



**PRECARITY
HAS A
CHANCE:
Public spaces
in movement
(toward)**

AKTO 18

**Group exhibition
16 June 2023
Structura Gallery Sofia, Bulgaria**

Artists: Elena Chemerska, Iskra Dimitrova, Hristina Ivanoska, Slavica Janešlieva, Gjorgje Jovanovik, Filip Jovanovski, Verica Kovacevska, Shqipje Mehmeti, Oliver Musovik, Natasha Nedelkova, Dorotej Neshovski, OPA (Obsessive Possessive Aggression), Aleksandra Petrushevska Ristovska, Nada Prlja, Dita Starova Qerimi, Nikola Uzunovski, Dragana Zarevska & Gjorgji Despodov, Velimir Zemovski
Curator: Ivana Vaseva

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“The space of a tactic is the space of the other... It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of “opportunities” and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse.”

Excerpt from *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau, p.118

The rapid shrinking of public space amid global capitalism is directly damaging the emergence of the public sphere and, consequently, the public person. The atomization and subsequent privatization of public spaces depoliticizes everyday life and changes whole contexts and ecosystems in the post-truth era. The public debate shifts in an automatic and temporary created spaces, and often becomes depersonalized, heated and even hystericized without interpersonal relations that are created in bodily meetings.

The neoliberal urban restructuring in post-socialist societies has shrunk and transformed public spaces to sites for passive reception of consumerist and nationalist messages rather than being places for nurturing democratic political subjectivities. The capitalist expansionist policies make inequalities, exclusions and enclosures more noticeable than before. Such dominant consensus of the state controlling apparatus and the profit-oriented elites has led to tailoring of discourses and withering freedom of speech, loss of argumentation, commodification of public interaction, devaluation of expertise, even greater polarization and divisions in society, and silencing the plurality of voices. Anthropologist Goran Janev points out that the public sphere has turned into an arena for political party skirmishes, in which there is no room for an already devalued expert analysis. He adds: “framing any different opinion as something that “comes from the opposition camp”, a public debate was killed and became impossible”¹. It can also lead to growing conflicts and intolerance on ethnic, gender and sexual grounds. Chantal Mouffe notes that conflict in public space can take the form of violent antagonism when it is not given the opportunity to have legitimate channels of expression or to take an agonistic form.²

1 Goran Janev, Neoliberal Manipulation of Symbols - “Skopje 2014” and the Appropriation of Public Space <https://rs.boell.org/en/2021/01/29/neoliberal-manipulation-symbols-skopje-2014-and-appropriation-public-space>

2 Chantal Mouffe, Which Public Space for Critical Artistic Practices?, 165 https://readingpublicimage.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/chantal_mouffe_cork_caucus.pdf

Artists have always tended to enter contested and polarized grounds, to set the stage for the public to emerge³, to imagine “new ways of operating” in the formal rules and “disciplinary structures” as de Certeau’s tactics... And, this selection is precisely that – different artistic endeavors that reclaim and redefine the public sphere and the public space by creating tactics for its re-conquest and access for the precarized and silenced. It is either through direct and indirect processual relationality with an idea of reappropriating and returning the public space to its ‘owners’ or through legitimizing a symbolical public space where other potentialities can be conceived and shaped.

They all envision a freed space, even temporarily, for contestation of the existing narratives through collaboration in voicing up with the ignored, neglected, silenced, unremembered, omitted, marginalized within the existing hegemony... These art practices can create public space anew through the struggles for the rights and in close relation with the social movements or even stimulate them in times when it seems that they are weak.

3 In the past three decades there have been several artistic groups’ attempts to create collective semi-temporary public spaces due to the political turmoil in the country or to present kind of subversive responses to the pushed urbanization strategies or the re-vamping of the center of the city of Skopje. In the first group I would mention formal and informal groups of artists including the ad-hoc choir Raspeani Skopjani, the art group and art space Art I.N.S.T.I.T.U.T., Skopje, the initiative KOOPERACIJA, the art group Momi, the group of artists that formed the space Kula, the art group Dzee, etc., all having different reasons for their formation, with their own language, expression and methods of operation. And, in the second group I will mention only a few: The Golden Shell on the main city square, Atanas Botev’s Billboard as an announcement for his exhibition in 2008, “Territory” by Igor Tosevski in 2009, Zoran Popovski’s “Right to the City” in 2008, the OPA billboard „Solution” in 2012, Filip Jovanovski’s billboard “Mother Courage and her children” or his projects in the Railway residential building, the Universal Hall, the Main Post office and the former communal space called Domche, dating from 2015 and ongoing, or even throwing paint as an act during the “Colorful Revolution” and so on. These were all critical of the change in public space but also of projects attempting to artificially construct the public. There were also a number of youth initiatives that, seek new alternative places to create art, in the absence of space, or reduced public space, though they were very short-lived.

On the other hand, this exhibition simultaneously talks about the very material conditions of the initiators of these processes – artists and cultural workers who live in precarious circumstances with political but without economic agency and without any or proper infrastructure. Their precarious status offers them flexibility, agility and unprecedented criticality when working collectively, constantly standing ready to negotiate and challenge hardships, committed to their purpose, though in an uncertain economic and financial position. They are here and they address different crises with radical imaginative proposals, but often dependent on chance and often using chance procedures so as to further explore their intentions.

Some of them are going to the public space (once) belonging to the community or the neighborhood, and together with the local residents they try to evoke the memory of solidarity and togetherness and to reestablish the significance of the public anew, while calling for reparation. Such is the case with the former communal – now privatized building Domche in **Filip Jovanovski's** work, then the erection of a wall in Berlin by **Nada Prija**, the significance of cultural heritage for a better future through the narrative of one modernist building and the surrounding buildings designed by architect Frano Gotovac in Split in **Verica Kovacevska's** work, through the public actions for the preservation of a local street and its ecosystem as a collaboration with the neighbors in Przhino by **Iskra Dimitrova**, to the neglected public space as a monument dedicated to the freedom in Kochani in **Elena Chemerska's** work, and public children parks and the disappearance of playgrounds and subsequent changes in the children's games as in **Dorotej Neshovski's** work.

Others tackle social issues and are in solidarity with the underprivileged and marginalized, jointly creating temporary (public) spaces in the city and its institutions. In her work, **Slavica Janešlieva** reflects on the underprivileged position of migrants through her own personal lens. In the work *The Roma*, **Oliver Musovik** focuses on their game in his work to create another space at a time of big protests

against authoritarianism, as well as against privatization, **Velimir Zernovski** creates a platform to give voice to people with atypical development and their artistic potentials, **Hristina Ivanoska** strengthens the feminist voice in our society through a critical perspective and through this practice challenges the existing narratives thus creating different public space, While **Dita Starova Qerimi** and **Shqipe Mehmeti** explore the medium of painting, drypoint and drawing to give focus on the woman's position in a patriarchal society and motivates her to fight for a better future.

