. Participated on numerous group exhibitions in the country and abroad. She won many awards, and some of the most important are: 2003 - Atanas Muchev Award, Selection 2002, Strumica; DENES Award, Nominated Artists Exhibition, Annual Award by the Civil Society Foundation in New York, Trust for Mutual Understanding and the Contemporary Art Center in Macedonia, Skopje; 2001 - First Prize, 1st International Mini Print Triennial, Tetovo; Grand Prix, 5th Biennial of the youth artists, Skopje; 2000 - Purchase Award, 3rd International Print Triennial, Bitola; 1997 - Second prize, SIAB '97, Skopje etc.

Goce NANEVSKI

We are all Vampires, 2016, video, 9' 47"



In his documentary video *'We are all vampires'*, Goce Nanevski is using interviewing as a medium to capture the tales and stories of the ancient people and the Macedonian tribes retold from generation to generation about the existence of vampires; then the conversation is slowly transferred to the analysis of the current society and the personification of the current problems in the political, economic, social, and cultural world as work of vampires. By giving a satirical dimension to the video, the author ascertains, with lots of criticism and self-critique, that we are all vampires in the present times and that all current societal malformations occur thanks to us, and are directly or indirectly initiated by all social actors in the community.

Born in 1974 in Skopje. He graduated at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje in 1996 and finished his master degree at the same Faculty in 2002. Since 2004 he works at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Sculpture and is an associate professor of sculpting, sculpting techniques and drawing. Since 2012 until 2016 he was a Vice Dean of Studies. Selected solo exhibitions: 2015, New York, MC Gallery, Monument Document; 2014, Skopje, Mo (nu) ment, National Gallery of Macedonia; 2010, Banja Luka, Bosnia, Fifty or Fifty extended, Museum of Contemporary Art; 2010, Cairo, Egypt, 12 Cairo Biennale, Opera house; 2009, Venice 53rd Venice Biennale, Making Worlds, Palace Zanolio.

OPA / Obsessive Possessive Aggression/

Keep calm and eat Chocolate, 2012-2013
three objects (each 24x28x3cm) and several figurines in variable arrangements



In *'Keep calm and eat chocolate'* (2012) the art group OPA refers to the glorification of triviality imposed by the system in which the Macedonian society exists and indirectly ridicules the values that do not correspond with the present-day. In a satirical way, the object plays with the newly conceived glorification of the 'antique' values, splendour and luxury which do not exist in reality, but are part of the so called process of antiquisation which was invented in order to impose new way of thinking about the Macedonian identity, fostering the idea that the Macedonians are direct descendants of Alexander the Great.

OPA (Obsessive Possessive Aggression) was founded in 2001 by the visual artists Slobodanka Stevceska (b.1971, Skopje, Macedonia) and Denis Saraginovski (b.1971, Skopje, Macedonia). Both of them studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje and are working on the border line between art, media and performance. OPA has had solo exhibitions in Macedonia, Estonia, Slovenia, Croatia, France, Germany, USA and the Netherlands and has exhibited widely in group exhibitions and festivals such as Transmediale, Berlin; Transeuropa: Europäisches Theater- und Performancefestival, Hildesheim; Freewaves' Biennial of New Media Arts, Los Angeles; Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, etc. OPA received residency fellowships in Estonia, France, Germany, Switzerland and Netherland. They are winners of the Interdisciplinary award "Dragisha Nanevski" on AKTO Festival of Contemporary Arts in Bitola (2010) and the Annual award for young visual artist DENES (Today)(2004). www.o-p-a.org

Nada PRLJA

Impossible to Predict, 2016, space installation, colored sand, 300 x 500 cm



The variable installation *'Impossible to predict'* by Nada Prlja represents a floor 'image' created with sand in different colors. The image is associated with the map of the world and its colored regions point out the territories that are possible high risk war zones. Influenced by the time factor and the aerial motion in the space (people movement, wind, circulation) the initial setup of the map will change, the sand will move (similar to the Buddhist meditative sand drawings that last until the wind or the water 'takes' them away) and in this way the initial sketch of the riskiest zones will change and other territories will become high risk war zones. With this transfiguring installation, Prlja alludes to all allied political games that have been played, in the past and in the present, by the powerful ruling politicians who manipulate the lives of millions of people in the world with simple oral agreements and negotiations, just as they would maneuver the figurines in a children's social game.

