



dejan kaludjerović

The Face of Fascism



Ora, a voi preparare il discorso funebre per me

Dejan Kaludjerović

Ora, a voi preparare il discorso funebre per me (2019)

The artistic practice of Dejan Kaludjerović refers to childhood as a process of political subjectivation. Through the inquiry into children's patterns of socialising and representations of social and gender roles, the artist exposes the complex macro structures, historical transformations and tensions that pervade the construct of childhood. Often deriving from his own experience of growing up in the socialist Yugoslavia, he refers to how children, being both playful and aggressive, rehearse societal patterns, but also subvert and undermine them. In his previous exhibitions – as in a small-scale experimental retrospective “*Algorithms of child play*” [1] curated by the algorithm under the supervision of Mohammad Salemy – the complicated relations between geopolitics, infantilization and immediacy, anthropology of aging and growing up have been uncovered.

In his earlier work “*The Future Belongs to Us*” (2002--2006) the artist presents a series of acrylic paintings, featuring the postures of children taken from the underwear advertisements from 70's shopping catalogues. Questioning the socially determined gender patterns and gestures, Kaludjerović takes the title from the “Cabaret” movie song (originally “*Tomorrow belongs to me*”) sung by the Nazi youth. In historical fascism, children and youth were seen as the driving force of the ideology, their energetic bodies -- considered as ideological vessels or containers -- were supposed to enact its intensity and aggressiveness.

Similarly, the analysis of how fascism is inscribed into the mundane is present in his new work under the title “*Ora, a voi preparare il discorso funebre per me (2019)*”, which is presented at Expo Gemeindebau in Waschhalle Wienerberg / George Washington-Hof, Vienna. It is based on certain aspects of Austrian and Italian history, antifascist struggles and political assassinations. Vienna is a city with a contested cultural heritage: under the burden of traumatic political changes, the urban topologies have been transformed many times. As part of Red Vienna's city planning, a newly established Gemeindebau was named in honour of Italian socialist Giacomo Matteotti in 1926 in order to celebrate the international antifascist solidarity.

Shortly after giving a speech in the Italian Parliament denouncing fascist violence and fascist-capitalist common economic interests in 1924, Matteotti, a socialist politician, was assassinated. Antonio Gramsci writing on the political situation of Italy of that time summed it up: “The terrain upon which the crisis evolves will continue to be the trial for Matteotti's murder [2].” Matteotti's speech saluted by his comrades ended up with an informal pessimistic conclusion – “Now, you will have to prepare the funeral speech for me”, which Kaludjerović used as a title for his work.

Contesting the complex problematics of heritagization – the process through which values are attached to objects, practices and places and transformed into heritage, artist Dejan Kaludjerović refers to this particular historical case in his newly produced artwork. Taking courage not to follow the method of monumentalization, which often arrests the work of memory, Kaludjerović questions what might be the real face of fascism today. On the contrary, he creates a confrontational situation of looking straight into its eyes. The black-and-white embroidered portrait of the unknown person appears to be the face of Amerigo Dumini, the fascist hitman and leader of the group that kidnapped and killed Matteotti in 1924 supposedly under recordless confirmation of Mussolini himself. The embroidery, produced by the artist and his partner, with the help of their friends through a methodic time consuming labour, takes the aesthetics of popular culture and stresses the connection between kitsch, popular taste and populism. The political strategy of populism, according to Belgium political philosopher Chantal Mouffe, is based “on the establishment of a boundary between an “us” and a “them,” between the people and the establishment[3].” The specific construction of “us” and “them”, based on exclusion, xenophobia and restriction of democracy, is specific to right-wing populism. It is reflected in the face-to-face posture, as well as in the intentional misuse of the quote attributed to Matteotti: who is going to deliver a memorial address for whom?

The embroidery is presented on top of a red painted canvas through which Kaludjerović examines the overwritten and blurred layers of history. The canvas, plain red from a distance, appears to include pages from historical socialist proletarian press of the 1920s, reporting on fascist violence, as well as the notes of “Bella Ciao”, the song of struggle. These are the two crucial types of antifascist mobilization – printed word and music score. Their location in this work also mobilizes the viewer: the act of approaching the image shifts the very relation to a political moment. Connecting the notions of populism, kitsch aesthetic forms, and a contemporary vortex of political ideologies, the artist invites us to think about our own agency in historical processes, the position of a subject within them, and the recurring forms of oppression and struggle.

Aleksei Borisionok

[1] Dejan Kaludjerović. Algorithms of Child Play. Bildraum 07, Vienna. 17.09–09.10.2019

[2] Antonio Gramsci. The Italian Crisis (1924). In Selections from political writings (1921-1926), London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1978. P. 264.

[3] Chantal Mouffe. We urgently need to promote a left-populism in Regards, 2016.

The embroidery was produced by the artist and his partner, with the help of their friends.



Ora, a voi preparare il discorso funebre per me (2019)
/from the series: *The Face of Fascism*
inkjet prints, acrylic, gesso 220 x 180 cm
including **The Face of Fascism – Amerigo Dumini** (2019)
embroidery, 64 x 48 cm

* The embroidery was produced by the artist and his partner, with the help of their friends.







Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand



Dreams (FIDAN, 8 years old, Azerbaijan)

/ from the series: *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand* (2016)
carbon paper and colored pencils on canvas paper, 222 x 92 cm

Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand (2013 - ongoing)

Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand are a series of site-specific installations based on research and interviews with children in different countries (from 2013-present: Russia, Serbia, Azerbaijan Iran, Austria, Israel; planned productions in the near future include: Slovenia, Canada. The children, locals from each location, range from 7-11 years old and come from different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds. Each installation is made in relation to the local site and based on specific and often universal children's games which are accompanied by a sound piece emitted from 6 – 7 speakers (each speaker for the voice of one child). The children, interviewed individually, are then put into conversation with one another through the editing process, reacting within the installation to one another's stances on political issues such as social exclusion and inclusion, foreigners, language, colonization, war, money, poverty, etc.

The specificity of visual articulation of each installation in the series that forms a stage for the audio piece is that it is grounded in the local context or represents a visual metaphor of this particular society. The school board in Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia was direct reference to the 2004 terrorist action in the school in Beslan where almost 400 people among which 156 children were killed. In Serbia, marbles are the most popular children's game, but the circle is a metaphor for the society that is caught in the no way out situation of circling around without the possibilities to surpass the crises on all levels, cultural included, etc.

Furthermore, in Belgrade the artist used the amount of marbles that is equal to the number of children born in the same year in the same municipalities as the seven interviewed kids.

At the end of the project, a comprehensive catalogue will be published. It will include collection of the interviews from all versions of the series *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand*, as well as essays and drawings relevant to the project. Together with archive that will be based on material from the local newspapers, relevant historical and contemporary details that are visually or through texts reflecting the children's answers to the asked questions.

Concept:

The series of works *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand* uses children's narration as „litmus paper“ to detect the way each society in question generates cultural differences, identifies the Other and different, and establishes the system of values based on it. By following the narration of children, we learn what does it mean to be member of local community or foreigner in each society, to be rich or poor, to speak different language, to be boy or girl. The children's answer point out at ideological, cultural and societal matrixes that were imposed on them in family, school or other educational institutions, through media, globally present society of consumption (of games, etc.) and the ways children relate to these issues. Through the world of school children between 6 and 10 years of age, in the period when they are not yet individualized, I am trying to observe the world of adults and the models of construction of socially coded and normatively „predetermined“ identities for the children.

In the visual articulation of the sound installations, the accent is put on the tension in between the “naivety” of the children and the “seriousness” of the political context which is to be found in the background of each specific society where the work is being produced. At first glance visually seductive and colourful world of children's games unmask and places at the central stage tensions and conflicts of the modern day global society. Although the number of children of 6 to 7 is not a representative sample for a proper sociological pole, their choice is based on the idea to represent different ethnic, religious, social or “class” groups in the society where the children are growing up, and their narration is very indicative for the problems of this particular country. The special accent is therefore made on the comparative analysis of the children's narrations in all of the countries where the work is produced. It is important to detect which are the terms that are qualitatively comprehended in the different way in each context. (I.E. in Russia all children new what terrorism means, and in Serbia and Azerbaijan they could barely pronounce the word).

Puzzle Cubes (2019)

Site-specific installation, six-channel sound, one-channel video, 20 cubes, MDF, print, 1:33:29 hours

The site specific, six channel sound installation *Puzzle Cubes* conceived for the exhibition *Conversations: Ljubljana* at Tobačna 001, The Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, Ljubljana is one of the site-specific installations from the series *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand* (2013–present), produced in different parts of the world.

The installation is made in relation to the local site and accompanied with a sound piece emitted from 6 speakers (each speaker for the voice of one child); the children are narrating/answering questions about political issues such as social exclusion and inclusion, about foreigners, language, war, money, poverty.