And, there is a third gateway that continues to fight against the contemporary threats of disillusionment created by illiberal governments in late capitalism, such as the fake feeling of democracy and freedom of expression and speech also resulting directly from diminishing the public and the public space, as well as by using irony. This can be seen in the work by **OPA**, the fake feeling of security and belonging, especially in the era of post-truth and fake news as in **Natasha Nedelkova's** work which talks about the current environment of toxicity in nature and media, the different models to present defiance against the shrinking of so many rights – freedom of speech, freedom of public expression and freedom of public space as in **Gjorgje Jovanovik's** work, or even becoming apocalyptic in the isolated, dehumanized and speechless public building's interiors of the specific Yugoslav socialist modernism in **Aleksandra Petrushevska Ristovska's** paintings, and the

post-human apocalyptic landscape that **Dragana Zarevska and Gjorgji Despodov** are introducing through the perspective of the persona/phenomenon of queen(ness) ... while **Nikola Uzunovski** envisions habitats for people, animals and plants in the face of the alarming climate changes and urgent need to preserve the biodiversity and natural resources.

This selection brings together various voices that have expressed dissatisfaction with and defiance against the suppressive mechanisms and geometries of power and exclusion, and acquire visibility and power to transform implemented policies. They are sometimes indirectly relational and sometimes collaborative, but if simultaneously executed and articulated, they present an opportunity to form micro public spaces in movement of an imaginary (artistic) community that would re-establish the public. Precisely by simultaneously claiming the right to “ownership” of all, there is a potential toward implementing symbolic place for collective politicization. On the lines of what Stavrides notes in terms of the squares movement in 2011, i.e. that public space acquires new meaning out of such collective acts: “It is as if people reclaim space as a locus of dissident acts, a locus separated from the dominant mediatic space of simulated participation. It is as if people explicitly or implicitly redefine the meaning of space sharing and of publicness”⁴. We have to

4 Stavros Stavrides, *Common Space The City as Commons* (London, Zed Books, 2016): 160

work toward collective reinvention of public place as common space. Or, as Stavrides puts it: “The most urgent and promising task, which can oppose the dominant urban governance model, is the reinvention of common spaces. The realm of the common emerges in a constant confrontation with state-controlled ‘authorized’ public space”⁵, and that is one of the most urgent tasks that will lead to the rethinking of common spaces in which together we create a future equal for all.

The selected works in this research are located in the intersection between art, activism and sometimes include research in architecture and urbanism, sociology and anthropology, law and the rule of law... They are strongly embedded in the local context(s), although talking about global processes that are familiar to other distant places; they are intersubjective and collaborative, where the aesthetic quality is mixed with the ethical one. In different proportions, all the works try to publicly and loudly show that public space is an important element of democracy, and is not something solid but a changeable asset that should be constantly demanded. They are important critical responses to that reality, and bring the potential for its re-conquest through the constant presence, contestation and perpetuation of the discourse that a living and inhabited public space is essential for a democratic process.



**We have to
continue
moving.**



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Zernovski
Curator: Ivana Vaseva

Elena Chemerska

Fly Lokubija Fly / Fatherland:
A Monument to Freedom, 2022
two-channel video installation

The docufiction *Fly Lokubija Fly / Fatherland: A Monument to Freedom* is an iteration of a long-term artistic research project/process (2017-ongoing) *Fatherland: A Monument to Freedom*, which revolves around the efforts to revitalize a utopian monumental memorial complex called the Monument to Freedom in Kochani, North Macedonia.

The memorial site is a collaboration between artist Gligor Chemerski and architect Radovan Radjenović. It was erected in 1981 in honor of the 40th anniversary of the People's Liberation Struggle and the victory over fascism. It was designed as a public space with an integrated stage and an amphitheater suited for all sorts of collective actions, where the lives of the community using it can intertwine. Following decades of transitional processes after Yugoslavia's dissolution, Kochani lost its once-thriving industrial capacities in unjust privatization of national industries. Poverty rose, as did conservative tendencies and mass outward migrations. The once prosperous town began to wither, and its most celebrated symbol - the Monument to Freedom - fell into physical disrepair. The video brings together research done with members of the local community reflecting on the significance the edifice has had in their personal life and the shifting social and economic context of their hometown of Kochani; a speculative site-specific light installation referencing a set of bronze casts that have been stolen from the site and sold as old iron during the challenging 90s; and documentation of the workshop "Fly Lokubija Fly", designed based on the stories gathered from locals from different generations, of the informal tradition of bringing children to fly kites at the site of the Monument to Freedom.

Elena Chemerska (1991) is a visual artist and researcher from Skopje, North Macedonia, whose work spans from moving images to painting and immersive installations. Positioning her practice in a critical discourse with the modernist tradition, she employs different strategies and approaches to image-making, focusing on the human tendency to create a basis for the future in relation to memory.

Elena holds a BFA in Painting from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje (2015), and MA in Fine Arts and Design from the Master Institute of Visual Cultures, AKV St. Joost Academy of Art and Design, NL (2019).

Exhibitions include *Spaces of Generosity- Transformative Stations*, Skopje, North Macedonia (2022); BANG BANG Festival- LATE TO THE PARTY: MACEDONIAN PERFORMANCE ON VIDEO, Museum Tinguely, Basel, Switzerland (2022); Supernova Regeneration Festival, Denver, USA (2021); *Dislocations*, SGSAAH, Glasgow, Scotland (2021); Ostrale Biennale 021, Dresden, Germany (2021); Youth Biennial Belgrade, Serbia (2021); Fuori Visioni Festival 6|Atto II IL CONFINE, Piacenza, Italy (2021), and other.

She is the author of the long-term documentary project *Fatherland: A Monument to Freedom* focused on revitalizing the Monument to Freedom, which has put into motion international collaborations between artists, cultural workers, conservators and the local community.

In 2021, she received the Denes Award for Young Visual Artist (MK) and the Prince Claus Seed Award (NL).

www.elenachemerska.com

**Installation view: Fatherland:
A Monument to Freedom / Fly Lokubija Fly. 2022.
SCS Centar- Jadro, Skopje, North Macedonia.
Photo by Dragica Nikolovska. Courtesy of the artist**



Iskra Dimitrova

16:16, 2023

performance, sound and video

(approx. 5 min.)

The resistance of the neighbors on our narrow, quiet street started in 2018, after we found out that on our street of 16 families, someone was planning to build a huge building of 6 stories, 16 apartments. The urban mafia has already built several huge buildings in our neighborhood although it is prohibited, and the process is gaining momentum. My neighbors and I wrote hundreds of pages, we argued to dozens of officials from the local government, from the government, to the ombudsman, we submitted criminal charges, we had dozens of meetings with urban planners, officials, NGO's, lawyers, municipal councilors, politicians, journalists etc. – with no success.

So many times we stopped the mechanization with our own bodies, gathered for protests in the larger settlement and personally signed a petition during the most dangerous times of Covid. We fought with our mobile phones and their data, connected and (thankfully) helped by the media and we fought with – art projects.

