

ACAS – Albanian Contemporary Artist Salon

1 - 9 November 2015

National Historic Museum - Tirana

Opening
Saturday 31st October 2015

COOPERATION
ALBANIA - FRANCE
2015 - 2016



1 - Presentation of our cooperation program

2 - Presentation of our event

ACAS - Albanian Contemporary Artist Salon

3 - Selection of the artists by an international jury

Christine Macel, chief curator- Centre Pompidou

Alicia Knock, curator - Centre Pompidou

Saâdane Afif, French artist

4 - Presentation of the 14 selected artists

Endri Dani, Klodian Deda, Arbër Elezi, Yllka Gjollësja, Ilir Kaso,

Greta Pllana, Leonard Qylafi, Alketa Ramaj, Gentian Shkurti,

Marina Sula, Ermela Teli, Driant Zeneli, Fani Zguro, Enkelejd Zonja

5 - Plans et planning

ACAS - Albanian Contemporary Artist Salon

Presentation

Cooperation program 2015 - 2017

In the wake of the invitation to the Franco-Albanian video artist Anri Sala by the French Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2013, the Embassy of France in Albania and the Albanian Ministry of Culture wish to implement a partnership where contemporary art, in all its forms, takes an important place in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

By highlighting Albanian emerging artists and their works during the event ACAS – Albanian Contemporary Artist Exhibition in November 2015, and with an exhibition in France in 2016, our mutual goal is to show at an international scale the contemporary and modern Albania, its youth and its strengths, in order to fight the stereotypes and to give to the Albanian art scene the place and the image it deserves.

The exhibition of collections of FRAC, in May and June 2016 at the Gallery of Arts in Tirana, will be an opportunity for the general public to experience international contemporary works, with an adapted educational program.

Website of the French-Albanian cooperation in contemporary art :
<http://albanie-france-ac.com/en/>

Presentation of our event

ACAS – Albanian Contemporary Artist Salon

Aims of the ACAS – Albanian Contemporary Artist Salon are to promote the work of a selection of Albanian emerging contemporary artists in Albania, in France and at an international scale, by organizing a two-weeks event in Tirana and inviting international professionals to experience the artworks of contemporary Albanian artists during the Salon. This event is also the ground to the preparation of an exhibition to be held in France, in 2016.

The ACAS – Albanian Contemporary Artist Salon will take place in the exhibition galleries of the National Museum of Tirana between 1 and 9 November 2015.

The selection process was done in Tirana by an independent jury of art professionals : Mrs. Christine Macel – chief curator of the Centre Pompidou, Mrs Alicia Knock – curator for the Centre Pompidou Mrs Alicia Knock and Mr Sâadane Afif – French artist.

This selection reflects the liveliness and diversity of the Albanian artistic scene, and all media and techniques are present, from painting to drawing, from installation to video and film.

Artists taking part to ACAS – Albanian Contemporary Artist Salon : Endri Dani, Klodian Deda, Arbër Elezi, Yllka Gjollësja, Ilir Kaso, Greta Pllana, Leonard Qylafi, Alketa Ramaj, Gentian Shkurti, Marina Sula, Ermela Teli, Driant Zeneli, Fani Zguro, Enkelejd Zonja.

Selection of the artists by an international jury

Composition of the jury :

- Christine Macel, Chief curator for Centre Pompidou
- Alicia Knock, curator for Centre Pompidou
- Saâdane Afif, French artist, based in Berlin



The coordination team received 65 applications by Albanian artists under 40 years old. The selection jury came to Tirana on July 1, 2 and 3 and make a selectio of 14 artists.

14 artists under 40 years old have been selected. Born between 1977 and 1991, already experienced or just finishing school, they offer a broad view on the actual Albanian contemporary art field. Based in Albania, Italy, Germany or Austria, those artists are living in many countries and are already, or will soon be part of the international art scene.

This selection reflects the liveliness and diversity of the Albanian artistic scene, and all media and techniques are present, from painting to drawing, from installation to video and film.

Presentation of the 14 selected artists

ENDRI DANI

Born in 1987, in Shkodra, Albania.

Lives and works as an artist and graphic designer in Tirana, Albania.

Biography :

2006 – 2010

Diploma in Fine Arts, University of Arts, Tirana, Albania

2015

- Bienal Fin Del Mondo

Part 3 (Argentina) – Part 2 (Chile) – Part 1 (Uruguai)

- Coexistence: for a new Adriatic Koine

Fondazione Pino Pascali, Polignano a Mare (Italy)

2014

- Coexistence: For a New Adriatic Koine (Venezia / Croatia / Montenegro / Albania)

- Multiplicity, New-York, USA

- Group Exhibition, Robert Kananaj Gallery, Toronto, Canada

- Ardhe Award 2014, Zeta Gallery, Tirana, Albania

- POST – Young Albanian Artists, Fondazione Pino Pascali, Polignano a Mare, Italy

- Marrakech Biennale 5, Section curated by Johan Gustavsson, Marrakech, Morocco

Co-founder of MIZA gallery, an artist-run-gallery dedicated to the work of emerging Albanian artists.

Artistic Statement :

My training as a painter permeates my photographs, videos and installations which tend to incorporate found objects; artifacts of ordinary life; elements of Albania's history; and souvenirs. My recent work has been largely research-oriented, dealing with the predicaments of Albanian life and its underlying paradoxes,

particularly as they manifest themselves in material and consumer culture.

I am inspired by subjects that have touched me personally, or stories arising from my daily encounters.

I try to let experientially-derived insights slide poetically towards a sort of fictional space where everything is possible.

Website / Links :

www.endridani.com



PALIMPSEST 01

Video (Stop Motion) 3 min 05 sec - May 2010

The cement mixer, an important object in construction, becomes the object of my work. Taken from an apartment complex under construction, and thus abstracted from its basic function, it is transported to my studio so as to gain another meaning.

Link: <https://vimeo.com/131352390>

Password: cementmixer



Souvenir of my homeLAND

Video/installation - July 2011

Video documentation 4 min 40 sec & 9 objects with different dimensions

For Pasolini, technological innovations and consumerist principles were what separated the new generation from former ones. "Souvenir of my homeLAND" is a meditation on these ideas which Endri Dani expresses through the process of "undressing" souvenirs one can find everywhere in small stores in Tirana, places which have morphed into the most frequented "contact zones" with the cultural heritage of Albania. These objects are not only consumed by tourists, but they are also consumed by Albanian citizens and immigrants as representative emblems of ethnic and national identity, emblems of Albania, emblems which, in fact, stand far removed from those aspects of cultural heritage which they claim to evoke. Their garbs, colors, symbols scraped, the figurines are exposed in the dirt that constitutes their bare essence.

Sofia Kalo - (Pasolini Prossimo Nostro - Miza 2013)

Link: <https://vimeo.com/130999741>

Password: souvenir



CM182

Series of 20 photos - March 2015

In the photo series CM 182 he seems to claim to be the "outcome" of the inevitable Albanian cultural heritage of the past. In the six pictures he is portrayed comparing his height under some apartment blocks built during the communist dictatorship and located all around the country (Shkodra, Burrel, Fier, Korça, Elbasan, Pogradec, Lezha and Tirana). The pictures reveal that the two heights (human and architectural) coincide. In fact he is as tall as the entrances to the buildings.

Text by Claudio Cravero, curator, PAV Turin

KLODIAN DEDA

Born in 1984 in Albania.