This installation is made out of 20 puzzle cubes that put together make one of possible six images of beautiful landscapes. The artist exposes political landscapes framed by images of Slovenian natural treasures through which symptomatic details of an oppressive politics no longer remain hidden.

**An enemy, it's like one of my classmates, he's really not nice
to me, 'cause he hits me,**



SLOVENIAN VERSION



2019

SLOVENIAN VERSION

Puzzle Cubes

/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**



curated by: Alenka Trebušak

Puzzle Cubes

Conversations: Ljubljana

Tobačna 001-Museum and Galleries of
Ljubljana, Ljubljana (2019)

what you see is politics.



Islam is maybe some kind of medicine against diseases,
umm, otherwise I don't really know.

Then... to speak, erm,



Americans are people, nation, they have their own culture like all other nations... but they abuse the fact that America is the greatest pow- ...one of the greatest powers in the world.

America has a lot of ra-...racists, um... and Americans are people like everyone else, some are good some bad, but um... somehow they love to fight and have control over everything, that I do not like them... as a country.

Politics is about elections, right,



Conversations: Puzzle Cubes

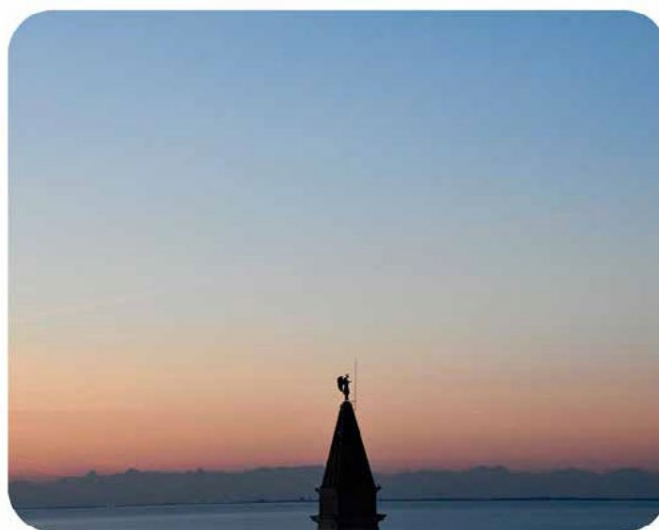
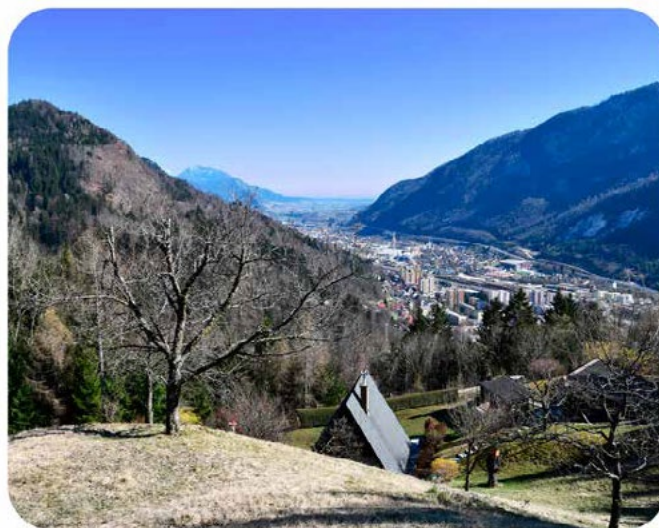
Jelena Petrović

*I think that we are, that most Slovenians are very humble, um,
that we're nice, that we know how to take care of the environment, most of us do* (Alina, 10 years old)

Growing up is political; we are conditioned ideologically and affectively by the social communities that surround us. Referring to this, Dejan Kaludjerović's art project *Conversations: Hula-Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand* (2013–present) reminds us of the fact that childhood is not spared from political reality and political thought however much this period of life, often referred to as the age of innocence, may be devoid of social responsibility for the things that happen and will continue to happen in the future. The playground as the basic setting of the exhibition is presented as the place where innocence, ingenuity and imagination blur those safe zones within which the banality of evil vis-à-vis society, that is, vis-à-vis the other, is for the first time manifested in each individual childhood.

With this new edition of *Conversations: Puzzle Cubes* made in Slovenia, Kaludjerović exposes political landscapes framed by images of Slovenian natural treasures through which symptomatic details of an oppressive politics no longer remain hidden. Observing beautiful landscapes, which always been connected to Slovenian national pride and identity, there are visible and invisible borders shaped by local knowledge, media footages, EU economy, public speaking and political stages. Such visual narratives touch upon neuralgic points of Slovenian society and its divisions, whether material (marked by barbwire fences and corruption) or ideological (generated through hegemonic class, religion, gender and/or nationalist diversifications). Beautiful photo-prints of nature around Dragonja, Piran, Gorica, Črni Kal, Bled and Jesenice stuck to puzzle cubes “playfully” trigger political consciousness not only about the inhumane barbwire borders and unbearable human lives affected by them, but also about the fact that it is our global neoliberal world that produces the deeply entrenched state of permanent war and its perpetually conflicting identities.

Alongside these political landscapes, children's (stereo) typical black-and-white representations of this state of affairs paradoxically indicate the complex politics of hegemonic distribution of social, political and economic power. Remaining ethically untouchable and socially unbreakable these children's observations appear as normative or generally accepted commonplaces of patriarchy, capitalism and racism, not only in Slovenia, but also all over the world. What makes Kaludjerović's *Conversations* horrifying is not the series of these children's answers, containing variations of the absorbed social narratives in-between hegemonic and subaltern worlds, but rather the inability to imagine a possible future beyond such oppressive politics that have occupied landscapes that belong to all.



Political Landscapes (Črni Kal, Jesenice, Bled, Dragonja, Piran, Nova Gorica)



Yes, because for example... there will be... architects coming here
from other countries...

Conversations WMW (2017)

Site-specific installation, 18-channel sound, four-channel video, 2:56:15 hours

The installation *Conversations WMW* is composed out of visual elements of all already existing versions from the series *Conversations: Hula-hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand* (Russia, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Austria and Israel), together with specially made 18 channel sound installation with 4 channel video with the subtitles (German and English).

Before entering the room, the visitor is visually confronted with colorful wall made out of 32 Alphabet Cubes (Azerbaijani Version), not being able to see the space. Going behind the wall, one will find a big plane (55m²) covered with cardboard, that is carrying the circle with 30777 glass marbles (Serbian Version), while penetrating the enlarged (30m²) Sand Box (Iranian Version). One of the options to climb up to the platform is by walking on the ramp made out of the black school board with painted Hopscotch on it (Russian Version), supported by some of the sticks from the Mikado Spiel (Austrian Version). Another possibility is to step onto some of the leftover Alphabet Cubes spread around the platform.

The visitor is free to walk around, climb on the playground, sit at the frame of the Sand Box, observe and listen to the conversations of 18 selected children from 6 countries, which is presented as 18 channel sound installation synchronized with German and English subtitles, projected on 4 walls of the room.

Listening to the sound of the installation, the spectator has the impression that he/she is listening to a conversation between these 18 children coming from 6 different countries speaking Russian, Serbian, Azeri, Farsi, German, Hebrew and Arabic.

Some of the Concrete replicas of Shelters from the Israeli Version are used as supporters of the platform, as well as spread around the playground, in order to sit on them as well as on some of the Alphabet cubes and Mikado Spiel box.

In the visual articulation of the sound installations, the accent is put on the tension in between the “naivety” of the children and the “seriousness” of the political context, which is to be found in the background of each specific society where the work is being produced.

The audio part is made out of the recordings of interviews with children from the already produced versions from the series *Conversations* in these six respective countries.

