

April 20 – May 20, 2018

Latvia100 

*Orient*

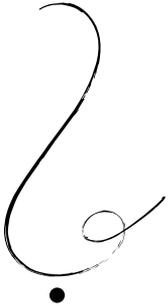
Curated by Michal Novotny

At two different locations – Tallinas iela 6 and Kim?, Sporta iela 2 k-1

*Family Business: Power Failure*

Dafna Maimon

Kim?, Sporta iela 2 k-1

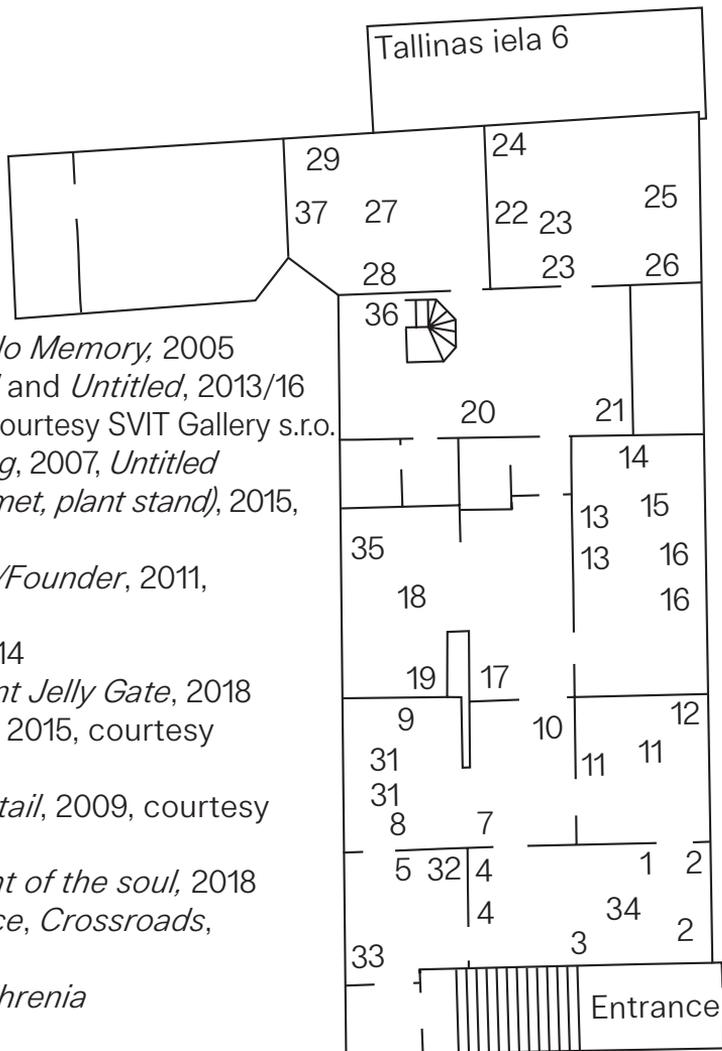


Kim? Contemporary Art Centre  
Sporta 2, k-1, LV-1013, Riga  
kim@kim.lv / www.kim.lv

Tallinas iela 6

Tallinas iela 6, ground floor

- 1—Jiří Skála (CZ) *The Pacific Has No Memory*, 2005  
2, 32—Ádám Kokesch (SK) *Untitled and Untitled*, 2013/16  
3—Jiří Kovanda (CZ) *The Ears*, 2007, courtesy SVIT Gallery s.r.o.  
4, 8—Vlad Nancă (RO) *I love shopping*, 2007, *Untitled (Saturn, plant stand), Untitled (comet, plant stand)*, 2015, courtesy Gallery Sabot  
5—Jasanský & Polák (CZ) *Director/Founder*, 2011, courtesy S VIT Gallery s.r.o  
7—Julius Reichel (CZ) *Blue Coat*, 2014  
9—Romana Drdová (CZ) *Checkpoint Jelly Gate*, 2018  
10—Alice Nikitinova (CZ) *The Coat*, 2015, courtesy SVIT Gallery s.r.o.  
11—Ioana Nemes (RO) *Stove, Ponytail*, 2009, courtesy Jiri Svetska Gallery  
12—Atis Jākobsons (LV) *Bright night of the soul*, 2018  
13, 16—Pavla Malinová (CZ) *Embrace, Crossroads, Pandulák, Key country*, 2017  
14—Jiří Černický (CZ) *First schizophrenia produced in series*, 1998  
15—Zsófia Keresztes (HU) *Tasty Selfie*, 2018  
17—Habima Fuchs (Astrid Sourkova) (CZ) *Constellation for a seed, a blossom, a fruit and bowl*, 2017, courtesy SVIT Gallery s.r.o.  
18—Adéla Součková (CZ) *On Earth Awakening*, 2017  
19—Petr Štembera (CZ) *Grafting*, 1975  
20—Richard Nikl (CZ) *Olga*, 2017  
21, 25, 26—Piotr Łakomy (PL) *Untitled*, 2017, courtesy Galeria Stereo  
22—Emöke Vargová (SK) *Viruses*, 2016  
23—Pakui Hardware (LT) *On Demand*, 2017  
24—Gizela Mickiewicz (PL) *Untitled*, 2018  
27—Wojciech Bąkowski (PL) *Holiday Power Supply*, 2016, courtesy Galeria Stereo  
28—Jimena Mendoza (MX) *TRI*, 2017, courtesy SVIT Gallery s.r.o.  
29—Martin Vongrej (SK) *Sameness in difference*, 2018  
31, 34—Jan Brož (CZ) *Uninvited Guest*, 2012/18  
33—Matei Bejenaru (RO) *Maersk, Dubai*, 2007  
35—Pavel Bräila (MD) *Work*, 2000, courtesy Kontakt, The Art Collection of Erste group and ERSTE Foundation  
36—Viktor Timofeev (LV) *Crack 2 in the Porcelain*, 2017  
37—David Maljkovič (HR) *Lost Memories from these Days*, 2008, courtesy of Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka

