

1- *Real Snow White*, 16:9 HD video, 9'15", 2009

2- *The Messengers*, Installation/Media intervention, 3 phonecalls in Croatian with English subtitles, 3 excerpts from *Story-Magazine* with English translations, 2008

Pilvi Takala was born in Helsinki, Finland, in 1981. She lives and works in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. She received her BA (2005) and MFA (2006) from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts. She was a resident artist at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam and at IASPIS, Stockholm. In her work, Takala often uses narrative forms which are based on actions in specific social settings. With subtle interventions the artist creates situations where the unwritten rules and shared truths are revealed, questioned and eventually reinvented. She is interested in looking at the social rules we follow in different situations and finding ways of pushing the limits of our tolerance to create openings, exceptions in everyday life that allow us to see something in a place we thought was empty. A selection of her solo shows include *You Can't Do What You Can't Imagine*, Finnish-Norwegian Culture Institute, Oslo, Norway (2010); *Real Snow White*, Galerie Diana Stigter, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; *The Trainee*, Studio K, Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland (2009); *Real Snow White*, Masa-project, Istanbul, Turkey (2009); *The Angels*, Turku Art Museum, Turku, Finland (2008); *Between Sharing and Caring*, Frac des Pays de La Loire, Nantes, France (2007). Her work has been featured in several group shows, namely: *How to work*, Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland (2011); *The other tradition*, Wiels, Brussels, Belgium (2011); 4th Bucharest Biennial, Romania (2010); *And the moral of the story is...Morality Act III*, Witte de With, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2010); *Export-Import*, Kunsthalle Helsinki, Finland (2010); *Nordic Art Triennial*, Eskilstuna Art Museum, Sweden (2010); 5th Berlin Biennial, Berlin, Germany (2008); 9th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey (2005), amongst many others.

**KUNSTHALLE
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Thursdays to Saturdays | 3 - 7 pm | closed on holidays

with the support of:

PILVI TAKALA

FLIP SIDE
27.05.2011 | 02.07.2011

■ PSSST!



Nisu smetale ni visoke pete

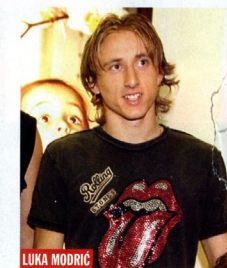
Prošli je tjedan pjevačica i voditeljica **Vlatka Pokos** pomogla potpunom neznancu. Stao mu je automobil i nitko mu nije priskočio u pomoć, sve dok nije naišla Vlatka. Premda je bila u visokim potpeticama, spremno je gurala karavan. Komentirala je da je njezina reakcija prirodna, ali da su danas ljudi hladni i prave se da ništa ne vide.

Kad pekinjezer napada

U društvu Roberta Prošinečkog, **Luka Modrić** je poslije utakmice svratio u restoran Jaxx, no po izlasku iz restorana dotrčao je maleni pekinjezer, ugrizao Luku za nogavicu te se priljepio za njega. Dok se Luka borio s malim vražićkom, prijatelj mu se dobro nasmijao.

Problemi na autocesti

Na putu iz Splita prema Zagrebu, kod tunela Mala Kapela, **Goranu Karanu** je stao automobil. Pjevaču je ipak organiziran prijevoz u Zagreb pa je stigao nastupiti na aukciji fotografija Jadrana Lazića.



Curica stiže u proljeće

Pjevač **Saša Lozar** čeka bebu sa sup-

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Kunsthalle Lissabon is pleased to present Flip side, Pilvi Takala's first solo show in Portugal. Flip side will feature two recent works of the artist, *The Messengers* (2008) and the critically acclaimed *Real Snow White* (2009).

In *Real Snow White*, The absurd logic of the “real character” and the extreme discipline of Disneyland become apparent when a real fan of Disney's Snow White is banned from entering the park in a Snow White costume. As visitors are encouraged to dress up and a lot of costume-like merchandise is sold at the park, the full costumes are only sold for children. The Disney slogan “Dreams Come True” of course means dreams produced exclusively by Disney. Anything even slightly out of control immediately evokes fear of the real, possibly dark and perverse dreams coming true. The fantasy of the innocent Snow White doing something bad is so obviously real, that the security guards and management refer to it when explaining why the visitor can't enter the park dressed up as Snow White.

