la Biennale di Venezia

57. Esposizione Internazionale

Partecipazioni Nazionali

HA Rı ZON OF EX PF/T ONC

HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS

PAVILION OF CROATIA AT THE 57<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA



#### **ARTISTS:**

TINA GVEROVIĆ AND

MARKO TADIĆ

CURATED BY

BENČIĆ

**BRANKA** 

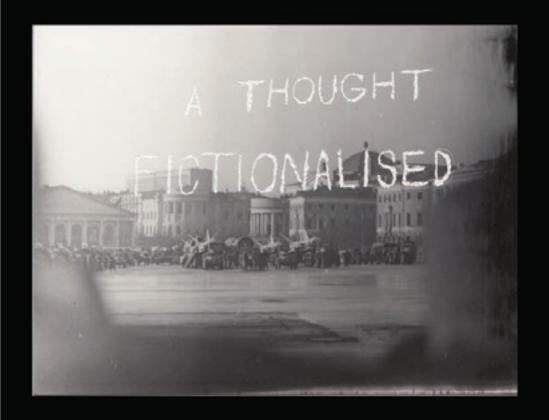
FROM MAY 13<sup>TH</sup>

TO NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup>

2017

ARTIGLIERIE, ARSENALE

**VENICE** 



MARKO TADIĆ

EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN

FILM STILL, 16MM FILM TRANSFERRED TO VIDEO



## A SEARCH FOR STRANGE PASSAGE





MARKO TADIĆ

EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN

SLIDE PROJECTION, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ

MARKO TADIĆ

EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN

SLIDE PROJECTION, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE
PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ

2017



TINA GVEROVIĆ

BODIES AND THINGS, LOST AND FOUND
INSTALLATION VIEW, FRENCH PAVILION, ZAGREB
(WITH BEN CAIN AND ALEXIS TAYLOR)
PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ



#### HORIZON OF EXPC-TATIONS

MECHANISMS OF VISIBILITY

BY

BRANKA

BENČIĆ

TINA GVEROVIĆ
PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE I
DETAIL

PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ

RUINS MAKE US THINK OF THE PAST THAT COULD HAVE BEEN AND THE FUTURE THAT NEVER TOOK PLACE, TANTALIZING US WITH UTOPIAN DREAMS OF ESCAPING THE IRREVERSIBILITY OF TIME.

Structured as a fragmentary narrative, the exhibition HORIZON OF EXPECTATIONS at the Croatian Pavilion brings together two artistic positions that deal with issues of uncertainty, tension or collapse, and how they relate to different conditions and contexts. Following the idea that underlying various forms of interruption is the issue of temporal discontinuity <sup>2</sup>, Tina Gverović and Marko Tadić engage with conceptual procedures and subjective imagination inscribed in spatial and temporal discontinuities, in a process that encompasses contingency and actively engages our perceptual space.

THERE IS AN UNINTENTIONAL WAY OF CAPTURING WHAT ELUDES US IN THE NOISE OF TIME...<sup>3</sup>

Fractures or cuts enacted in physical and discursive spaces, objects and images appear as moments of interruption and breakage, and articulated both as

sites of potential collapse and crash, as well as sites of potential transformation and imagination. To achieve this, Tina Gverović and Marko Tadić delve in processes of accumulations – of materials or images, and their effects.

In their own way, be it accumulations of material and materiality, layers of construction material or layers of history, accumulation of capital, archaeology of the present, the artists' interest focuses on the concept of accumulated temporality. Within the context of examining different temporalities, as perspectives of the notion of time, different measure and different duration, which sometimes takes thousands of years, manifesting as shapes of larger and smaller geological formations, creating landscapes or continents, or are only (temporary) clusters of worn out transferred material, all the way to the intricate fabric of mutual relationships and measures of individual notions of space and time. This is how, in the sense of epistemology of oblivion and reconstruction of the horizon, the archaeology of the present reflects itself as accumulated remains, images, objects and time. The artists bring in different scenes, framing the processes of creating, of constructing, of building. Together they form a type of ruined, abandoned archaeological site, oscillating between deconstruction and construction<sup>4</sup>.

What connects the works, what is common to the background idea sustaining these works, are different processes and forms of accumulation, such as materiality and methodology, as tool and language – the processes of stockpiling, gathering, collecting materials, images and events. In Tina Gverović's works one encounters focus on different processes, such as sedimentation, building up of history and materiality of certain goods relatable

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to trade, economy, exchange, migration, of both people and goods, production surpluses and bodies in transit, as shattered debris of fragments of intertwined histories, reminiscent of the historical context and recent events in the Mediterranean geopolitical space. Marko Tadić's found images, as a specific vernacular archive through an interest in critical practices of found footage and collecting, put in action different processes of reproduction, de- and re-contextualisation and appropriation of images. Retaining traces of their previous histories even as they are re-inscribed and dissolved into a new context, in the process, the method and materials the artist selects are transformed.

Materials themselves generate associations that, together with the forms into which they are shaped, establish the subject or content of the work of art<sup>5</sup>.

Using different media, painting, drawing, installation or text, TINA GVEROVIĆ creates works in the form of disorienting installations that engage with the space, territory and identity, and how these concepts are bound to imagination. Her images are fluid and fragile, suspended between different conditions. In PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE, a multifaceted installation based on paintings, video and objects and text, she continues to explore processes and accumulations, history and materiality, bodies in transit, as moving masses or geopolitical entities. Body outlines, clothing garments, gestures of materiality and traces of presence are inscribed onto canvas surfaces that constitute intricate layers. Surfaces of paintings are rendered through careful placing of pieces of clothing onto the wet pigment/paint – so that they in places bare outlines/traces of bodies (shirts etc.) and in places

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achieve a mottled, fractured effect, claims the artist<sup>6</sup>. Such appearances of the body, not only as a subject to be represented but also as an absent instrument made evident through a mix of traces and objects, registers the physical presence<sup>7</sup>.

Paintings are positioned as self-standing objects, panels, screens and barriers or are laid horizontally forming bulks and stacks, becoming objects and becoming metaphors of different possibilities and perspectives. The constellation of paintings and objects, seen as layers and sequences of conditions, potentialities, positions and movements, constitute a fragmented, fragile and uncertain space, the landscape of the work, focusing on the ephemeral and transient, devoid of coordinates. The gestural and procedural repetitiveness accentuate this fragmentation, suggesting different moments and different vistas or viewing points captured within the process of making, constructing, building – histories, narratives, identities or possible futures 8.

MARKO TADIĆ continues to explore his longterm interest in the legacy of modernism and the actualisation of its utopian potential. His works represent a look back at the recent history as a visual narrative of obsolete remains and elements of visual arts, architecture or everyday imagery, building up an unusual atmosphere of oblivion, highlighting the possibilities of re-reading the relationship with the past. Establishing in this way a link with the past, mostly through images as tools of memory, the artist attempts to understand and define the time in which we live. He de- and re- constructs a modernist vocabulary from a formalist perspective, using it as the research polygon for a new genesis: looking awry into a vast pool of ruins

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as well as seeing new potential constructions<sup>9</sup>. This entails opening up new perspectives and constituting new meanings, dealing with the past through different forms of archives as tools to re-imagine history.

g found images and animation techniques to stage a parrative oscillating between document and fiction.

Using found images and animation techniques to stage a narrative oscillating between document and fiction, Tadić unfolds a series of haunting visual sequences, based on a series of projected images. Like images of disappearance, they represent a trace of unknown events that fade out and vanish before our eves. Frozen in time, we witness the passage of time inscribed in those 'found', old projected images engulfed in the atmosphere of melancholy. Marko Tadić places the appropriation of existing images, their transfer and the processes of their re-contextualization and remediation, at the centre of his interests. The work that represents an image of an image, a representation of a representation, explores preserved scenes – such as the photograph itself – and is based on the appropriation of still and moving images. Conserving the image, at stake is the process of conserving time. EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN is shaped as an installation including slide projections, 16mm film transferred to video and drawings. It is based on a series of projected images of vintage imagery - found slides as found images intervened on by the artist with drawing and scratching, i.e. grattage, peeling off the skin of an image. Regardless of the medium, his works can be seen as a continuous effort to initiate a potential new beginning, often building on the ruins of times past. Therefore, EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN act as a panorama of achronological time, suspended between history, memory and future projections.