CONVERSATIONS

WMW



2017

Conversations WMW

/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**

curated by: Mandana Roozpeikar



Conversations WMW

Conversations
Weltmuseum Wien, Vienna
(2017-2018)



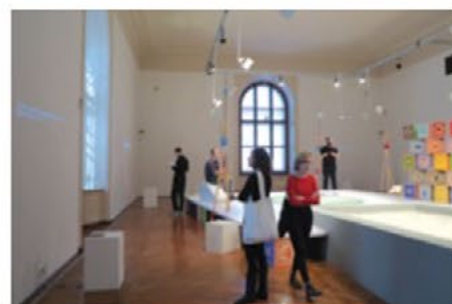
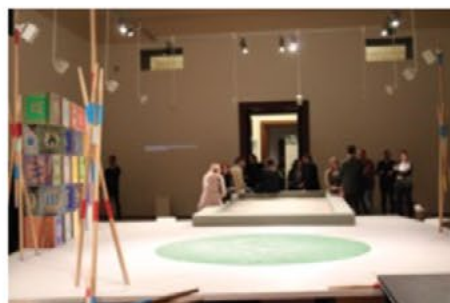
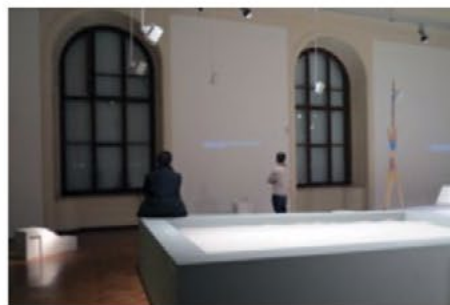
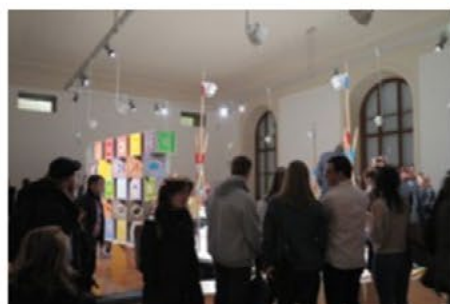
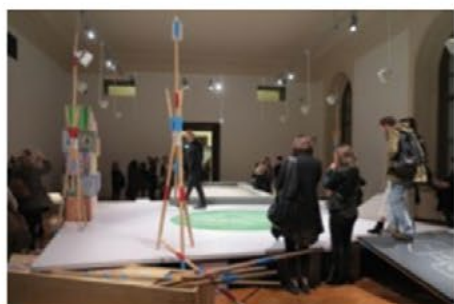
Yes, the meaning of money is that for example they are being
had with it...

Yes, the meaning of money is that for example they are being
had with it...

For example, there are cities that are more beautiful than our city,
but they're not the capital.

Spied







Shelters (2016)

7 channel sound, video, 6 models for shelters made of concrete, 71 min, dimensions variable

The installation *Shelters* conceived for the exhibition *Conversations: Jerusalem* at Art Cube Artists' Studios, Jerusalem is one of the site-specific installations from the series *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand*, produced in different parts of the world.

This installation is made out of wooden sculptures that make up the installation look like small models of local bomb shelters. They can be played with, moved around and used to sit upon. The artist was interested in the way in which the outer features of a shelter function as a place for playing, while its inside provides a safe space during times of war.

ISRAELI VERSION



Shelters
Conversations: Jerusalem
Art Cube Artists' Studios, Jerusalem
(2016)

2016

ISRAELI VERSION

Shelters
/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**

curated by: Maayan Sheleff

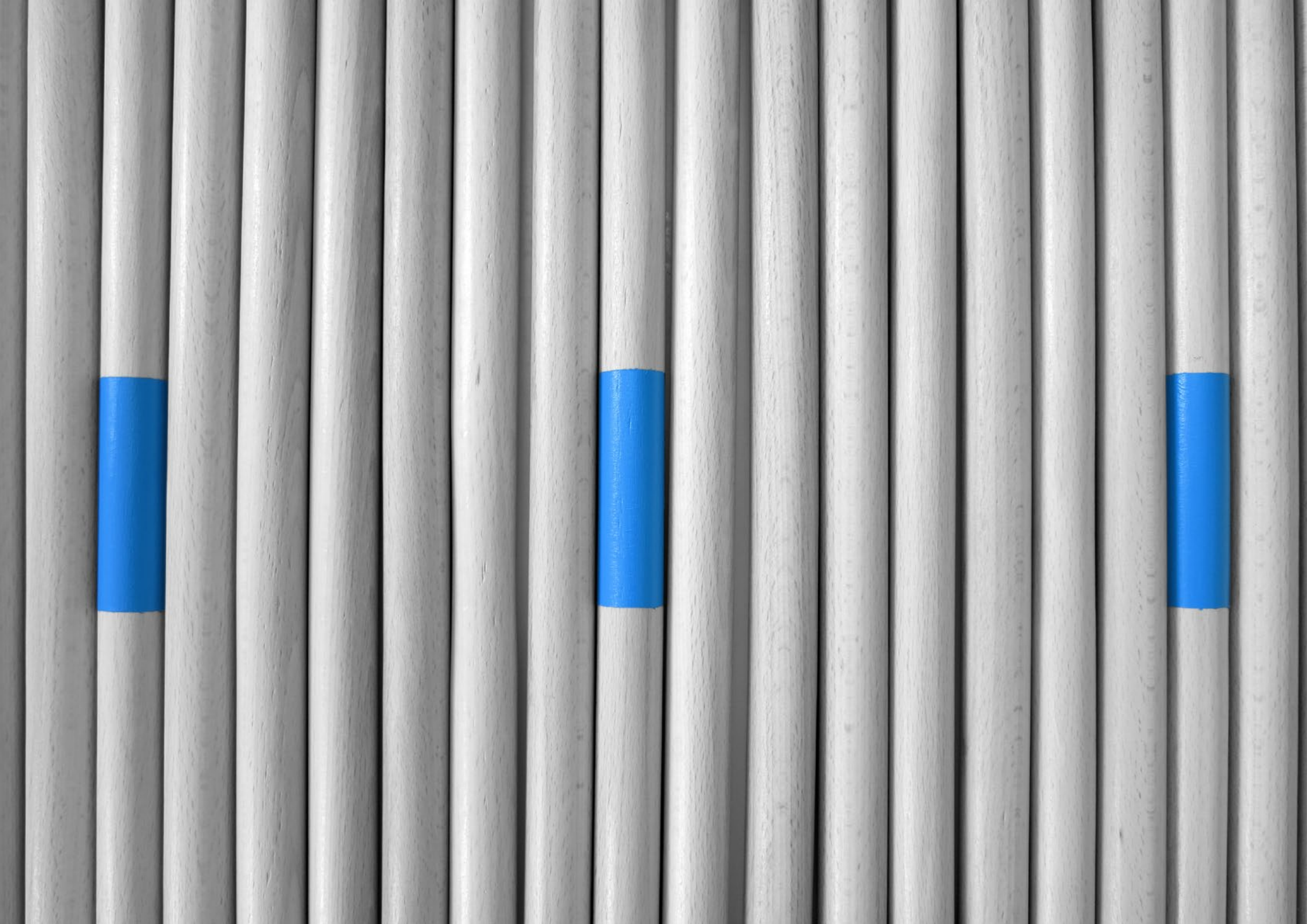
Politicians are... kind of nice. Because they're important.



Palestinians are people living in Palestine. But we don't
have Palestine any more, here!

As they occupied Palestine and made it Israel.





Mikado Spiel (2016)

6 channel sound, video, wooden box, 41 wooden sticks, acrylic, varnish, 92 min, loop, 174 x 38 x 22cm, ø2.7cm x 162cm each

The installation *Mikado Spiel* conceived for the exhibition *Crises as Ideology?* at Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Vienna is one of the site-specific installations from the series *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand*, produced in different parts of the world.

This installation is made out of wooden box painted with acrylic and filled with 41 wooden painted Mikado sticks. Listening to the sound of the installation the spectator has the impression that he/she is listening to a conversation between these six children.

AUSTRIAN VERSION



2016

AUSTRIAN VERSION

Mikado Spiel

/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**



Mikado Spiel
Crises as Ideology?
Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Vienna (2016)

curated by: Anamarija Batista, Dejan Kaludjerović

Politics are for example... mhm... when...
well, there are a lot of politicians for example in Austria
there is the ÖBB or ÖFB or other... politicians.



installation view, exhibition *Crisis as Ideology?*, Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Vienna, Austria (2016)

Politicians do.. speak into the microphone.. and I see
them on television very often.

ZARA, 7 years old, AUSTRIA



**I...most of the time I know that we for example are in war
with Americans or we are enemies with them. Then...er...**

Sand Box (2015)

6 channel sound, video, MDF, acrylic, 1T of local sand, styrofoam, 50 min 27 sec, loop, dimensions variable

The installation *Sand Box* conceived for the exhibition *Conversations - Iran* at Sazmanab, Tehran is one of the site-specific installations from the series *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand*, produced in different parts of the world.

This installation is made out of wooden sand box painted with acrylic and filled with local Iranian sand. Listening to the sound of the installation the spectator has the impression that he/she is listening to a conversation between these six children.

IRANIAN VERSION



2015

IRANIAN VERSION

Sand Box

/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**



curated by: Sohrab Kashani

Sand Box
Conversations - Iran
Sazmanab - Centre for Contemporary
Art, Tehran (2015)

I think it's not a restriction for women,
this is their duty. But I don't know why boys don't
wear it on their heads, girls wear them.

their eyes...and from top to their eyes. Their eyes are only
visible. They for example wear the scarves too well.





Alphabet Cubes (2014)

7 channel sound, video, 45 wooden cubes, acrylic, 72 min, loop, dimensions variable

The installation *Alphabet Cubes* conceived for the exhibition *Conversations - Azerbaijan* at YAY Gallery, Baku is one of the site-specific installations from a series *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand*, produced in different parts of the world.

This installation is made out of 45 wooden cubes painted with different alphabets that are being used in Azerbaijan (Azeri, Russian, Lezgi). Listening to the sound of the installation the spectator has the impression that he/she is listening to a conversation between these seven children.

