



La Biennale di Venezia

58. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

Croatian Pavilion

58th International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia

Igor Grubić: Traces of Disappearing (In Three Acts)

Croatian Pavilion PRESS KIT

Artist:

Igor Grubić

Curator:

Katerina Gregos

Commissioner:

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia

Press preview:

Wednesday 8 May, 4.30 – 6.00 pm

Opening reception:

Wednesday 8 May, 6.00 – 9.00 pm

Croatian Pavilion at the Biennale Arte 2019

Calle della Regina

Sestiere Santa Croce 2258

30135 Venice

**(50 m from Fondazione Prada | alternatively 3-5'
walk from Rialto Mercato and Rialto bridge)**

Nearest vaporetto stop: San Stae

Igor Grubić's project for the Croatian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, *Traces of Disappearing in Three Acts* (2006–19), is thirteen years in the making. It is presented in its entirety for the first time in Venice. It consists of three inter-related photo essays and an animated film, set in a specially commissioned *mise-en-scène*.¹ The project started in 2006 when the artist began documenting post-war, transitional reality in Croatia, particularly the fundamental shift from socialism to capitalism, from a central, state-planned to a free market economy. It explores how this shift has affected changes in habitation, the urban fabric, public space and social relations. It traces the effects of privatization, gentrification and financial speculation, and documents the violent transition from industry to post-industry, and the sweeping away of past traditions, ideologies, former certainties and belief systems in the wake of globalization and neo-liberal capital.

Grubić began the series by photographing one settlement where several homeless people built makeshift shelters to live in. He decided to follow one particular person that interested him because of his practical and creative approach to life, and his inventive way of configuring his surroundings. The result of this is the photo-series *Wild House*, the first of the three chapters or "Acts". It looks, on the one hand, into the living conditions of communities that exist at the margin of mainstream society and disenfranchised people living in "states of exception" and, on the other, demonstrates how deprivation and lack of material means fosters creative approaches to the practice of everyday life. It also examines changes in public space with the increasing privatisation of property, the consolidation of corporate capital and its physical establishment in place and space.

The second part of the photo-series *Filigree Sidewalk* (Act II) examines changes into traditional vocations and local handcrafts — such as filigree craftsmen, tailors, barbers, furriers — highlighting which professions survive, adapt, or change and which ones become obsolete with the times. Grubić shows how these changes are inextricably linked with the tide of gentrification, and the advent of the service industry and leisure economy. Finally, *Deconstruction of the Factory* (Act III) presents a series of defunct factories — a significant architectural heritage encapsulating an important chapter in the history of work and architecture in Croatia. These are monumental reminders of the transition from industry to post-industry, of changing con-

¹ The scenography created especially for the project by designer Rihards Funts makes direct reference to the materials, forms and colour palette of factory architecture.

ditions of work, of the devalorisation of the blue-collar workers and their gradual disempowerment in the face of hyper-capitalism today. Similarly the factories are potent signifiers of the transition from a period defined by specific ideologies, political beliefs and values (socialism) to one characterised by post-ideology, post-politics and generalised political apathy (in the period we currently call “late capitalism”).

In the adjacent space, Grubić shows *How Steel was Tempered*, a poetic, captivating short, animated, experimental film made with images from the factory locations used in the photo essay. The story focuses on a father-son relationship to talk about social, political and generational shifts. With very simple but poignant means, the film movingly talks about the coming of age, of familial bonds, but also about the prospects of fruitful future relationships based on shared social space and collaborative working.

Grubić’s project for the Croatian Pavilion sits firmly in the humanist dimension of documentary photography, bridging together poetics, politics and social reality. *Traces of Disappearing* expands his already significant contribution into socially committed documentary work, and the preservation of the memory of Croatia’s architectural history, work and culture. Its scope is local but also ecumenical, analysing as it does the changes engendered by globalization, privatisation and the consolidation of neo-liberalism. At the same time, it is particularly resonant within the context of Venice, a city that has sold its soul to the devil of rampant profiteering; a city that is being hollowed out by the effects of uncontrolled tourism, the service industry, and corruption. Finally, *Traces of Disappearing* highlights the new situations that are coming to replace the old, while subtly inviting us to think about future ways of imagining – and inhabiting – our world.

Note to Editors

We are pleased to announce that the Croatian Pavilion was selected by Frieze in their choice of the best of what to see in Venice during the Biennale – from national pavilions to collateral events and museum shows.