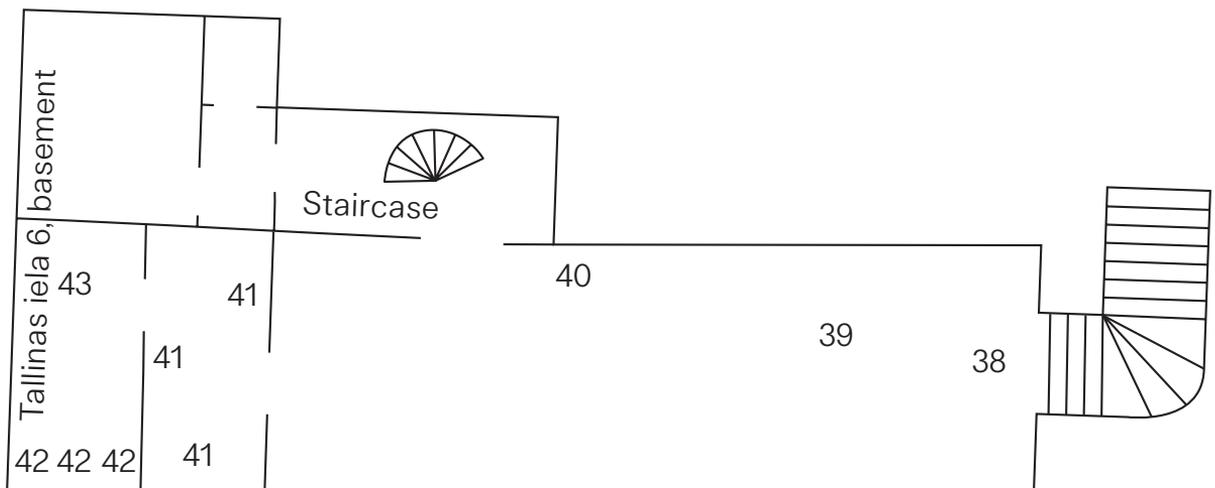


April 20 – May 20, 2018

*ORIENT*

Curated by Michal Novotný

Darja Bajagić, Wojciech Bałowski, Matei Bejenaru, Piotr Bosacki, Pavel Bräila, Veronika Bromová, Jan Brož, Jiří Černický, Romana Drdová, Habima Fuchs, Matyáš Chochola, Anežka Hošková, Atis Jākobsons, Zsófia Keresztes, Aurora Király, Adrian Kiss, Adam Kokesch, Jiří Kovanda, Piotr Łakomy, Václav Litvan, Pavla Malinová, David Maljkovič, Jimena Mendoza, Gizela Mickiewicz, Marge Monko, Vlad Nancă, Ioana Nemeș, Alice Nikitinova, Richard Nikl, Pakui Hardware, Jasanský & Polák, Julius Reichel, Dragana Sapanjoš, Jiří Skála, Adéla Součková, Petr Štembera, Авдей Тер-Оганьян, Mark Ther, Viktor Timofeev, Jerzy Truszkowski, Anetta Mona Chișa & Lucia Tkáčová, Emöke Vargová, Martin Vongrej, Jana Želibská



Tallinas iela 6, basement

38—Piotr Bosacki (PL) *String instrument*, 2015

39—Václav Litvan (CZ) *Lighter than air*, 2017

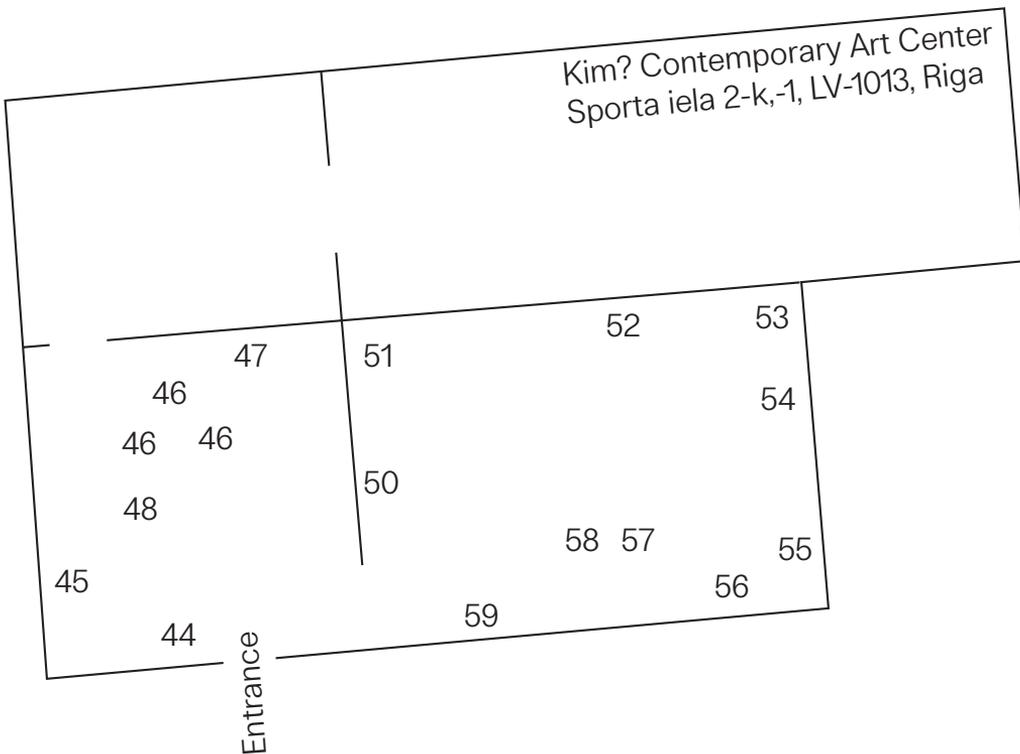
40—Adrian Kiss (CZ) *Big Gate*, 2017

41—Anežka Hošková (CZ) *Analog Witch I, Analog Witch II, Lucifer's The Light Of The World*, 2014, 2014, 2015