The performance 16:16 - I am doing in Structura gallery is just a scratch / external part of the documentation of our resistance, meant to be shared as an experience.

The video is a documentation of the November 2020 performance done out of despair to draw attention to our problem. Every time a truck drove down our narrow street, it was making a performance by running over “respect, neighbourhood, residents, law, jurisdiction, urban planning”.

Within the audio context, I wanted to contrast the aggressive, construction-machinery sounds with the peace and silence that we will lose... Even today, after so many years, I run out in panic if I hear a truck roaring down our narrow, steep street - to make sure it's just the garbage truck.

Iskra Dimitrova (1965, Skopje) graduated philosophy from the Faculty of Philosophy (1988) and sculpture from the School of Fine Arts (1990), Ss. Cyril and Methodius University, Skopje.

She has carried out a number of solo multimedia projects and installations: Skopje, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1997 (Museum of Contemporary Art), 1998, 2006, 2019 (National Gallery of Macedonia), Madison, USA, 1993, Vrsac, Yugoslavia, 1996, Rochdale, England, 1996, Zagreb, Croatia, 1996, Tokyo, Japan 2003 and Yokohama (Yokohama Museum) 2004.

In 1999, she was the unofficial representative of Macedonia at the 48th Venice Biennial.

She has participated in group exhibitions at the Japan Foundation Forum, Tokyo, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje and Belgrade, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, National Gallery of Macedonia, Umetnostna galerija, Maribor, National Gallery, Tirana, Brooklyn Museum, New York, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova, Ljubljana, Contemporary Art Center, Larissa (Greece) and Aomori, Japan, Museum Tinguely, Basel and many more.

Almost all of the relevant Macedonian art critics and curators have written about her artworks, as well as Linda Nochlin, Charlotta Kotik, Branko Franchesci, Yara Bubnova, Zelimir Koshcevic, Braco Zavrnik, Makiko Matake et al., and in Financial Times, New York Times, Asahi Shimbun and Tokyo Shimbun.

www.iskradimitrova.wordpress.com

Photo:
courtesy of
the artist



Hristina Ivanoska

Document Missing:

Performance no. 5 (Three Actions), 2017

HD video, 05:45 min.

In the video *Document Missing: Performance no. 5 (Three Actions)* Hristina Ivanoska reenacts three historically probable actions that might have been performed in 1903 by Rosa Plaveva, a Macedonian revolutionary woman from the turn of the 20th century. What distinguished her work at the time are the forms of resistance that Plaveva had chosen to apply that echo contemporary means of opposition and activism in relation to the current feminist and post-colonial theory. Reduced to a personal level that starts with the question “Who am I?”, Ivanoska *‘inhabits’* the character of Rosa Plaveva (1878-1970), whose documented memory stays almost forgotten in the archives of the state.

Through her texts and actions, Ivanoska creates situations that *‘were and were not’* and are based on documents and oral interpretations of historical events that are fluctuating through time and space. As the only protagonist in her performances, she becomes a flexible and porous entity, a medium through which different identities can be brought back to life. This work is part of a series of live and video performances that Ivanoska is conceptualizing, writing, and executing as part of her PhD artistic research titled “Document Missing: The Intricate Sense of Truth in Oral Histories”.

Hristina Ivanoska (1974, Skopje) is based between Skopje and Berlin. Ivanoska's overall research interest is focused on the suppression, control, and construction of collective memory regarding women's resistance strategies and politics. She works with objects, text, drawing, video, performance, and installation, often interdisciplinary. Ivanoska critically investigates the experience of present-day social and political systems and their relationship to theory and history. She validates handcraft such as embroidery, weaving, pottery, and quilting as mediums of political and social value and as a representation of individual struggle and limitations. Since 2000 she has been collaborating with artist Yane Chalovski. Together they represented the Macedonian Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennial with the installation *We Are All in This Alone*, curated by Basak Senova, commissioner National Gallery of the Republic of North Macedonia, Skopje. In 2004, they co-established the Association for Artistic Research and Curatorial Practices "press to exit project space" in Skopje.
<https://www.hristinaivanoska.com/>

Photo:
Yane Calovski.
Courtesy of the artist.



Slavica Janešlieva

Immigrant, Emigrant or Maybe I, 2016

160x70x8cm., sleeping bag, 2,700 drawing pins and 12kg bonbons produced in “Evropa” (candy factory)

Immigrant, Emigrant or Maybe I is part of the art series *States of Things*, artworks that are an articulation, i.e. an artistic expression of the current states and societal anomalies, and generally undervalued everyday life. Using the image as a sign, and the object as a narrative in a universal context visualizing the paradoxes of contemporary existence. Transforming everyday objects into sign-bearers of associative messages that reflect (im)migrant crises and serve to connect the personal experience with the experience of the others, intertwining meanings and interpretations. The long and meticulous crafting process combining 2,700 manually sewn pins and 12 kilograms of bonbons from the “Evropa” [“Europe”] confectionery is a metaphor of the quest for a better life, often mixed with raw (bitter-sweet) emotions and traumatic temptations. Whose is this sleeping bag that represents the sweet and sugary “Europe” (idealized) on the outside and sharp and prickly (uncomfortable) on the inside?

Slavica Janešlieva (1973) is a visual artist with a distinctive multimedia and intermedial expression. Janešlieva has specialized in graphic art/printmaking, but she shows her recognizable artistic expression and talent for visual narration in various media: print, object, art installation, drawing, photography, video, book art etc. Her works are part of numerous juried and curated national and international exhibitions all over the world (27 solo exhibitions and over 250 group exhibitions). She has received a number of international and national awards and honors, and her works are part of important institutional art collections in the Republic of North Macedonia and abroad. Janešlieva lives and works in Skopje, and is a full-time professor at the Printmaking Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University.

www.slavicajaneslieva.blogspot.com

Photo (detail):
Stanimir Nedelkovski.
Courtesy of the artist



GJORGJE JOVANOVIK

Inventions for You, Wonderful People!, 2014

The Lip Clip,
object, wood and cardboard,
20 x 6 x 4 cm
inkjet prints 2-sided, 50x70 cm

Multifunctional Rucksack for Protests,
object, cardboard, plastic foil, wood, rope, scalpel, fabric
60 x 40 x 12 cm
inkjet prints 2-sided, 50x70 cm

The Multipurpose Rucksack,
object, wood, fabric and bangles
90 x 30 x 2 cm,
inkjet prints 2-sided, 50x70 cm

The Antidepressant Television Covers,
object, fabric and cardboard
50 x 70 cm
inkjet prints 2-sided, 50x70 cm

The Curse Book,
object, book/ 17 x 12 cm
inkjet prints 2-sided, 50x70 cm

In 2010, while at the MoMA in New York, I spotted the book "Chindogu - Unuseless Japanese Inventions". I immediately loved the concept and went delving into this practice. Ever since, I long mulled over the possibility of translating the Chindogu experience into the local concept, and thus the concept for a "Macedonian" version of the inventions was born, which I first presented at the exhibition "Inventions for You, Wonderful People!", at the MoCA Skopje in 2014. The selection of 5 inventions presented at the exhibition, with a focus

on oversaturation with depressing TV content, the repression of freedom of speech and expression, infrastructural disorder of cities, dysfunctional communication, is part of a cycle of 12 inventions which, through a tragicomic depiction of problems, offers a practical object or invention that would solve them.