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The exhibition is a constellation that unveils itself, opening different vistas, perspectives, horizons of works that take shape by our movements through the exhibition space, inviting the observer to connect different fragments, narratives, experiences. The space is arranged in order to explore structures of exhibiting and the perception of the observer, articulating its fluid, almost performative character of moving through space. As a self-reflexive gesture it is a form of colonizing the space. This is meant to point to tensions between the space, the observer and the observed – as spatial gestures focusing on examining relations and interactions between the objects and the subjects. The displayed dispositions are the means of unfolding the space, exhibition, artworks, (hi)stories and bodies as place for the inscription of different ideas and positions, often left inconclusive or unresolved. Such space, contouring the idea of 'in-between' is the space in which the common experiences and loose associations are joined and new meanings are created, which brings the exhibition space close to the idea how theatre functions ... to force the passive observer to occupy the position of experimenter who observes phenomena and seeks for their causes. 10

Avoiding a fixed narrative that defines a certain content, the exhibition instead takes part in creating a series of gaps, ruptures and interrelations, that contour renegotiations and fractures as places of potential transformation and imagination, staging mechanisms of visibility – framing of space and time, place and identity, of what can be seen and heard in the public field, and of what is invisible and unintelligible, marginalised or shut out. In this way a 'horizon of expectations' takes into account both, our individual and collective experiences we share as

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audience, framing local hi/stories into global contexts. Borrowing the title from H. R. Jauss's reception theory, the shifting 'horizon of expectations' points to a platform of common experience, knowledge and understanding of things, framed by renegotiations and uncertain possibilities of identification.

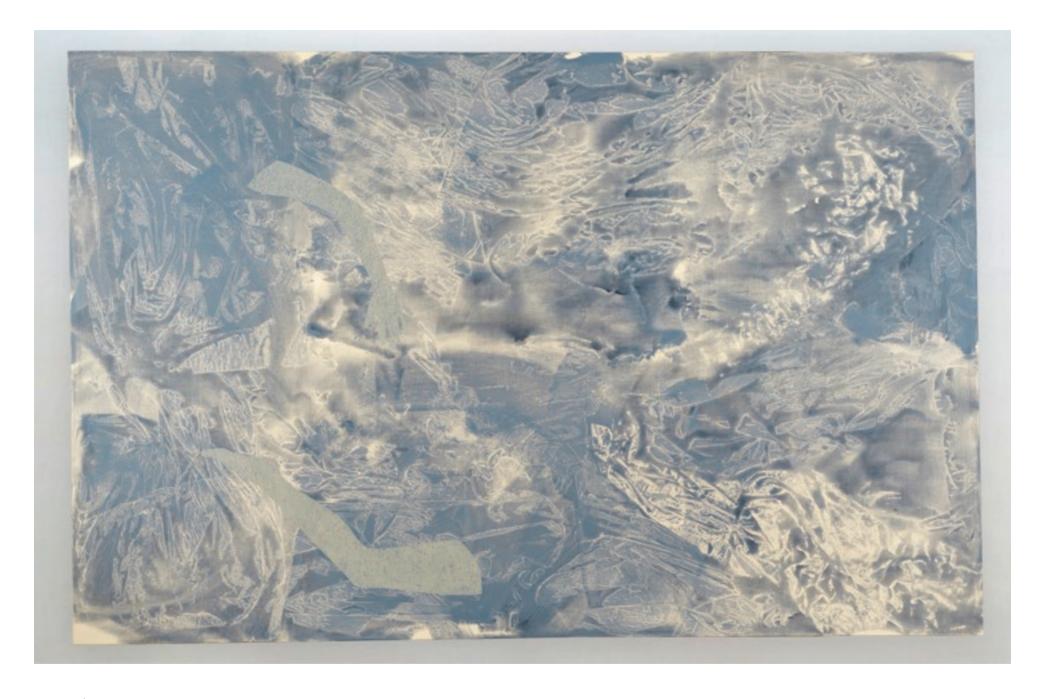
- 1 Svetlana Boym, Ruinophilia: Appreciations of Ruins, www.monumenttotransformation.org
- 2 Marta Buskirk, Contingent Object of Contemporary Art, MIT Press, 2003
- 3 Annie LeBrun, Perspective dépravée: Entre catastrophe réelle et catastrophe imaginaire, 1991
- 4 Tina Gverović, notes/transcript, Artist Practice Video
- 5 Buskirk, ibid.
- 6 Gverović, ibid.
- 7 Buskirk, ibid.
- 8 Tina Gverović and Ben Cain, Bodies and Things, Lost and Found, (exhibition catalogue), Zagreb, 2016
- 9 Ana Dević, exhibition essay, Laura Bulian Gallery, 2016
- 10 Jacques Rancière, The Emancipated Spectator, 2009



TINA GVEROVIĆ PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE I

DETAIL

PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ



TINA GVEROVIĆ

PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE I

FROM THE SERIES OF 8

PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ

2017

GOUACHE AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 175 × 270CM, INCLUDED IN THE INSTALLATION PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE



TINA GVEROVIĆ
INVENTORY
SHOWN AS PART OF THE EXHIBITION SEA OF PEOPLE
INSTALLATION WITH INDIGO DYED CLOTHING AND FABRIC,
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, DUBROVNIK
(WITH BEN CAIN)
PHOTO: BEN CAIN



MARKO TADIĆ

EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN

SLIDE PROJECTION, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ



# DEMONUMENTALIZING HISTORY

MARKO TADIĆ'S HAUNTING PLOTS

BY

**MARCO** 

**SCOTINI** 

"Where do objects go when they no longer have any use?" asked Gilles Deleuze in Movement-image, in order to interpret the relationship between the temporal nature of an action and that of a situation. He continued with the most obvious and immediate response that could be formulated: "they normally go in the dustbin". However, he immediately adjusted the inadequacy of this reply with another possible formulation (this time theoretical): "Bergson asked the same question and replied metaphysically: that which has ceased to be useful simply begins to be." The leave of absence of means from their end, the emancipation of words from a natural language, the progressive loss of their own places on the part of objects and people (so that they are continuously out of place), is a sign of the times in which we live. Nonetheless, the impossibility of reusing certain things or the condition of residual fragmentation of what has existed previously, is very far from being a halting in their history or a sign of their irrevocable disappearance. In effect, that which Deleuze calls the 'dustbin' corresponds to a space of potentiality, to a field of latency, where each completed action can re-access a possible could-do, to its faculty as such: as the generic possibility of enunciation or action, never exhausted by all the defined enunciations or by all actions already carried out. Where all the potential actions are never exhausted in a defined number of realizations, they remain capable of ever new manifestations, of possible new beginnings. It was when faced with the inertia of the detritus of the past, such as Yugoslavian 'Socialist modernism', that Marko Tadić decided to "make History with the rags and refuse of history?" - as Benjamin would have said, quoting the Goncourts. But these elements of detritus are not such solely because, after some fateful date, they ceased to work. They are

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rather things or signs which, possibly, have never really had a proper function and can, therefore, be considered as 'toys' in Benjamin's sense. In other words, "collective products" that always refer to a comparison with the adult world and through this, each time, free up the first and original play that had become fossilized through habit.

Postcards, geographic maps, old slides, notebooks found in flea markets, personal photographic archives and second-hand books make up this Lilliputian (static and mobile) archive that Marko Tadić tries to reactivate through the simple process of video animation. Tadić uses these objects as sources of the past which, more than providing direct information about facts and dates, produce an idea of the weave of time.