Lives in Milan, currently studying Philosophy at the State University of Milan.

Biography :

Klodian Deda was born in 1984, in Albania. He lives in Milan, where currently he's studying Philosophy at the State University of Milan. In 2011 he graduated at the Academy of Fine Arts of Brera, Milan. In 2008, he was invited to the Art Kontakt Festival in Saranda, attended by the following Festivals at Art Kontakt Kavajë 2009, Art Kontakt Porto Palermo, Himara 2012. In 2009, he took part in the project Krossing at the 53rd Venice Biennial. Among others, his works were exhibited at Caelum Gallery, New York 2012; Miza Galeri, Tirana 2013 and Galleria San Lorenzo, Milano 2009; as well as in collective exhibits such as Internazionale "Arte Italia" 2010 Turin, "Sotiri" 2011 Korca, and "Riciclarti" 2011 Padova "Ardhje" 2013 and 2014 Tirana, Marche Centro d'Arte Italy, CoCoCo Como Italy and Gallery of Faculty of Arts, Pristina, Kosovo, 2014, Fabbrica del Vapore Milan, Gallery of Ministry of Culture, Pristina 2015.

Artistic Statement :

The idea of my artistic activity comes from modesty, from the inevitable need or lack of something. A lack of what we think satisfy us, but at the same time turns into mania. This desire becomes an obsession, as sometimes could be the survival.

The purpose is to highlight the responsive and sensitive sides of man. That man who demands with determination to feel complete.

My artistic journey has had several phases, dealing with themes like nomadism, the move of the modern human being, constantly modifying the anthropological structures. The theme of homosexuality, as a social blow that has not completely found an identity in the West.

Another theme is the recycling, in that mania of continuous production in endless consumption of objects.

For the fulfilment of an idea I'm mainly influenced by factors outside the art world, focusing my research in different aspects of everyday life. At the beginning I was fascinated and impressed by Pop Art and Minimalist art, then my works from static started to turn into action-art.

Materials in my creations have a specific attention. The work in itself does not have a purpose, I don't expand it totally, but I prepare the ground where the public will be put in touch for the final realization. The public becomes a dynamic part, due to him the work arises, he'll bring it with him as an experience. All this helps the public, in order that he has not been only a temporary subject; he brings the right attention on his actions, since he was the subject of an artwork and at the same time he was the most vulnerable to an artistic perception. This raises the difference between that public who wanted to remain passive, at a distance or perhaps who lived the experience in another form or as a taboo.

The goal is to have a direct impact on the public by putting it to the test in front of sensitive topics or to stimulate in him a physical action.

Website / Links :

www.klodiandeda.net



All spying all

Interactive art, public performance - 2014

The uncertainty, the fear, the hatred, the envy, the hunger to possess, the insecurity etc.. are pushing the human being to create a system of self-defense manipulated.

Espionage in itself is a practice of appropriation of rival's secrets to get a military, political and/or economic advantage. I become interested about this phenomenon and in consequence of this I wanted to recreate a system of kidnapping of information. A tested mechanism to visually prove the interception of a individual.

With the current mass media, we are in a continuous surveillance and spying mechanism of our information, our daily lives that it has become a way of life. The artwork "all spying all" is happen through the streets of the city. The public is invited to take the glass and place it on the wall. Trying to listen the vitality behind that wall. And then tell it to the artist, or to other people who are there. What he heard and what he felt from this experience, after having spied on the private life of other citizen.



My Ukraine

Site-specific installation, Interactive art, public performance -2014

The project "My Ukraine" is built through the intervention of the public. A table will be placed, in the left side there will be sheets of paper mapped with the Ukraine flag. These flags in A4 format, will be in the room. Near to it will be two or three pairs of scissors and an empty box. On the right side of the table there will be a paper^ with the instructions on what the public should do. He is invited to take a flag - paper and with the scissors to create a map of the Ukraine. After this, each one has to write one's own e-mail address in the back side of the flag, put it on the clear plastic and hang it on the panel. It will be explained in the instructions that will be sent to each participant, by e-mail, his personal map of the Ukraine. The material will be documentation and personal at the same time .

With this work I ask to the public to get involved, a direct participation, an undertaking of responsibility. To experience, for a short time, the feeling of have the power to be able to divide the boundaries of a state or a nation.

The audience will take home this interaction at work, not only as a lived experience, emotionally, but also as an evidence thanks to the material received from the artist. The material that will receive will be the visual evidence of the experience, then a work created for his interlocutor.

ARBËR ELEZI

Born in 1988 in Berat, Albania.

Lives in Montevarchi, Italy

Biography :

2015

"Cittàdiffusa", Ginestra fabric of knowledge Montevarchi (IT)

"Se mi tolgo un capello sono uno che ha capelli, se mi tolgo un altro capello sono uno che ha ancora i capelli, se continuo così divento calvo".

2014

"Bones From The Sky", Asab-One, Milano (IT).

"Pae/saggio" edited by Carles Marco and Paola Lucrezia Cioncolini, with the work "Bones from the sky"

"The Topography of Citizenship" a project of Pietro Gaglianò, with the work "-", Florence (IT).

Experience with "TeatroStudio Krypton", Giancarlo Cauteruccio, Florence (IT).

Artistic Statement :

Arbër Elezi's poetic composition is infected of truth, or otherwise said the Aporia is materialized. In this essential paradox (Aporia), the empiricism and the ontology enter a free fall. In order to better comprehend the concept of PhenomenART developed by Elezi, we part from his first art installation "Se mi tolgo un capello sono uno che ha capelli, se mi tolgo un altro capello sono uno che ha ancora i capelli, se continuo così divento calvo" (If I pull a hair I am one still with hair, If I pull another hair I am one who still has hair, if I keep on pulling I will become bald).

At the beginning of Ludovico Quaroni book The Tower of Babel, Henry Miller's saying is quoted in it: "Confusion is the word invented in order to indicate a rule that cannot be understood" (Quaroni 1967, pg.23). In Quaroni's view Babel is not only a symbol of architecture in means of construction, but also the place of a project and research of meaning.

Babel is in essence the unfinished city, the impossible project that aims to re-institute a great city, a renowned structure. Unlike Babel, the contemporary city, in its diffused form is a dispersed, does not have entries Neither verticality. Its horizontal axe, without an architecture that pleases its vertical presence and the recognisability of its main places, often produces disorientation. A horizontal city as if a labyrinth, nevertheless, the dispersed hides in it the secret of a new relation between the horizontal and the vertical.

In order to understand the soil consummation, what it produces and which is the motivation the leads it ahead, is enough to take a look the modifications of the Italian Territory of the late 50s', even though for certain phenomena is sufficient to get back ahead to: suburbanisation, habitat dispersion, great national infrastructure along with mass motorisation, city expulsion from third productive functions.

This phenomena, that the capitalist better life semantics pretends to name it in a misleading way, aims to justify it as a neutral transformation of the soil, which produces by human, irreversible modifications to the natural surfaces that impact the territorial structured and restored product systematically, following the construction realisation and infrastructure, but also complex socio-territorial modifications.

Comprehending the devastating consequences of the soil consumption and striving it utterly, is necessary understanding also the direct causes and motivation laying within the complex capitalist system of territorial governance.