The characters for whom the “solutions” are intended are portrayed as flash-ins from the larger social picture, helplessly caught in the elements of circumstances that are somewhat beyond the realm of their control. The resulting feeling is an inevitable mixture of frustration and resignation.

Gjorgje Jovanovik (1980) has focused in his recent work on the question of the integration and disintegration of the contemporary man. He re-examines interpersonal communication in the context of the general situation of redefining universal values, man-society relations, and consumerism as a key factor of modern lifestyle, politics as a factor of disintegration of the cities, states, and families...Also, the element of self-reference is present in his works – a re-examination of the self in inner or extensive contexts of decaying old, and creating new values. With no limits in media, he has worked on installations, performances, objects, videos, collages, and paintings in order to achieve a transformation of the artistic dimensions of his individual expression by following up on the fluidity of the contemporary context.

He has realized several solo exhibitions in North Macedonia and abroad including: The Beheaded (Prima Center Berlin, Berlin Germany, 2020), Chocolate Drops (Gallery Hoast, Vienna, Austria, 2018), Radio Free Skopje, internet radio project (CAC Gallery, Skopje, Macedonia, 2015/16), Invention for You Wonderful People! (Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje, Macedonia, 2014) The Confession of a Cake Monster (Studio Golo brdo, Rovinj, Croatia, 2013), etc.

Jovanovik received the DENES award for young visual artist in 2009, the award for video at the international festival Alternative Film/Video in Belgrade in 2009, and the award of the 10 Biennial of Young Artists organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje in 2013.

www.gjorgjejovanovik.com

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist.



FILIP JOVANOVSKI

Prints of a scenario in 12 frames and a video made for a performative installation in public space, produced in 2022

July 3, 1973, marks the day when a building was put into use in Skopje, a building belonging to the post-earthquake brutalist architecture - the building of the Taftalidzhe local community and a cultural center, which the citizens call “Domche”. “Domche” is perhaps the smallest brutalist-style building in the world. In the first years after its construction, “Domche” was used to take in families whose homes were leveled by the 1963 earthquake. This building later served the needs of the community of all residents of the neighborhood... The building of DOMCHE is a concrete-made horizontal sculpture, a monument to the memory of the community in Taftalidzhe. DOMCHE, a building/sculpture/monument with clean and clear abstract forms, was cast in concrete, immersed in the middle, below, between the trees, in the community, close to the street, on the ground floor, almost invisible, but important.

The “text” takes the form of twelve stories under the title DOMCHE - (Perhaps) the Smallest Brutalist Building in the World, written as part of a long-term artistic interdisciplinary project entitled THE CITY AS A STAGE - Lost Modernist Utopias. The project, applying the methodology of reading the building, using different research approaches and involving the community and experts in different fields, and using stage props, transforms the public space into a stage where the problems of the community are “performed”. The stories are written through a process of research, working meetings, workshops, as well as use of archives, libraries, video and audio interviews with users of the space, conversations, private recordings and archival videos and photos of people who were part of the life in DOMCHE.

Filip Jovanovski (1979) is a visual artist with a distinctive interdisciplinary approach. Jovanovski explores different media and their interdisciplinary connection - visual art, theater, video, film and spatial installation. He creates long-term socially engaged artistic projects, which are based on research and are often in collaboration with different communities. In his projects, he tries to expose the hidden mechanism of dominant positions of power that leads to the destruction of public space and the public sphere in general, while deconstructing and encouraging different alternatives to the capitalist way of life.

His works are a transformation of political and social categories into spatial images. He often uses public spaces for his works or creates them, as well as unconventional and alternative exhibition spaces. He was one of the authors of the Macedonian pavilion titled “Freeing Space”, which was presented at the 2018 Venice Biennale for Architecture. He has made about 30 stage designs for theater plays, research and interdisciplinary artistic projects, and won several international awards.

His project “This building talks truly”, curated by Ivana Vaseva, which represented The Republic of North Macedonia at the 2019 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, won the prestigious Golden Triga for best exposition.

www.akto-fru.org

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist



VERICA KOVACEVSKA

FILLING THE VOID, 2022

audio guide, 1h / video, 7:14 min

FILLING THE VOID is an audio guide created by Verica Kovacevska in Split, Croatia.

The work focuses on the beloved modernist building Kineski Zid* and the surrounding buildings designed by architect Frano Gotovac. It combines walking and storytelling to allow the audience to (re)discover the neighbourhood and reflect on its history, significance, and potential for a better future.

The piece is open to both locals and tourists, and can be accessed by anyone using a mobile device. It aims to place a new landmark on the tourist map of Split and question the way that local cultural heritage is valued and protected. The work was produced as part of the project Voids 2022 - an art program in public space - organized by Culture Hub Croatia.

FILLING THE VOID was recently documented by local filmmaker Duje Kundić, further addressing the role of film in preserving ephemeral art and showing how documentation itself can become (part of) an original artwork.

* (English translation: Chinese Wall)

Verica Kovacevska (1982, Skopje) is an artist and researcher who explores themes of urban design, architectural heritage, and immersive technology. Most of her projects are participatory and performative, allowing the audience to experience the built environment in new ways.

She holds a BA in Visual Arts with Theatre and Performance from the University of Plymouth (UK) and MPhil in Arts, Culture and Education from the University of Cambridge (UK). She is the recipient of numerous awards, grants and residencies, and has shown her work in many international exhibitions.

Since 2023 she is a PhD candidate at HafenCity University in Hamburg (DE).

<https://www.kovacevska.net/>

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist.



SHQIPE MEHMETI

Untitled, 2023

Mixed media (drypoint, drawing)

diptych 2x72x52cm

The first part of the diptych is a representation of what is visible: a house, a yard, a garden with flowers, illuminated windows of the house... It is a representation of a warm home, family happiness, feeling safe, tranquility...

The second part is a play that dramatically reveals the background, what happens behind the illuminated window, behind the curtain, beyond the veil, behind the fake smiles, in the dark...

The basic idea of this work is to present the difference between appearance and reality, between public and private, between what is the everyday life of the citizen and sometimes the harsh reality that hides behind the image of happiness, love, mutual respect and togetherness in the home.