42—Viktor Timofeev (LV) *Everything Dies But You, Interdependence, Russia Today*, 2017

43—Jerzy Truszkowski (PL) *Farewell to Europe*, 1985-95

Kim? Contemporary Art Center  
Sporta iela 2-k,-1, LV-1013, Riga



### Kim? Contemporary Art Center

- 44—Darja Bajagić (ME) *Ex Axes – Underage, Ex Axes – Corna, Ex Axes – Hunting for Bitches, Ex Axes – The last Delight*, 2017, courtesy of New Galerie
- 45—Aurora Kiraly (RO) *Héroïnes*, 2013–18, courtesy Anca Poterasu Gallery
- 46—Matyáš Chochola (CZ) *Congress of the Lords*, 2016
- 47—Julius Reichel (CZ) *Double A/Blue*, 2017
- 48—Matyáš Chochola *Alchemic Tiltyard of the History*, 2016
- 50—Marge Monko (EE) *Shaken Not Stirred*, 2010, courtesy the artist and Ani Molnar Gallery
- 51—Dragana Sapanjoš (HR) *IS ALWAYS FADING: bukkake: we are our own devil*, 2013
- 52—Veronika Bromová (CZ) *Me Table*, 2000
- 53—Mark Ther (CZ) *My Pleasure*, 2002
- 54—Christian Steiner (DE) and Mark Ther (CZ) *Maria Callas*, 2005, courtesy DSC Gallery
- 55—Matyáš Chochola (CZ) *Unexpected Combination of Good Things*
- 56—Avdey Ter-Oganyan (RU) *Towards the Object*, 1992
- 57—Anetta Mona Chisa/Lucia Tkáčová (SK) *Here and Elsewhere*, 2006
- 58—Jana Želibská (SK) *Censorship*, 1980
- 59—Jiří Černický (CZ) *Phoenixies*, 2007

## *ORIENT*

*“A sprawl of snowy hills and ugly roads...there is no one to see them”<sup>0</sup>*

The exhibition *Orient* is a meditation on the Eastern European identity. As the unifying aspect of this unclear region, it considers the failure of its own identity. The contradictory longing for pride and patriotism, and the simultaneous shame of where we come from<sup>1</sup>, leading to suppression, and the negation of this belonging. The embarrassment growing from the internalisation of the collapse of the surrounding context, once built upon a social and political utopia. The expectation of catching up with the western capitalist standards, for which the integration into Europe, meaning Western Europe, was so often reduced on both sides. The slipping of the Second World from the frame<sup>2</sup>, and hence belonging neither to Europe, nor to the West, nor to “non-Western”.

This exhibition chose the projection of an obviously problematic title<sup>3</sup>, to constitute the self-ironic identity of the “East European (br)Other”<sup>4</sup>. It claims this contradictory “Oedipal relation”<sup>5</sup>, by both refusing and craving, as key constituents of the in-between-ness of Eastern (Bloc, Central, post-communist, New etc.)<sup>6</sup> Europe.

Stating the suppressed inferiority complex, as a possible reason for the recent upheaval of nationalism and non democratic tendencies in Eastern Europe, it questions whether the acceptance of this failure in constituting and performing Eastern European identities, could not be turned to be its virtue.

Built on expectations, desires, stories, experiences and stereotypes, it stages a drama that takes the viewer through five genre scenes following the historical dialectics of the region’s development since the end of 1980s. A muddle of most ironic and most earnest intents for creating the new museum of (in)famous national histories. A therapeutic reenactment of our surprises, victories, traumas and humiliations. A dark satirical comedy of *The Fateful Adventures*<sup>7</sup> in the non-existent region after *The End of History*<sup>8</sup>.

Despite the harsh irony<sup>9</sup>, this exhibition believes it will help the “wayward children of Europe”<sup>10</sup> to finally grow and return to the European home once again, but also consider home as being more “celebratory” than “self-congratulatory” and more “fraternal” than “patronising”<sup>11</sup>.

This exhibition is not a mapping, nor a survey, but a subjective journey seen from a point in space and time, and

constructed with artists chosen not according to nationality or language<sup>12</sup> but via a relation. It doesn't aim for equality, but rather for inclusion.

0 In LUX: Laura McLean Ferris, *New Artist Focus*, Laura McLean Ferris on Deimantas Narkevičius: "The landscape of their country – a sprawl of snowy hills and ugly roads, paints a lonely picture, and suggests that there is no one to see them."

1 "Farewell, Poland, farewell, empty wasteland, forever covered in snow and ice (...) Barbaric people, arrogant and fickle, Braggarts, blabberers, having nothing but language, Who, day and night shut up in a heated room, Amuse themselves with a glass for every pleasure, Smore at the table and sleep on the ground." Philippe Desportes: *Adieu à la Pologne*, 1574, translated from French in Philippe Desportes's *Adieu à la Pologne* and Jan Kochanowski's *Gallo Crocitanti* by Rory Finnin in *Comparative literature studies*, Vol. 44, No.4, 2007.

2 Lucy Steeds in *How We Talk About East-European Art?* conference by tranzit.sk: "There was only one Eastern European artist included in *Les Magiciens de la Terre* (...) We're now gonna sift to Havana, to consider the 3rd Art Biennale of 1989, which as you can see here, was the subject of the first of the two volumes, under the *Making Art Global* title. And I can tell you right away that no Eastern European Artists were included, but if you look at the catalogue, no Western artists, as strictly, were represented either."

3 Edward Said in *Orientalism*, compare to *Inventing Eastern Europe* by Larry Wolff: "As late as the eve of World War I, French scholarship still alternated

between two seemingly similar terms, *'Europe orientale* (Eastern Europe) and *'Orient européen* (the European Orient). (...) The idea of Eastern Europe was entangled with evolving Orientalism, for while Philosophic Geography casually excluded Eastern Europe from Europe, implicitly shifting it into Asia, scientific cartography seemed to contradict such fanciful construction. (...) Such uncertainty encouraged the construction of Eastern Europe as a paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion, Europe, but not Europe."