"Bones From The Sky"

pig and buffalo bones, fishing string/"Sky', 200 x 200 x 200 cm, 2014

"Don't expect bones from the Sky", goes an Albanian proverb. Man and nature are always described in dichotomy, where the man that protects the nature, the man that destroys the nature, the man that is in search of understanding nature. But in the reality, man and nature are not two different things. We are part of the same nature. We are born out of nature. We are an integrated part of this landscape and we do own particularities; we are equipped of self-consciousness and are able to pose questions on the world in which we live in.

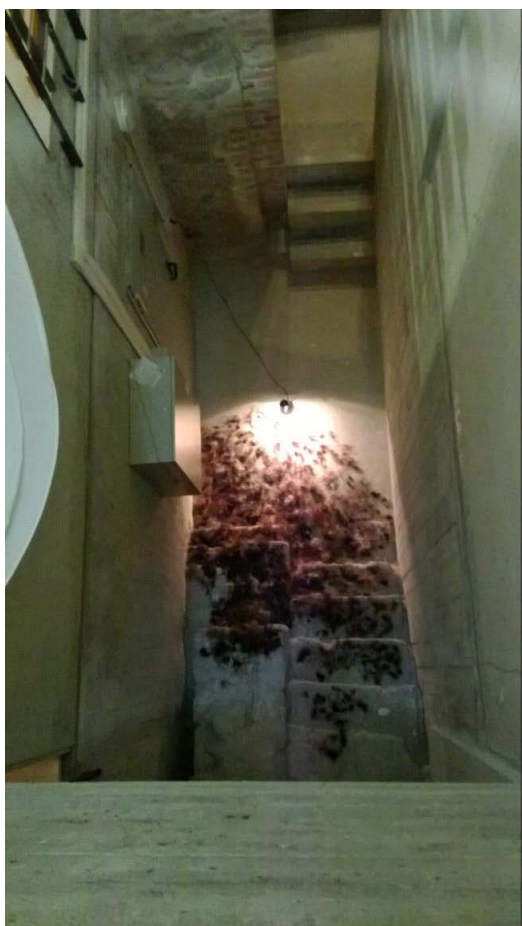
We are the universe self-aware of it.

Joseph Beuys says that the ear form is destined to the sound. In this key lecture "Bones from the sky", becomes a proverb that in its form is a theoretical, a theorem, out of the experience of the subject. The frame that includes this composition is the Aporia, the paradise of the existence of being part epistemologically to the physics and controlled ontologically from the consciousness.

Arbër Elezi's aim is to map the phenomena inside of the art giving a tremble to the silhouettes at its limits, where the artist self-proclaims its excellency as a unique creator of the art. Well, this limit does not exist. How is it possible that this complex existence has come out of the void, and the latter does not? In the PhenomenART concept everything can create art in relation to all that the existence withholds: art can be created through the unanimated matter as that of the

animated one, art can be created in means of the sky with the clouds, art can be created by the Sun and the Earth, art can be created by the subatomic particles as can the laws of physics, chemistry, the laws of dreams and also the Bing-Bang if existence.

The social sculpture proposed by Joseph Beuys is righteously a decent optic but remains a fragment in the real transparent amplitude of art. For as long as Duchamp proved himself as a genius in highlighting the gesture as an artistic version through the 'Ready-Made' concept, has restored once again as the only possible being able of creativity, thus, a stone can be made an artist but not vice-versa.



"Se mi tolgo un capello sono uno che ha capelli, se mi tolgo un altro capello sono uno che ha ancora i capelli, se continuo così divento calvo"

(If I pull a hair I am one still with hair, If I pull another hair I am one who still has hair, if I keep on pulling I will become bold)

Installation, Human hairs, 2014

YLLKA GJOLLESHA

Born in 1985, in Dibra, Albania.

Lives in Tirana, works as an Ass. Professor at the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Biography :

2015

Imago Mundi, Benetton Foundation Project, Albania

Residency & Presentation: SalzburgerKunstverein, Salzburg, Austria

"Music Talks" Galerie Im Tralkhaus, Salzburg, Austria

"Tirana Open" Piramide, Albania

Documentary, "Light" Elegy about Gjin Mili, photographer, NY

2014

"Post New Albania Artist" Museo Pino Paskali, Italy

Solo Show "TIME" solo exhibition FAB Gallery, Tirana, Albania

2013

Tirana "Young Albanian Filmmakers Festival" NY, USA

"Kollidromeno Price", NGA, Tirana – Shkodra, Albania

Artist Statement :

Yllka Gjolleasha is a contemporary video artist that investigates the emotional effects conveyed by the image and the sound.

Using mostly the moving images, she transmits original feelings and situations of silence where the landscape is frozen in time. Visually her videos resemble to a painting because of its slow and delicate movements. Her works are emotional, poetic and take the public far away in time because of their

nostalgic elements and love for the forgotten things, things which normally are banded and not noticed.

Website / Links :

<https://vimeo.com/user15819554>



The Family

video, full HD, 7 min 40 sec - 2015

This observation, this time is addressed to two people. She has chosen to place two monitors facing each other inside of which is the image of two human beings who form a family. In real life they are a couple.

In both videos the process is followed with close plans. In the first video the man realizes various regulation processes, while in the end, the tuning of a pianoforte. This process unfolds bringing to mind the Kandinsky similitude for piano and artist elements, which seeks to aggravate the important hierarchy of elements. Performing without a public is not made by an artist and this process tuner forms a casual 'melody' without a score.

At the other video we discover the craft of the old and noble woman, embroidery, where hand by hand we discover that she outlines her husband's working object.

The third video is their daughter, she is playing a pieces from classical music piano of Frederic Chopin and her room holding a giant poster of "La Scala" opera house in Milan, Italy.

It is understood that not only their legal documents makes them be a family, but also belonging to the same family background entity: people working for the surface but focusing more on the inside of the object.

One such positioning behind scenes and appearances, is intimate and unites both of them in lifestyle and action.

Against fluctuations of the everyday life and their varied shades of daily life takes a poignant and poetic nuance.

Curator: Zef Paci



Columns

Photo print, 300cm x 400cm - 2014

Columns taken from a common situation in road construction of Tirana. They become part of a new structure built inside a gallery.

Photos are full dress wallpaper, four pages of a room.

A new environment which leads to the ancient columns of a temple. A situation that lives between two times and at the same time is not a part of any of them.

ILIR KASO

Born in 1982, In Permët, Albania

Lives and works in Tirana, where he is a teacher at the University of Arts.

Biography :

Ilir Kaso was born in 1982, in Përmet. He graduated in 2005 from the Academy of Arts in Tirana. He is a lecturer at the University of Arts of Tirana.

He has been awarded for the experimentation in graphic style "Balkanima" 2005, "AMC" award as the best Albanian contemporary artist 2007, audience award "TIFF" 2009, award for the best image in "Anifest ROZAFA" 2010, best Albanian animated movie award "Albanian Film Festival" 2012, audience award in "DocuTIFF" 2015.

Ilir Kaso is the author of three personal exhibitions: "Ëndërrimtarë të realitetit" (Reality Dreamers), FAB Gallery, Tirana 2012; "Oxymoron", Lokal-int, Biel-Bienne 2012; "I am the river", Beton 7 (Athens)-Miza (Tirana) 2013. He is currently doing the masters studies in Visual Anthropology at the Institute of Albanology Studies in Tirana.

Artist Statement :

Kaso's works deal with experimental cognitive techniques as a way to understand better the metaphysics in art. He tries to understand what the best tool for comprehensively expressing the subject is. The combination

of these mediums is merely a continuous bridge towards the "small" family world and the big consumers one of unclear values.