The title which, beginning in 2013, repeatedly reappears in many of his works, not by chance, is IMAGINE A MOVING IMAGE and immediately states the obscure force of return and repetition that presides over Tadic's whole artistic production so that an image becomes dynamic rather than static, is re-immersed in a temporal duration, within a narrative. Those objects considered to be lifeless take on a life and an existence that has, by now, exited from the infinity of happening and has passed on to acts, becoming events again, starting everything ex-novo, 'from the beginning'. The Zagreb School of Animated Films - one of the most significant phenomena of Yugoslavian film making in the 1950s and 60s – itself becomes, for Tadić, a sort of workshop to be reopened with all its symbolic capital and its challenges to the rhetoric of political realism. With the last chapter in his work, EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN (2017), Tadić uses a series of post-war photographs rather than sequences designed and edited with stop-frame animation. That which takes place here is the start of a continuous game of appearances and disappearances in which urban and natural landscapes, just as building sites for monuments or industrial plants, become not only the scenario but the very body of the author's constructive intervention. Using the photo grattage technique, the physical surface of the photograph is incised by a progressive subtraction which, while revealing the new possibilities of life that this might take on, is eroded through to disappearing almost entirely under the graphic signs of

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incision. The phrases that appear as intertitles often say "A ruined view" or, again, "A search for a strange passage" where the image, rather than being a spatial field, becomes a temporal diaphragm that has to be perforated in order to re-access the moment that precedes the impression from which the photo originated. This is the gap between the inescapable nature of the document and the abstraction of the drawing that shows the two different ways of being in time - the actual and the virtual - that meet, overlap and appear to negate each other in turn. Parts of unedited material alternate with that edited using in-camera editing methods, where the processes of the development and growth of graphic constructs that can even achieve the saturation of the previous image originate. The building utopia of Sisak, Tadić's home town, following the end of the Second World War, is at the heart of this brief visual narration.

Far from every form of assumed memorability, this story is one that immediately declares its own exhaustion and perishable nature. Only in this way can it profane time by restoring its potential. This exhausted and suspended time thus becomes that which really belongs to us. But let's listen to Tadić on the subject.

MARCO SCOTINI: I believe your work, like the work of your colleagues in other regions of the former socialist bloc, could be attributed to the 'spectrology' Jacques Derrida refers to. The issue of spectre is the foremost element which appears, either in the content, or in the creative processes. There is a sort of inherent anachronism, naturally, only seemingly. However, it harbours propositions of different manners of comprehending the notion of time, the historicity of things. You exhibit old photographs and disused postcards, modernist cinematic and museum structures, radio plays and video animations, Kodak carousels, planners and different obsolete elements. Paraphernalia which could, therefore, belong to the ruins of the past, but you use it with a very clear awareness of the present. What kind of temporality is contained in such an experience?

MARKO TADIĆ: I feel like some kind of parasite, as I always use old photos, old catalogues, old books and films. I regard it as a sort of direct intervention and collaboration with the past. I

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apply photo-grattage against vintage prints and slides, which breathes new life into this melancholy material in an almost Frankenstein-like manner, reanimating something which, after such an intervention, returns to life completely of its own. All these photographs came from personal archives and were found at flea markets, after being discarded by their owners or whoever took possession of their living spaces. These objects, once introduced into an artistic context, become projections of a possible future, equally familiar and distant. Time grows irrelevant and these works become universal, like general ideas. They illustrate what could have been and what still could be possible.

MARCO SCOTINI: Another important aspect for examining the works displayed in *IMAGINE A MOVING IMAGE* could be a consequence of previous hypotheses of time. Here I mean the process of miniaturisation you apply on the subjects and formats of your exploration, and which define a Benjaminian variation of, one might say, a 'toy'. Agamben claims that "in play, man frees himself from sacred time and 'forgets' it in human time." By way of miniaturisation, all which is old transforms (profanes) into a toy, without being an escape from history.

MARKO TADIĆ: The material I work with is debris. In our part of the world, certain ideas have been removed and quashed after big socio-political changes. One might say that they were eliminated by other facts and events, and replaced by new values, systems and meanings. These works illustrate a conflict between personal memory and political history. These photos, slides and objects illustrate fragments of a possible world which, accumulate, transform in a narrative and an internal awareness of a scarcely recognisable time. These scale-models are here to allow us to take the position of a thinker, of a maker; a phenomenological step backwards for a better understanding of things. At this point they are simple, accessible and mobile; they evoke a combination of work and play. This is a strategy for a demonumentalisation of ideas and systems, since playing with ideas is allowed.

MARCO SCOTINI: Your work reinterprets the history of Yugoslav socialist modernism. By that I mean the abstract architectural

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explorations of Vjenceslav Richter, whose studio you will be analysing for an upcoming exhibition. I also mean Vladimir Kristl of the Zagreb School of Animation, established in the late fifties and immediately acknowledged as one of the finest in Europe. Particularly with the latter you have built your entire video production, with five or six truly important works. Thinking about the use of drawing, I could say this curve spans from Ivan Kožarić, to Vlado Martek, to you – finally. In what sense does this legacy turns from a potential to reality?

MARKO TADIĆ: I perceive this tradition as a spectrum of ideas, as a laboratory where I can examine the art works and practices preceding mine. These artists challenged the social position of an artist, the social duty of artistic practice, their own responsibilities to the society, the role of institutions in a contemporary world, and, in that sense, I am pleased to glide in their wake. We still aspire to open works and institutions, open from the point of view of meaning and comprehension, open to new theories and practices.

MARCO SCOTINI: Stop motion as an operational technique, impossible journeys as video content, the past and the present, document and fiction: you always put material time on display. However, there is first and foremost a metamorphosis by way of which drawing and stop motion (like a sequence of pages in a planner), with every image created to uphold the others, become a deposit or a pre-text to other images until they entirely drown in one another. The first image cannot be established; there is always something leaning on something else. This idea is not also the one which underlies the relationship between a display and the displayed?

MARKO TADIĆ: Given that all my work is pure research, there are no extremes, only chapters which deconstruct and reconstruct certain elements in a new way. All segments of my work (drawings, books, animations, installations) begin with the simplest essential idea and progress to evolve into more complex structures, always in communication with each other, in a neverending upswing and improvement. Throughout this

constant principle of abandonment of ideas and rendering them obsolete, I strive to correct them and use what has value (cathartic recycling).

MARCO SCOTINI: In much of the post-socialist art, from Ondak, to Muresan, to Narkevicius, there is always an inescapable connection between infancy and history: a perpetual 'restart' which is always a different kind of repetition. In my view, you insist on the same mould, but in different forms. Your world is not so much built out of objects as out of (narrative, scenic, exhibitive) devices which portray them or serve as a means for their apparition: a screen is a recurring figure. However, these devices (once sacred) now stand beside us as pliable tools, without knowing if they register a loss (as witnesses of disenchantment) or they are ready to get back in the game (as subjects of a new enchantment). What is the concept of utopia that lives in your work?

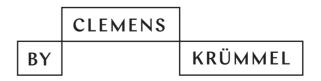
MARKO TADIĆ: It is a concrete, specific utopia, a quest for practical solutions to the problems. My works cast a new glance on the ideas and ideals of the past to unearth new solutions and options for both today and tomorrow. I believe my work is more prescriptive than descriptive, a visual research that becomes a research of the ideas capable of surviving in this world. The work itself takes a step back to assume a new didactic role. Everything begins with a series of inquiries in an attempt to find the right strategy to comprehend and partially resolve the questions at hand. In that process, creating these machines or displays helps me understand the creative process behind these quests. Being involved in the creation of something is important for my ideas, and making objects helps me connect these existing ideas for a better understanding of the particular issues.