4 in *The Third Text: Welcome to Slaka*, Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius writes that "the ideological construction of the racialised colonial Other and the 'undeservingly white' East European (br)Other in the dominant western discourses reveal too many points in common to be ignored."

5 unknowingly killing his father and marrying his mother, questions of who is who remains.

6 Katarzyna Murawska Mathesius in *Mapping Eastern Europe: Cartography and Art History* adds many different names for this region: Marchlands, shatter zone, the belt of political change, the other Europe, New Europe, Mitteleuropa, Zwischeneuropa and many others.

7 Jaroslav Hašek: *The Fateful Adventures of Brave Soldier Švejk*.

8 Francis Fukuyama: *The End of History and The Last Man*.

9 In November 1956, the director of Hungarian News Agency, shortly before his office was flattened by artillery fire, sent a telex to the entire world with a desperate message announcing that the Russian attack against Budapest had begun. The dispatch ended with these words: We are going to die for Hungary and for Europe.” Milan Kundera in *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, *The New York Reviews of Books*, 1984.

10 this term that Václav Havel used in his speech to U.S. Congress on February 22nd 1990, was translated from the original Czech word “zbloudilé” meaning rather “abandoned”, “lost”, or “stray children” by the simultaneous interpreter as “wayward children.”

11 in *Political Critique: Eastern Europe according to British media: More likely to go to Italy for cappuccinos than join the ethnic fighting in Kosovo*, Anna Azarova further writes: “Eastern Europe’s main attraction is, of course, that it’s cheap. (...) “knock-down prices, [...] lured by dirt-

cheap flights,” “cheap beer and even cheaper women,” (...) The inhabitants of these cheap countries who lived the painful past and its consequences were similarly hardly mentioned – except in the context of describing their excitement at the sight of westerners’ purcha\$ing power; or as wild, undesirable side-effects.”

12 “Well, dearest friend, dearest Hikkithoki, that is your name as you must know. We all invented names for ourselves on the journey. They are: I am Punkitititi. My wife is Schabla Pumfa. Hofer is Rozkapumpa. Adler is Notschopikitischibi. My servant Joseph is Sagadarata. My dog Goukeri is Schomanski. Madam Quallenberg is Runzifunzi. Mlle. Krox is Rumborimuri. Freistaetler is Gaulimauli. Be so kind as to tell him his name.” These lines to Gottfried von Jacquin, from January 1787, were written by German speaking Mozart after his journey from Vienna to Prague through Czech speaking lands of “Bohemia.”

The exhibition is co-organised by BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels and Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art in Krakow in the framework of *Trauma and Revival*, a European project on cultural relations between Eastern and Western Europe. The project partners are BOZAR Center for Fine Arts, ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto, Bunkier Sztuki Gallery of Contemporary Art in Krakow, Jyvaskylan Yliopisto, Austrian Culture Forum Moscow, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, State Museum and Exhibition Center ROSIZO, Tretyakov State Gallery.

The exhibition is organised within Latvian Centenary Programme and is co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, State Culture Capital Foundation of Latvia, Riga City Council, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Flemish Government, and the Federation of Brussels and Wallonia.

1. Waiting Room

Matei Bejenaru, Jan Brož, Romana Drdová, Adam Kokesch, Jiří Kovanda, Vlad Nancă, Alice Nikitinova, Jasanský & Polák, Julius Reichel, Jiří Skála

The grandeur of railway stations and restaurants become settings for an apparently displaced population, we see tableaux filmed in people's homes, in their kitchens, as they prepare food, and play sentimental music redolent with nostalgia... for what? For the communism just past, or for an absent partner or child? We will never know as life seems weirdly both quotidian and in suspension, time seems out of joint. (...)

"Akerman's plan to make the film "before it was too late" begs the question: too late for what exactly? Perhaps before the society formed under Soviet communism disappears. In this sense the people in this film may have already been spectral presences, always already ghosts conjured from a past time, and now, 20 years after the event, even more so. We see them only ever in passing, without the agency of a voice to speak for themselves, and if they do it is in Russian, untranslated. And, as the title with its cardinal directional specificity would seem to assume a Western audience, like the spectre they withdraw from contact with their intended audience.

Steven Ball in *D'Est: Spectres of Communism*, essay on Chantal Akerman film *D'Est*, 1993

My context is a country that was built on a social and political Utopia. But I grew up in the period when nobody really believed in it. The fall of the Soviet Union was at a time when people had other Utopias. These were liberal Utopias, about freedom to do what you do. These kinds of Utopia were also an illusion, and lasted only for a few years. People grew disillusioned very quickly. What kind of Utopias can be created on a human scale? That is the question and I don't have an answer.

—Deimantas Narkevičius: *Against monumentality* by Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Flash Art*, July – September, 2008

WORKS:

Jan Brož *Uninvited Guest*, 2012/2018.

The original intention of my project was to produce a re-edition of light fixtures in the closed Rapotín Glass Factory or, more precisely, to revive for a short time the production of bedroom bowls colloquially called "Brussels chandeliers", perhaps for their characteristic geometric patterns. For me, these light fixtures are subconsciously associated with the region of their origin and production, which I also come from. After all, one of the "chandeliers" hung in the bedroom of our house (its "bat-like" pattern remains inscribed in

my memory). It was probably also for this reason that the topic a priori attracted me with the aesthetics of these products – their visual lightness, conceptual modernness and design gracefulness.

–text by Jan Brož

## 2. All dressed up and nowhere to go

Darja Bajagić, Veronika Bromová, Jiří Černický, Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová, Matyáš Chochola, Aurora Király, Marge Monko, Dragana Sapanjoš, Авдей Тер-Оганьян, Mark Ther, Jana Želibská

In my cabaret there were no eight years old girls. But girls of age, girls – long legged, girls – imitations of angels. Instead of wings, they spread their long legs, which was as beautiful, as if they were angel wings. Guests liked this more than any illusionist show, and their faces followed the open genitals with fascination, like the praying bodies of Muslims following Mecca. To make the show more interesting, girls were making different special effects. One, for example, put a blinking plastic ring with a diode into her vagina. After she got naked and spread her legs, her entire c\*\*t was lit through visibly. While the ring was not visible at all. Once she started to pee, it looked like the famous light fountain in Fučikárna. (...) Another speciality were the glass eyes, used for mutilated bodies in car crashes. An amazed “ooh” emerged from the Germans in the bar, whenever a girl spread her legs and there was a “magic eye” looking upon the astounded guests! It even winked when she alternately closed and opened her legs. It was an unbelievable illusion of a living eye, right in the anus. You must admit, that real angels, even with their wings, would never be able to reach that effect!