AZERBAIJANIAN VERSION



2014

AZERBAIJANIAN VERSION

Alphabet Cubes

/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**



curated by: Anastasia Blokhina and YARAT

Alphabet Cubes
Conversations - Azerbaijan
YAY Gallery, Baku (2014)

I want to become President, so that there would never be a President after me, and then I will become Queen and that's all. Then, it will go on like that. Well...then my daughter will become Queen and it will go on like this.

We can get our land with peace, but they don't give it back, Armenians don't give back our lands.

NURAY, 9 years old, AZERBAIJAN





Klikeri/ Marbles (2014)

7 channel sound, video, 30777 glass marbles (ø15mm), cardboards, 46 min, loop, dimensions variable

The installation *Marbles* conceived for the exhibition *Invisible Violence* at Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade is one of the

site-specific installations from a series *Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand*, produced in different parts of the world.

This installation is produced with 30777 glass marbles, which are equal to the number of boys and girls born in the same years and the same towns as the seven interviewed children. These are 7 to 9 year olds, school children with different ethnic, social and cultural backgrounds. In the post- production of the recorded material, the questions asked are omitted and only the children's answers are edited to create a narrative. Listening to the sound of the installation the spectator has the impression that he/she is listening to a conversation between these seven children.

SERBIAN VERSION



Klikeri / Marbles
Invisible Violence
MOCAB, Belgrade (2014)
Fiery greetings
Lothringer Halle, Munich (2015)

2014

SERBIAN VERSION - KLIKERI

Mables

/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**

curated by: Zoran Erić, Blanca De La Torre and Seamus Kealy

Politics is some school craft which you have to go to school to learn, and you get a lot of money for that craft.



installation view, exhibition *Invisible Violence* at Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade (2014)

We don't need foreigners, because maybe someone talked them into coming over here and killing us.

BOJANA, 9 years old, SERBIA



Klassiki/ Hopscotch (2013)

6 channel sound, Ready-made school blackboard, acrylic paint, 31 min, loop, 202 x 145 cm

The work *Klassiki/ Hopscotch* has been conceived for the 7th International Contemporary Art Exhibition in Vladikavkaz, is the installation which is painted on an old school blackboard and placed on the floor. It is accompanied by a sound piece coming out of 6 speakers where children from Vladikavkaz - in their own words - are narrating / answering questions about political issues of social exclusion and inclusion, about foreigners, language, war, money, poverty, (what it is war, what it means to be a foreigner, what it means to be a rich or poor, what it means to speak a different language, what it means to be a boy or a girl?).

RUSSIAN VERSION



2013

RUSSIAN VERSION - KLASSIKI

Hopscotch

/ from the series **Conversations: Hula Hoops, Elastics, Marbles and Sand**

curated by: Beral Madra

Klassiki / Hopscotch

7th International Contemporary Art Exhibition
Vladikafkaz, North Osetia, Russia (2013)

6th Moscow Biennale - Special Project Alanica.
The Experimental Method (2015)

I want to live alone, to have everything beautiful, maids, whatever I tell her she does... for me to be queen...I'll sit on a chair and tell the maid that she does what I tell her... A beautiful house I will have. The house will be golden... I am a queen, I can protect everything...

The First of May, 1977



The First of May, 1977 (2014)

29 slide carousel projection with sound (13'20" EN, 15' 48" DE)

The work *1st of May 1977* is a deconstruction of an 8mm family film in which a small act of violence is isolated and played out while its cause remains concealed.

Split into two separate locations, the work is comprised of a sound piece in one space which is based on interviews with members from the two families who witnessed and directly participated in the act of violence and a slide projection made from the 8mm film in the other.

Considering the event occurred in 1977, it now exists as a distant memory for each person interviewed and the differences and discrepancies in their accounts attesting to the subjective nature of memory and perception.

Originally captured in a single moment, the act of the boy throwing a rock at the girl's head becomes 29 slides which are then looped into a four minute sequence. By creating stills from the 8mm family film and representing only a brief instance from the day it occurred, the slide projection isolates and prolongs the act of violence.

By separating the testimonials of the witnesses and participants (sound) with the "evidence" of the act of violence (slides), the visitor engages in the act of becoming a witness themselves by carrying the contents of one space mentally to the other or at least a thin remembrance of it. Because the two spaces are approximately identical in character and the distance between them is just long enough to begin the process of forgetting, the absence of the images and presence of sound in one space and the absence of the sound and presence of the images in the other space creates a parallel scenario to the act which is itself in question.



installation view, *1st of May 1977* (space 2) exhibition *Disappearing Things* - 55th October Salon, Belgrade (2014)





excerpt from sound installation

The Girl's Sister Remembers:

The girl's sister doesn't remember anymore. She doesn't remember who was there. She says there were eight of them, although, she doesn't remember if their grandmother was also there. She can't recall it, but says she thinks she was, since their grandmother used to go everywhere together with them. What she knows for sure is that four of the children were with their parents. But she is really not able to invoke it at the moment, either in her memory or visually. She remembers the event itself, that she and her family had a picnic and that it was okay; they were playing, running and jumping around. She says that the only thing that comes to mind is that the boy and the girl were teasing each other and fighting. She says she doesn't know anymore what else the boy and the girl were doing, or if she was near them. The only thing she remembers is the moment when the boy screamed. She remembers that everyone started shouting and running towards the boy. She didn't see what was going on, and can't remember if a stone or something flew towards the boy. She doesn't remember if she actually saw it or if it's what she was told by others. She doesn't remember when it was or how old they were. She remembers it was unpleasant and that's all. As far as she remembers the story was that the girl hit the boy and that the girl had probably picked up a stone from somewhere, the grass maybe.

She thinks the family was on a grassy hill and doesn't remember how the stone had gotten there. She says she remembers the story that the family told her better than what she experienced. She says she is 44 years old now and thinks that it wasn't winter time, the weather was nicer and it was spring or summer. She doesn't know what year it was, whether it was 1979, 1975, or 1976 but that it wasn't 1980.

slides from the work



excerpt from sound installation

The Boy's Brother Remembers:

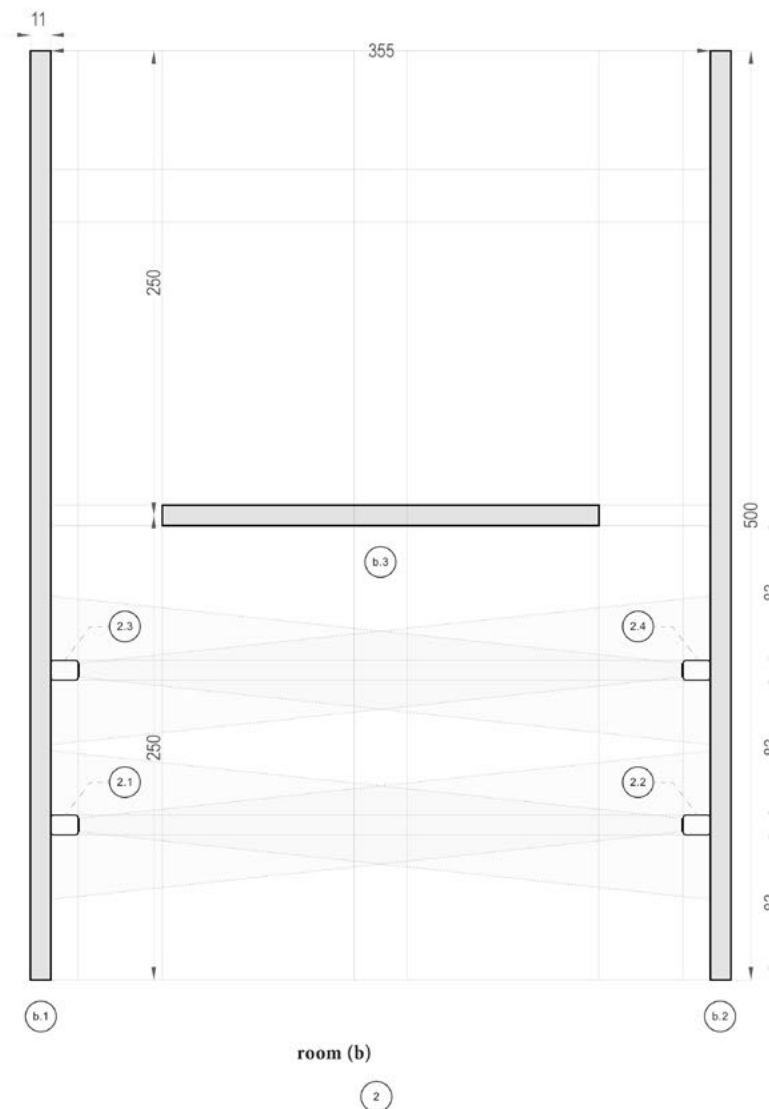
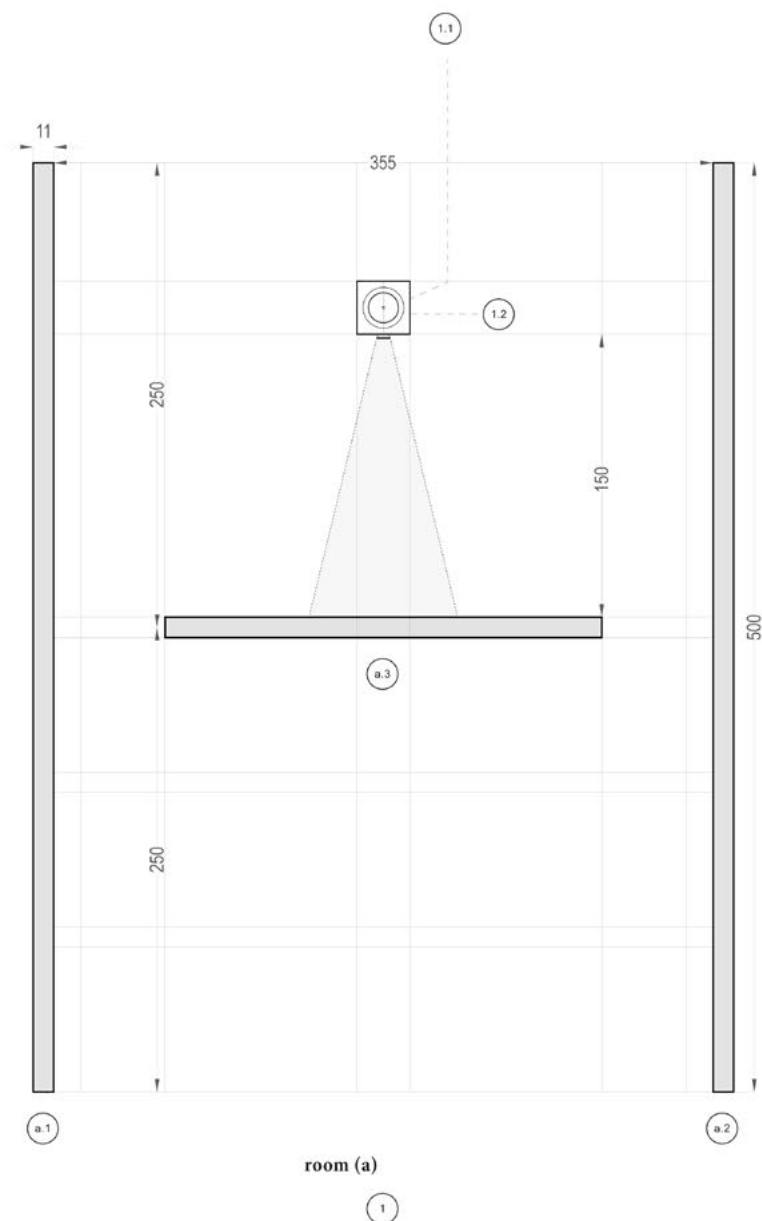
There was the boy and girl's grandmother. There was the girl's father, mother, sister and the girl herself. There was the boy's mother, father, the boy's brother and the boy himself. The boy's brother remembers that they parked on the mountain Divčibare and that he and the girl's sister played with a ball. He thinks shortly and says he can- not actually remember anything except what he had seen in the film after the fact. He says the boy and his mother, their grandmother as well as the girl's mother and father were chatting. He and the girl's sister were playing with a ball, while the boy and the girl were hopping around, running, jumping, and pushing each other. And then, he says the girl pushed the boy from behind. The boy fell down and the girl ran away. The boy then grabbed a stone and threw it at her head. Then nothing, the camera fell in the grass. He can't really remember how long it lasted but thinks about half a minute, not longer. He doesn't remember what happened after. He says he might remember more if he hadn't seen the film twenty times.



installation view, *1st of May 1977 (space 1)*, exhibition *Invisible Violence*, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (2015)

1st of May 1977

dejan kaludjerović / 2014
4 channel sound installation / 29 slide loop /
2 identical rooms / dimensions variable



(all dimensions are in cm)

- 1 ROOM (A)
500cm x 377cm / interior to be painted matte grey

a.1 - a.3

FREE STANDING WALLS

standard interior construction, finished

- 1.1 KODAK SLIDE PROJECTOR
projection to be 70cm-80cm diagonal,
timed 29 slide loop

- 1.2 SLIDE PROJECTOR PLINTH
height to be 80cm / width to fit projector neatly

- 2 ROOM (B)
500cm x 377cm / interior to be painted matte grey

b.1 - b.3

FREE STANDING WALLS /

standard interior construction, finished /

- 2.1 - 2.4
ACTIVE MULTIMEDIA SPEAKERS (4)

*to be mounted @ 220 cm (bottom of speakers)
attached to 5.1 DVD player

Notes on Installation*

The work should be installed in two identical rooms that are a fair distance apart from one another in the building. They should have the ability to be darkened and be acoustically isolated. If they are nearly identical than only walls a.3 & b.3 need to be constructed but if this is not possible than all depicted walls should be constructed in order to create identical conditions.

In 2014, the artist produced a sound and slide installation called *The First of May, 1977*. This work was shown at the 55th October Salon in Belgrade, and later, in 2015, at the Salzburger Kunstverein as part of the touring exhibition *Invisible Violence*. Two identical, narrow rooms are constructed in a larger gallery space. These rooms are neither adjacent nor near one another; rather, they are deliberately removed from one another. Other installations and rooms separate them. It is as if they are meant to be accidentally identical in their individual discovery by attending viewers. There is a deliberate gap between these two spaces, like a gap in belief, or indeed, like a gap in memory – a kind of *déjà vu*. There is also certainly the sense of time being displaced, or even a Nietzschean return of time, when the second installation is discovered. Each room is painted black and has a self-standing wall placed within it, dividing the room into two. One room has several, dissonant voices speaking within it, one after the other, as if each voice is that of a person somnambulistically responding to an unknown question. The artist has assembled their replies to his single question into a narrative. We hear responses from the mothers of two children, a boy and a girl, then from their fathers. The boy then responds, while the girl refuses to remember the situation.

This first room has descriptions of these various interlocutors of an event that apparently happened on the eponymous date. The other black room simply has a series of diapositive slides projected, one by one, onto its central wall. The second room seems to depict this described moment, which appears to be something rather innocuous actually, and clearly from a somewhat distant childhood. We see only blurry, colour projections of a long-ago event with children in a garden, concluding with close-ups of, presumably, the boy in question.

The title immediately creates associations with uprising and revolution, the passing of states from one political body to another, labour rights, and naturally, the anthem “*The Internationale*”. *The First of May* is, after all, International Worker’s Day. As such, it is a holiday, a global one, and historically relevant (if not internationally celebrated) as such. The title may, however, only be indexical and thus coincidentally meaningful. The entire artwork arrives out of the artist’s own probing of the complexity of memory, truth and the ongoing, often severe manipulation of narratives in the context of the Yugoslavian wars in the 1990s. And here, colliding with a troubled history of war and tragedy (and related concurrent and postwar narratives) – and perhaps also entwined with occasions that problematically mark modernism’s development (the influence of Marxism on society and political structures) – here, appears some documentary evidence of, it seems, a naïve act of violence committed by a child.

The artist is indeed very close to the subject of the artwork. For here, we are hearing his family members describe the moment when he, the boy who also speaks in the sound installation, himself struck his cousin with a stone many years ago, and here we see photographic remnants presented as some form of self-incriminating evidence. The artist himself dissects and analyses this long-ago moment and its documentation and its later, flawed descriptions to engulf it within the dream-like, playhouse mirror structure of its own open fragmentation. Its visual presentation and adjoining subjective verbal descriptions are based on several mnemonically challenged narratives as they interact with each other and become contaminated by associations of war and its representations.

The artist here stages and re-stages the event like in a feverish dream endlessly caught in a dark labyrinth, or indeed, as we might imagine a detective obsessively reviews the evidence of a crime. In this case, it is the act of a child who, at the age of five, we presume, has not developed his conscience or sense of the world enough in order to always differentiate right from wrong. Yet, the staging of this everyday event by the artist is not intended as some sort of confessional self-portrait. It, in part, appears to underline his need to strip layers of normalcy as it is made up in shared narratives down to a kind of speculation in visual form of darker regions of consciousness, identity-development and the production of the ego. These forms themselves flicker in and out of the structures of shared language and story-telling, for example, as they are inevitably caught up in webs of ideology and the collective wish fulfillment that ensures collective belief.