Deleuze G., *The Movement-Image*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1997, p. 185

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### BETWEEN THE DEMI $\Delta ND$ THF DEFP BLUE SEA

TINA GVEROVIĆ – PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE



In recent years, the installations Tina Gyerović has created under different variations of the title SEA OF PEOPLE for different art spaces and cultural contexts bear witness to the indelible imprint that the Mediterranean, a specific natural, cultural and geopolitical environment has left on her personal life and the lives of those around her. Far from merely attempting to portray or to "pay homage" to this region of the world, she has aligned many parts of the knowledge and insights she has gained in her previous experimentation with the vocabulary, the grammar, the poetics of installation in order to make her experience aesthetically, emotionally and intellectually accessible and rewarding. Using the whole range of "old" and "new" media has been giving her working concepts, at a very basic level, the potential of a historical perspective. She has always practiced painting, drawing, printing, sculpture, video as interrelated, complementary means of expression and analysis that eschewed didacticism while at the same time elaborating complex gradations in her uses of materials, textures, shapes, levels of detail or referentiality.

PHANTOM TRADE, the present part of Gverović's installation project again consists of a stage-like platform, but this time – unlike in previous instances where she arranged her pictures in groups of displays approaching or reaching verticality – there are also scattered heaps of horizontally stacked blue and grey images. These are produced manually and through different printing procedures, countered in the exhibition space by large slabs of a heavy, stone-like material, which also serve as image-carriers. In their periphery, short video commentaries, sequences

of gestures and words are presented that the artist associatively attaches to her images without there being the impression that were are given any direct "explanation". The predominant colour is light grey and a softened indigo blue, a choice that Gverović, in one of her recent videos, relates to her interest in the chemistry of trades and the trades of chemicals that happened and still happen on the Mediterranean, especially those reflecting the history of imported and exported colour pigments; indigo may, in this perspective, be one of the most universally traded pigments assuming a vast variety of social, economic and symbolic significations. In this context, indigo comes to reference both the carrier (the sea) and the carried substance.

Although it is hard to imagine a time when the Mediterranean was not a vast, politically charged and contested space marked by violent conflicts, today's specific imbalance of interests around the capitalist construct of a "Fortress Europe" appears to be of another kind. Decades have passed since a magisterial historical study like Fernand Braudel's MEMORY AND THE MEDITERRANEAN was published, in which the authors opened his panoramic view by writing: "The best witness to the Mediterranean's age-old past is the sea itself. This has to be said and said again; and the sea has to be seen and seen again. Simply looking at the Mediterranean cannot of course explain everything about a complicated past created by human agents, with varying doses of calculation, caprice and misadventure. But this is a sea that patiently recreates for us scenes from the past, breathing new life into them, locating them under a sky and in a landscape that we can see with our own eyes, a landscape and sky like those of long ago. A moment's concentration or daydreaming, and that past comes back to life."

It appears today as if historical geography has undergone processes of fragmentation that would forbid a psychologizing personalization of the Mediterranean such as Braudel's. Like almost all other seas, it has been subjected to new, divergent spatial and temporal economies and politics – seafaring, fishing industries, harbours and shipyards have come closer to extinction, and with them the social

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imageries of many generations and epochs. The drastically asymmetrical geopolitical power relations existing between the states bordering the sea today and the reshuffling of spheres of interest around them having built up an undertow forcing tens of thousands of desperate people across uncertain waters in order to survive may not even be unprecedented.

One aspect that may be considered new, though, is the way in which a full-fledged image industry is seemingly functioning to compete with notions and ideas expressed in written and spoken "official" and popular languages. To differentiate between clear-cut modes of grasping and representing, between, for instance, web-based news imagery, press reports and official bulletins, what is almost generally dubbed a "refugee crisis" in the Mediterranean region seems moot, when one considers the tenuous role not so much of images, but of imageries existing around the present phenomena of a what can be called a war of (and on) mobility, of and on moving from war-torn regions to relatively affluent and superficially more peaceful regions.

There is a number of obvious questions concerning the roles artists' images can play in a climate in which very different images of the "situation" are frequently conflated, and here I mean a field of expressions that equalize the movement of (masses of) people with the movement of (masses of) water – and, not least, also with (masses of) information. Notoriously, the talk is of "waves" of immigration, of refugees, of asylum seekers, a metaphor that gains hazardous momentum not only through the recurring tendency of a "hatred of the masses" (or at least a suspicion and/or a prejudice against them) observable in economically affluent democracies – it also encounters the paradoxical fact that these metaphorical "waves" of people are risking every day to drown in literal waves.

Then there is the so-called "stream", or "flood", of images – an expression implying an excess of information, of mediatized images that is believed by many cultural critics to "swamp" the processing capacities of consumers. A flood, a wave is water in a forceful, directional movement. SEA OF PEOPLE

is the title Tina Gverović has given to a number of recent installation works, leading up to her contribution to the Venice Biennial, "Sea of people" is a choice of words that not only avoids the trend of xenophobic implications of metaphors mentioned before, but grants the image of a mass of human beings a degree of positivity and dignity. The differentiated combination of words, gestures, materialities and images is at the core of Gverović's aesthetic practice. As soon as one confronts oneself with the choices she has made in each of her installations, one can find a distinguishable sense of abstraction - mostly an abstraction from preexisting media imagery and from historical artistic genres like landscape or history painting, but also one from a formal purity in existing concepts of painting and drawing. Her images in this work may, at first, appear like gestural renderings meant to expressively depict or allude to the sea. seen from a smaller distance, like the one her videos seem to suggest, they unfold a diverse and richly layered vocabulary alternating between likeness and abstraction that opens them up to a different level of interpretations. We find markmaking, translucent washes, imprints that become readable as made with pieces of clothing, gesturally painted passages, white interstitial areas - and clearly outlined, cutout-like shapes of human limbs; the impressions shift between registers of abstract modernist painting, ornamental arrangement, cartography and archaeological preservation techniques like moulds or frottages. All of these modes of image-making refrain from claiming substantiality. The pictures resist easy interpretations first of all by not only being pictures; slowly, but steadily the sense of a generous crossing of boundaries, but also of a ghost-like quality and fatality arises. Where are these images, what holds them, in this world?

Not only for its obvious technical difficulty, the depiction of the sea – a topology that the artist Allan Sekula has called a "Forgotten Space" – has produced some of the most characteristic turning points in early modern and modern art history. Early on, it has become a symbolically fraught potential space whose resilience against picturing produced

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"oceanic" imaginations of the Sublime - an imaginary space that came to stand for a crisis of visibility inside the unfolding of modernity's programmes of knowability. In the period between the French Revolution and 1870, history painting was transformed from being representational of a ruling instance to depicting events. Especially, Théodore Géricault's THE RAFT OF THE MEDUSA of 1819 marks the beginning of a modern perspective in the depiction of that unreachable realm of the oceans. Its subject matter is not only the tragedy of a shipwreck that, caused by the captain's incompetence, cost the lives of over a hundred people, with only 15 surviving, it is also the documentation of an international scandal, as the French monarchy tried everything to hush up the embarrassment of the incident. Géricault famously went to visit morgues in order to learn how to paint corpses and painstakingly studied survivors' reports of the event, making this painting, still on display at the Louvre, a test case for the possibilities of artists assuming the role of investigators. As there were no technical means to provide visible evidence, art of the 19th century was forced to rely on oral and written accounts, supplemented by general knowledge like that of anatomy that could be acquired on land.