The subtle and deeply intimate metamorphosis of his mother's portrait shown in the video art "My mother", is followed by the "brutal" and globalist one of sugared figures, brought through the installation of "Reality Dreamers", made with organic ingredient that does not remain at the formal presentation. The entire structure starts melting slowly by the heating from below, transforming the whole thing into a giant

Melting Pot of matter, sweet, consumable, and mystic.

He investigates the real and unreal, dream and reality as a continuous state of artistic reflection as much personal and as universal. The natural and atmospheric elements, far from the contemporary man's attention,

which is so closely related to material goods, are twisted with time stratifications in order to understand and rerun the present.

Website / Links :

<https://vimeo.com/73751857>



My mother

HD, mute in black & white, 06:39 min - 2007

This work shows the physical changes of my mother since the age of 19 until she becomes 46, by engorging the details that caused these changes. During those six minutes you can perceive the filing of a lifetime and the stains it leaves upon human body. Each wrinkle contains a story, and they start appearing one by one, by making you feel helpless about the inevitable process.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NURoQ6PcJQk



Reality dreamers

performative-video-installation - 2012

The subtle and deeply intimate metamorphosis of "My mother", is followed by the "brutal" and globalist one of sugared figures, brought through the video / installation of "Reality Dreamers". The central installation of the personal exhibition taking place in FAP gallery in Tirana is placed on a four-square-meters metallic table heated by over 9000 watt power. On it, the messengers figures made of melted sugar multiply towards infinity, swelling the ranks of protesters in orderly rows. These figures, as different and as similar, made of this organic ingredient, seem to set the whole work in a different format, sweet, consumable, and mystic. And while standing up straight on their feet, their hands hold a stick of matches which like the Promethean fire, just long to be kindled. But the work does not remain this formal presentation, because the entire structure starts melting slowly by the heating from below, transforming the whole thing into a giant Melting Pot of matter, where the flame does not find time to be consumed. The existential metamorphosis of figures with a dose of refined irony is eventually collected into a rudimental lollipop built by a shovel and afterwards placed on the wall.

In this installation-performance, the shape takes from shape to return into in a new format, seemingly in search of itself. The installation is presented as a giant mechanism that constantly plays with the ongoing performance throughout its entire duration. The warmth of the heating wires and the metamorphosis of the burning sugar which continuously melts, are combined in it.

In the end the work eventually disappears, while sugar as an ingredient of mass consumption, returns to origin, as a parallelism of today's consumers world, where recycling of matter is proposed as succession preposition.



GRETA PLLANA

Born in 1992 in Durrës, Albania.
Lives and studies in Venice, Italy.

Biography :

2012

Esposizione collettiva, Accademia Di Belle Arti Di Venezia, Art Night

2013

Esposizione collettiva, Accademia Di Belle Arti Di Venezia, Art Night

Esposizione collettiva di giovani artisti albanesi, Venezia

Atelier F,W orkshop a cura di Carlo di Raco, Forte Marghera

2014

Atelier F, Workshop a cura di Carlo Di Raco, Forte Marghera

Workshop ed esposizione collettiva, Festival Art Kontact, Porto Palermo,Albania

Artist Statement :

My artistic career was inially based on a meticulous search of black and white photos from family albums and historical pictures from the Albanian culture. Re-elaborating those images by introducing colour I was able to reproduce the figures in stylized manner perhaps grotesque, giving it a surreal aspect thanks to the colours.

I therefore depth this research also by taking some pictures on my own, using more than one photo for a painting and recreating surrealistic situations in which I apply a personal distortion which aims to involve the public in this mixture between classical subjects and unusual colours.

From this perspective I alternate diluted parts from material parts differentiating more sections which put in prominence some subjects than others; this way the painting is dynamized becoming a pictorial form of photo developing.

Website / Links :

<http://www.premioceleste.it/greta.pllana>



Untitled

Oil on canvas, 145 x 110 cm, 2015

This work was realized with oil on canvas, inspired by an old photograph which depicts two young women wearing the typical clothes of the country, and who are looking at the lens.

The artist decided to "reset" the shot by cancelling the meticulous and detailed statement of women's clothing, of soft and bright colors, in order to create a unicity of those figures by deforming them.

Another important thing is the change of what was a black and white picture, brought to life again through unrealistic colours.



Untitled

pencil on paper, 100 x 75 cm, 2015



Untitled

Oil on canvas, 120 x 90 cm, 2015

LEONARD QYLAFI

Born in 1980, in Korca, Albania.
Lives and works in Tirana, Albania.

Biography :

Leonard QYLAFI is an Albanian contemporary artist (b 1980) working in different mediums such as; video, photography, music and painting.

Education

1999 – 2003, MFA – Atelier of painting, Academy of Fine Arts, Tirana/Albania

Solo exhibitions

2013 - "Museum of Nature" at Zeta Gallery / Tirana/Albania

Group exhibitions

2014 - October Salon 55th "Disappearing Things"

Curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen and Vanesa Muller

Belgrade City Museum , Belgrade/Serbia

2012 - "Flying" Curated by Christoph Tannert and Ulrich Schreiber,

Kunstlerhaus Bethainen, Berlin/Germany

- "Concrete in Common" Kunst Raum Riehen Basel/Switzerland

- SUPERMARKET Art fair Stockholm /Sweden

Artist Statement :

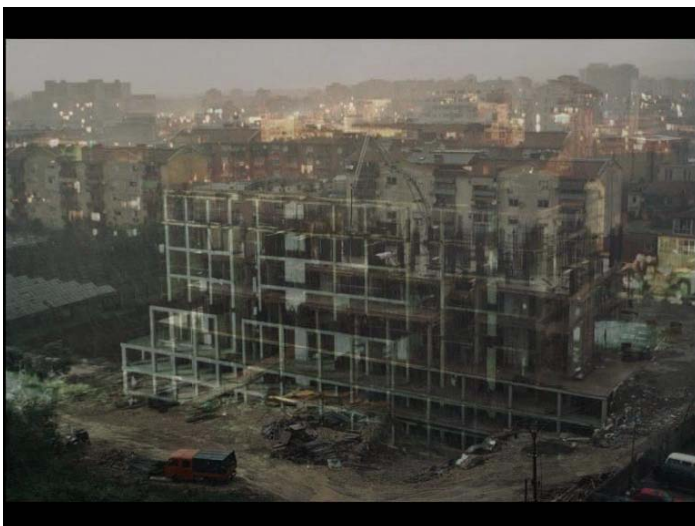
My art works various in different mediums and I don't consider a specific medium as my main field of interest . In state I base my work in specific ideas that are elaborated together with the work making. I consider my art doing a complex process of interaction between the idea and the physical aspect of the work.

I started painting since I was very young and continued to study it in the academy of fine arts in Tirana. This didn't stop me to explore and experiment in other mediums as photography, video, music and installation. A considerable part of my work in the last years has been in the medium of video and photography or cross disciplines between both like animation of still pictures to render video tracks. My relationship to mediums is a kind of attraction that is pushed by the concept that I have and the languages qualities that each medium reserves in it.

I am not oriented to specific themes. The thematic of my works is in general based on my subjective experiences of reality as a result they show a close relation with the environment. In other cases I am intrigued by a more ontological point of view that deals with philosophical ideas. My aim is to create an intimae dimension where the viewer can find him/her self within the art work even thou this is done by very personal and subjective point of departure.