Dejan Kaludjerović is interested in the everyday inscriptions of power, culture, language, belief and law on the body and on the mind. His work, he says, is “mainly concerned with issues of responsibility and manipulation.” He thus examines the usual suspects, such as forms of mass media, education systems and indeed the influence of family and society on the psyche. But underneath this ongoing examination, as we have seen, we can pinpoint (and the artist openly admits to) a central concern with violence, and the nitty-gritty that emerges from mechanisms of power and capitalism as they are inscribed on the body and mind. Thus, when we unpack a work such as *The First of May, 1977*, elements of a long- ago act unfold into some sort of presentation of documents and fragments to be examined, and the testimonies then bear witness to something not only within the room, but outside of it, in the streets around the gallery space, and in living histories. We can ascertain several unfolding situations in this work. Matters of innocence and non-innocence, the passage into adulthood and all that carries with it in terms of borne memory, the production of perception, the role of day-to-day cultural propaganda, even matters of political crises and war – these all begin to emerge as we see a kind of sketch of the human condition as it is emerging and shifting in the malleable shape of a child and the memories attributed to a long-ago act, here caught up in a web of associations around the war in Yugoslavia.

The Happy Prince

The Happy Prince - Plovdiv (2015)

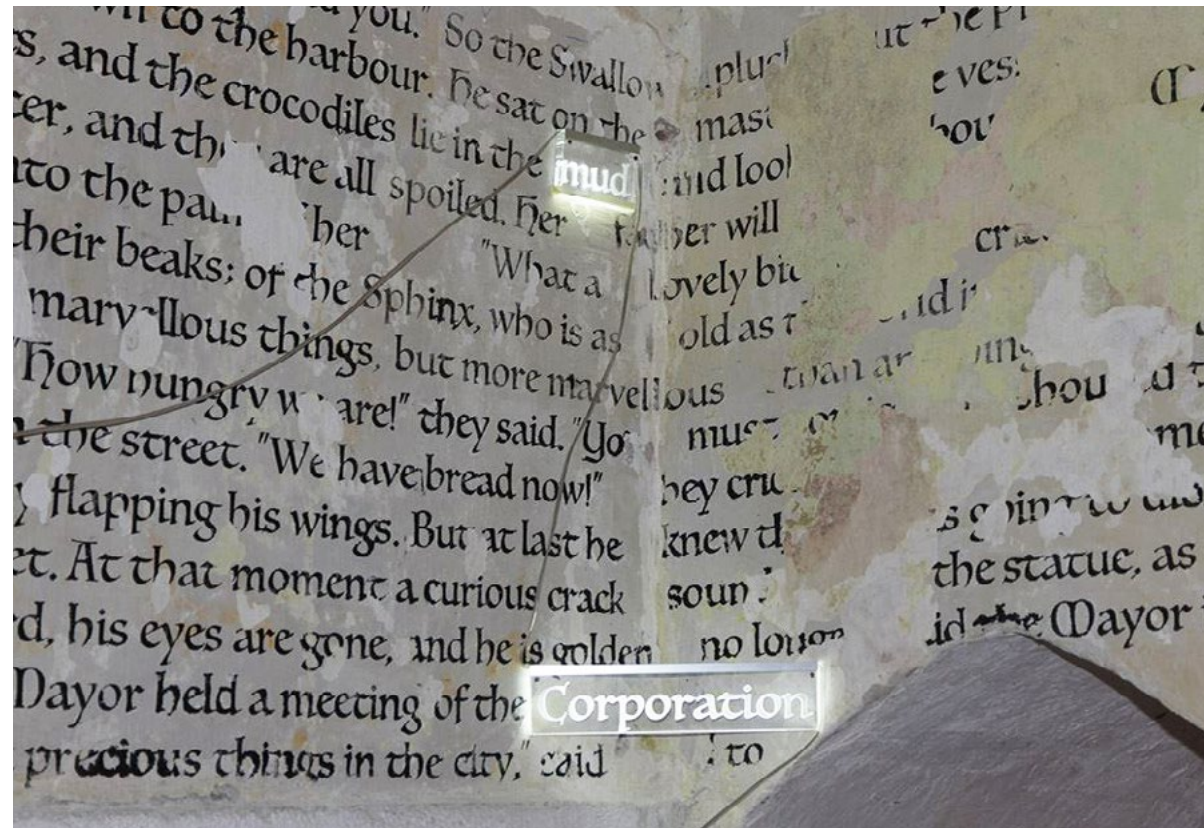
stencils with Oscar Wilde's fairy-tale *Happy Prince*, acrylic, 6 acrylic sheets light boxes, dimensions variable

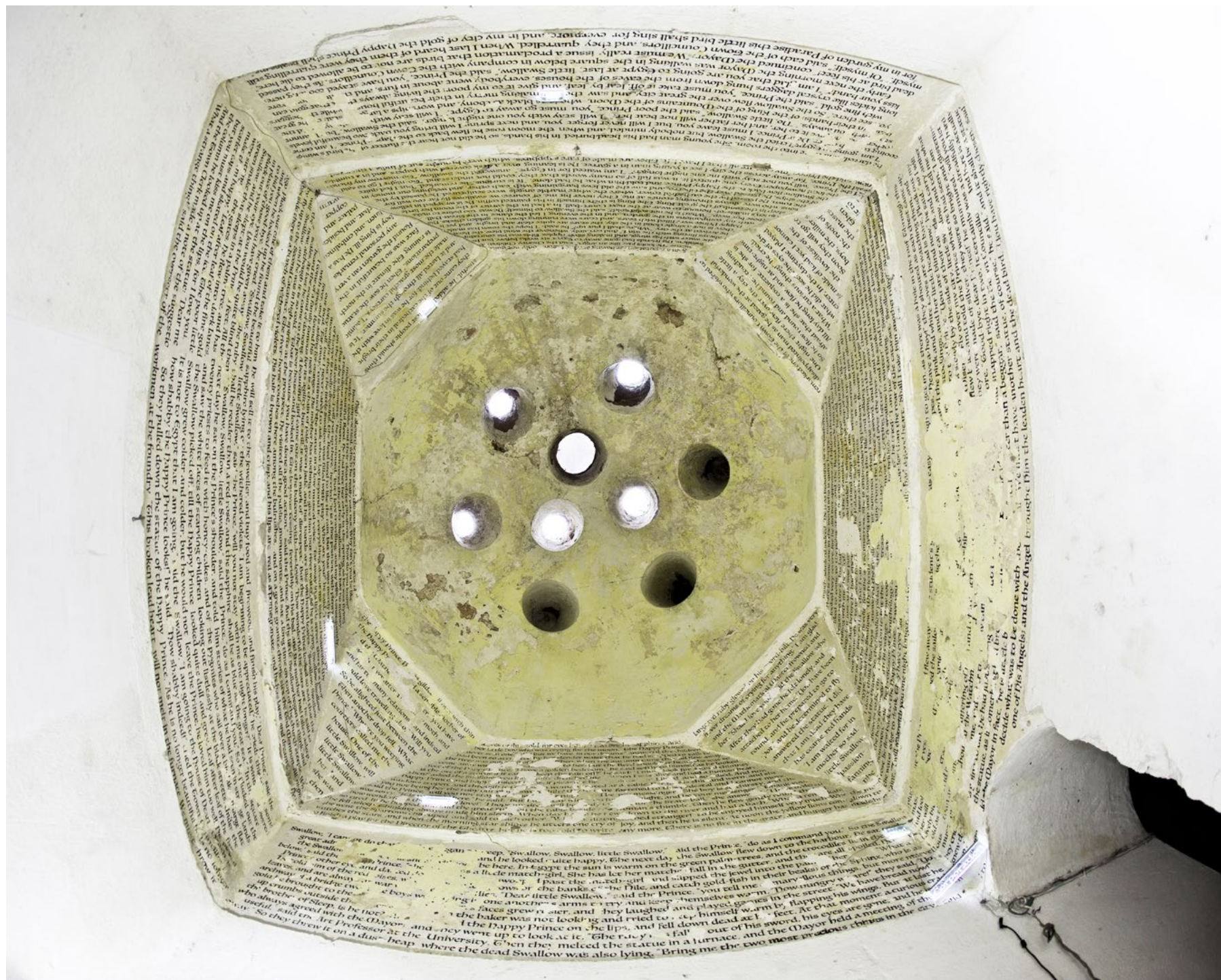
The Happy Prince - Plovdiv is being created especially for the Center for Contemporary Art in Plovdiv and it uses creatively the ancient bath's authentic architecture.

In his installation Dejan Kaludjerovic tells Oscar Wilde's fairy tale "The Happy Prince". All the 3478 words of the text have been written on the uneven walls in an old fashioned, historical font.

The viewer perceives the artwork as an integral part of the ancient architecture – as if it had been there since ages. But on the background a few, brightly shining, key words from the text stand out – "selfishness", "mud", "fear", "power", "rich", "corporation".