Sometimes everything appears to be fine, but there's something deeply, deeply wrong. Behind the scenes of a beautiful little house, a well-decorated home and a happy family hides the monster of horror, pain, violence, loneliness, sadness... Sometimes, and this is hidden most of the time, it is not enough to have a beautiful house, a garden with blooming roses, a soft green lawn, beautiful children, a golden retriever running around in the yard and an expensive car.

Shqipe Mehmeti (1981, Kichevo) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje (2004), and she completed a postgraduate degree (2007) at the same faculty. As a visual artist, she has participated in over 200 group exhibitions in different countries, including North Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, Germany, Italy, Spain, England, Turkey, Egypt, the Czech Republic, the United States, Canada, Lithuania, Andorra, Malta, and France. She has also held 30 solo exhibitions in cities including Skopje, Sofia, Paris, Berlin, Nuremberg, New York, Pristina, Visby, Istanbul, Bursa and Zurich.

She has received several awards, including the Grand Prix (2018) from the Ministry of Culture at the “17th Winter Salon” organized by the Association of Artists of North Macedonia.

She has attended various art residencies in Kosovo, Serbia, Bulgaria, Malta, Andorra, and France, organized between 2005 and 2020.

Since 2018, she works at the National Gallery of North Macedonia in Skopje.

<https://shqipemehmeti.blogspot.com/>

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist



OLIVER MUSOVIK

A Balancing Act, 2016 **video, 1'28"**

Three Roma boys having fun, performing “skiing” stunts with their cargo tricycle (driving it on two wheels) on an empty, closed down boulevard in Skopje, during the mass anti-government protests in April 2016.

Wildbuilds (Shtip), 2017 **Inkjet prints series of 3**

The work presents a way of situating fear, repression and their repercussions in the city. It explores the ways in which they affect mobility, both physical and social, and change the geographies of the city. In examining the economic, political, social and cultural foundation, contemporary topics around the city’s built environment and urban behaviors are addressed.

“Wildbuilds (Shtip)” [“wildbuilds” is a literal translation of ‘divogradbi’ - a colloquial term for illegal constructions in Macedonia] presents examples of illegal building practices in North Macedonia - several demolished individual homes in the city of Shtip.

These “modern ruins” left after the local government has demolished the houses, lie now as traces and monuments of people’s broken dreams and aspirations for better life.

Zoning and building regulations too often seem to infringe on individual property rights, and on the other hand, selective and corrupt enforcement is used as a means to promote social and economic segregation through exclusion.

Oliver Musovik (Skopje, 1971) received his BFA from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Skopje in 1997 and his MFA in 2004.

Musovik has held solo exhibitions in North Macedonia, Switzerland, Slovenia, Serbia, Australia, and Montenegro.

He has also been part of many international exhibitions, including *REALIZE! RESIST! REACT! Performance and Politics in the 1990s in the Post-Yugoslav Context*, Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova (+MSUM), Ljubljana, 2021; *Solidarity - Now More Than Ever*, Weimar, 2019; *AFTERMATH - Changing Cultural Landscape, Tendencies of engaged post-Yugoslavian contemporary photography*, Ljubljana and touring, 2012-14; *HISTORY, MEMORY, IDENTITY: Contemporary Photography from Eastern Europe*, Modena, 2009-10; 3rd Bucharest Biennale in 2008; 1st Thessaloniki Biennale, 2007; *The Gorges of the Balkans*, Kassel, 2003; Manifesta 4 – European Biennale of Contemporary Art, Frankfurt, 2002; 6th Istanbul Biennale, 1999.

His artist-in-residence programs include Maribor, 2022; Weimar 2018; Brno, 2017; Geneva, 2016; Seoul, 2014; New York, 2006.

Musovik has works in several public collections including that of the MoCA Skopje; +MSUM, Ljubljana; National Museum of Montenegro, Cetinje; Photography Foundation, Modena.

Many of his works are published in art magazines and books including “Autobiography” (Thames and Hudson, 2004), “Vitamin Ph – New Perspectives in Photography”, (Phaidon, 2006), “Photo Art, Photography in the 21st. Century”, (Dumont 2007 / Aperture, 2008).

www.olivermusovik.tk

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist.



NATASHA NEDELKOVA

Erecting Tenderness, 2021

video, color, sound, 10min 49s

A speculative iconological research, *Erecting Tenderness* (2021) reassembles images to highlight the links between the fake-news industry in the city of Veles, North Macedonia, the Slavic divinity of Veles (Volos) and its visual resemblance with the self-proclaimed shaman Jason, one of the most visible figures in the attack on Washington's Capitol in January 2021. The ex-Yugoslav city of Titov Veles first became famous after it was classified by WHO as the world's most polluted city, due to its toxic zinc and lead factory located in the city center. The toxic environment, with a cheap and stable internet connection and a high unemployment rate, drove a group of young people to create hundreds of fake-news sites, contributing to the creation of radicalized far-right groups like QAnon and eventually influencing the US elections in 2016 in support of Donald Trump.

This occurrence granted Veles a new identity as the World Capital of Fake News. Images from recent documentary videos depict the smelter, while fragments from three Macedonian films capture the dark and suffocating atmosphere of the city and try to draw a parallel between the environmental and media pollutions. Mass circulation of information in the digital age creates a large and unstable archive where all horizons change; the new environment is, among other things, a huge machine for creating collective hallucinations, fake news and propaganda. This virtual reality enables new connections; the pollution in Veles causes a processes of toxic paranoid subjective interpretations on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean.

Erecting Tenderness points to the struggles and resistance of the insignificant, the small and the ordinary that can take place in circulation systems of images and information that knit the World Wide Web.

Natasha Nedelkova (1993) is a visual artist and researcher.

Her artistic projects contrast the digital allure of realism, resemblance, immateriality, totality and converge with the pleasures and complexities of computational, algorithmic and ludic digital culture. By using narration as a tool to reframe and fragment ideas, she aims to grasp and reconfigure social and political transitions. She obtained a bachelor's degree at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje and a master's degree in Film Studies at École Normale Supérieure de Lyon. She also earned a degree from École Universitaire de Recherche ArTeC in their Artistic Research Program in 2020. Her first solo exhibition *Performing the Impersonal / Manifesting the Speculum* opened in May 2022 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje. She has exhibited her works in numerous galleries and festivals, including Manifesta 14 in Prishtina (2022), École Universitaire de Recherche ArTeC in Paris (2021), 13th International Biennial of Young Artists in Museum of Contemporary Art in Skopje (2021), Gallery Miroslav Kraljević GMK in Zagreb (2020) and Zeta Contemporary Art Center in Tirana (2020). She was one of the three award-winning artists for Most Successful Artist and Work of Art at the 13th International Biennial of Young Artists in Skopje.

www.natashanedelkova.com

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist



DOROTEJ NESHOVSKI

Childhood, 2023

object consisted of 12 bases from granules of recycled rubber in a wooden frame, 158 x119cm

The reduction of public spaces for children's play can be viewed as a reflection of larger societal changes. Traditional notions of play, which prioritize open-ended, unstructured and imaginative activities, spontaneous play, exploration, and socializing are transformed in new experiences of play that are different from what previous generations may have experienced.

