

# Mayday

Anjesa Dellova

Amers

19.03.–30.04.2023

**Gjama: The male dirge in the northern Albanian mountains**

Lecture by Dr. Bledar Kondi,  
Martin Luther University,  
Halle-Wittenberg (in English)

Saturday, 29 April 2023, 5 pm

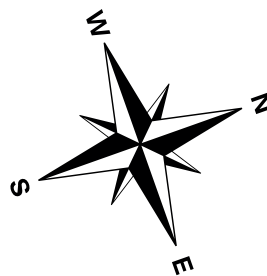
The Albanian ethnomusicologist and composer Dr. Bledar Kondi will talk about his research on the "Gjama": How and by whom is the ritual practiced? What role do music and dance play in dealing with death? And what is the significance of the male funeral lament in Albanian culture between continuity and change, folklore and folklorism?

Anjesa Dellova's monochrome paintings are inspired by photographs of children and families, traditional folk imagery or rituals such as the "Gjama", a lament for the dead practised in northern Albania. The ritual, which is performed by men, follows an impressive choreography of gestures and chanting: The performers rhythmically beat their chests, scratch their faces and throw themselves to the ground. This is how the news of death is communicated and one's own grief is expressed. The custom has been revived since the 1990s, after it was banned in communist Albania.

For the solo exhibition at Mayday, Anjesa Dellova has developed a new series of paintings in which she dedicates herself to a sequence of this dirge. For this she works in a technique she calls "frottage" - by means of very dry application of oil paint on canvas she creates monochrome figures. Six almost life-size figures on narrow upright formats surround the visitors and seem to remain in different crouching positions. The onomatopoeic titles of the works stand for the wailing sounds of the "Gjama"; with "Amers" (French for a landmark on the coast that enables sailors to find the entrance to the harbour) she re-locates the scenery and creates associative references to the location of the exhibition space at the harbour in Basel. Anjesa Dellova is interested in the embodiment and representability of death and mourning. In doing so, the artist focuses on the emotions and vulnerability of the male figures and reflects on traditional role and gender images. At the same time, the portraits are stripped of their individuality by the monochrome colours and graphic reduction and are given a universal, symbolic expression.

**Anjesa Dellova** (\*1994, lives and works in Lausanne) studied visual arts at ECAL in Lausanne and at HEAD in Geneva and works in the media of photography, video and painting. Her work has been shown in several group exhibitions, including at the National Gallery of Kosovo in Pristina and at Jungkunst in Winterthur. In 2022 she was awarded the Kiefer Hablitzel Art Prize. Mayday is showing her first solo exhibition in German-speaking Switzerland.

**Anjesa Dellova**  
**Amers**  
**19.03.–30.04.2023**



1. **Ah o o o**  
Oil on canvas  
160 × 65 cm  
2023
2. **E he he he he**  
Oil on canvas  
160 × 65 cm  
2023
3. **Oh oh oh**  
Oil on canvas  
160 × 65 cm  
2023
4. **Ĕh eh eh eh eh**  
Oil on canvas  
160 × 65 cm  
2023
5. **Ah a a a**  
Oil on canvas  
160 × 65 cm  
2023
6. **Ĕh ě ě ě**  
Oil on canvas  
160 × 65 cm  
2023