The Messengers is an intervention into Croatian media, more accurately a magazine called *Story*, specializing in celebrity news and gossip, and its fixation with local celebrity Vlatka Pokos. The basis of the piece is the idea of inverted gossip. Gossip can be any small detail about the life of someone famous as long as it portrays the person in a negative light. Instead of spreading juicy gossip, Takala sets out to report pieces of insignificant but positive acts whose value in scandalous terms is nil, yet when performed by a celebrity become newsworthy. These absurd little news items create a 'rupture' in the traditional tabloid formula through their lack of sensation and by being nothing more than a slightly naïve testament to people caring about each other.

Through these two pieces, Flip side will look at the mechanisms that underly the construction of public personas, either a Disney-owned character that becomes too tangible, thus escaping the corporation control over collective subjectivities and associated profit, or a Croatian celebrity whose life and actions are defined and understood inasmuch as they are perceived and mediated through gossip magazines. In both cases, these figures are nothing more than fictional constructions, one becoming too real for fictional standards and the other appearing too fictional for reality standards.



new perfect community that would set an example to everyone else. He devoted the last years of his life to designing EPCOT (Experimental Prototype Community Of Tomorrow), a real living community with an independent legal status that he gained by buying enough land in Florida. He took further many of the ideas that were already used in Disneyland, such as the underground tunnels for garbage and other unwanted things. In the Disney parks the garbage goes underground directly from the bin, so we never see the ugly sight of someone collecting garbage. Walt Disney was disappointed by our reality and wanted to construct his own. Sadly the beautiful construction of Disneyland lacks flexibility, even a slight misunderstanding of its rules can destroy the whole illusion and therefore can't be allowed.

In *Messengers*, one of the interesting aspects of real versus fiction has to do with the reported events. Firstly, because these events are so unimportant that they are almost not worth mentioning, it's hard to imagine that someone would

actually make them up. Lying about something like this somehow doesn't even seem like lying. Whereas if the story would portray the celebrity in a negative way, it would already gain significance. Lying about Vlatka Pokos ignoring a person in need of help would already make sense to lie about.

The other interesting play between fact and fiction has to do with the first news that were published about Vlatka Pokos helping someone to push their car in her high heels. If you listen to all the phone calls, you realize that there's no recording of this event being reported. You might think I left it out or that I failed to record it. The truth is that this event was real, or at least it was not made up by me. When this story was published, I had already decided on my project, written my stories and chosen Vlatka Pokos as my subject because of her extreme visibility and bad reputation, but I hadn't made the first phone call yet. So reality took over my fiction before I even got started, so all I had to do was to push further in the same direction.

TO OPERATE A REVERSAL OF THE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HUMAN NATURE?

Yes, you could say that. Actually, the stories my actors report to the magazine are expressions of basic human kindness that I would say is socially required. I think we expect this level of kindness to be part of human nature and being caught ignoring a phone that someone dropped would be something to frown upon and surely better material for gossip. In the case of a celebrity, a super human whose job is to provide scandals and to appear more beautiful and interesting than the rest of us, it's natural to criticize her every move. If her smallest (human) mistakes are of interest, it's actually only fair to also be interested in her kind non-important actions. But a gossip magazine is not supposed to be fair. We would expect them just to be interested in scandals instead of involving themselves in speculation on a celebrity's true nature as a good or bad person. The beauty of the piece lies in the magazine's willingness to acknowledge and publish also these unimportant news. So I think the piece uses the media, Story magazine's relation to Vlatka Pokos, more precisely, to reverse our assumptions about human nature.

