

PROJECT NAME: "ONUFRI" PRIZE, 2004

EXHIBITION PLATFORM: "CHOSEN PLACES"

DATES: DECEMBER 18TH, '04 – JANUARY 25TH '05

SYNOPSIS: INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION ON
CONTEMPORARY ART

LOCATION: NATIONAL GALLERY OF ARTS,
Blvd. "DESHMORET E KOMBIT", TIRANA

ORGANIZER: NATIONAL GALLERY OF ARTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

"Chosen Places" stands as a metaphor for our contemporary time/space relationship. As always in history, time and space are dialectically conditioning our existence, but even more so, it happens today. "Chosen Places" actually is a title borrowed by the work of Dimitrij Shubin's series of photographs, that so much speak of themselves. Anonymous and totally unfashionable places appear in front of us, however hiding an intrigue that all anonymous places do. But the intrigue, when one gets to know about it, is the shivering story of murders and killings, but not accidents.

However, the selection of the participating artists, even though it is still in process, which means that this short text is also coming in the midst of this process, has an invisible red thread connecting them together. All the artists deal with interventions in places and spaces, either site specific or virtual ones. They speak to us more as experiences: somewhere through their symbolical power; somewhere else images of people talk to us about lost histories in old spaces and objects that try to bear some witness of forgotten times and glory; virtual memory is scrutinized as a space of its own that contains limitless data, whose restaging can alter original meaning and allow us to play with it; juxtaposition of objects and houses undergo artist's interpretation to offer us a reflective stance, so necessary in understanding the complicated human universe.

PROJECT GOALS

The challenge of continuing the successful experience of this annual international event, started in 1998, not only has become increasingly bigger, due to the lack of clear cultural policies from cultural institutions, but it also puts in front of the organizers various aims and goals to achieve:

- To ensure the international participation of a broad scale, as a vital condition to the cultural exchange to be provided by this meeting.
- To increase the international professional awareness to the art production of the “perhiperic” areas.
- To establish and broaden the cultural exchange between participating artists and visiting public.
- To give space to the public and professional debate on the issues of contemporary culture and its impact on the new societies.
- To provide space and possibilities to young artists, Albanian and international to show their newest achievements in their art practice.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

It's a fact by now that the young contemporary Albanian art is having an important impact on the international art scene. The role that the organizing of a prestigious international art event, such as “Onufri” Prize, has a vital importance in not only having made it possible, but also has contributed a lot to changing the image of the country itself.

This project aims at presenting high profile contemporary artists, with a lot of creative energy, selected by high profile international standards. The previous years experience has shown that "Onufri" has been a launching platform for many young and aspiring artists, Albanian and foreigner as well. This due to the combined showing of their work with more established artists, as well as through contacts with galleries, curators, and critics, invited either as members of the international jury, or as participants to the round tables organized within the framework of the show. However, due to a very unstable political condition that the country is constantly experiencing, despite the very successful echo the event has had, it hasn't managed yet to be a structure independent from political mood. Therefore, it still needs all the support that can be granted to it, by all institutions, foundations, businesses and individuals, who are keen in changing and improving the image of this country and extend the range of possibilities offered especially to a hopeless young generation.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND PUBLIC IMPACT

Considering the challenge this event offers and the above mentioned interest on the young Albanian art scene, there is already a large international interest to the outcome of "Onufri". Professional public, curators, critics, gallerists and art fans have already shown a lot of interest in the event. The event still offers the best chance to luring a significant number of art professionals to Tirana, for the simple reason of an art event that offers a lot of possibilities to know more and establish eventual exchange of benefit to the participating artists and to the visitors as well.

On the other hand, considering the increasing interest with which the local public has responded to this annual international show, for several days the local public, either professional or not, shall have the possibility to experience the artistic actions, meet the artists, and also experience the cultural diversity such an environment is going to offer.

Also regarding the follow up of the project a series of encounters, and round tables with public debates on issues of contemporary art and related to the show itself is planned to take place. An important part of this program is the creation of the catalogue, which is going to be the virtual extension of the show itself.

"Onufri" thus aims at broadening the artistic audience, offering an incredible chance of interchange between artists, critics, curators and public. The show shall take place in the National Gallery of Arts, Blvd. "Deshmoret e Kombit".

PARTICIPATION

The artist's selection this year has been realized by the curator of the show, that for the first time doesn't come from inside the Albanian scene, but is definitely part of its history and development. Erzen Shkololli, with a rich background as one of the most well known Albanian contemporary artists from Kosova, has recently engaged in a successful curatorial practice, and is running an independent Institution for Contemporary Art in Peja, where he has organized a number of exhibitions with some of the most important international and Albanian artists of our times. The selection shall follow the framework of the Prize "Onufri", consisting of regular visits of the curator to all the artists interested to apply, according to an open platform. All the participants are going to be selected in advance and will be announced on November 30th.

ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL PRIZE "ONUFRI 2004"
Exhibition "CHOSEN PLACES"

PARTICIPATING ARTIST' LIST:

1. Yael Bartana / **Afula /Amsterdam**
2. Missirkov / Bogdanov / **Sofia/Bullgaria**
3. Pavel Braila / **Chisniau/Moldavia**
4. Enisa Cealiaj / **Tirana/Albania**
5. Department for public appearances / **Munich/Germany**
6. Giovanni de Lazzari / **Malgrate/Italy**
7. Jakup Ferri / **Prishtina/Kosova**
8. Sonja Gangl / **Vienna/Austria**
9. Alban Hajdinaj / **Tirane/Albania**
10. Edi Hila / **Tirane/ Albania**
11. Sejla Kameric / **Sarajevw/Bosnia and Hercegovina**
12. Christoph Keller / **Berlin/Germany**
13. Shpetim Kercova / **Tirana/Albania**
14. Mikael Lundberg / **Stockholm/Suedi**
15. Mario Mišković / **Zagreb/Kroatia**
16. Asa Nylén / **Stockholm/Suedi**
17. Oliver Musovik / **Skopje/Macedonia**
18. Fehrat Ozgur / **Ankara/Turkey**
19. Adrian Paci /**Shkoder / Albania / Milano/Itali**
20. Platforma 9, 81 /**Zagreb/Kroaci**
21. Suela Qoshaj /**Tirana/ Albania**
22. Seth Price / **New York/U.S.A.**
23. Anri Sala / **Tirane / Shqipwri/Paris/France**
24. Gentian Shkurti / **Tiranw/ Albania**
25. Dimitrij Shubin / **St. Petersburg/Russia**
26. Leke Tasi / **Tirana/ Albania**

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS (i nënshtrohet ndryshimeve / subject to further change):

Shkelzen Maliqi / Philosopher, art critic and journalist. Director of Center for Humanistic Studies “Gani Bobi” and editor in chief of ARTA – monthly supplement for visual arts in weekly Java / **Prishtina**

Petrit Selimi / Social Anthropologist / **Prishtina**

INTERNATIONAL JURY:

Silvia Eiblmayr / Artistic and Managing Director of the Galerie im Taxispalais / **Innsbruck/Austria**

Michal Kolecek / Freelance curator/**Usti nad Labem/ Czech Republic**

Edi Muka / Director of Tirana Biennale, Curator at National Art Gallery/**Tirana/Albania**