–Ivan Jonák, from the unpublished memoir of 700 pages

Ivan Jonák, a Czech businessman, owner of the legendary club Discoland Silvia, that he once infamously promoted by riding naked in an open cabriolet in Prague’s city centre during the white day together with naked female models, who served 18 years in prison for ordering his wife’s murder in the 1990s, and who was himself subject of two failed murder attempts, has died at the age of 59, on the 666th day after his release from prison.

–Radio Prague, February 24th, 2016

WORKS:

Veronika Bromová *Me table*, 2000

The pain of non-movement was becoming unbearably rough, though the sheer stability of my situation was also reassuring. I was slowly coming around to a particular point of view.

This position lasted a long time but ultimately left no scars. It occurred to me, part way through the evening and after all, how comfortable it must be for others to have me on my back and under glass.

–fragment of a text by Douglas Hájek

Avdey Ter-Oganyan *Towards the Object*, 1992

In 1992 at Trekhprudnyi Lane, in Moscow's first artists run space that he co-founded, Ter-Oganyan drank himself unconscious prior to the opening and remained passed out on the floor in the middle of the gallery for the duration of the one-night exhibition.

A statement for what is performance and sculpture, a comment on the brutal reality of the economic transformation of Russia in the 1990s; we must also not forget the artist himself doesn't remember anything of that work.

—text by Michal Novotný

### 3. Carpathian Digital Meadows

Pavel Bráila, Habima Fuchs, Atis Jākobsons, Zsófia Keresztes, Pavla Malinová, Ioana Nemes, Adéla Součková, Petr Štembera

Back when I was at the art academy, I think it was my 1st or maybe 2nd year, I read an interview in the newspaper or magazine with a “contemporary” artist from ex-Yugoslavia. I don't remember exactly where he was from, nor his name, but what stayed with me from this interview is a statement he made at one point, saying something like:

If I were to live in France or Norway... I would like to or would also make works that analyse or study the relationship between a “line” and a “circle”. But look at me and look where I live, I can't just stand with my arms crossed, I have to make art that is socially engaged, art that reacts to the situation that I am in.

Today, when I moved from Bosnia to France, I decided to use the naivety of this statement...

—Ibro Hasanovic: text from: *Circle and Line*, 2009, vinyl on wall (black and golden vinyl)

Main field: Circus Alien, Kernel Panik, Mikro, Direct Drive, Deport, Frontall, Hypno, Morphonic, Harampade, Space patrol, Otok – Tone – Trois Points, Spectro + Virus + P.E., Saltimbank + K.G.R., R.T.G., Gardenzitty, Aphrikka, System Defekt, Tribal Vision, Layka, Full Circle, Mimic, Prior, Fatal Noise, Esc, Komatsu, Pentatomica, Tsunami, Anal Commandos, Team Trash, Kaztrol, Letek, Vosa + Emmadoom, Distix + Singular, Bass Beast + D.B.S., Machine WRKS AKA, Restless Natives, Strahov, Oktekk, M2R, Shamanic, Psykomatik TPR, Ufopunkers, MayapuR, Zuqwa.

Second Field: Virvál, Magion, Master kru, Rotor, Trinidad, Hedonix + Pan:dan, Spofa, Laydakk, Recycle, Basswoos, Rekrea, Zmastek, MassaCrew, Czahovna Soundsys, Funda-Mental, IGRA 1.5V, Locus, Antares, Bione, Illegal Soundsys, Kwan, Pitel, CML, Third Hand, Mozaika, Radio 23, Cable, Haccor.

NSK Field: NSK, Metek, Cabaret, Luxor, Ubik, Qwadrant soundsystem, Stupid Sounds.

Desert Storm Field: Trakkass + Oxyde + Metro, Desert Storm + Toltek + New Sense, Hekate + Reset + Headfuk, pH:4, Enzo, D.P.

—Participating sound systems map of free techno festival Czechtek 2004

WORKS:

Petr Štembera *Grafting*, 1975

It was at these “evening performances” secretly held at various places that Štembera conducted a number of extreme body art performances in which he exposed his body and sometimes even the viewers to danger. Štembera’s courage supplemented by skills learned from yoga enabled him to undertake very demanding performances. In “Grafting” Štembera grafted a bush sprig into his arm in a way common in arboriculture.

—text by Kontakt collection

Pavel Braila *Work*, 2000

White paper is a constant in Pavel Braila’s early performances, a screen between two worlds that have equal claims on the artist’s devotion. The first is the world of the immediate, the rough, honest context in which Braila lives, the muddy soil and the familiar faces one calls home. The second is the artistic world—not yet the pragmatic, ruthless, global, English-speaking “art world,” but—at the time when “Work” was performed—a meeting place for a small, idealistic crowd of individuals who could afford to take risks, to look for new means of expression, to be, as the artist recalls, at ease and spontaneous, situated outside the commercial circuit, confident that art could change something.

—text by Kontakt collection

#### 4. The Devil in the Machine

Piotr Bosacki, Anežka Hošková, Václav Litvan, Adrian Kiss, Viktor Timofeev, Jerzy Truszkowski

The horrific new trend was set on February 19 by a 26-year-old jobless man, who poured a flammable liquid on his half naked body and set himself on fire in front of the local branch of a major bank to the utter horror of a few passers-by.

(...)

Less than 24 hours later Bulgaria was jolted even more, when a 36-year-old artist, climber and environmentalist, set himself on fire in the centre of Bulgaria’s sea capital Varna, the scene of the biggest rallies of anti-government protesters in recent months.