Born in Sarajevo. In 1982 she moved to Skopje. From 1998 to 2013 she lived in London, and since 2014 lives and works between Skopje and London. Prlja graduated at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje, and completed MPhil in Philosophy of Art at the Royal College of Art in London. She participated at the following international biennales: 5th Moscow Biennale, Moscow (2013); 7th Berlin Biennale, Berlin (2012); Manifesta 8, Murcia (2010); International Printmaking Biennale, Ljubljana (2009). Has participated in many solo and group exhibitions in the world, like: Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); White Cube, London (2013); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2013); FUTURA centar, Prague (2013); The Museum of City, Vzgalica, Ljubljana (2012); Museum of Contemporary Art and National Gallery of Macedonia, Skopje (2010/07); Hong-Gah National Museum, Taipei (2010); Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2010), etc. Since 2014 she is engaged in curatorship, through numerous projects, most realized at her independent project and gallery space Serious Interests Agency in Skopje.

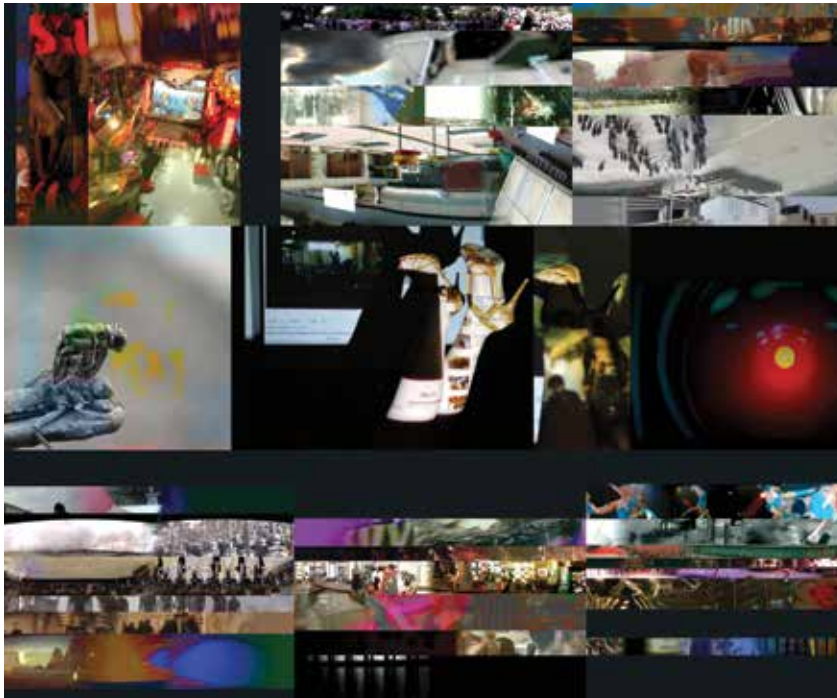


In his spatial installation *'Quo vadis?'* (2016), Igor Sekovski conceptualizes the long-lasting individual and general spiritual state of wandering, lack of direction and lack of sense of existence and action. Vacuum, hollow steps, a state of 'neither here, nor there', levitation in space and time, they do not offer security and conformism (conceptually), nor they promise simulacrum of the future with clear and optimistic accuracy. The big and glittery letters (helium balloons) emphasize the need for asking this existential question that seems to be avoided intentionally in the trivial daily mantra and in the meaningless attempts to justify mere existence, yet the clarification with oneself and with the nature of the problem is the key point in order to begin the quest for restructuring systems.

Born in 1972 in Skopje. In 1997 graduated at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje, painting, and in 2003 finished the MFA studies at the Joshibi University of Art and Design, Kanagawa-ken, Japan. Author of seven solo exhibitions in Skopje, Tokyo, New York, Cetinje. Participated in numerous group exhibitions in the country and abroad (Japan, Bulgaria, Germany, Montenegro, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Azerbaijan, Canada). Since 2012 he is a co-founder and president of the Institute for Arts and Culture "Ars Acta". Lives and works in Skopje.

Boris SHEMOV

12:05, 2015, digital print 200 x 240 cm and video 3' 13"



The multimedia project *'12:05'* (2015) by Boris Shemov consists of a digital print and a video installation which embodies the author's belief that everything and nothing, in the same time, have tremendous meaning and no meaning at all. This kind of anarchistic point of view translates into dense visual "landscape" saturated with experimentation, synthetic and multifaceted conceptualization.

The video connects different scenes taken from a drone and depicts people's movements and machines working, as well as industrial sights and sounds, while the collage-like digital print is a combination of images of video materials, creating multi-layered optical imagery. More precisely, this kind of visual vocabulary allows for different interpretations and numerous narratives (real or invented by the recipient) and adds multiple discourses to this artwork.