Almost precisely a century ago (and a century after Géricault's painting), during the last years of World War One. photography and film were already the "new media" of the hour, but they were still incapable of grasping the reality of events on the sea. Winsor McCay, an extremely popular cartoonist, inventor of the ground-breaking LITTLE NEMO fantasy picture stories, destined to work for the newspapers of the media tycoon William Randolph Hearst, recognized both the artistic AND political realities of his time. He didn't content himself with doing editorial illustrations that only allowed for pointed satirical comment, but (against the will of his boss) put a lot of effort into the invention of animated cartoons, where he only followed in the footsteps of his predecessor Emile Cohl. After initial experiments with popularizing animation as a kind of extension and vivification of his cartoon characters, he became obsessed

with the idea that this technique held the potential to become a medium of the future - as he believed it could provide a serious supplement to fill the imaginary space inaccessible to photographic technologies. Combined with an ambiguous talent for patriotic propaganda, this resulted in his animation film THE SINKING OF THE LUSITANIA (1917/18) by which he sought to "document" the German torpedoing of the passenger steamer "Lusitania" on May 1, 1915. This silent film is one the earliest modern examples of an attempt to face the crisis of history painting on the level of media-technological progress, and also to master the difficulties arising from a lack of adequate technology. What becomes visible there is the origin of the historical ideology of pictorial truth, which 3D animations still bear with them today: only an object seen from all possible surrounding perspectives appears credible. The poly-perspectivism discovered by McCay was based on the assumption that truth and conceivability were apparently two sides of the same coin, and this led him to enthusiastically examine the three-dimensional representation of waves, the sailing ship, the fish scared away by the torpedoes, the art-nouveaulike linear styling of the explosion and the slowly sinking ocean-liner and its passengers. Interspersed texts seem like echoes of Géricault's material verism. The artist also consulted the surviving witnesses - and presents this visually in a real-life action passage at the beginning of the animated film: "Mr. Beach giving Winsor McCay the details of the sinking – necessary for the work to follow." The work is then characterized by its heroic quantities: "Twenty-five thousand drawings had to be made and photographed one at a time." The mixture of artistic and non-artistic idioms that would become visible in "The Sinking of the Lusitania" had a place to start from: "The first work done was the moving sea" - which, tellingly, held on to the broadest abstraction available to the artist.

It makes only limited sense to view Tina Gverović's work as a CONTINUATION of the line of art and media historical development sketched out here. A documentary film made with the most recent 4K imaging technology – like, for

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instance, LEVIATHAN, shot in long stretches with a GoPro camera dangling from the side of a moving fish trawler - or media-critical experiments like Philip Scheffner's featurelength film HAVARIE (2016/17, based on a book by Merle Kröger), that takes its cue and entire material from a threeminute web video of a refugee boat taken from aboard an ocean liner - most of all manage to epitomize the aporia of "available" web images. If there is such a thing as a single genre rhetoric of contemporary exhibitions, a LINGUA FRANCA that has been typically influencing the aesthetic of artworks presented on the occasion and in the context of the emerging global biennials movement, it must be the veristic first-person perspective of the video camera collecting and presenting visible evidence from sites and situations far remote or in some other way difficult to access. Like so many other historical instances of artistic methods implying visual realisms before, the habitualized, invasive use of "endlessly" extendable digital imaging has ended up under heavy scrutiny, not only by those deploring a loss of medium specificity or an encroachment on time resources available to viewers.

Gverović's installation seemingly situates itself laterally to trajectories of media history and to claims of "actuality" that media news coverage offers. Her "projection screen" may best be sought in her viewers' minds, bodies, and imaginations. It is perhaps her focus on SPACE as an abstracted entity that appears to be the most arresting. With varied elements of alternating media and methods, she creates a wide range of sensual responses, epitomized by the formal structure in and from which she creates. Reminiscent in part of minimalist or conceptual installation artworks such as Robert Morris's SCATTER PIECES, in which material, colour, shape and position are united in an interlocking system of bodily and spatial experience, her own sense of detail and dimension is particularly remarkable. Never choosing the easy shift toward the monumental, the elements of her arrangements retain an intimate size easily relatable to the dimensions of the human body. By providing a gradual approach through different aesthetic and linguistic layers, she facilitates a shifting perception that at no time overpowers viewers with

the prolonged immediacy of a spectacular, immersive performance. Perceptions are kept in a steady flow, building relations, following leads, diving into layers. The images are "staged", placed on display as a superimposition that blocks the view on large portions of some of them. Here, associative potential is provided by triggering a sense of weight and quantity, allowing to be read as a pile of documents, as the visible result of a collapse, as haphazardly strewn image carriers, as the display of a quantitative development as in statistic methods of representation, and, depending on the felt dimensionality one brings to the experience, as an eroded surface of tiles or an uprising of tectonic plates.

The degree of literalness, one feels, is shifting with the polymorphism of sculptural, spatial, painterly formations one can detect and recognize - without feeling the need to come to one particular diagnosis. Gverović's gestures that can be seen in the recent videos add to the impression of a light, poetic attitude behind the whole negotiation of space that is a multi-part installation like this: almost overly precise in their pointing out and following parts and areas in her pictures, she speaks freely of her own associations, but in such a manner that one does not feel coerced to follow them to the letter. Speaking about the blue pigment she has variously worked into the surface, she says: "I'm thinking of chemical foundations of painting, its spatial and haptic possibilities." From time to time, these observations are attaining a state of self-referentiality, as, for example, when she moves her right lower arm and hand into the picture to point to one of the free-floating arms or legs visible in it. There, when we are reminded of the artist's body as part of the "whole picture", the "sea of people" suddenly appears less like a metaphor and more like a possible literal situation - with parts of human bodies, parts of their clothes floating, sinking, resurfacing in an ocean - and with apocalyptic potential. The tectonic layering, which may invite further nautical associations with romanticist paintings like Caspar David Friedrich's SEA OF ICE (THE WRECK OF HOPE) (1823/24), a ruin as romantic as an abandoned archaeological site, speaks of internal pressures

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on the inside of this work, the topological thought that sets in – continents seen moving from afar – dramatizes the arrangement on the stage of the installation and fills the space with imagined lines of influence, of cause and effect.

The sheer weight of the heavier "counter-pieces" that Gverović provides in the installation offers a play with different dimensions of "gravity" - also readable in the sense of "gravitas", seriousness. The gesture of placing a painting in a horizontal position inside the exhibition space, the "waste" of images hiding other images ostensibly diminish the dignity of the art objects on display, but actually add to the fluidity and apparent mutability of the installation that draws its energy from methods like adaption or mimicry that work as triggers or connecting threads. Time enters through an evocation of the changing tides when diverse and complementary techniques and procedures are employed: tracing, moulding, imprinting, layering all represent different expressive strategies, but also different temporalities. The individual images are formally as much reminiscent of photograms as they are of crudely improvised prints. As in the photo-based image spread that the artist has created for her recent publication, the installation and its framing in the video parts remain suspended in non-specificity, keep a ghost-like neutrality to a certain degree.

Gverović asserts that current movements of people may be somehow similar to this, but does not fall into the traps of case-study concretism or illustrative reportage style. Distances are kept, most of all on the visual level, semitransparency avoids the individualisation displayed in current newspaper and web imagery. What is actually depicted or hinted at may not even be the catastrophic shipwreck I have deciphered and related to current refugee crises, as well as to the conspicuous placement of this topic in modern art history, in a mode of thinking that could have found its model as a metaphor for existence in cultural history – as can be found, for instance, in Hans Blumenberg's SHIPWRECK WITH SPECTATOR (1979). Balancing concretion and abstraction, referentiality and autonomy, the aesthetic and the ethic, Tina Gverovic's installations activate all parts and layers of the

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viewers sensitivity, a bodily perception that doesn't end with an illusionistic evocation of "the sea", but leads from a centred, yet multi-layered and fragmentary waterscape to those outer limits where each exhibition space engages with the outside world

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TINA GVEROVIĆ SEA OF PEOPLE INSTALLATION, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, DUBROVNIK PHOTO: MARKO ERCEGOVIĆ

INSTALLATION INCLUDING 7 PAINTINGS ON A WOODEN PLATFORM:

AT FIRST SIGHT I-III ACRYLIC ON CANVAS 90 × 124CM, 90 × 124CM, 90 × 112CM

(FILIP TRADE COLLECTION) NORTH ATLANTIC, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

90 × 110CM

POLARIS, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS,

90 × 110CM

(NEDA YOUNG COLLECTION)

CHOOSE YOUR TIME I, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS,

2016

90 × 110CM

CHOOSE YOUR TIME II-III, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS,

90 × 110CM



TINA GVEROVIĆ

SEA OF PEOPLE
INSTALLATION, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, DUBROVNIK
PHOTO: MARKO ERCEGOVIĆ



TINA GVEROVIĆ
INVENTORY
SHOWN AS PART OF THE EXHIBITION SEA OF PEOPLE
INSTALLATION WITH INDIGO DYED CLOTHING AND FABRIC,
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, DUBROVNIK
(WITH BEN CAIN)
PHOTO: BEN CAIN