Website / Links :

<http://www.leonardqylafi.com/>



IMAGERY

Color print technology was introduced in Albania in the late 70s. As it was an expensive and elaborate Technology only selected magazines and publications with a wide national and international print run Featured color image reproductions. Nevertheless, the quality of these reproductions illustrating the socialist party's parades, the leader's official speeches and other important events was rather bad- mismatching colors, blurred images ,and a general unbalanced

color scheme dominate the reprints of the photographs documenting events considered to be important for the People's Republic image under Enver Hoxha. The dominant color of many of these pictures is red: red flags, red tracksuits worn during official sports events, red neck scarves.

Leonard Qylafi uses these commonly known reproductions as source material for a series of paintings. The paintings reveal their photographic sources, but emphasize the blurred outlines of the depicted people, transforming them into abstract mass ornaments. They focus only on a part of the original photo as if zooming into the parades and events, which are compositions of choreographed bodies themselves. The level of abstraction varies from soft contours to vanished outlines merging individuals into a composition that only at second glance is based on a mass of people standing in rows. Although Qylafis's paintings maintain fragments of the original composition, the transfer from the book page into a painting is a synthetic one that focuses on the pictorial aspects of the subject. Like time capsules opened after several decades the selected pages from books and magazines reveal their propaganda aesthetics. These are simultaneously emphasized and rewritten in the process of painting.

ESTATE

Video installation (projected), Standard Pal 4:3 aspect (no sound), 8:58 min - 2007

Tirana the city which has been subject of critical urban changes in the last decades is the "stage/ platform" where these projects "perform their acts". The personal experience living inside this dynamic is the core of the artist research which hosts several mediums in order to reflect the complexity of his relationship with the changing environment. Video, photography, painting, mixed media and selected text were produced within a period of seven years trying to lump the essence and the shapes of the changing process (happening in time and space) in a very synthetic body of work.

ALKETA RAMAJ

Born in 1983, in Permët, Albania.
Llves and works in Tirana.

Biography :

Alketa Ramaj (born 1983 in Permet, Albania) graduated in 2006 from the Academy of Arts, Tirana. She was the recipient of the 2012 Onufri Award and 2013 Ardhja Award. Her work has been exhibited in Albania and abroad in exhibitions and venues including: Bienal del Fin del Mundo, Mar De Plata, , Valparaiso, Venice, 2014-2015; Fondazione Museo Pino Pascali, Bari, 2014; ISCP, international studio & curatorial program, New York, 2014; Stacion, Center for Contemporary Art Prishtina, 2014; Basement, Basel, 2013; Artists in Residence, Artpoint Gallery, Vienna, 2013; La Fenice Gallery, Venice, 2012; The National Gallery of Tirana; What Happened to the General?, FAP Gallery, Tirana; Mulliqi Prize, National Gallery, Prishtina; Feedback 1989, Dajti Hotel, Tirana, 2009; Constructing Space, Deutsche Welle, Berlin, 2008 and Tirana-Transfer, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, 2006.

Artist Statement :

Alketa Ramja's work is typified by an incessant curiosity and permanent study of new forms of expression, which reveals a striking independence in terms of applying her own critical and personal working methods.



lindje perëndim lindje
neon light, 280cm -2015

The neon writing consists of three words in Albanian language. Lindje in Albanian language stands simultaneously for "East", "Sunrise" and "Birth". While. Perëndim stands for "West", "Sunset" and "Decay".



No Title
video color sound, 3'43 -2013

This video is a reference of the relationship between a couple as a cycle of what may seem monotony, but in reality is an interior conflict of insecurity and silent domination.



"Riteset" (carrying structures)
installation, sculpture in plaster, 143x40x10 cm - 2012

The structures fulfill a function only in relation with the tree, without the tree, these structures turn into "worthless bodies". In my current work, they became part of my artistic investigation. In this way I try to give to these structures an aesthetic and communicative value, which was invisible before.

GENTIAN SHKURTI

Born in 1977, in Mammuras, Albania.
Lives and works in Tirana, Albania.

Biography :

2015

Imago Mundi, Fondation Benetton, Albania

2014

Damni i colori, Valenzuela et Klenner, Bogota, Colombia

2011

Albania National Pavillion, Venice Biennial, Italy

2010

"Les promesses du passé", Centre Pompidou, Paris, France

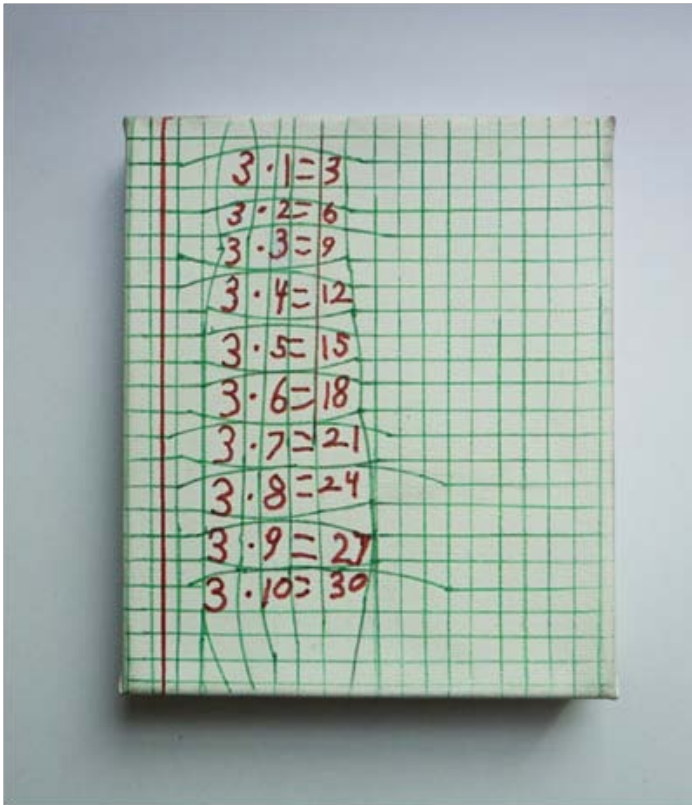
"Video - Val", Video Festival, Créteil, France

Artist Statement :

To be surprised, like when you discover something. The ground of my works are fundamental questions, whether they are easthetical or social. Inside the cacophony of information, clichés, conformism, the way the perception of the worls is imposed to us, i try to raise essential and naïve questioning, in order to get closer to the truth.

Website / Links :

<http://www.gentianshkurti.com/English/works.php>



Conform

2015

Conformism probably starts at school. with the careful way of writing inside the lines and cases of the school notebooks. In this graphic work, a kid writes a multiplication table on the white surface of the Imago Mundi canvas (12 x 10 cm). The lines have been drawn at the end.



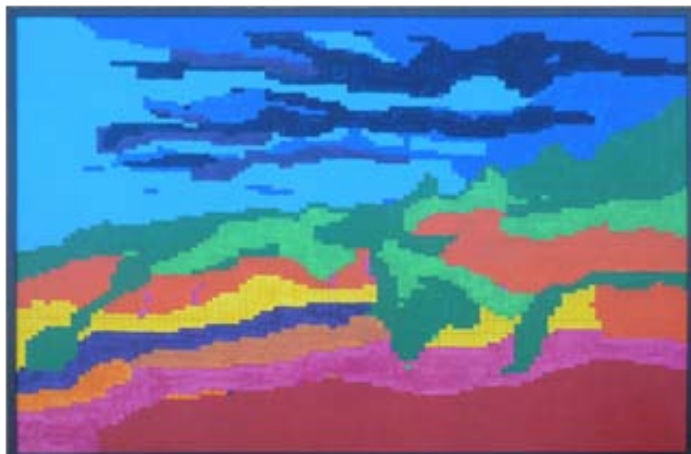
Democratic painting

video, painting - 201

Democracy painting is a project including a series of paintings based on a selection of colours, realized after a survey done with 100 people.

