



ENG

Petrit Halilaj (Kostërrc, Kosovo, 1986) lives and works between Berlin, Mantua and Pristina. A selection of his recent solo shows includes "Petrit Halilaj" (National Gallery of Kosovo, Pristina, 2014), "OF COURSE BLUE AFFECTS MY WAY OF SHITTING" (Chert, Berlin, 2014), "Poisoned by men in need of some love" (Wiels, Brussels, 2014), "July 14th" (Fondation d'Enterprise Galeries Lafayette, Paris, 2013), "Who does the earth belong to while painting the wind?!" (Kunsthalle Sankt Gallen, 2012) and "Petrit Halilaj" (Kunstraum Innsbruck, 2011). In 2013 he represented the Republic of Kosovo in the country's first pavilion in the Venice Biennale. He has participated in innumerable group shows, including "SUPER Visions - Zeichnen und Sein" (Museum Schloss Moyland, 2013), "New Public" (Museion, Bolzano, 2013), "30 Künstler/30 Räume" (Kunstverein Nürnberg/Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft, Nürnberg, 2012), "Ostalgia" (New Museum, New York, 2012) and the 6th Berlin Biennale (2010), among others.

PETRIT HALILAJ

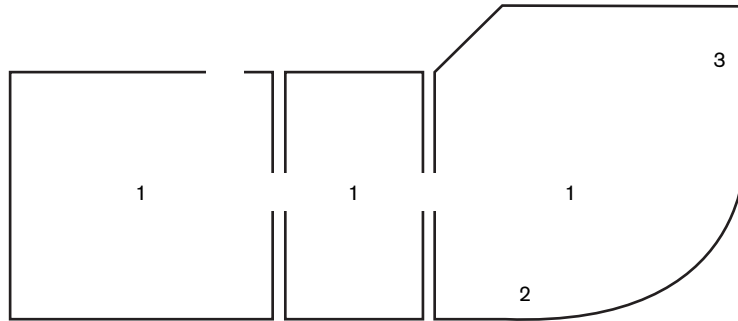
I'M HUNGRY TO KEEP YOU CLOSE. I
WANT TO FIND THE WORDS TO RESIST
BUT IN THE END THERE IS A LOCKED
SPHERE. THE FUNNY THING IS THAT
YOU'RE NOT HERE, NOTHING IS.

Avenida da Liberdade 211 - 1º esq
1250-194 Lisboa, Portugal
www.kunsthalle-lissabon.org / info@kunsthalle-lissabon.org



17.07. - 27.09.2014

Acknowledgements: Susana Pomba



1

I'm hungry to keep you close. I want to find the words to resist but in the end there is a locked sphere. The funny thing is that you're not here, nothing is., 2014

installation
variable dimensions

2

I don't have a room, I don't have a mind. Nevermind! (Pia Pia), 2014

canary costume

3

I don't have a room, I don't have a mind. Nevermind! (Drago Mandarino), 2014

canary costume

Kunsthalle Lissabon presents *I'm hungry to keep you close. I want to find the words to resist but in the end there is a locked sphere. The funny thing is that you're not here, nothing is.,* the first solo show of Kosovo artist Petrit Halilaj in Portugal.

Petrit Halilaj was born in present day Kosovo in 1986. He is too young to remember the fall of the Berlin Wall, but old enough to remember the ensuing consequences of that historic moment for the geographic area that rapidly came to be known as “ex-Yugoslavia”. In questioning his own life experiences, the artist has come to reject pathos or any kind of nostalgia associated to his childhood memories of life as a refugee, privileging instead a more optimistic and materially complex practice, which favours a more critical and politically relevant approach.

From the start of his artistic activity, Halilaj's preference for ordinary materials and childhood memories have come to constitute an attempt to understand what notions of “home”, “nation” or “cultural identity” might mean. The way in which he frequently combines earth, rubble, wood, birds (especially domesticated birds like chickens or canaries) or delicate drawings, evokes a personal and utopic world. At the same time, it reveals the incontrovertible reality of a geo-political situation that is much vaster and all encompassing than any single subjective experience of the world.

For his first exhibition in Portugal, Petrit Halilaj will present the inner structure of the nest that previously formed the project he developed for the Republic of Kosovo's first official representation in the Venice Biennale of 2013.

The exhibition at the Kunsthalle Lissabon recovers both the work's title and the inner structure (made of wood panels and paint) of the installation. By moving this structure to Lisbon, these panels cease to operate as forms that construct and outline a space, and become the content of the project itself. Halilaj presents these architectural elements as both simple, construction materials and as independent, autonomous objects, bearing the marks of their previous life and usage.

For the original presentation in Venice, the panels were demarcating an inaccessible, closed space; a private nest for two canaries, which visitors could only peep at. Now, this space is open and accessible to the public, who are free to walk amongst the panels.

Furthermore, by situating these components in the exhibition context of the Kunsthalle Lissabon, which has been self-performing as an institution since its conception, the artist reflects on questions connected to the ways in which national or other representational logics are materialized in certain objects, and in the narratives they conjure.