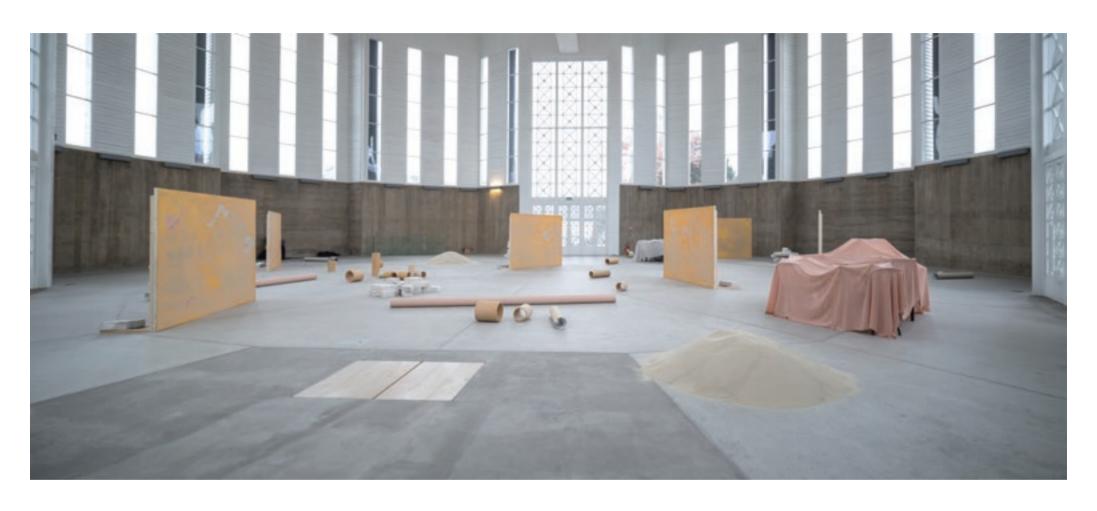


TINA GVEROVIĆ

PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE II

FROM THE SERIES OF 8

PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ



TINA GVEROVIĆ

BODIES AND THINGS, LOST AND FOUND
INSTALLATION VIEW, FRENCH PAVILION, ZAGREB
(WITH BEN CAIN AND ALEXIS TAYLOR)
PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ

2016

THE INSTALLATION WITH 6 PAINTINGS (TINA GVEROVIĆ, 190 × 280CM, ACRYLIC AND GOUACHE ON CANVAS), AN AUDIO ELEMENT SUNG BY ALEXIS TAYLOR AND A SERIES OF SCULPTURAL INTERVENTIONS (GRAVEL, CONCRETE BLOCKS, PLASTIC TUBES) CONCEIVED JOINTLY WITH BEN CAIN.





TINA GVEROVIĆ

BODIES AND THINGS, LOST AND FOUND
INSTALLATION VIEW, FRENCH PAVILION, ZAGREB
(WITH BEN CAIN AND ALEXIS TAYLOR)
PHOTO: NIKOLA KUPREŠANIN

TINA GVEROVIĆ

BODIES AND THINGS, LOST AND FOUND

GOUACHE AND ACRYLIC ON CANVAS,

190 × 280CM

PHOTO: BEN CAIN

2016



TINA GVEROVIĆ

DIAMOND CUTS: SEA OF PEOPLE
INSTALLATION VIEW
SUZHOU DOCUMENTS, ART MUSEUM SUZHOU
(WITH BEN CAIN AND ALEXIS TAYLOR)
PHOTO: BEN CAIN





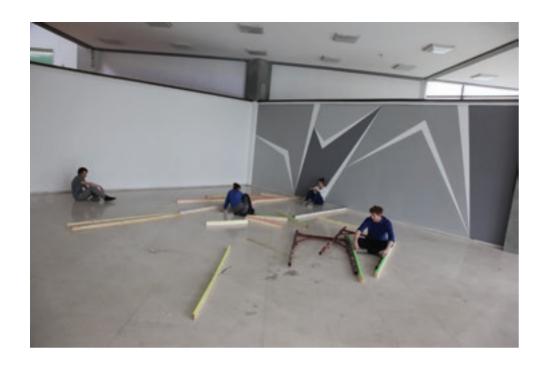
TINA GVEROVIĆ

DIAMOND CUTS: SEA OF PEOPLE
INSTALLATION VIEW
SUZHOU DOCUMENTS, ART MUSEUM SUZHOU
(WITH BEN CAIN AND ALEXIS TAYLOR)
PHOTO: BEN CAIN

THE INSTALLATION (CCA 230 × 400CM)
COMPOSED OF SKELETAL ARCHITECTURAL
STRUCTURES MADE OF STEEL RODS
(COLOURED - POWDER COATED), FABRIC
(PRINTED SILK) AND AUDIO ELEMENT (PLAYED
ON SINGLE CHANNEL SPEAKERS PLACED

2016

WITHIN THE INSTALLATION).





TINA GVEROVIĆ

CHAMELEON

HD VIDEO, 12'30"

(WITH SINIŠA ILIĆ)