The percentage of colours on the canvas corresponds to the percentage of the colours that the public has chosen.

The installation is composed of videos of the survey and graphic percentage of colours, and paintings.



MARINA SULA

Born in 1991, in Lezhe, Albania.
Lives and studies in Vienna, Austria.

Biography :

Solo / duo exhibitions

- tba, Zeta Gallery, Tirana (ALB), 2015 (with Bjørn Segschneider)
- tba, Parallel Vienna, Vienna, 2015
- Sula & Nikl, Galerie Kunstbuero, Vienna, 2015 (with Richard Nikl)
- Let's Draw Something 2.80.92445, Semper Depot, Vienna, 2014
- Pro Duo, Prawneg & Wolf, Bruneck (ITA), 2014 (with Richard Nikl)

Group exhibitions (selection)

- tba, Museum of Contemporary Art, Rijeka (CRO), curated by Michal Novotny, 2015
- Best of Lote & Larp, Galerie Kunstbuero, Vienna, 2015
- Territories, Semper Depot, Vienna, 2015
- Month of Photography, Semper Depot, Vienna, curated by Sonia Leimer, 2014
- Display Window, Parallel Vienna, Vienna, 2014
- Getränke 2, Studio Cumberlandstraße 31, Vienna, 2014
- Art and Photography, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, curated by Martin Guttmann, 2014

Artist Statement :

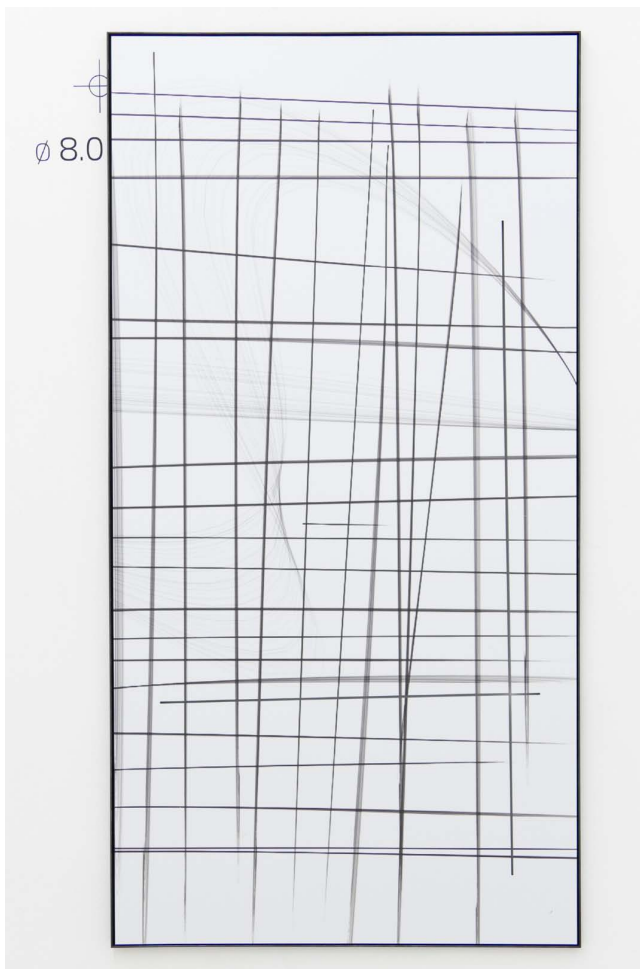
Marina Sula creates her abstracts drawings with her finger on a tablet.

The result are rhythmic patterns that create obsessive anti-forms over several successive lines referring to the classical defense of abstract art by Clement Greenberg, who argued that art should generally respond autonomously to reality.

This grid associates a certain structure of the lightness of handwriting gestures. Autonomy is ultimately thematized. The question is, what extends the result, her hand or the device; The relationship between finger and the screen is kind of far. Light strokes and expanding lines are results of open software, not inventions of the artist, and therefore she shares the authorship. Using of various absurd techniques, such as adding rulers, in order to make lines straight, is possible understood as an attempt to control unknown and inaccessible.

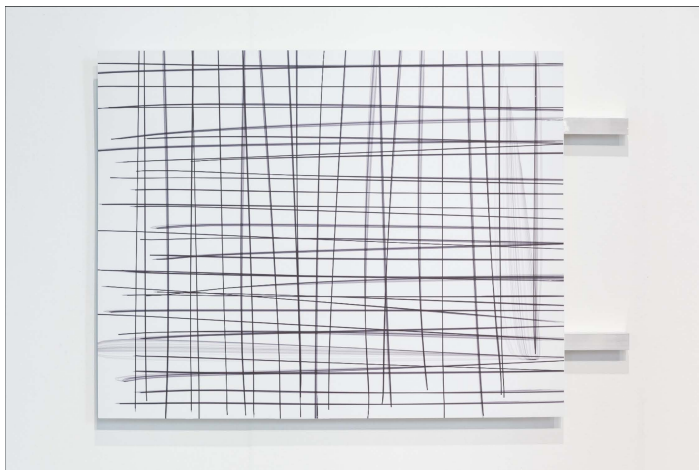
The work is a commentary on the status of the media, which plays a critical role concerning the increasingly technological component and become autonomous.

Text: Michal Novotny



Tablet Drawing - Office (2015)

Tablet drawing, UV-print on Dibond, laser cut, steel (172 x 89 cm)



Tablet Drawing - Metro - image_256.png (2014)

Tablet drawing, UV-print on pvc, aluminium profiles (110 x 140 cm)



Untitled - drawings (2014)

Pdf file, Thermo Zell, UV-print on pvc, forex

ERMELA TELI

Born in 1981 in Tirana, Albania.
Lives and works in Tirana, Albania.

Biography :

Born in 1981 in Tirana, Albania. Received , Degree in Theater in 2004 and Master of science in Film and Tv in 2015 , at the University of Arts, Tirana-Albania. Further training in documentary production and theory of film. Actress in different theater and movies production, in Albania and abroad, from 1999-2006. 2008-2014 , she worked at National Theater of Albania. Since 2009 , Ermela Teli, as film director, produces her movies /documentaries and video audio installations.

Artist Statement :

I was an actress first, acting in interesting subjects of movies after the fall of communism in Albania. I did it my way as much as I could, considering myself sort of courageous, because when I begin I never learned before. But after, I founded acting ridiculous and I was more looking at the people who love to do it. I begin to do what I wished to do, especially filmmaking.

In filmmaking you do not need to be strong , is not a male or female gender, is a language.

Since I begin to make my films, I believed that a lot of the times the power of a scene is based on new ideas and people that appear randomly. The new ideas came and stories to develop too. More than nowadays, we need to illuminate our thoughts, we need clarity and intellectual dimension.

Important reflections, connected with radical changes, that for example my country Albania has suffered but not only, also other countries, are facing big crisis of " meaning ". Perhaps the fate of Albania since the dictatorship of absolutism to human absurdity process in political and social crisis, caused a significant reflection and intellectual one.