The changing landscape of public spaces and the influence of neoliberalism, computer-oriented activities and consumer-driven forms of play have major impact on the concept of freedom in play, and can shape children's preferences, behaviors, and identities. It is important to critically examine and address these changes to ensure that children have access to inclusive, diverse, and enriching play experiences that promote their holistic development.

Through this work, Neshovski talks about the importance of the public space for children's play and how the booming construction sites in post socialist cities shape childhood everyday. Through this installation, which is a damaged and thrown foundation from a public playground, the artist offers an interactive site that can be further intervened by children.

Dorotej Neshovski (1989, Skopje) graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje at the Sculpture Department in 2012. He works with the concepts of creative spontaneity, artistic articulation, social inclusion and pedagogy through participatory activities, mapping and resonance methodologies, institutional activities, research practices and education of children. He explores urban transformation processes using painting and sculpture.

As one of the founders of the art group SEE, established in 2012, he is an active member and participant in all the projects of the group. He has participated in numerous group exhibitions in North Macedonia including: SEE, UM/A 1 (2015) and It's Easier to Breathe Underground (2017), as well as 31 and 32 session of the Art Colony Galichnik (2021).

He took part in the 6th International Symposium *Curating Exchange: Spaces, Functions, Fictions and Other Commons* organized by press to exit project space, where he presented his performative lecture *Fictions and the spaces I inhabit*, addressing an array of potential readings into the public concepts of ephemeral versus permanent, public versus institutional, and virtual versus physical space, while creating so-called “invisible works.”

He is the author of “Art is not what you want” (Private Print, Skopje, 2017) an art book on drawing, presented in Skopje, Berlin, Tokyo and Paris, as well as the art book „Anything outside of art is a waste of time” (SCS – Centar Jadro, 2021), and is a co-curator of a group exhibition of public space called *Spatial readaptations* (2022), using the Skopje “beach” as a place for cultural practice.

Neshovski lives and works in Skopje.

<https://www.facebook.com/dorotej-601120143678886>

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist.



OPA (Obsessive Possessive Aggression)

Complaint Box, 2012

interactive object (cardboard box, shredding machine, paper, pen),
33x26x13cm

The work in front of you is a (micro) call for action. Always altered and always re-contextualized. According to the new specificity. This time the box brings an absurd question. Basically, a benign one, which in this context could be seen as political. No one is going to be satisfied. The concern becomes shared, and the trauma a collective one.

OPA (Obsessive Possessive Aggression) is a collaboration founded in 2001 by visual artists Slobodanka Stevcheska and Denis Saraginovski. Its practices are context based, including parody, created or twisted reality, mockumentaries, tactical media and subversive affirmation and over-identification strategies. OPA has held solo exhibitions in North Macedonia, Croatia, France, Germany, Estonia, the United States, the Netherlands, etc; has also exhibited widely in group exhibitions and festivals including *Transmediale* (Berlin), *Transeuropa - European Theatre and Performance Festival* (Hildesheim), *Freewaves' Biennial of New Media Arts* (Los Angeles), *Biennale of Contemporary Art* (Moscow), *Ars Electronica* (Linz), and has received residency fellowships in France, Germany, Switzerland, Estonia, the Netherlands, etc. OPA was a co-founding member of Kooperacija Initiative (2012-2015) and Forms of Ownership collective (2018-2021).

www.o-p-a.org

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist.



ALEKSANDRA PETRUSHEVSKA RISTOVSKA

Spaces of Oblivion, 2019 – 2020

Selection of three paintings

Two chairs

2019/20, Oil on canvas, 100x100cm

Faculty of architecture: What have we left behind?

2020, Acrylic on canvas, 30x30cm

Library of fire

2020, Acrylic on canvas, 50x50cm

The one-time ideology read from our present time obtains a new concept of comprehension. For me, such interior of public space causes uniting with the past, i.e. imagination for the future. Dystopian emptiness in which times of existence are blended... It could be said that it is exactly such form of silence that I would like to capture.

The interior objects that we now see most often spark a nostalgic feeling that they have not changed, yet at the same time they have. Such idealized memory, which could be approximately explained as the most sincere moment in our existence, presents a unique artistic structure that for any individual represents an intimate corner, a fragment from their private, their own and personal memory.

This “phenomenon” of reverting to the past could be seen in many authors, not only in the idealized form, but with an idea of the same in various theories and merits. Such situation is determined with an artistic shape, visual record, and that would be a reflection of the past.

Provided the focus of perception alters, it would be possible to implement a new vision. I contemplate in the direction of planning new prospects of the already existing currently. What have we learned, or better yet, have we learned anything from all that? My wish is to recognize the beauty which is not only tangible in that space, but it has its own character and profoundness with the function it used to have. My opinion is that it should not be perceived as completed.

Aleksandra Petrushevska Ristovska (1981, Skopje) has had several solo and group exhibitions in Belgrade (2022), Istanbul (2020), New York (2010), Berlin (2010), Vienna (2009), Beirut (2009), Amsterdam (2008), Belgrade (2006), Museum of Contemporary Art Skopje (2005, 2006, 2008). Thus far, she has participated in several international projects and art residences (KulturKontakt Austria, European Cultural Foundation, Pro Helvetia Skopje). Since 2009 she has been working as a professor at the Faculty of Art and Design (International Balkan University).

The artist's visual practice is a profound exploration of social and existential issues, which are expressed through a diverse range of traditional and interdisciplinary media.

Furthermore, Petrushevska Ristovska's paintings highlight the symbolic and cultural meanings associated with architecture. She captures the ways in which architecture serves as a reflection of human values, beliefs and ideologies, and how it shapes our perception of space and place. Her artwork invites viewers to contemplate the significance of architecture as a form of communication, conveying messages and meanings that go beyond the physical structures themselves.

Petrushevska Ristovska's skillful integration of color palette and color theory adds a layer of complexity and depth to her artwork, making it a compelling and thought-provoking visual experience for viewers.

www.apr.mk

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist



NADA PRLJA

The Wall Replica, 2013/23

Nine paintings, mixed media on paper, 50x70x4cm

The three artworks by Nada Prlja: the *Peace Wall* a public art work, *The Wall Replica* series of paintings and *Peace Wall Replica* installation within the gallery space explore the dichotomy between public and private spaces, while examining 'public' and 'private' art in posing questions of ownership, value and relevance.

The site-specific public art *Peace Wall* (2012) commissioned by the 7th Berlin Biennale, was a temporary 'wall', 12 m long and 5.5 m high, that blocked the traffic on Friedrichstrasse in Berlin and provoked reflections and discussions about socio-economical barriers within modern cities, during and after the Biennale. The artwork *Peace Wall Replica* (2013) installed within the gallery space of White Cube, in London, is 1:1 replica or identical copy painted by the artist Nada Prlja of graffiti scribbled by the public on the North side of the public artwork *Peace Wall*.