Thus the artist makes a complex and critical comment on the contemporary social and economical reality, in which all of us live. It is a fairy-tale, which tells the story of the unjust realities of the society in the 19th century, related to the not more just realities of the 21st century.





installation view, exhibition *Mature and Angry*, Center for Contemporary Art - Plovdiv - Ancient Bath (2015)

Tin Man



Tin Man (2013)
Cardboard boxes, inkjet prints
318 x 282,5 x 93 cm
includes *Keine Angst vor kleinen Tieren* Video, 1'20", looped (2004)

installation view, exhibition *Invisible Violence*, Artium Museum, Vitoria, Spain (2014)



installation view, exhibition *Invisible Violence*, Artium Museum, Vitoria, Spain (2014)

Tin Man, 2013



installation view, exhibition *What Did Tomorrow Bring Us?* Gallery Van De Weghe, Antwerp (2013)

“For his first solo exhibition in Belgium, Kaludjerović has produced an installation that immerses an image of L. Frank Baum’s, Tin Man, from the *Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), with a children’s swing. In the manner of his previous projects, this piece too reflects the artist’s inquiry into (in)stability, that is, the truth of representational forms. This installation with two arm-like beams, bearing a swing on one, and a video on the other, has the head of the frightening, although smiling, face of the Baum’s character. Initially associated with the carefree childhood (interpreted by way of the swing), this installation, upon secondary reading, evokes the sensation of the lack of self-confidence and instability, typical for all the characters of this novel - for Scarecrow and Cowardly Lion as much as for Tin Man himself. This feeling is confirmed in the video *Keine Angst vor kleinen Tieren* (No Fear from Small Animals) from 2004, which is projected on a hanging panel and establishes a(n) (in)balance with the empty swing on the opposite side of the beam.

In the video, almost in stillness, three kids are restaging the scene on a poster-advertisement for children’s garments, visible behind them. The poster bears the same title *Keine Angst vor kleinen Tieren* originally published in the German fashion magazine *Burda*, at the beginning of the 1980s. On this poster, three kids are dressed up in rabbit, cat and dog pattern rompers. A boy and a girl are standing, and the boy is pushing a carrot into the mouth of a second girl who is sitting between them. This scene, once accepted as an appropriate image of commodity, restaged in a contemporary context, reveals explicit sexual allusions. *Keine Angst vor kleinen Tieren* emphasizes the instability of representational forms, by setting free a potential truth hidden under cultural artefacts, thereby revealing politics and economic forces that had once established a social order. In other words, it shows how art participates in representation’s “submission of subjectivity” under modern structures of power (Foucault, 1998). In this regard, it is possible for us to conceive that power lies in the constructed symbolic order of the dominant ideologies, rather than in the representational form itself... [The] empty swing, hanging opposite the video, may suggest a signified place which appears as “the locus of power” that, according to Lefort, remains an empty space only to be temporarily occupied, in order to challenge and dislocate a dominant order symbolized here, by the video projected on the other side of the beam.” One question arises here: what is this empty place to be filed with?

Excerpt from the text Impossible identity and instability of representational forms in the work of Dejan Kaludjerović (2012)
by Goran Petrović



Keine Angst vor kleinen Tieren (2004)
Video, 1'20", looped

The implications of how children are staged by adults is also the theme of *Keine Angst vor kleinen Tieren*, 2004, where the artist takes up a photograph from Burda fashion magazine from 1980. The change of context makes this image hard to look at: We can see children wearing animal-inspired clothes standing in front of a fence where a little boy sticks a carrot in a little girl's mouth. When Kaludjerović restaged the add in a video performance with children of a similar age in 2004, some of the audience members left the exhibition venue in anger. They had overlooked the poster present in the background and thought the image was of the artist's invention. 25 years and many pedophilia scandals later, it had become impossible to ignore the potential sexual undercurrents of such an image.

Burda Magazin (March 1980)
page from a Burda Magazin



Bite a Carrot Bunny feat. Michael (2004 - 2019)
Acryl and oil pastels on canvas,
220 x 180 cm





Seeing this image from *Burda* fashion magazine from 1980 as an emblem of adult imagination of childhood, Kaludjerović also realized the painting *Bite a Carrot, Bunny!* in 2004 based on the photograph. After the painting was damaged during a transport, the destruction erasing the problematic interaction between boy and girl, the artist decided to not just restore the missing part. Rather, he took a radical new step. He asked Michael, a seven year old boy, to complete the painting again. This was the painterly equivalent of his *Conversations* (2013-ongoing), for which Kaludjerović has been interviewing children on their opinions about war, money, friendship, dreams, fears and many other topics over the years. In these projects, Kaludjerović not only reflects the way society imagines or stages children by making drawings about or for them, but gives them a voice. The little boy Michael chose to not simply restore the painting as it had been, but instead drew a colorful mix of things he cared about at the moment, whether he had just seen them at the artist's studio, took them from what remained of the painting itself or found them within himself.

This shows the radicality of Kaludjerović' gesture: Allowing a child's painterly imagination to break the spell of adult childhood imagery, the artist gives the power to the children not only symbolically, but also factually. By setting the stage for a child collaborator, the artist takes a logical next step in his practice and it is thus no surprise that he now wants to continue further by inviting other children to contribute to his paintings too. What will be put on display in Kaludjerović' next exhibitions will thus be their choice as much as his.

collaboration with a seven year old boy Michael, Vienna, 2019



Children's Playgrounds

Children's Playgrounds - The Monuments of a Void Childhood (2010)

With his newest body of work Kaludjerović investigates childhood signifiers, such as playgrounds, electric cars and swings leaving the protagonists out of the picture, quite literally. Instead of having the children climb up the ladders, cross over playground bridges or sweep down slides, Kaludjerović leaves an empty and hollow field, making the viewer feel slightly perturbed. The two bridges represented in the drawings Blue reach into infinity, yet we do not know where they are heading. The bridges could potentially represent them (children) and us (adults) – hopefully meeting somewhere in the middle and finding a common fruitful ground of exchange. In a more abstract manner Kaludjerović continues to point out our responsibility in shaping the next generation and perpetually questions the truthfulness of our acts vis a vis the youngest ones.

from the text “Where Have All the Children Gone?” by Boško Bošković

Kaludjerović' first ready-made sculpture from this series is an electric car, a quintessential object of engagement in amusement parks for boys and girls growing up in the 70's and early 80's. Kaludjerović adds an extra layer to this piece that is not readily visible to the audience. Parts of the car's interior, the parts surrounding the engine, are hand painted with Kaludjerović's favourite childhood cartoon character. With this symbolic gesture the artist hints as to how we memorize certain aspects of our childhood and our ability to store, retain and recall information from the past. He brings his beloved childhood recollections into a space of art and tries to decipher their meaning today.



Untitled (The Car) (2010)

ready-made, acrylic / ready-made, acrylic, 50 x 110 x 55 cm

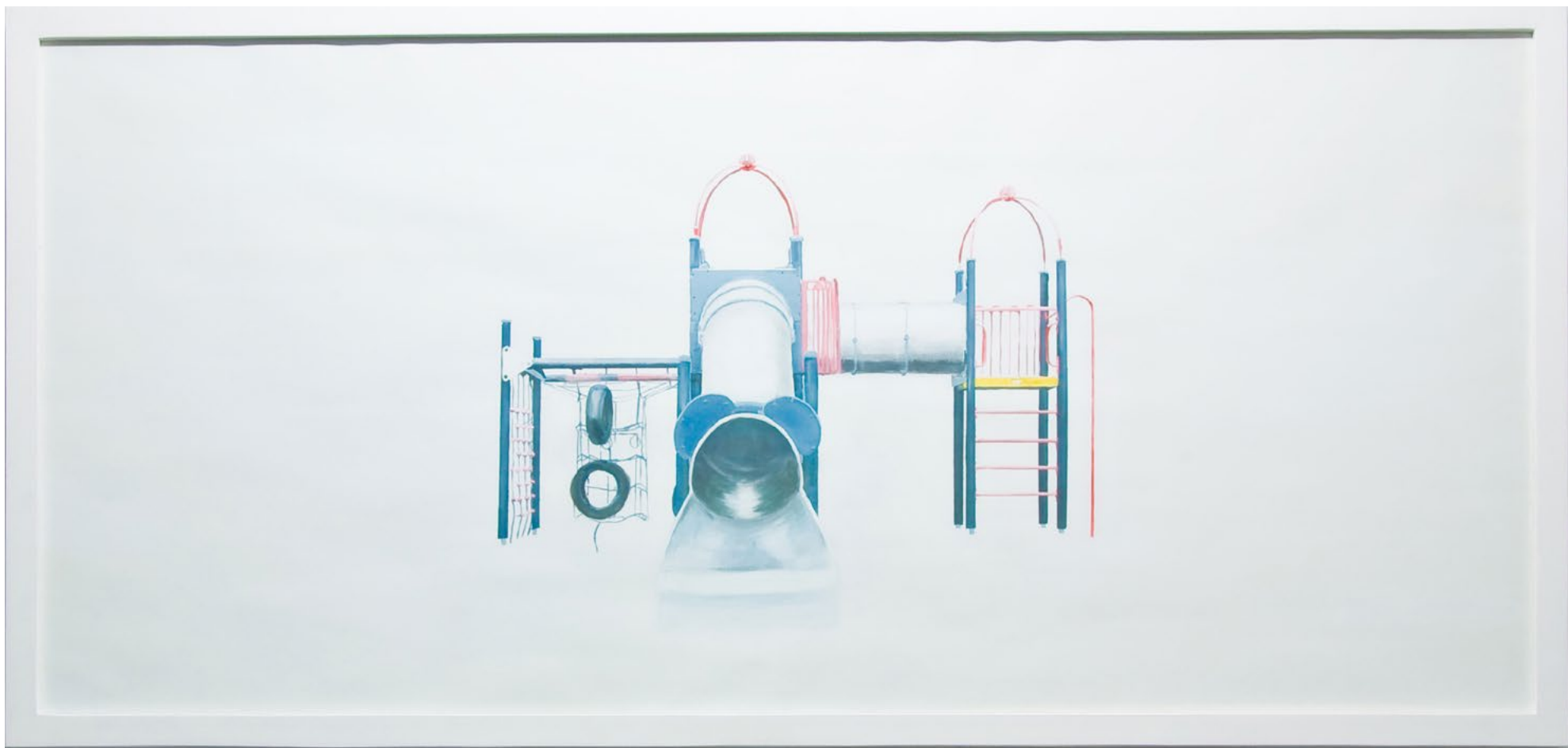
Untitled (The Swing) (2010)
ready-made, 17 x 41 x 21 cm