Communication codes and their compromise , are the topic of many works I have done recently, in the name of the truth about thoughts. A friend of mine, a writer told me once , " Human solidarity can turn into false positions, those absurd ". Another interesting dimension I am looking for, in my work process is also humanism!

Looking on, -What is beautiful, true and saint? Because the society is looking what is useful so, Utilitarianism replacing humanism, which is another important point of my research in a work I made about religion and consumerism.

In my project, I did not had any list of things to do, to make a video work, but I waited from each story to become important to me, as the stories about nature, love, transition, curban and religion, intellectual disorders cases, special communities, gambling etc.

I try to find a language for the film not just telling a story.

I believe in independence and intellectual courage.



Architecture of Sadness

written and directed by Ermela Teli - docu-fiction, installation - 16 mn Albania/Sweden prod

Architecture of Sadness is divided into three chapters, happening during three different time periods. By moving the camera into the space of these distinct narratives, the viewer sees the film as "architecture of emotions" and a mental social experience instead of seeing architecture as a collection of physical buildings.

The film starts with the Rozafa legend, where a woman's body reduces into an object of sacrifice and moves into the dictatorship period where the sacrifice now has grown into the entire society. The trilogy ends with the Transition, which is the subject of Architecture of Sadness

The camera follows crowds of people proceeding into a space without a sense or purpose resembling to a body without a mind. The series of events is therefore a narrative that is again dominated by betrayal, sacrifice and loneliness, three elements that constantly hit the conscious of a human and society.



Autistic Symphony

Audio installation, production by Ermela Teli and David Lipka.

Audio recording, voices of children with autism, from Education Center of children with limited abilities Luigj Gurakuqi, Tirana Albania. Ermela Teli, Impressed of ambiances of the Education center and vocals of children, like babbling, repetitive melodies, strange expressions of words, all of them bringing communication, is the theme of Autistic Symphony.

First presentation, Stockholm December 6th 2014.

DRIANT ZENELI

Born in 1983, in Shkodra, Albania.
Lives and works in Rome, Italy.

Biography :

In 2011 he represented Albania at the 54th International Art Exhibition – Venice Biennale. In 2008 he won the Onufri International Contemporary Art Prize, Tirana, and in 2009 the Young European Artist Award Trieste Contemporanea. He has exhibited at: Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milan (2015; 2010); IV Bienal del Fin del Mundo, Chile (2015); Viafarini, Milan (2014); GAM, Museum of Modern and Contemporaryart Turin (2013); White House Biennial, Athens (2013); KCCC, Klaipeda, Lithuania (2013); ZKM, Karlsruhe (2012); MUSAC, Castilla León. Spain,(2012); TICA, Tirana (2012); Prague Biennale 5, Prague (2011); 98 weeks Project Space, Beirut (2011); Trongate 103, Glasgow (2011); National Gallery of Kosove, Prishtine (2010); Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genoa (2009); Studio Tommaseo, Trieste, (2009); National Gallery of Tirana, (2008).

Artist Statement :

Driant Zeneli's (born in 1983 in Shkoder, Albania) whole research has the goal of challenging physical and intellectual limits by staging ironic and dreamlike situations, sometimes absurd. He explores the importance of some performative attempts through his personal involvement or through someone else's participation. In his work the aim of redefining the idea of failure, utopia and dream -as foundational moments for building a possible alternative -is at the core of these actions as well as of other works that investigate how art can intervene on didactic practice and possibly redefine it.

Website / Links :

<http://driantzeneli.blogspot.it/>
Password Vimeo: 32111



The dream of Icarus was to make a cloud.

Video, 2009, 4'05", color, sound.

<https://vimeo.com/57467463>

Some Say the Moon is easy to touch...

HD Video, 2011, 05'15", color, sound.

<https://vimeo.com/57311046>

Don't look at The Sun while you're expecting to Cross it.

HD Video, 2014, 04'39" color, sound

<https://vimeo.com/120228189>

When Dreams Become Necessity

(2009-2014), Trilogy

What is the most seductive promise of happiness cached behind a general condition of disenchantment?

When Dreams Become Necessity investigates the importance of some performative attempts with the aim of redefining the idea of failure, Utopia and dreams as foundational moments for building a possible alternative.

When Dreams Become Necessity is comprised of three videos: The Dream of Icarus Was to Make a Cloud (2009) is an attempt to create a cloud by flying with a paraglider; in Some Say the Moon is Easy to Touch... (2011) the artist launches himself in a bungee jump to touch the moon on the day this satellite is at the minimum distance from earth. In Don't look at The Sun while you're expecting to Cross it (2014) he decides to cross the sun after the Lovejoy comet passed through the perihelion in 2011, remaining intact.

In the three performative actions, as stated in the titles, the artist tries to reach objectives commonly perceived as impossible. The anticipation and the technical preparation occupy practically the entire length of each video, and come to a quick conclusion in attaining the goal and in the consequent rupture of the illusion. The imagination is not drained by the personal failure nor is it impoverished by the failures of science; rather, it accepts the challenges, opening itself up to reflection and to the research that can turn the promise into a commitment.



<https://vimeo.com/102646102>

Unlikely Collisions

Durational Performance, video documentation, double projection, 4'20", color, sound - 2014

A project that starts from a publication of the NASA (1959). A cross-section of an applied space station, a prototype that could host a 50 members' crew, has been conceived as a laboratory for studying the effects on astronauts of the long space travel. In relation to the Theory of collision by Trautz and Lewis, Driant Zeneli set drones and professional traceurs to move into the exhibition space, walking it and cross it by jumping from the windows from outside to inside. Here, the theory of collision seems to find a possible imagined analogy in collisions between bodies as well as in their failed impact generating new possible reactions. A double channel projection documents the performances.

FANI ZGURO

Born in 1977 in Tirana, Albania.
Lives and works in Tirana and Berlin.

Biography :

Selected solo exhibitions

2014: "Video by Video" (Solo Screening), University of Prishtina (Kosovo), Accademia di Brera, Milan (Italy), National Gallery of Arts, Tirana (Albania), "Shshshshshshshshshsh...", Gallery On The Move, Tirana (Albania), "Entrada", 90 Minute Shows, Contemporary Istanbul (Turkey)

Selected group exhibitions

2015: "Recorded Memories", curated by Constanze Wicke, Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade (Serbia), Museum of Photography, Thessaloniki (Greece), Athens Photo Festival, Benaki Museum, Athens (Greece), "YAA", Ningbo Museum of Art, Ningbo (China), "New Contemporaries", Gallery On The Move, Art Cologne (Germany), "Young", Gallery On The Move, Art Brussels (Belgium), "Dammi I Colori", Valenzuela and Klenner, Bogota (Colombia), "All About These... Ladies and Gentlemen", Temporary Gallery, Koln (Germany), Art Market Budapest (Hungary)

Artist Statement :

It's never easy to talk about my works. You can write descriptive short texts about definite works, but to say anything about your work in general is an endeavor resulting in some sort of 'writer's block', like an emotion that you have felt continually, and now you have to deploy it schematically. However that which makes it more complex is the time frame used in those reports. Because the artist's work changes through time, it evolves or it degenerates. I have started at the beginning of 2000s by realizing performances and installations in public spaces at the time studying at Accademia delle Belle Arti di Brera in Milan. Then I was attracted by the enthusiasm and energy of artists like Santiago Sierra, Sislej Xhafa and Maurizio Cattelan. My performances were of an ironic character while installations in public spaces resembled atypical slogans or spot manipulations like those of Armani in Vial dell'Orso in Milan. Then from middle 2000s I committed myself to video art because of the nostalgic relation I had with cinema (notably 60-70s). And doubtless it got amplified by the solo exhibition of Steve McQueen that I saw at Fondazione Prada in Milan in 2004 or 2005. The videos that I created during this period were not of a performative context.