(...)

While struggling with severe burns that had left healthy skin only on his feet, the young man became known as Bulgaria’s Jan Palach, the Prague student, whose death in flames sparked the hope of a whole nation back in 1969.

—Milena Hristova *Bulgarian Burning Bushes*, novinite.com March 27th, 2013

Andrzej Filipiak came to Warsaw from Kielce on Tuesday night. At around 11 pm he sat on the bench in front of the prime minister's office and set himself on fire. He did not have any banners, he did not shout. (...) A 56-year old man could not find a job and did not receive help from the state. "He asked me 30 zł for a ticket. He just said he was going to Warsaw. He shaved and left the house," says his wife.

—wpolityce.pl, June 13th, 2013

Lydia Petrova, the 38 years old photographer, who set herself on fire before the building of the Presidency in Sofia last week has passed away. Despite the efforts of doctors at the Pirogov emergency hospital, the woman passed away last night. She suffered extremely heavy burns and from the very beginning medics warned that her state was incompatible with life. Let us remind you that Lydia Petrova set herself on fire on November 3 as a sign of despair before the eyes of dozens of journalists and pedestrians around the Presidential office building.

—BNR, radio Bulgaria, November 10th, 2014

Piotr Szczesny, a 54-year-old father of two, set himself on fire in front of the Communist-era Palace of Culture in Warsaw. Mr. Szczesny's outcry was aimed against the far-right policies of the ruling Law and Justice Party, which he believed represented a mortal danger to Poland's democracy. In a leaflet that he seems to have distributed before his suicide, he was unflinching: "I love freedom first and that is why I decided to immolate myself, and I hope that my death will shake the consciences of many people.

—Ivan Krastev *New York Times*, December 2nd, 2017

WORK:

Jerzy Truszkowski *Farewell To Europe*, 1987

Jerzy Truszkowski shot the video *Farewell to Europe* one day before his conscription into the army, therefore right before his subjectivity was symbolically taken away from him by the military machine of the communist state. The work gathers features characteristic of the artist's practice (affiliated at the time with the 'chip-in culture' in Łódź): challenging the figure of a leader, authority, symbols of pan-individual ideologies and the necessity to act out social and political roles. The work also revolves around the exploration of the self-creative potential of an individual, so characteristic of Truszkowski.

—text by the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw

## 5. Shadows of the Past Futures

Wojciech Bąkowski, Pakui Hardware, Piotr Łakomy, David Maljkovič, Jimena Mendoza, Gizela Mickiewicz, Richard Nikl, Emöke Vargová, Martin Vongrej

Art of Eastern Europe, if there was one and if it was to be written about by an Anglophone art historian, had to be presented according to the rules of quite another discourse, as convincingly autonomous, immunised, so to speak, against the dominant socio-political clichés about rape, backwardness, imitativeness, and “clean tractors”. Not surprisingly, a tentative and Cold War-underpinned Western research on art in Eastern Europe focused almost exclusively on modernism behind the Iron Curtain, following the patterns of the earlier rediscovery of the persecuted Russian and Soviet avant-garde.

—Welcome to Slaka *Does Eastern (Central) European Art Exist?*  
by Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, 2006

Coincidentally the tongue I use is one of Czechs, of Slavs, of slaves, of one-time slaves to Germans and Russians, and it's a dog's tongue. A clever dog knows how to survive and what price to pay for survival. He knows when to crouch and when to dodge and when to bite, it's in his tongue. It's a tongue that was to have been destroyed, and its time has yet to come; now it never will. Invented by versifiers, spoken by coachmen and maids, and that's in it too, it evolved its own loops and holes and the wildness of a serpent's young. It's a tongue that often had to be spoken in whispers. It's tender and cruel, and has some good old words of love, I think, it's a swift and agile tongue, and it's always happening. Not even the Avars could get this tongue of mine, not tanks or burning borders or the most repulsive human species of all: cowardly teachers. What will eventually get it is cash in a shrinking world. But I still have time.

—Jáchym Topol *City Sister Silver*, 1994

Look inside of my soul  
And you can find gold and maybe get rich  
Look inside of your soul and you can find out it never exist

—Kendrick Lamar *Bitch don't kill my vibe, album: good kid, m.A.A.d city*, 2012

## Interview with Michal Novotný regarding *Orient* group exhibition

Q: Let's start with the obvious – the title. You state that the title *Orient* is “obviously problematic”. Would you elaborate on that?

A: It's a joke actually. And fooling people is always problematic, and even more so in state institutions. Someone may also oppose the idea that Eastern Europe was ever colonised by the “West”, only culturally, which, I think definitely makes a difference. Orient is a reference towards Edward Said's *Orientalism*, in the sense that Eastern Europe as much as the Orient never really existed, but was, or is, more a series of projections. However, it also has to do with a lack of information, certain ignorance, not only of people, but also western media, schools and other institutions. But we must not forget the projection is double sided, we have also had our West, our “occident”, that was very different from what we imagined, or what the exotic image was, which was given to us via the cultural dominance that still persists. The title should also be a certain hyperbolic warning, that we do not enter a kind of “oriental despotism”. Because this disenchantment, that it is not, how we expected, often leads to some sort of resentment, this thin line, when the inferiority complex turns to complete arrogance and aggression. That pretty much helps all those populist instant solutions sellers.

Q: I wanted to ask you about your mention that “projection is always double sided” in the artistic context of this exhibition. Art history is

quite often written from the perspectives of so called art centres, not the so called peripheries. But also peripheries quite often want to catch up with centres or to refer to them which is also problematic on many different levels. Did this factor somehow influence your choice of participating artists? Do you want to reveal this double mirror projection?