Born in 1974 in Skopje. In 1996 he finished the undergraduate studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje, painting department, course of handmade paper and in 2003 he earned his Master's degree at the same faculty. He participated in numerous group exhibitions in Macedonia and abroad. He works as an art associate at the National gallery of Macedonia in Skopje. Selected solo exhibitions: 2015, *"12:05"*, National Gallery of Macedonia; 2013, *"Ars Acta 001"*, Gallery MC, New York; 2011, Berlin Prima Center Berlin, *"Sharing extension"*; Cetinje National Museum of Montenegro, Gallery *"Dado"*, *"Life domain"*; 2006, Skopje, Macedonian National Gallery, *"code B"*; 2005, Skopje, Gallery *"Point"*, *"Exhibition for a day"*; 2003, Tokyo, Gallery *"Toki Art Space"*, *"Insomnia"*. He is co-founder and member of the Institute for Arts and Culture *'Ars Acta'*.

Aleksandar SPASOSKI

Lodge, 2012, video 3' 46"



The video 'Lodge' (2012) by Aleksandar Spasoski is an interesting video installation in which there is audio and visual dynamics and harmony of the composition. Pigeons can be seen on the screen following the rhythm of two classical music pieces and being recorded in a pigeon house. They are located in different pigeonholes and each of them has its own coordination in a harmonic cohesion with the music. There is an impression of watching a musical piece – an operetta... However, dwelling deeper into the video content there are several different discourses. Are the pigeons in Spasoski's video a prelude of people who are searching for a common thing (common ground) coordinated according to the rhythm, course and dynamics set by someone else? Is the common ground, actually an artificially created environment by someone else (the pigeon house) offering false security, yet taking away the freedom?

Born 1974 in Tetovo, Macedonia. He graduated painting in 1997, at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Skopje. In 2008 he obtained a Degree of New Media Art and Video at the ADBK in Munich and in 2013 MA at the Faculty of Fine Arts Skopje. His works include conceptual art, video art, installations, film and documentary, painting, sound and music. He participated in various international exhibitions and Video and Film festivals. His movie "Voyeur" was awarded on the Munich Art Academy for 2008 - (Preize Träger), then nominated at Film Festival Kassel, Oberhausen short film festival, Split Film Festival, Transitland Europe Project, project organized by InterSpace Sofia, Transmediale Berlin and Ludwig Museum Budapest that aims to create a Book of 100 most remarkable video works from 1990 - 2010. Works and lives in Munich and Skopje.

Krunislav STOJANOVSKI

The Eye, 2011, multimedia installation and a video



In his video and spatial installation *'The Eye'* (2011) Krunislav Stojanovski deals with the aspect of manipulation and continuous deception of the broad masses by the political leaders and their speeches uttered backwards become a meaningless chant, equally irrelevant, no matter which country or period they belong to. The author is also addressing the phenomenon of control and surveillance by third party – by “The Eye” or the “Big Brother” being the Conductor of all changes, and he (ignoring the criticism) concludes that neither the politicians who are manipulating the people, nor the amorphous masses are capable and powerful enough to make social and political upturn.

Born 1969 in Skopje. Graduated painting in 1998 from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb with prof. Djuro Seder. 1997 graduate of public art in the class of Dr. Agnes Denes (USA), the SOMMERAKADEMIE Salzburg. 1998 professional works and improves the Cable Factory, Helsinki. Member of the Croatian Association of Artists since 1997, and from 2004 HZSU. Between 1990-1999 worked as a journalist for culture, and in 2000 and 2001 as a restorer of fresco painting. Since 2003 until now leads a painting workshop which developed special programs. From 1995 to today initiates and organizes various art projects of international character. Deals with painting, drawing, installations, photography, video, writing and education. His works are related to social, humanist, environmental and political overtones, with special emphasis on the individual and his role in general. He has won several awards and scholarships. Exhibited in 30 solo and 50 group exhibitions in more than twenty countries. He lives and works in Zagreb.

