



Republic of Serbia
Ministry of Culture and Media



KUĆA LEGATA



La Biennale di Venezia

58. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

**PAVILION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
58TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA**

DJORDJE OZBOLT: Regaining Memory Loss

Commissioner: Vladislav Šćepanović

Exhibition Curator: Nicoletta Lambertucci

9 May – 24 November, 2019

Pre-opening Days: 8 – 10 May

Opening Event: 9 May 2019, 14:00 h

Organizers and other collaborators:

Heritage House (Kuća legata), Belgrade /realisation/

Design Week (UG Nedelja dizajna), Belgrade

Supporters: Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia



Djordje Ozbolt, *In ghosts we trust*, acrylic on canvas, 180x200cm, 2019
Copyright: Djordje Ozbolt



Djordje Ozbolt in his studio, 2019

May You live in interesting Times is the theme given to the **58TH INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION of LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA** by its art director Ralph Rugoff, using the ancient Chinese curse as an inspiration explaining his concept in the following lines: *“At a moment when the digital dissemination of fake news and ‘alternative facts’ is corroding political discourse and the trust on which it depends, it is worth pausing whenever possible to reassess our terms of reference. In this case it turns out that there never was any such “ancient Chinese curse” - **May You Live in Interesting Times**, despite the fact that Western politicians have made reference to it in speeches for over a hundred years. It is an ersatz cultural relic, and yet for all its fictional status it has had real rhetorical effects in significant public exchanges. At once suspect and rich in meaning, this kind of uncertain artefact suggests potential lines of exploration that are worth pursuing at present, especially when the “interesting times” it evokes seem to be with us once again.”*

For the Serbian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition, Djordje Ozbolt presents new paintings and sculptures that address memory, both personal and collective.

Ozbolt’s installation, entitled ‘Regaining Memory Loss’, has been created in direct response to the cultural and political heritage of the Pavilion. Incorporating imagery from his early life, Ozbolt’s work explores the manner in which a personal past can coexist with engrained cultural and political histories. The paintings and sculptures in the Pavilion expose the artist’s attempt to reconcile his first-hand memories of an era with its imposed and continually changing narratives.

The artist’s visual language, formed in a distinct historical context, questions – sometimes humorously – the concrete embodiment of history. Ozbolt’s work is characterised by an incessant incorporation of eclectic visual images. The work in the Pavilion sees his visual language expanded to incorporate very personal references which originate from a shared and recognisable architectural and cultural heritage. Layering his imaginative and colourful style together with these fragmented recollections, Ozbolt’s work questions the extent to which history is just a subjective interpretation, both in its unconscious and conscious retellings.

The Serbian Pavilion is transformed by a new wall painting by Ozbolt, which serves as an imaginary landscape on top of which more paintings are hung. Ozbolt views these works as windows, or portals that open onto symbolic

and illusory visions of the past. Through the artist's signature use of bright, saturated colours, the canvases and wall paintings clash and fight against each other, in a sort of performed unreliable history.

In a series of sculptures, Ozbolt looks at the human figure as a symbol of idealism. By incorporating historical sculptural representations of this idealism, he also draws on symbolism from Yugoslav monuments which often depicted workers and peasants as heroes. Ozbolt playfully subverts these archetypes, adding contemporary societal aspirations (not towards the working classes, which are largely invisible in cultural representation), of yoga and machismo. These sculptures highlight how emblems shift between historical contexts, taking on a form of new allegory that is always highly political and social, but also determined by unreliable personal perception.

The sculptures and paintings are configured to look at each other, each reflecting to the other the layering of selective fragments of memory. The works themselves are interpretations, subjective views of the past from the perspective of the present moment. Ozbolt questions the role of the artwork in distilling the truth: in its imagined unreality, the works reveal their memory to be false, but as artistic representations, they are true.

About the Artist

Djordje Ozbolt (b.1967, Belgrade, Serbia) briefly studied architecture in his hometown before settling in London in 1991. Ozbolt received his BA from the Slade School of Fine Art and his MA from the Royal Academy of Art. He has participated in numerous solo and group exhibitions, at museums such as the Tate Modern in London and the National Museum of Art in Osaka. He lives and works in London, United Kingdom.

www.heraldst.com

www.taronasugallery.com

www.gallerybaton.com

Programme Council for 2019

The Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia, along with The Heritage House (Kuća legata) are responsible for the Serbian entry to the International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. For the 58th edition both institutions issued an open call to artists and curators. A specially appointed Programme Council selected Djordje Ozbolt from all received proposals. The Programme Council consisted of Commissioner; Vladislav Šćepanović (Artist, Exhibitor at the Serbian Pavilion at 57th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale Di Venezia and Professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts, Belgrade), President of the Council; Danielle Kvaran (Curator at Reykjavík Art Museum), and members; Dragan Zdravković (Artist and Exhibitor at the Serbian Pavilion at 57th International Art Exhibition La Biennale Di Venezia and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Applied Arts, Belgrade), Vladimir Dimovski (Art Historian and Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Technical Sciences, Novi Sad), Milica Todorović (Museum Advisor and Art Director of the Gallery of Contemporary Fine Arts, Niš) and Gala Čaki (Independent Artist).

The Programme Council gathered the renowned authorities in their own fields of expertise, in order to select the artist whose authentic artwork, conceptual standpoint and artistic language corresponds with the requested theme *May you live in interesting Times* in an adequate manner.

Heritage House, Belgrade

The Heritage House is a young cultural institution established by the Belgrade City Assembly in 2004 with the aim of protecting, conserving and exhibiting all movable and non-movable cultural goods bequeathed to the town by prominent artists and citizens. It is committed to the encouragement and restoration of the custom of charitable giving and the receipt of new bequests and gifts. The first, new donor to the Heritage House is Olga Jevrić, one of the most prominent sculptors of Yugoslav and Serbian art scene of the second half of the 20th century. Among other notable donors are: Veljko and Mara Petrović, Petar Lubarda, Olga Jančić, Risto Stijović, Petar Dobrović, Ljubica Cuca Sokić, Nedeljko Gvozdenović, Milenko Šerban and Milena Jeftić Ničeva Kostić.

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High Resolution Images

High resolution images are available to download at:

www.serbianpavilion.com/pressVB2019.zip

www.kucalegata.org/pressVB2019.zip

Credit Line

Djordje Ozbolt

Regaining Memory Loss

The Pavilion of the Republic of Serbia

58th International Art Exhibition

La Biennale Di Venezia

9 May – 24 November, 2019

Visiting Us

Exhibition dates: 9 May – 24 November 2019

Opening times: 10:00 –18:00 (Closed on Monday except 13 May, 2 September, 18 November)

Address: Pavilion of the Republic of Serbia, Giardini di Castello, 30122, Venezia Vaporetto: Giardini

www.serbianpavilion.com

www.kucalegata.org/regainingmemoryloss.htm

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