<https://frieze.com/article/venice-biennale-guide-2019-shows>

ARTISTIC TEAM

About
Igor
Grubić

Igor Grubić (b. 1969, Zagreb) is one of Croatia's most accomplished and internationally acclaimed artists. His work includes site-specific interventions in public spaces, photography, and film. Since 2000 he is also working as a producer and author of documentaries, TV reportages and socially committed commercials. He represents Croatia at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia with the long-term project *Traces of Disappearing (In Three Acts)* and the short, experimental documentary/animation film *How Steel was Tempered*, which has received several awards, including: Special Mentions at the Anilogue International Animation Festival and ANIMA FEST, as well as Best Professional Film at "ASIFA-Croatia" (2018).

Igor Grubić has been active as a multimedia artist in Zagreb since the early 1990s, making photography, video, and site-specific actions. His interventions into public space, along with video works explore past and present political situations while cutting through the fabric of reality. Grubić's critical, socio-politically committed practice is characterised by the long-term engagement and investment into the subjects he chooses to work with. From the in-depth exploration of the fate of historical monuments and the demise of industry, to examination of the predicament of minority communities, his projects unfold over several years of research and grassroots, personal relationships. Though grounded in the documentary tradition, Grubić's work in photography and film is characterized by an affective and empathic approach, which is deeply humane and often poetic.

Grubić has participated in numerous major international exhibitions including, among others: Tirana Biennial 2 (2003); Manifesta 4 (Frankfurt, 2002); Manifesta 9 (Genk, 2012); 50th October Salon (Belgrade, 2009); *Gender Check*, MuMOK (Vienna, 2009); 11th Istanbul Biennial (2009); 4th Fotofestival Mannheim Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg (2011); *East Side Stories*, Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2012); Gwangju Biennale (2014); *Zero Tolerance*, MOMA PS1 (New York 2014); *Degrees of Freedom*, MAMbo (Bologna, 2015); 5th Thessaloniki Biennial (2015); *Cut / Rez*, MSU (Zagreb, 2018); *Heavenly creatures*, MG+MSUM (Ljubljana, 2018); *The Value of Freedom*, Belvedere 21 (Vienna, 2018).

His work is included in the collections of TATE Modern, the Museums of Contemporary Art in Belgrade and Zagreb, Muzeum Sztuki, Kadist Collection, Kontakt Collection and Art Collection Telekom, among others.

Grubić is represented by Laveronica arte contemporanea, Modica, Sicily.

www.igorgrubic.org

About
Katerina
Gregos

Katerina Gregos (born in Athens, based in Brussels) is a curator, lecturer and writer. For over 15 years her curatorial practice has consistently explored the relationship between art, society and politics with a particular view on questions of democracy, human rights, economy, crisis and changing global production circuits. Recently she was chief curator of the 1st Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA1): *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More* (2018), which she also helped to set up. Since 2016 she has been curator of the Munich-based (non-profit) Schwarz Foundation. Previously, Gregos served as founding director and curator of the Deste Foundation's Centre for Contemporary Art, Athens and Artistic Director of Argos-Centre for Art and Media, Brussels.

Gregos has curated numerous large-scale exhibitions and biennials including, among others, *Anatomy of Political Melancholy* (for the Schwarz Foundation), Athens Conservatoire (2019); *The State is Not a Work of Art*, Tallinn Art Hall, the Art Hall Gallery and the City Gallery (2018); *A World Not Ours*, Kunsthalle Mulhouse, (2017); *Personne et les autres*, the Belgian Pavilion, 56th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia; *Between the Pessimism of the Intellect and the Optimism of the Will*, the 5th Thessaloniki Biennial (2015); *The Politics of Play*, Göteborg Biennial (2013). In 2012 she co-curated Manifesta 9 and in 2011 she curated Speech Matters, the Danish Pavilion at the 54th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. Gregos also regularly publishes on art and artists in exhibition catalogues, journals and books, and is a visiting lecturer at HISK: the Higher Institute of Arts in Ghent and the Jan Van Eyck Academy in Maastricht. She has participated in numerous international conferences and symposia.