There did not happen anything. There were maybe selfportraits in darkness, a nocturnal car journey where only cars' lamps can be seen, a two video channel where I filmed Tirana's streets night and day, or videos in an editing context manipulating old black and white movies. During recent times my work is focused in recycling personal archives notably the manipulation of books. In the case of series "Untitled" commissioned by Goethe Institute for the traveling exhibition "Recorded Memories", I have used nine old pictures of my father, where is distinguished in all of them a single overpenciled face of a person. Whereas in the series "Book for Flights", I penciled over half of pages to fight the fear caused by the plane flight. There are many the series that use various books. Likewise the series working currently, where I scratch and eliminate all text from book pages and then I create using them bigger paper frames, ready to be drawn or painted. Doubtless the work most representing this time is "Exterminators" (2010), where I created a sculpture in a floor context, for which I have used the original book of collected short stories "Zoti Dosti", and above it I have worked and reworked new subjects, creating in this way various layers, precisely like asphalted roads or the history of ancient cities which are characterized by overlapping layers of buildings of various times. Perhaps my works through recent time is focused at the censure phenomena, but not in the banal way of using the word censure which can easily be interpreted as cliché. But censure as an element which naively creates the conditions of a romantic history.

Website / Links :

<http://www.fanizguro.net/>



Portraits

C-prints, 30x50cm - 2014

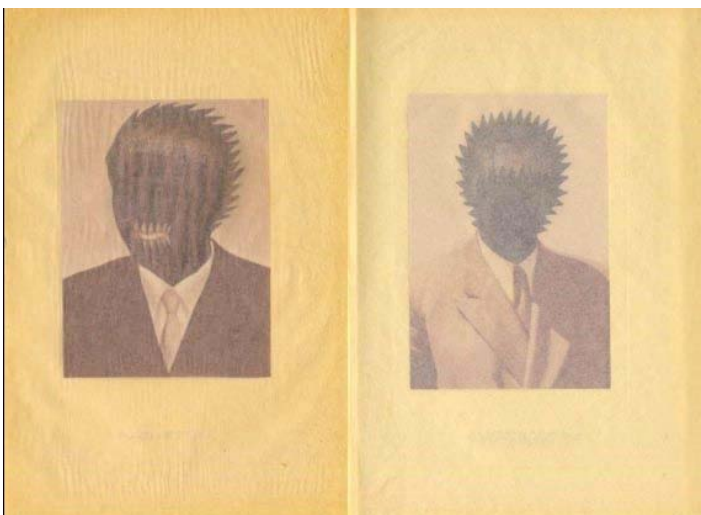
"Portraits" starts from the series "Untitled", 2007 ("Untitled" is a series of photographs showing my father When he was young. On each of These photographs the face of the person standing right next to him Has Been Made unrecognizable. These men were all De-tained later. If These photographs Had fallen into the wrong hands, and the men on the photographs Had Been Identified, this could have harmed my father. There was a sort of unwritten law: one could keep all of one's photographs ... as long as one rubbed out the faces of Particular people). Physically "Portraits" and "Untitled" are the same, but the idea of using the portraits of some contemporary art famous people comes from the kosovian artist's video Alban Muja, "Free Your Mind".



Job Writings

C-prints, 60cm x 90cm - 2014

"Job Writings" is a project that has started in 2001, by developing texts in high dimensions in public spaces (are different productions from 2001 to 2002, but the most special one I made was at historical advertising Armani close to Via del Orso in Milan, raping his poster, with my huge text). For the new series of "Job Writings" I have used several phrases from my book "Mr. Dosti", finished in 2010. After choosing the phrases and realized in a slogan size, I show them in public spaces. Entire installation is documented through pictures in black and white (the colors were never my favorites), and then presented as photographs.



Exterminators

Mixed media, 20 cm x 15 cm - 2012

"Exterminators" is a continuation of series started in 2006. In this new series I have realized 30 portraits of the same person; our ex-political leader, as if he was Rembrandt.

ENKELEJD ZONJA

Born 1979 in Fier, Albania.

Lives and work in Tirana, Albania

Biography :

Solo exhibitions

2014 - Visit in the Wound, Zeta Gallery, Tirana, Albania

2009 - Mejan Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden

Group exhibitions

2014 - Post Albanian Artists, Museo Pino Pascali, Italy

2013 - Suden, KunstHalle, Berlin, Germany

LiveArt, National Gallery, Tirana, Albania

NordArt, Kunstwerk Carlshutte, Budelsdorf, Germany

Flash Art Event, Palazzo Del Ghiaccio, Milano, Italy

Supermarket, Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden

Artist Statement :

I began my anthropological fieldwork in Albania's postsocialist art world in late 2009. That year's Onufri Competition (a yearly state-sponsored art competition held at the National Art Gallery in Tirana) was one of the first art events that I attended, which is also where I first encountered Enkelejd Zonja's works. At that point I did not know who he was; I had not heard his name before, but I remember being stricken by the two pieces with which he competed: ISS Albania and Fairytale from 97, two large oil paintings of the realist style that so poignantly expressed the dramas of contemporary Albanian life. I remember lingering over them, returning to them after a quick tour of the exhibit, and then lingering yet again. In retrospect, I think I was stricken for one important reason, which put Enkelejd Zonja's work apart from that of his contemporaries. Within Albania's art world, his art was, in my knowledge, a singular effort to engage sincerely, directly, and critically with the social and political predicaments of Albanian life.

Since then I have followed Zonja's work closely, which I understand to be full of allegories, allegories that demand close attention and an acute social sensitivity to be deciphered. The diverse characters of his paintings are laid out in quasi-bare theatrical scenes -- some of which are directly removed from Albania's streets, homes, or history -- where even in their static states, one can see and feel issues that are rarely talked about, at least not in public platforms: the poverty, the desperation, the effects of vast immigration, abandonment, the and so on, that reign in Albania today. Zonja's allegories are, in my view, important for they have the capacity to uncover that which risks being concealed, and worse, forgotten. They are important for they have the capacity to rescue that which threatens to disappear in the chaos of Albania's postsocialist reality. As such Zonja's aesthetics exude high political potential.

Zonja's work is truly contemporary, in that it manifests the fluid dynamism between local and global forces. To produce his work he employs practices which have come to be recognized as vernaculars of contemporary art -- historical juxtaposition, research, and multimedia -- while engaging with issues that take their inspiration from the local context. Importantly, Zonja does not offer self-orientalizing works that are produced solely for the gaze of the Western "other" -- his work is highly relevant to Albanian publics, in making them face and reflect upon uncomfortable truths.

Sofia Kalo, PhD, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, June 2015

Website / Links :

<http://enkelejdzonja.com/>



The alchemy

oil on canvas, 320 x 200 cm - 2013



Visit in the Wound

250 x 200 cm, oil on canvas - 2013



Ordinary meal

oil on canvas, 230 x 160 cm - 2009