Igor TOSHEVSKI

Painterly Utopia: Boy without Knapsack, 2011, digital photography, 7 x (70 x 100 cm)



The photo-installation *'Painterlyutopia: Boy without Knapsack'* by Igor Toshevski is part of the project "Free territory" and a phase of the project "Supremus – the last territory" (2011). The artwork consists of a series of 7 photographs taken in South-west Macedonia, on which a snapshot is framed in a manner that is visually "occupying" certain space or "demarking" certain territory. Contrary to his previous artworks (included in the exhibition "In search of a common ground" and part of the Free territory project), in this work Toshevski does not intervene by creating an artificial appropriation, but instead he chooses scenes in the landscape that are identified as "boundary" or demarcation (an alley, gate, scarecrow, football net and other artefacts found in-situ). These territories are declared free art zones by the artist, with their own declaration, and all activities or objects within the art zones are declared artworks (sculpture or installation). Each temporary art territory is registered and its life history recorded by photo-documentation.

Born 1963, Skopje. Studied printmaking at Kuvataaide Academia, Helsinki. Masters degree in sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Skopje. During the 1980s he is one of the founders and active member of several art collectives, among them the group Zero (1985-1990) which had a significant role in the occurrence and development of the alternative art scene in Macedonia. As an individual artist, in his numerous installations and long-term projects, Toshevski explores the complex relations between conceptual art and its radical position in the social and political context of post-socialist transition. He was also a founding member of the Kooperacija initiative (2011/2014) with whom he frequently exhibited in Macedonia and abroad. He works as a production designer in film and theater, art director and graphic designer.

Selected solo exhibitions: Dossier, City Museum, Skopje (1997); Process, MoCA, Skopje (2004); Territories (2004-2012); Love Undefined... MoCA, Skopje (2012). Selected group exhibitions: After the Wall, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1999); Love it or Leave it, Cetinje (2004); Cosmopolis, Thessaloniki (2002); Illuminations, La Biennale di Venezia (2011)

Velimir ZERNOVSKI

Distilled, twinkle, twinkle, 2014, staffed textile figure



Velimir Zernovski with the Mickey Mouse like figure in *'Distilled, twinkle, twinkle'* (2014) subliminally transfers messages from a history based on constant failure, shame, loss and abundance. This pop culture character can be interpreted as identity search with childish naïveté after the moment of recognition or belonging. The way the artwork is displayed – hanging on a golden rope, suggests hopelessness and ominousness due to the infantile moment. Still, the sad end leaves an opportunity for new interpretations or beginnings that will reject the reproduction as we know it.

Born 1981 in Skopje. Graduated at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University - Skopje, MFA in 2015 at the same Faculty. He realized solo exhibitions in Macedonia and abroad: New York (2010, 2012), Paris (2011), Vienna (2009, 2011), Freiburg (2009), Skopje (2006, 2007, 2010, 2012, 2013); he took part in group exhibitions in Slovenia, Kosovo, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Macedonia, Turkey and USA. Curated and co-curated several projects and exhibitions and participated in many international projects and collaborations. He was working as a curatorial assistant at Press to Exit Project Space project of the Swiss Cultural Program in Macedonia. Through paintings, videos, installations, installations with objects in public space and writing and publishing art books he explores notions of identity, urbanity and popular culture. Lives and works in Skopje.

Location:
Städtisches Atelierhaus am Domagkpark
Halle50 Domagkateliers
Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky Str. 30
80807
<http://www.atelierhaus-domagkpark.de>
<http://www.domagkateliers.de>

DOMAGKATELIERS.DE

Supported by:



Landeshauptstadt
München
Kulturreferat



Landeshauptstadt
München
bezirksausschuss
München



MINISTRY OF CULTURE, REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



Organised by:

Aleksandar Spasoski,
Project coordinator for international exchange cultural promotion - Munich
contact: Domagk Ateliers, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky Str. 30,
Brief kaste/Raum: M.0.09, 80807 München
www.spasoski.com; mail: aleksandar.spasoski@gmail.com; +49 176 315 64 315



Ars Acta Institute for Arts and Culture - Skopje
The Institute for arts and culture 'Ars Acta' aims to promote new artistic disciplines, technologies and media, foster critical discourse and integrate arts and culture into various forms of institutional and non-institutional developments. Ars Acta Institute organises projects interrelated with new expressions in contemporary art and socio-political changes in the society, and showcases experimental and non-commercially driven art. Also establishes partnerships with cultural centers, public institutions and private organisations that nurture similar programs and artistic values. The organization operates with five members Ana Frangovska, Bojana Janeva-Shemova, Radmila Onchevska, Boris Shemov and Igor Sekovski.
<https://arsacta.wordpress.com/>; arsactainstitute@gmail.com

Curators and text:

Ana Frangovska, Bojana Janeva-Shemova

Translated:

Radmila Oncevska

Design:

Igor Sekovski

Printing:

<http://www.flyeralarm.com/de>

Produced:

2016[®]