Another important object from Kaludjerović's past is the swing, as one was located in front of the artist's apartment building when he was a child. For his solo exhibition in 2010 at the Steinek gallery in Vienna, he engaged his father to dismantle a swing from a public sphere, and recreate a new habitat for it in the gallery. His father appropriated something from a public area and used it to recreate the artist's private memory, thus Kaludjerović turns the object into an artefact in a gallery space. In return the artist found another swing which he carefully hand painted with the same cartoon character as he used in the interior of the ready-made car object. He then positioned the swing in the same public space where the old one once stood. Now the hidden character from the car sculpture becomes accessible to everyone since it resides in the public domain. Kaludjerović took a photograph of the newly painted swing, and then he displayed it alongside the one from his childhood that his father secured for the gallery space.

Untitled (The Swing) (2012)
framed photo





Grau Monument (2010)
Acrylic and graphite on canvas paper,
93 x 200 cm

Je Suis Malade



That love is killing me and if things keep going



frame from video *Je Suis Malade/ Slovenian Version feat. Neja* (2008) coproduced with Ganes Pratt Gallery, Ljubljana

Je Suis Malade (2008 - ongoing)

In the video work “Je Suis Malade” (2008) a 10 year-old long-haired blond girl is reinterpreting the French chanson “Je Suis Malade”, originally sung by the Egyptian-born French singer Dalida. The video is filmed in such a way, that the performer is standing peacefully in an unidentifiable dark space so that only she is visible. The content of the song the girl is singing in a language she do not understand, has a theme that is inappropriate for her age. In fact, the text is speaking about a woman in great pain due to her unrequited love. Formally the video is made in one single shot and loop-projected. The song’s lyrics, which highlight love sickness and paralysis it ensues, contrast with the child’s performance, which amounts to an instrumentalisation of the quintessence of youthful innocence for purposes of visual consumption. Indeed, this blonde girl becomes herself the generic child attempting to convey to us a product in a language and experiences foreign to her. This is in and by itself a subtle illustration of the pathology (malady) of our globalize consumerist society.

frame from video *Je Suis Malade/ Australian Version feat. Maggie* (2011)
coproduced with Hobart Art University, Tasmania and bm:UKK



frame from video *Je Suis Malade/ Australian Version feat. Kip* (2011)
coproduced with Hobart Art University, Tasmania and bm:UKK



frame from video *Je Suis Malade/ Ukranian Version feat. Tanja* (2011)





installation view, *Je suis malade* / 3 channel video installation, exhibition *Donetsk goes contemporary*, Donetsk, Ukraine (2011)

The three channel part video installation *Je Suis Malade* (triptych) portrays three young children, filmed in different parts of the world. (Slovenian Version and two Australian versions/ Kip and Maggie). The protagonists are immersed in the lyrics, yet have no direct relationship to the experiences (original song performed by French singer Dalida) since they are not able to conceive the concepts of the song or the language. The performance becomes a vehicle to reveal the current mechanisms of the western liberal world where children can easily become mere consumers from the earliest age and that they are not even aware of it.



installation view, exhibition *What Did Tomorrow Bring Us?* Gallery Van De Weghe, Antwerp (2013)

Je Suis Malade

Australian Version – feat. Kip

Audio/Video installation (2011-2013)



The interactive version with custom made “stand alone video unit/ player” with additional made headphones with sensors. By using this unit the work is placed on a new level of reading, where the spectator is the only one that is directly enabling when would the child in the video start to sing the song directly and only to him/ her.

I Am Sick

*I can't dream no more, I can't smoke no more
I don't even have a personal history no more
I am dirty without you, I am ugly without you
I am like an orphan in a dormitory*

*I don't feel like living my life no more
My life stops when you leave
I don't have a life no more and even my bed
Turns into a platform on a train station
When you leave*

*I am sick completely sick
Just like my mother when she used to go out at night
Leaving me alone in my despair*

*I am sick, perfectly sick
You arrive - one never knows when
You leave again - one never knows where to
And it's been nearly two years
Since you last gave a damn*

*Like on a boulder, like on a sin
I am hooked on you
I am tired, I am exhausted
Of pretending to be happy when they are here*

*I drink all nights but all the whiskies
taste the same to me
And all the boats exhibit your flag
I don't know where to go anymore, you are everywhere*

*I am sick, completely sick
I pour my blood into your body
And I am like a dead bird when you are asleep*

*I am sick, completely sick
You have deprived me of all my songs
You have emptied me of all my words
Though I was talented prior to your skin*

*That love is killing me and if things keep going
I'll die all alone with myself
Near my radio like an idiotic kid
Listening to my own voice that will sing*

*I am sick, completely sick
Just like my mother when she used to go out at night
Leaving me alone in my despair*

*I am sick, that's it, I am sick
You deprived me of all my songs
You emptied me of all my words
And I have a sick heart
Surrounded my barricades, can you hear me? I am sick!*



installation view, *Je suis malade – Slovenian Version*, Gallery Steinek Vienna (2010)



frame from video *Je Suis Malade* feat. *Fidan*/ Azerbaijani Version (2014)



frame from video *Je Suis Malade feat. Si Tompel/ Indonesian Version* (2017)
The puppet is produced in collaboration with Iwan Effendi



EUROPOLY - The European Union Identity Trading Game



EUROPOLY - The European Union Identity Trading Game (2004) is an ongoing project, which has so far been realized in the form of an installation and a portable game version. Europoly is informed by my personal experience of immigration. At first impression, Europoly may seem simple and playful - a game that is intended to take the player through the complicated, problematic and rough world of the immigrant, a game that explores the challenges immigrants face in everyday life. One of my main strategies in choosing this topic and the method of engagement is informed by the fact that most people exist in their own worlds and systems and do not pay much attention to the issues and challenges faced by others - I feel this situation can breed prejudice and animosity. On the other hand, the administration itself does not care about individuals and their personal stories. They want to protect their system, their values and capital, which is understandable but in order to start any kind of process for improving these issues, we must first begin by exploring and uncovering them. Europoly is an attempt to bring attention to the lives, experiences and personal stories of others, especially immigrants in European Union.

Europoly radically transforms the widely familiar game of MONOPOLY – Monopoly means to have power over something or someone – into a Kafkaesque world of complex rules/laws, which today's European Union offers to all 'players' as the only possibility, the only reality. The EU defines European identity as something that is provided only within the Union and only to EU citizens, even though Europe does not end at the borders of the Union. However, the EU does have the power to define identity, to set up the rules of a game others have to join. The project offers several layers of reading and understanding. Beyond the declared aim of the game, the deeper aim is to encourage reflection among the human condition in the EU, due to the enlargement of borders and many contradictions existing within rules and matters of fact. It is my intention to make the invisible people among us (immigrants) more visible, involving their personal stories and histories into the game. Europoly encourages us to ask questions about opportunities offered by entering the EU and reflect on the struggle faced by many in responding to certain requirements imposed by EU laws. The project doesn't intend to provide any answers or judgments, rather it aims to remind us that behind systems of laws there are people living out their everyday lives.



Small white card with text, likely a rule or instruction card.





installation view

Europoly @ European Forum Alpbach 2011



workshop with the Erste Stiftung's partners



installation view



do you want to have a better life?

www.europoly.org

Europoly billboard