A: Maybe in the internet era it becomes even more obvious, that centre-periphery dichotomy, or rather the civilised-non-civilised, as it is nicely depicted in the book you gave me - “Inventing Eastern Europe” from Larry Wolff, isn't only a question of “manners” but mainly of money. Democracy itself cannot function under a certain monthly income. For me this is no more a question of access, but of infrastructure. We have zombie painters in Czech Republic, they saw it online, but are they really zombie painters, if they don't sell a piece? The myth of modern and contemporary art is the one of autonomy. Free spirit cashed out only consequently. My conception is much more materialistic. Context matters in what we see as good or bad art. And you can buy this context, walls, people, information channels. Ironically enough so many of those, who left for “civilization”, find themselves in much lower living standards, struggling with three jobs but still infinitely grateful to be in New York or London, for the culture. I am very happy to see for once a list of names with all these weird letter accents. But it's not about nationality,

I mix old and young artists, trend surfing with forgotten ones. Equally important is that there are artists who left the region as soon as they could, and others who for different reasons came to live here. It's not to break the "centre's" walls, but the idea of something inherently good or bad.

Q: You also mention that "The exhibition *Orient* is a meditation on the Eastern European identity. As the unifying aspect of this unclear region, it considers the failure of its own identity." Above you mention that the capital or absence of it, to be more exact, is one of the factors that creates the dichotomy of the centre and periphery. What are the other factors that constitute that identity?

A: Language. Literally, as we all speak languages that nobody else does, so even together we need to use English. I will never speak and write the English I would like. That's maybe why I always use so many quotations, I need to look for someone else to say, what I want to say. But also metaphorically, the language of visual art. When you have foreign curators coming, you often see that they repeatedly choose the same people, who speak the language they understand. I do the same. Maybe with some mistakes or misunderstandings, a bit like the local avantgarde styles, those versions of cubist Parisian cafés you have in the Latvian National Museum and that we have in Prague as well. And finally, these local modernities are more interesting in the perversions and bastardisations than the classics, or at least just as interesting. I included artists in the show who never really lived in the region, don't even speak the language, but who provide the right

passport, or at least place of birth. It is a valid criterion. Generally accepted, and I want to be inclusive. But I am also interested in how to make the ones, that don't speak the international language, understandable. How can you make them look "chic".

Q: The exhibition has six chapters – what paradigms or filters do you use to create them? In what way do they structure the exhibition?

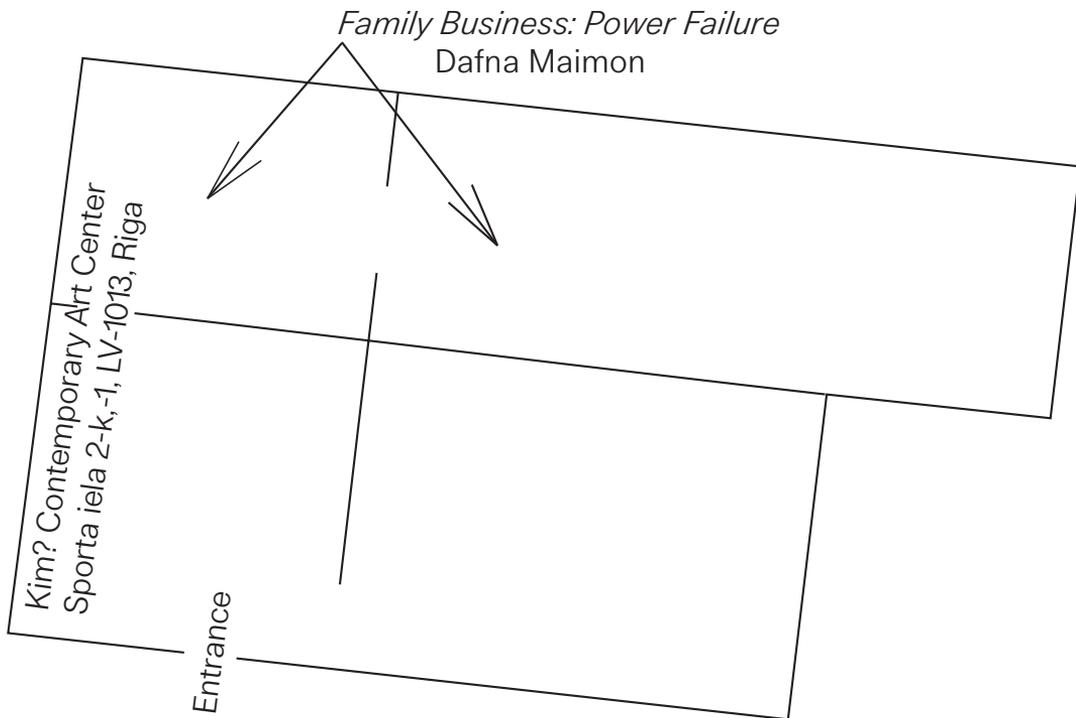
A: They are interiors, or environments. Making the artworks as props on a stage is a comment on this proclaimed autonomy of (western) arts. Contemporary art has a whole ideology of truth related to the neutrality of presentation, independence of artist persona, freedom of his expression, clear division between commercial and non-commercial etc. I don't believe in any of those. It is much better to be using theatricality as something openly false. Better to over-manipulate the artworks than pretend you are not doing so. I also really think we perceive the reality as we never did before, via something that is probably close to film "genres", but this could also allow us to overcome stereotypes, because genre allows us to be both serious and ironical. And that is something very Eastern European. Last, they constitute some sort of chronology, maybe a chronology of liberation failures, from 80's onwards the history of feeling the freedom had finally arrived.

Q: To finish the talk I'd like to go back to the starting point – again about the so called former Eastern Europe. There is a certain problem with shaping a vision for the future in the region although this is not different from other global trends.

And even worse, it's not a secret that most governments and societies, having a long tradition of migration, are strongly against immigration now, they openly express nationalistic views or tend to shift constitutions to antidemocratic directions, like in today's Poland or Hungary, for example. Is there some relation to this topic in *Orient*?