Gregos and Grubić started working together since 2011, for the 4. Fotofestival Mannheim Ludwigshafen Heidelberg (DE) and subsequently for Manifesta 9. Their proposal for the Croatian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale was chosen unanimously from the Open Call launched by the Croatian Ministry of Culture.

www.katerinagregos.com

About
Rihards
Funts

Rihards Funts (born and based in Riga, Latvia) is a designer. He sees design as a form of art that unites the rational and emotional perception of objects, where the aesthetic values of the object have roots in craftsmanship and engineering, become visible through the functionality of objects and highlight the value of the selected materials.

Funts has been running his own design studio since 2008. Combining design, art, craft, science and social responsibility forms the specific character of the studio, which works in exhibition, environmental, industrial and graphic design. Recent designs for exhibitions include: *YOU'VE GOT 1243 UNREAD MESSAGES. The Last Generation Before the Internet. Their Lives at the National Museum of Art, Latvia* (2018) and *Signals from Another World. Asja Lacis and Children's Theatre* at AVTO, SALTS, Istanbul (2019).

In 2016 Funts created MAD International Summer School of Design, an immersive intensive course where artisans, design students, professors, and experts from various fields work and live together for a determined period of time to create design pieces with the purpose in Sigulda, Latvia. In MAD's philosophy, new values for design and craftsmanship can only emerge by developing creative works and understanding the two disciplines deeply, blurring the boundaries between the fields of design, art, crafts, and science.

www.rihardsfunts.com

About
Rafaela
Dražić

Rafaela Dražić (born and based in Split, Croatia) is an award-winning visual communication designer working internationally for cultural and non-governmental organisations. Dražić holds a PhD from the Fine Arts Academy University of Warsaw where she has taught from 2009 to 2012.

Dražić's work has been shown at the Jan van Eyck Academie, Netherlands; Foksal Gallery, Warsaw; In Between Gallery, London; KW, Berlin; Centre for Visual Introspection, Bucharest; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin and many others.

Dražić has been working with: Kunstmuseen Krefeld; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Camera Austria, Graz; Calvert 22 Gallery, London; Nottingham Contemporary Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb; Onomatopoe, Eindhoven; Goethe Institut; PNCA College of Art, Portland; INCA Press, Portland; OEI Magazine, Stockholm; Gregor Podnar Gallery, Berlin.

www.rafaeladrazic.net

About
the
building

The site that hosts the Croatian Pavilion is very old; in a 16th century plan by Jacopo dei Barbari a building on this site already appears as a palazzo, with shops on the ground floor. In 1700 it was demolished and the two warehouses, which remain today, were built. In 1900 it became the headquarters of a large construction company, and then for many years it was a carpentry shop, which closed down only recently. It is the first time the space is used for a national pavilion at the Exhibitions of La Biennale di Venezia.

Press enquiries

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Croatian Press / Enquiries

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Moderna galerija - National Museum of Modern Art, Lana Šetka: info@modgal.t-com.hr

Press images:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/2fis33108400wfp/AADIGDtpkVk4x3jQC1cz67rba?dl=0>

Other info

**58th International Art Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia**

**Igor Grubić:
Traces of Disappearing (In Three Acts)**

Curator:
Katerina Gregos

Commissioner:
**Ministry of Culture of the
Republic of Croatia
Minister: Nina Obuljen Koržinek**

Project coordination:
Nevena Tudor Perković

Project Management:
Tihana Puc, Pia Sopta

Organisation:
**Moderna galerija – National Museum of
Modern Art, Zagreb
Director: Biserka Rauter Plančić /
Assisted by Marta Troha**

Assistant curator:
Ioli Tzanetaki

Exhibition design:
**Rihards Funts / Assisted by
Reinis Ducmanis**

Architect:
Lovro Skoblar

Graphic designers:
Rafaela Dražić, Rihards Funts

Producer (Venice):
Diego Carpentiero

Film production:
Kreativni sindikat

Website:
Mihael Giba

Installation:
Josip Butorac, Jura Jazbec

AV installation:
Dejan Čuljat, Igor Siuc, Ivica Šamu (AVinstal)

Artist's Assistant:
Mia Bučević

Assistant producer:
Jasna Čagalj

Press photographer:
Bojan Mrdenović

Mediator:
Sarah Sharpe

The participation of Croatia at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia is financed by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia, with support from Kreativni Sindikat and The Croatian Audiovisual Centre (HAVC).