The recipients of the public artwork *Peace Wall* are given a possibility to interact in a free manner with the artwork, which resulted in graffiti, collages, posters, etc. layered over the artwork, by giving a new meaning and visual effect of the artwork. The public of *Peace Wall Replica* are art-goers, who are invited to contemplate about the artwork, without being able to intervene with it. The final artwork in this trilogy is *The Wall Replica* (2013/23). This series of nine paintings extends the discussion of im/possibility to own public artwork and shifts the public into a private, by creating a set of painting/sketches or replicas of the graffiti from the North side of *Peace Wall*, this time sizing-down the artworks to 50x70x4cm, a format commonly seen at art fairs and favoured by art collectors, by giving a new audience to the trilogy.

Nada Prlja is a visual artist whose main aim is to affect society in the most direct of ways; her work challenges critical discourse around issues of current politics, nationalism, human rights, migration, etc. Prlja's work adopts a site's context specific quality, which may vary from project to project, and in the choice of media deemed most appropriate. She works mainly in installation, live art, public art and drawing.

Prlja represented the Pavilion of the Republic of North Macedonia at the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019. She took part in 10 international biennials: 18th Tallinn Print Triennial (2022), Baltic Triennial 14 (2021), 7th Berlin Biennale, Berlin (2012), Manifesta 8, Murcia (2010), 28th International Printmaking Biennale, Ljubljana (2009), etc. She has organized and took part in more than 100 exhibitions.

Prlja received an MPhil research degree from the Royal College of Arts, London (2002), after graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts in Skopje (1997), and previously from the National High School of Fine Art also in Skopje (1989).

Prlja's main interest is art in the public domain. Her most notable public interventions were for Innsbruck International Biennial in 2022 and 2020, the 7th Berlin Biennale (2012), Marble Arch Gate, London (2007), etc. The practice-based research thesis, entitled 'Blurring the Boundaries between the Artist and the Viewer as Conditioned by the Changing Concept of Art Space', got Prlja a MPhil degree at the Royal College of Art.

Prlja has also engaged with curatorial and educational practice in a number of ways. She was artistic director of In Situ Art Far in 2015, she was an initiation, co-direction and program direction of SIA gallery in Skopje, and a full-time senior university lecturer in different London universities (Istituto Marangoni Fashion, Art and Design, Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University, etc).

www.nadaprlja.com

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist.



DITA STAROVA QERIMI

Existence, 2013

Mixed media, 142 x 110 cm

The work *Existence* is the result of the mental unrest of a woman who tries to lay a solid ground on which she can build her future despite all the patriarchal social obstacles she faces and against which she has to fight daily.

Dita Starova-Qerimi (1984) is an established academic painter and educator, assistant professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Design at the “American College” University - Skopje. Starova-Qerimi graduated in painting and graphic design at the Faculty of Fine Arts - Skopje, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje, and received a Master of Fine Arts degree at the same faculty, as well as a PhD on the topic “Mural painting in Islamic sacred buildings in the Republic of Macedonia through a practical analysis of human contribution”, under the mentorship of PhD Mehmet Ibrahimgil from the Gazi University Ankara (Turkey). Her papers in this field have been published in national and international editions, and her doctoral dissertation was published by “Logos A” from Skopje.

In her professional biography so far, Starova-Qerimi has held 14 solo and over 50 group exhibitions in North Macedonia, the United States, France, Turkey, Bulgaria, Kosovo and other countries. She is the winner of the “Metodija Ivanovski Mende” award - small format 2012, the “SIAB” award, the “13th November” award and other national and international awards. Her works are in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art and the National Gallery of the Republic of North Macedonia in Skopje, as well as in collections in Canada, Turkey and France. She is a member of the Association of Fine Artists of Macedonia (DLUM), the Association of Artists “Art Vizion”, the Association of Artists of Macedonia “Draudakum” and others. Starova-Qerimi has been the director of the National Gallery of North Macedonia since 2015.

Photo:
Courtesy of the artist



NIKOLA UZUNOVSKI

An Archipelago of Temporary Floating Habitats, 2023

Prints from the research process 1x3.70m

The water levels of Prespa Lake have been declining over the last 30 years, having decreased by approximately 313 centimeters to this day. The reasons behind these changes are different and demonstrated in various forms, such as increased air temperatures, decreased relative humidity, amplified evaporation, augmented cloudage, and reduced levels of sunlight, all of them not only being the result of the effects of climate change, but also of the use of water for irrigation systems by the three countries and the influx of polluting nutritional and dangerous substances.

The idea behind *An Archipelago of Temporary Floating Habitats* is to develop an archipelago of floating facilities intended for coexistence between people, animals and plants, made of natural materials that will be able to adopt to the water levels in case of further water withdrawals. This archipelago is composed of rafts tailor-made for people, animals and plants according to their needs, as an attempt to both support the preservation of the biodiversity of Prespa Lake and the water purification through specific plants, and offer the locality as a tourist destination, thus reducing the intensity of use of the water for agricultural purposes. In this particular case, several photos from the research process are shown including a photo from a single prototype intended only for plants and animals or for the species of birds known as terns, which was shown in the Museum of Contemporary Art – Skopje in 2023.

For the research of the work, Uzunovski was collaborating with Monozero Manufacturing and the architects Martina Peneva, Sara Ilievska, and Srna Davitkovska. Gratitude also goes to MES (Macedonian Environmental Society) and Ljupcho Krstevski.

Nikola Uzunovski (1979, Belgrade) has exhibited in more than a hundred shows around the world. In 2005 participates at the 51°Biennale di Venezia, in the project *Floating Sites*, in 2007 wins the prize Young European Artist Trieste Contemporanea where he starts his project *My Sunshine* which later was developed for the Macedonian pavilion at the 53°Biennale di Venezia, in (2009). In 2008 Abitare magazine named *My Sunshine*, as one of the best innovations in Italy. Since 2005 he has been teaching art and design in many eminent universities in Europe and Asia.

Combining an aggressive conceptual language and intimate topics, Uzunovski provokes the spectator and turns him into a necessary central character of his pieces. The observer's experiences, wishes and memories become a fundamental material of his oeuvre. Thus putting in evidence the importance of every individual decision in creation of our reality.

Photo: Denis Saragjinovski.
Courtesy of the artist



DRAGANA ZAREVSKA and GJORGJI DESPODOV

Queen of Something, 2022

Installation, base 50x80x100, 3d figurines from plexiglass

Queen of Something explores the idea of identity and belonging at the end of the world, as the narrative follows a queen who observes a dirty post-human landscape and cries. The concept of “queen” has become widely popularized on social media in recent years; anybody can, and should be a queen if they want to - unapologetically and for free. This installation, based on the name-sake poem by Zarevska, reflects on the loneliness of existing in a world where humanity has been extinguished, and the queen is left to ponder her own existence.

