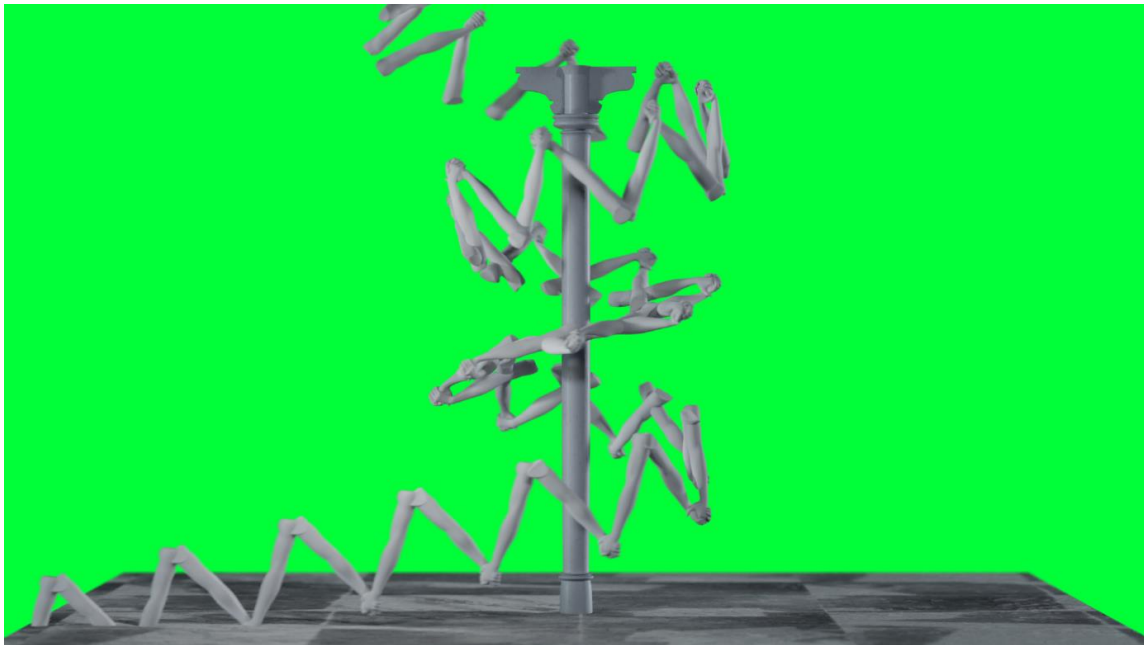


## Press release

**Nikola Ukić, *Make a Wish*, MMCA, 16 March – 21 May 2023**



**Partners: Osijek City Galleries, Waldinger Gallery**

**Curators: Ksenija Orelj, Sabina Salamon**

The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art is opening Nikola Ukić's solo exhibition on Thursday, 16 March, at 19:00. Under the title *Make a Wish* we continue to present artists from Rijeka's art scene who came of age in the nineties and found more stimulating working conditions abroad. After graduating from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Ukić attended the Academy in Düsseldorf (2000-2004), where he remained, with occasional activities on the local scene, primarily in Zagreb, Split and Rijeka.

The current exhibition features new large-scale works of demanding production, developed in dialogue with space and indirectly pointing to the building's history and its repurposing from industrial use to a museum. In addition to smaller-scale wall art, the exhibition is based on objects between sculptural pieces and architecture, with an interest in the research of materials as a significant starting point, yet with new preoccupations and focal points. Whilst before he regarded matter as an independent component of his work, now it immerses us into a physical experience of space where the visitor's body becomes an important component and the exhibition itself takes the form of a stage. Careful calculation of the execution method and, on the other hand, surrendering to unpredictable circumstances arising from interaction with industrial and synthetic materials presents a detachment from the sculptural tradition oriented towards noble materials complete figurative representations. The exhibited works, be it a house at the initial stage of construction,

deflated ducts or a floating structure made of interconnected hands, indicate the artist's preoccupations which could be translated into everyday language as testing the boundaries between reality and fiction, the crisis of a coherent physical experience and a dilemma of common interests and relations of mutuality. Ukić focuses on the questions of what sculpture can be today and how it is connected with social and manufacturing relations.

The side events include an interview with the artist, public guided tours and an educational programme for children and young adults.

## Biography

Nikola Ukić (Rijeka, 1974) started his artistic training in Rijeka at the former Faculty of Philosophy, Department of Visual Arts (1993-95). He continued at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb from 1995 to 1999, and the Art Academy in Düsseldorf, graduating under professor Georg Herold. He has been living in Düsseldorf for over 20 years.

Ukić's work ranges from ephemeral installations and site-specific sculptures to digital prints, videos and performances. His art practice focuses on challenging sculptural strategies, re-examining traditional givens and modernist protocols. He focuses on interactions between authenticity and fiction, the essential and the marginal, and focuses on the issues of cultural translation. Ukić continuously subjects sculptural processes to different contaminations, either by including other media on the top layer of his sculptures, or by selecting a sculpting process in which he accentuates the process-oriented nature of sculpture, challenging the obviousness of the artistic gesture and the self-sufficiency of sculpture.

Nikola Ukić has taken part in many exhibitions and has won several scholarships and residencies. For a longer period he has taught at art schools and he is currently a research associate at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Siegen, Germany. He co-curated the NRW artists exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb in 2014.

**Exhibitions (selection):** *Schweben*, Hengesbach Gallery, 2019, *Form follows*, PAEC Freiburg, 2015, *Blow Up*, Schloss Borbeck, Essen, 2015, *Projective Cast*, MCA Zagreb, 2013. Grants and awards: Neustart Kultur 2020, Kunstfond Foundation 2017, Young Talents Award NRW Art Foundation 2014, New Talents Art Cologne 2007, grant of the Art Academy and North Rhein-Westphalia State, Cité Paris 2002.

**Supported by:** Ministry of Culture and Media RH, City of Rijeka, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Stiftung Kunstfonds Neustart Kultur

<https://mmsu.hr/en/event/nikola-ukic-zazeli-zelju/>