INCLUDED IN THE EXHIBITION TURNOVERS

MSUB, BELGRADE

PHOTO FROM THE FILM SET: SAŠA RELJIĆ









TINA GVEROVIĆ

PARASTATES

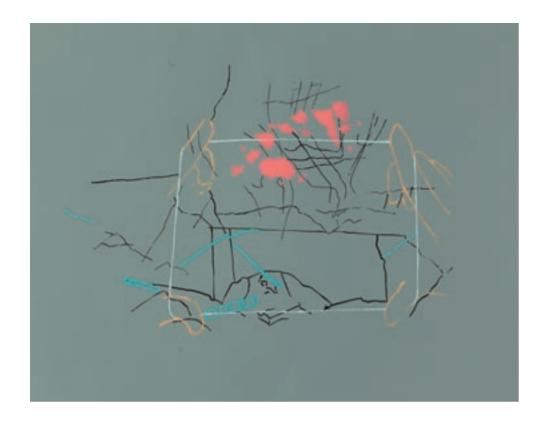
FROM THE SERIES OF 30 PAINTINGS GOUACHE

ON PREPARED PAPER, 27 × 35CM

SHOWN AS PART OF INVERTED HOUSE 2013

TATE MODERN PROJECT SPACE, LONDON

PHOTO: MARKO ERCEGOVIĆ





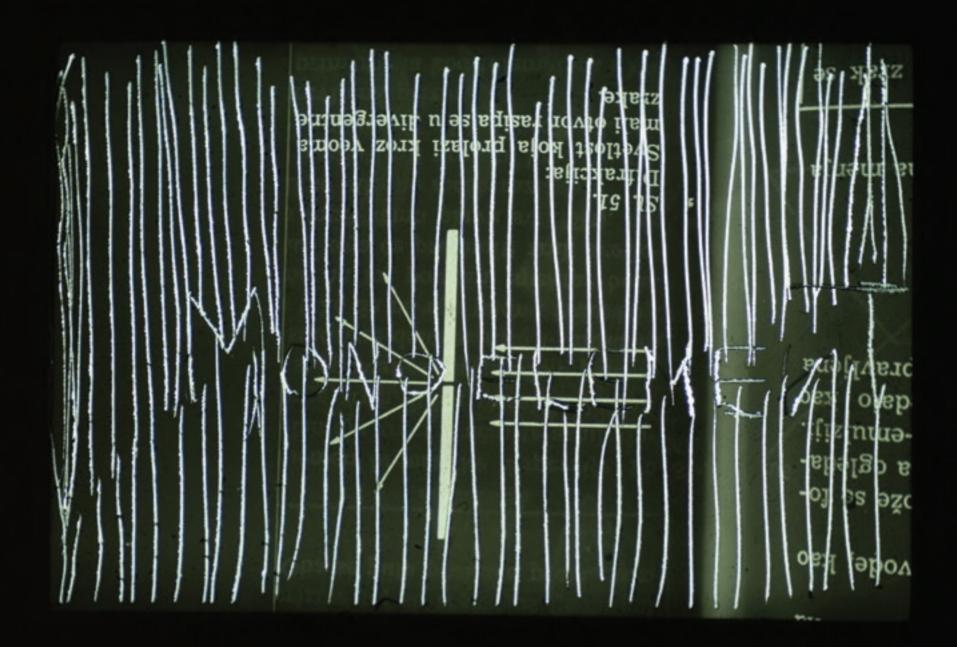
TINA GVEROVIĆ

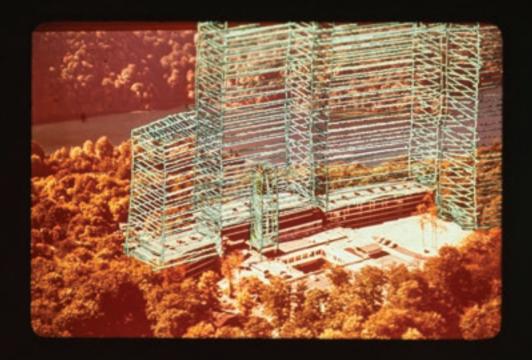
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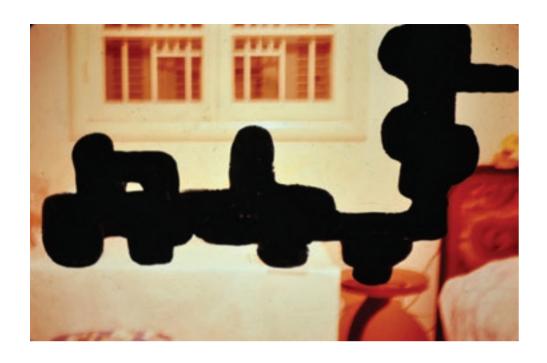
# A SEARCH FOR STRANGE PASSAGE

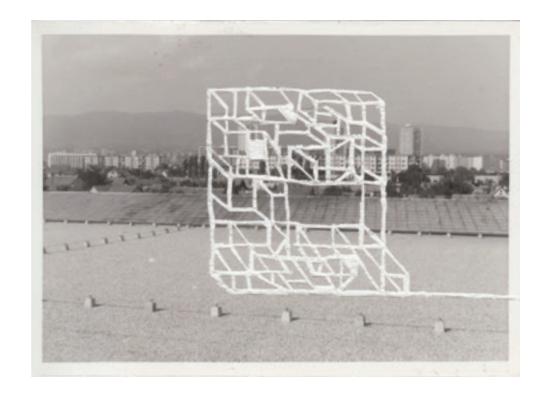


MARKO TADIĆ

EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN

FILM STILL, 16MM FILM TRANSFERRED TO VIDEO





MARKO TADIĆ

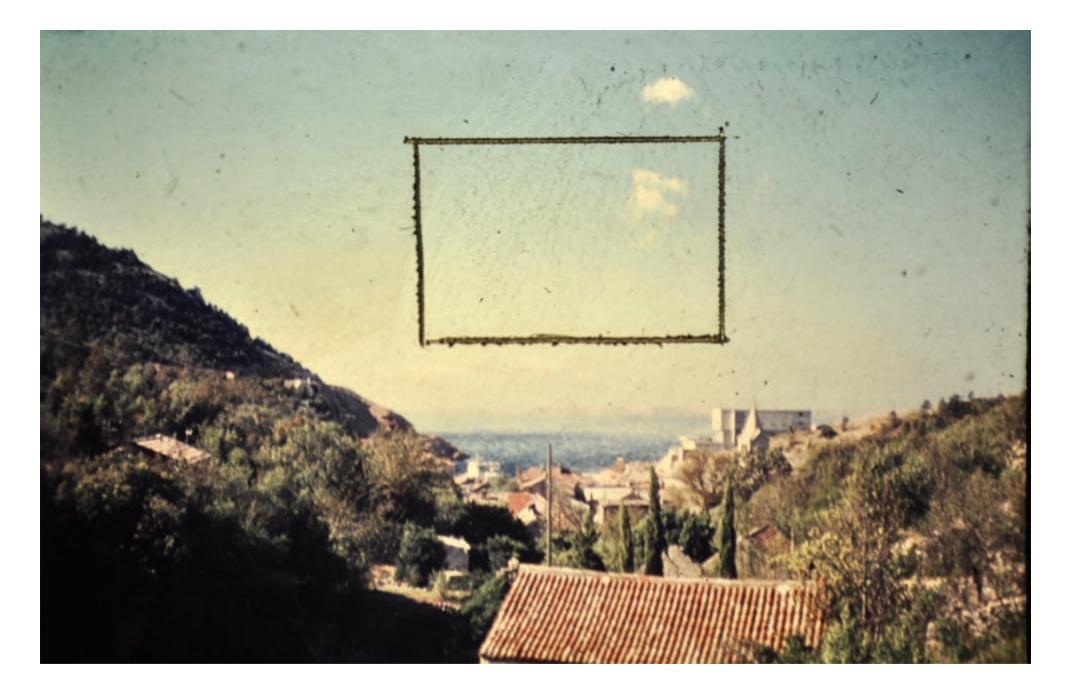
EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN

FILM STILL, 16MM FILM TRANSFERRED TO VIDEO





MARKO TADIĆ FROM THE SERIES *TABLE OF CONTENTS /* ARTIST'S BOOK DRAWING MARKO TADIĆ EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN SLIDE PROJECTION, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE PHOTO: DAMIR ŽIŽIĆ