Throughout the poem, the queen is confronted with various objects and creatures that represent different aspects of her identity, but also her professional appearance as she happens to be a CEO of a poetry production company at the end of the world. Despodov is building the infrastructure that defines and limits the Queen of Something by surrounding her with the objects that compromise her being, making it paradoxical and desperate, but lovely and full of hope at the same time.

This work is a co-production with FaVU VUT from Brno and PrivatePrint from Skopje.

Dragana Zarevska (b. 1985 in Kratovo) works with various media and poetry as a central point; from there, she takes off to building general narrational consistencies of concepts and imagining future scenarios for stuff. Diving in philosophy of technology, the future of work, archaeology of the future, folklore of the future, think-tanks of the new normal, etc. In the past, researcher and/or artist-in-residence at SITE (Stockholm), AIR Krems (Krems), Ausland (Berlin), Workshop Foundation (Budapest), ITD (Zagreb), BUDA (Kortrijk), Workspace (Brussels), Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers (Paris), WELD (Stockholm), RISE (Stockholm), Turkish Cultural Centre (Sarajevo), Summerhall (Edinburgh), etc. Twice nominated for the young visual artist award DENES (North Macedonia), one of the eight residency-awarded artists at BJCEM 2009.

Zarevska is currently engaged in research and teaching at the University of Technology in Brno.

Gjorgji Despodov (1996) is a multidisciplinary artist born in Prilep and currently based in Hague. He works with virtual and augmented reality concepts, and the use of different digital media: illustration, video, 3d animation, and installation. The interpretations and use of familiar objects serve as an extension of his personal experiences, tapping into general truths. Gjorgji makes art that both celebrates and challenges the mediums in which it is presented. “I find that graphic design, in particular, is an intriguing medium since it mixes communication with artistic philosophy. It offers a lot of possibilities to contribute to society as a whole and graphic design is a kind of communication within itself. His artistic practice exists between physical and digital environments, which reflects upon the manufacturing expenses of art, the structure of power, and theories of identity.

He completed his BA degree at the National Academy of Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria in an Advertising design class by Prof. Miroslav Bogdanov and Prof. Teodor Liho. This September, he will start his Master’s degree studies in Non Linear narrative at the Royal Academy of Art in Hague, Netherlands. He participated in last year’s Ars Electronica Festival with the performative workshop “Dunch at the Holy Crab” in collaboration with Marko Vivoda. He took part in several festivals and group exhibitions in North Macedonia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Austria, China, the Netherlands, and France.

In 2022 together with Sage House Integrated Marketing Agency (China), they received Silver Stevie Awards 2022 for Innovation in entertainment events and his short fashion movie “The Martian Chronicles” directed in collaboration with Aneliq Antova was shortlisted for ASVOFF X ARTSTHREAD X FNL Fashion film in Paris, France.

Both artists have previously collaborated with PrivatePrint on separate projects; PrivatePrint was the publisher of their artist books “The Curatables” by Zarevska (co-authored with Jasna Dimitrovska) in 2018, and SKIP AD by Despodov in 2021.



VELIMIR ZERNOVSKI

Confutatis - what are heroes made of?, 2022

Series of 8 drawings and sound made initially for the performance under the same title presented at Manifesta 14 in Prishtina

We perceive the political dimension of these constructed spaces in the concept of the collective, of the declared ensemble constituted by the individuals (children) who are destined to live in the “labyrinth”, the individuals (children) who inevitably belong to the “forgotten society”. By proclaiming that they are truthful, with all of their immanent alienation, the moral leader of the performance (Biljana Dimitrova) announces and confirms the “Physical Performative Theater” as an ensemble of heroism and its accompanying inverse narratives. The naming as an act of marking the “policies of the marginal” is performed through connecting the various moving bodies in the interactive space of the performative, becoming in this way a de-gravitated social body, tactilely and ceremonially addressing as a collective identity. Thus alienated, in the external, as well as in the internal world, the ensemble and the author become social actors, constituted as inter-agencies in the area of collective reality. But how is the collective memory space built? What is part of it what goes out? Is the subject that intentionally builds the memory space, one’s own, the personal, the private, but also the mythical - is that subject political? Or is the subject utopian? In that case, reality, as an opportunity for an open-social field, would be a rejection of the dichotomy and division between “being” and “being inside”, leaving the bodily presence between the myth and the reality. The division here, however, is not between the bull/animal and the human, between the gods and their mythical characters, but between the I/human and his mask, division – as much as it is possible. Natali Rajchinovska Pavleska

Velimir Zernovski (1981, MK) born in Skopje, SFR Yugoslavia, lives and works in Skopje, the Republic of North Macedonia.

Zernovski's artistic language encodes complex relationships between different temporal and spatial configurations, between the phenomenological and the sensory, between meanings originating from historical narratives and re-mythologizing through the performative act.

Zernovski is actively participating in many group exhibitions in Europe, the United States and Asia from the very beginning of his career back in 2005. His work is published in many international research publications, art magazines, art books and theory papers. He has curated and co-curated many projects and exhibitions and participated in many international projects and collaborations with various galleries, state and alternative institutions, museums, theaters and film productions. Big segments of his work are marked with three long-term projects including *Alice, what else is out there?* 2007 - 2010, The DISTILLED series 2010 - 2015 focused on the gender issues and inequality and The BEYOND series 2015 - ongoing. He is currently a professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University - Skopje.

<https://www.facebook.com/velimirzernovski>

Photo: Jelena Belic.
Courtesy of the artist



Curator:

Ivana Vaseva (1984, Skopje) is a curator, researcher and program director of the organization “Faculty of things that can’t be learned” – FRU, co-curator of the AKTO Festival for contemporary arts Arts that exists since 2006 and curator in Museum of Contemporary Art - Skopje. As a curator, she also collaborates as well with other communities outside the arts, developing exhibitions as well as spaces of co-creation, conversation, critical rethinking and political articulation of problems. She won the Golden Triga for best exposition at PQ19 (curator of the project), and has also won two “Ladislav Barishikj” awards from AICA – Macedonia (co-author), and the Special Architecture Award (co-participant). Vaseva specialized in curating at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam. She has curated many exhibitions, discursive projects and programs in various museums, institutions and universities both in the country and abroad and is an editor of several publications. Her latest projects include: group exhibition “Which side are you on: on the non-aligned decolonial constellation” (2022, National Opera and Ballet, Skopje); 17 AKTO festival for contemporary arts – “Contemporary (non)democracies: Care and spaces of the common” (various places in Skopje); XVI DENES award for young visual artist up to 35 years of age (National Gallery of the Republic of North Macedonia, Skopje), “Dear Republic”, performance essay in collaboration with Filip Jovanovski, Kristina Lelovac, Viktorija Ilioska (Main Post Office Skopje), “Realize! Resist! React!, Performance and Politics in the 1990s in the Post-Yugoslav Context” (Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana).

www.akto-fru.org