THIS REVERSAL, OR FLIP SIDE, IS ALSO NOTICEABLE IN THE WAY YOU WEAVE FACT AND FICTION TOGETHER. ONE COULD SAY THAT BOTH IN THE MESSENGERS AND IN REAL SNOW WHITE FICTION IS THE FLIP SIDE OF FACT AND

CONVERSELY, FACT CAN BE UNDERSTOOD IN TERMS OF BEING THE FLIP SIDE OF FICTION. IN ONE CASE, A DISNEY-OWNED CHARACTER BECOMES TOO TANGIBLE, THUS ESCAPING THE CORPORATION CONTROL OVER COLLECTIVE SUBJECTIVITIES AND ASSOCIATED PROFIT, AND IN THE OTHER, A CROATIAN CELEBRITY WHOSE LIFE AND ACTIONS ARE DEFINED AND UNDERSTOOD INASMUCH AS THEY ARE PERCEIVED AND MEDIATED THROUGH GOSSIP MAGAZINES. IN BOTH CASES, THESE FIGURES ARE NOTHING MORE THAN FICTIONAL CONSTRUCTIONS, ONE BECOMING TOO REAL FOR FICTIONAL STANDARDS AND THE OTHER APPEARING TOO FICTIONAL FOR REALITY STANDARDS.

This aspect is quite central to my work, as most of my interventions are pieces of fiction happening in "real life". Also the fiction in my work is often so real-like, that making a distinction between real and fiction becomes unimportant. Real Snow White plays specifically with the ideas of real and fiction and the word "real" seems to have flipped its meaning. The success of the Disney parks is based on Walt Disney's ability to bring fiction to life in such a precise way that it seems real. This Disney "real" is so established that most of the visitors in the park have internalized the logic of it and everybody calls the girl working in the park the "real Snow White". The way Walt Disney tried to make our world a better place is also very interesting. He felt that it was impossible to fix existing problems because the result would never be perfect. Instead, he wanted to build a completely

WORDS DON'T COME EASY

CONVERSATION BETWEEN PILVI TAKALA, JOÃO MOURÃO AND LUÍS SILVA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE EXHIBITION *FLIP SIDE*.

FLIP SIDE, YOUR SOLO SHOW AT KUNSTHALLE LISSABON, PRESENTS TWO RECENT WORKS, REAL SNOW WHITE (2009) AND THE MESSENGERS (2008). WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO PRESENT THESE WORKS AND HOW DO THEY RELATE TO THE TITLE OF THE EXHIBITION?

I wanted to show these two works together for the first time because they have a special connection. Unlike my other work, in which the main character is often an unwanted outsider, these two pieces have a popular celebrity in the center of the events. Vlatka Pokos, the star of The Messengers, is a real person turned into a fiction character by the media. In Real Snow White the girl dressed as Snow White is too real to be the perfect fiction character. Both of the main characters are seen in a very black and white way, they can only be good or bad. It's interesting how Vlatka Pokos being a good or bad person is speculated over the phone and how just a few acts of kindness can reveal her flip side, the good person. Her picking up a mobile phone is not a proof of her being "normal" or "not as bad as we thought", but instead, it will turn her directly into a good person. Snow White, on the other side, is so innocent and pure that we can not comprehend it without considering

her flip side, the dark side. If a normal adult who didn't sign a contract with Disney tries to become her, the situation will easily turn into something perverse. Even a Disney contract doesn't always stop adults from doing bad things. There has been a scandal concerning Disney workers staging an orgy dressed up in the character costumes and posting a video of it on youtube. My first concern when developing Real Snow White was the amazingly successful way crowds are controlled in Disneyland. With Messengers I started by thinking about the definition of gossip. So the two-sided nature of these characters wasn't my starting point, but again a kind of flip side of the project that revealed itself in the working process.

THE POSSIBILITY OF A SECRET DARK SIDE WITHIN PEOPLE IS NOT A SURPRISING ONE. THERE IS, FOR INSTANCE, AN ENORMOUS REPERTOIRE OF REASONS FOR CHILDREN NOT TO TRUST UNKNOWN PEOPLE AS THEY CAN DO "BAD THINGS" TO YOU. BUT THE OPPOSITE POSSIBILITY, THAT OF THE EXISTENCE OF A SECRET GOOD SIDE, HIDDEN UNDER THE MASS MEDIATED AND THICK LAYERS OF GOSSIP IS NOT COMMON SENSE. COULD WE SAY THAT IN THE MESSENGERS YOU USE A LOCAL (CROATIAN) MEDIA CELEBRITY, VLATKA POKOS