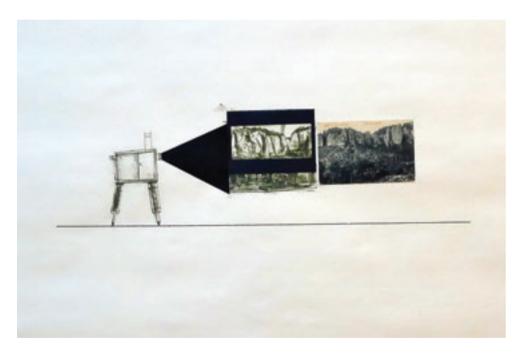


MARKO TADIĆ

EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN

FILM STILL, 16MM FILM TRANSFERRED TO VIDEO





MARKO TADIĆ IMAGINE A MOVING IMAGE DRAWING, COLLAGE





MARKO TADIĆ

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INSTALLATION, OBJECTS

FROM THE EXHIBITION THIS IS (NOT) A MUSEUM

APOTEKA I SPACE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

PHOTO: MATIJA DEBELJUH

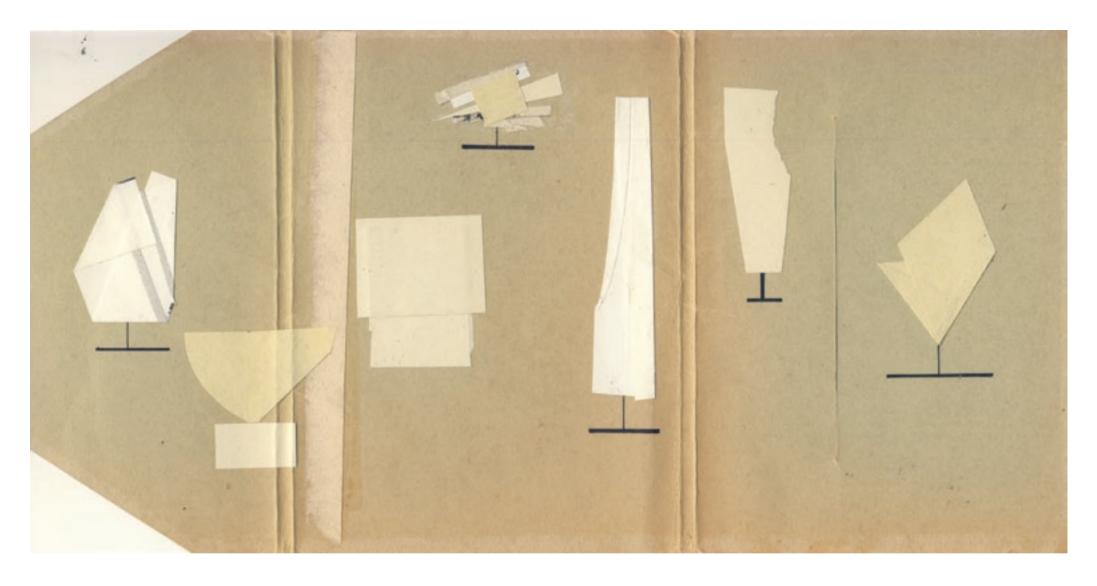


MARKO TADIĆ

BACKGROUND

FROM THE SERIES ACCUMULATION OF IMAGES FROM BELOW,

DRAWING, COLLAGE



MARKO TADIĆ

MUSEUM GARDEN

FROM THE SERIES ACCUMULATION OF IMAGES FROM BELOW,

DRAWING, COLLAGE

#### **ARTIST**

# TINA GVEROVIĆ

Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, completed postgraduate study at Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht and holds a doctorate from Middlesex University in London. She has recently exhibited at Suzhou Documents – Biennial (Suzhou, 2016), Museum of Modern Art Dubrovnik (Dubrovnik, 2016) Raum mit Licht Gallery (Vienna, 2015), Tate Modern (London, 2014), MSUB (Beograd, 2014), SE8 Gallery (London, 2013), and The Garden of Learning – Busan Biennial (Busan, 2012). She took part in residency programs in Sweden (Baltic Art Centre, Visby, 2012), Austria (Kultur Kontakt, Vienna, 2011), USA (ISCP, New York, 2006). Tina Gverović often collaborates with artists Ben Cain and Sinisa Ilić. She was a Teaching Fellow at Slade School of Fine Art and she currently teaches at Camberwell College of Arts in London and Dutch Art Institute in Arnhem (NL). Lives and works in London and Dubrovnik.

# MARKO TADIĆ

Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy.

Exhibited at solo and group exhibitions and film festivals in

Croatia and internationally, at venues in Zagreb, Ljubljana,
Milano, Vienna, Kassel, Berlin, Los Angeles and New York.

Awards: 28. Youth Salon (Zagreb, 2006), Radoslav Putar

Award for young Croatian artist (Zagreb, 2008), Ministry of
culture Vladimir Nazor Award for the best exhibition in 2014.

Participated in residencies and study programs: 18th Street
Arts Center, Los Angeles (2008); KulturKontakt, Vienna
(2008); ISCP, New York (2009); Kultur Bunker, Frankfurt (2010)
and Helsinki International Artist Program (2011). Currently
teaches at the Academy of fine arts in Zagreb and at NABA
(Nuova Accademia di belle arti) in Milan. Born in 1979 in Sisak,
Croatia, lives and works in Zagreb.

# BRANKA BENČIĆ

Independent curator and art historian based in Croatia. Over the past decade she has curated group exhibitions, artiststs solo projects and film screenings in Croatia and internationally, lectured and published on contemporary art in exhibition catalogues, journals and books. Her basic research, writing and curatorial interests are focused on contemporary art, exhibiting film and video, exhibition histories in former Yugoslavia. She is currently involved with several ongoing projects and initiatives, Artistic director at Apoteka - Space for Contemporary Art, Founder and Curator at Cinemaniac -Think Film exhibiting and research project at Pula Film Festival and curator of Artists Cinema, screening program series taking place at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Zagreb. Selected exhibitions include: PROJECTIONS Antun Motika and the legacy of experiments (MMSU, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka, 2017); Great Undoing, 54th Annale (2015); Temporary Encounters - This is (not) a Museum (exhibition series, Apoteka - Space for contemporary Art, 2014 - ); Motovun 1976 video meeting (MMC Luka Pula, 2015); Parcour (gallery Forum, Zagreb, 2015); Damir Očko: Studies on Shivering (KM - Kunstlerhaus, Halle fur Kunst und Medien, Graz, 2014); Think Film (MMC Luka, Pula, 2013).

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#### **COLLABORATORS**

#### WRITERS

BEN CAIN lives and works in London and Zagreb. He is a tutor in Fine Art at CASS, and Central Saint Martins, both in London. Cain completed his MA at Jan van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht in 2000. His work has been exhibited internationally including Manifesta 9; Busan Biennale, South Korea; Wiels, Brussels; Supplement, New York; Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool; Turner Contemporary, Margate; BlueCoat Gallery, Liverpool; South London Gallery, London. He collaborated with Tina Gverović on the installation PHANTOM TRADES: SEE OF PEOPLE, exhibited at the Croatian Pavilion.

LOVRO SKOBLAR is an architect. Graduated at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Zagreb. Since 2012 works at architecture studio Projekt MOD. Worked at Faculty of civil engineering (2006–2011). His practice includes collaborations with artists on exhibition design, such as with Damir Očko on exhibitions at Temple Bar Gallery, Dublin (2014), KM – Künstlerhaus Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz (2014) and Croatian Pavilion ath the 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia; Marko Tadić at Laura Bulian Gallery, Milano 2016. He collaborated with Marko Tadić on the installation *EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN*, exhibited at the Croatian Pavilion.

ANDRO GIUNIO graduated at the Faculty of Architecture, School of Design in Zagreb. Since 2008 works as a freelance graphic designer, individually and in collaborations. Clients include architects, artists, musicians, film and music festivals, nonprofit and non-goverment organizations, etc. His work has been exhibited on many design exhibitions, domestic and international. His practice includes experimental music projects as well. Also teaches as an assistant professor at the Department of Media Design at the University North in Koprivnica.

CLEMENS KRÜMMEL (b. 1964), lives and works in Berlin and Zurich. Art historian, curator and author. Worked as assistant curator at Karl Ernst Osthaus-Museum, Hagen (1987–1994). Co-publisher and editor of "Texte zur Kunst" (2000–2006). Co-founder (with Alexander Roob) of Melton Prior Institute for Reportage Drawing. Co-editor of the book series "Polypen", b\_books Verlag, Berlin (w/ Sabeth Buchmann, Helmut Draxler, Susanne Leeb). Currently assistant professor, Department for Architecture and Art, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich.

MARCO SCOTINI is artistic Director of FM Center for
Contemporary Art and since 2004 the Director of the
department of Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies at NABA in
Milan. He is a Head of the exhibitions program of PAV, Turin,
since 2014. Editor of the book Politics of Memory (Berlin:
Archive Books, 2015) His recent exhibitions include: The White
Hunter. African Memories and representations; Non-Aligned
Modernity. Eastern-European Art from the Marinko Sudac
Collection; The Unarchivable: Italian Art from the 1970-ies
(Milan: FM Centre of Contemporary Art, 2016–2017); Too early
Too late. Middle-East and Modernity (Bologna: Pinacoteca
Nazionale, 2015); Da Capo: Deimantas Narkevicius (Zagreb:
MSU, 2015), The Empty Pedestal: Ghosts from Eastern Europe
(Bologna: Archeological Museum, 2014), and he curated
Albanian Pavilion at the 56th edition of the Venice Biennale.

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# **EXHIBITED WORKS**

#### TINA GVEROVIĆ

PHANTOM TRADES: SEA OF PEOPLE 2017

INSTALLATION WITH PAINTINGS (ACRYLIC AND GOUACHE ON CANVAS), VIDEO AND SCULPTURAL ELEMENTS (IN COLLABORATION WITH BEN CAIN)

#### MARKO TADIĆ

**EVENTS MEANT TO BE FORGOTTEN** 2017

INSTALLATION WITH SLIDE PROJECTIONS. 16MM FILM TRANSFERRED TO DIGITAL VIDEO AND ARCHITECTURAL CONSTRUCTION

#### FILM PRODUCTION

Events Means to be Forgotten

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EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE
DI VENEZIA

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