A: The antidemocratic directions you mentioned, are depicted here as a relapse of the suppressed inferiority complex, but also the hardcore material conditions long ignored. The differences between wages and retirements in western and eastern Europe are striking, while living costs become closer. I often felt very affronted about the fact that people read me through my nationality and territoriality, this baroque church-like frame of a hammer and a sickle, beer and snow around my face, but at the same time such frameworks were so far from the material reality that I actually lived in. On the other hand, I myself also understood, how my behaviour and reactions, are very much shaped by growing and belonging to this mutilated nation, that didn't manage to heal its wounds, only covered them with these new western clothes. Therefore, there is also a lot of work, we need to do, on our, sometimes very self-centred, narrow perspective. And it is mainly how to use this specific, trauma related sensitivity for a positive outcome. I hope it's there in the show.

April 20 – May 20, 2018



*Family Business: Power Failure* is the fourth in a series of exhibitions and performances inspired by autobiographical and micro historical research into a family-owned business—Finland’s first kebab and falafel restaurant *Orient Express*, which introduced Finns to the delicacies of the Middle East and was opened by the artist’s Israeli father in 1985. For Riga’s edition the artist is producing an onsite performative space generated by voices and memories about the roles of female family members and power dynamics that will include local stories and performers. The reconstructed *Orient Express* installation at Kim? will be activated weekly by a group of performers, or rather restaurant staff, who will take the function of the business into their own hands. In this rebellious and playful state of operation, the women’s past is reimagined and reenacted in liberating ways suggesting a future of new power dynamics to come.

*Family Business: Power Failure* is the culmination of a long-term working process; some years ago Maimon found a rather strange high-budget video ad from 1986 that her father had produced, which used his own exoticness in a high-paced narrative to market kebabs in Finland. Starting from this video-relic and her childhood memories, the artist began reworking the commercial and reimagining the restaurant.

Now, *Orient Express* exists in a world beyond capital. The restaurant was first reconstructed in Lilith Performance

Studio as the performance *Orient Express Yourself*, where it was equipped with a functioning kitchen, complete with trained “restaurant workers” whose task was to sell falafel in exchange for the audience’s own words. The customers paid prices ranging from 15 to 299 words, and answered questions relating to memories of family and gender roles, as well as the effects of destructive patriarchal structures. Their amplified recollections enabled a semi-shared and intimate space between strangers.

A few months later, *Orient Express* expanded its operations to Galerie Wedding in Berlin, where the installation functioned as a ghostly memory of the long-gone restaurant. There it sold falafels to the audience only on the opening, where the word-payment was recorded into an old tape recorder. For the finissage the restaurant catered to people again with the performance *After Hours*. Maimon scripted an absurd movement score based on restaurant chores a worker performs when closing up for the night. One chore was to count the takings; the words collected at the opening were played back within the performance as further fragmented memories to a new audience.

The exhibition is coproduced by Kim? Contemporary Art Centre, Lilith Performance Studio, Galerie Wedding, SIC Space. Special thanks to Zane Onckule, Solvej Ovesen Helweg, Jonatan Habib Engqvist.

To work with Dafna Maimon means entering a family business. That’s the way it is. The important posts are always secured for family members. Luckily though, it is possible to become more or less a relative, sort of like an in-law, or adopted. Part of the family, but not quite a relative. I must, however, instantly issue a warning: It is extremely challenging to get out once you are in. Blood is thicker than water, and suddenly you sit in the woods playing harmonica, you pretend to be a self-centred dancer, or you find yourself hosting a

story-telling session, when all you wanted to do was to have coffee with a friend.

To work with Dafna is to spend a moment in her world. A world of constructed memories, trauma and repetition. It’s a little bit like one of Kafka’s unfinished novels. You have no idea how you got there, and an even lesser idea of how to get out. You don’t even know if you want out. For once you are inside, there is no outside. This makes it somewhat difficult to write about her work, or even her exhibitions, the way one normally writes about

artworks or exhibitions; they are like an endless stream of mutated moods. When the falafel shop opens in Helsinki, it's not the same as the one at the Lilith Performance Studio in Malmö last autumn, nor the one that recently temporarily inhabited Gallerie Wedding in Berlin, or the one at Kim? in Riga.

A family business is not a franchise. It's different in each location, yet part of the same motley family. When you in addition to this are somehow involved in the family business (I sometimes work a little extra with them), it becomes challenging to comprehend where you yourself end and someone else begins. Everything on the outside is in some way already absorbed into your own existence. And the more situations (I can't think of a better word for the individual expressions in this stream of consciousness) you get involved in, the harder it becomes to separate the situations from each other: repetition, dissolving of participants and actors, art objects and scenography, reality and fiction.

And then there are a few reoccurring themes: corporeality, emotional economy, gender roles, transformation, appropriation and emotional stress. "Emotional economies arise from trauma", Dafna says from her kitchen table when we discuss this exhibition through Skype. The conditions of production define the content. The lack of irony (it's practically post-irony-fun) makes me occasionally wonder if she is playing with doll houses, where the rest of us are the dolls she dresses up and moves around. But that doesn't really make sense. Because when you belong to the family business, it's no longer about playing a role or conduct a task, but about voluntarily longing for a dynasty with Dafna as matriarch.

I happen to read an article online. Annelie Karlsson, director of Family

Business Network Sweden, states that "a strong proprietor family with a positive outlook on life, creates strong, viable businesses". We might perhaps say the same about Dafna. With the difference that what she does actually is impossible. Or at least unbelievable. Both economically and logistically. It's as unbelievable as deciding to open the first falafel restaurant in Finland, or to live in the nineteenth century. To be part of the family business includes the pleasure of exoticising yourself, while simultaneously entering something unbelievable. Perhaps as unbelievable as imagining a world without money: where words are capita, emotions are at the centre, and where one can always be another.

Jonatan Habib Engqvist, friend, camp philosopher Scotch, storyteller, dancer Isak (a fictive son of Dafna's mother), and curator.

*Family Business: Power Failure* is a solo exhibition by Finnish-Israeli artist Dafna Maimon and is organised within Latvian Centenary Programme. Exhibition is supported by Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia, State Culture Capital Foundation, Riga City Council, Frame Finland, Embassy of Finland Riga.

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