Additional support:
**Embassy of the Republic of Croatia
in the Italian Republic**

The exhibition catalogue, designed by Rafaela Dražić, published by Sternberg Press and co-published by Moderna galerija – National Museum of Modern Art, has been financed by Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia and supported by Kontakt: The Art Collection of Erste Group and ERSTE Foundation.

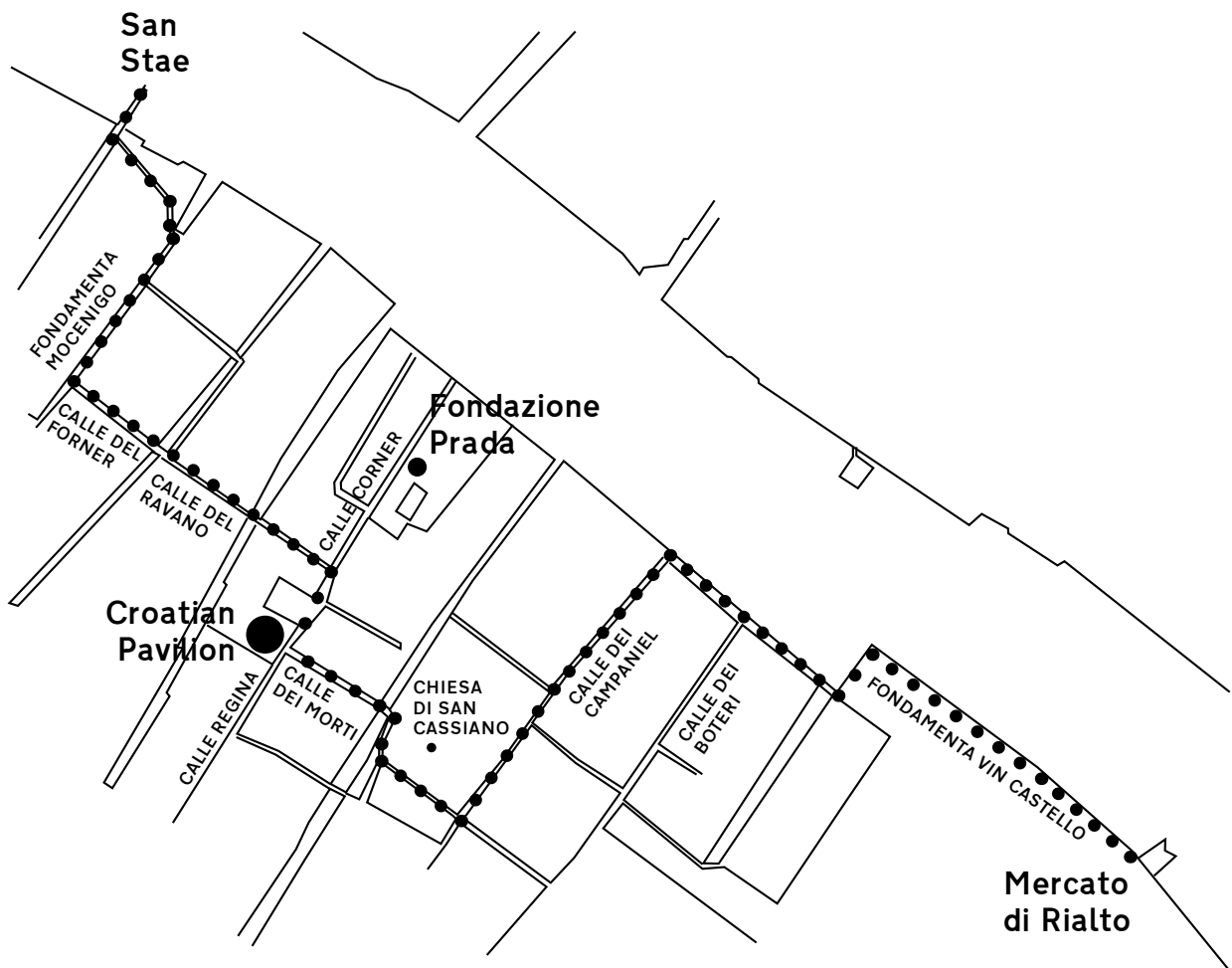
Kontakt. Art Collection
Erste Group / ERSTE Foundation

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#IGORGRUBIC
#BIENNALEARTE2019
#MAYYOULIVEININTERESTINGTIMES
#VENICEBIENNIAL**

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