

EXHIBITION TEXT**GLEB AMANKULOV****TEILZEIT IN SENILE TIES****OPENING RECEPTION:**Wednesday, 11th September, 18:00-21:00**EXHIBITION DATES:**

12.09.24- 25.10.24

OPENING HOURS:

Wed-Fri, 12:00-18:00

Interpolated throughout 'Teilzeit in Senile Ties' and the wider spectrum of Gleb Amankulov's practice, from material search to composition, objects are infused with a precariousness that explores power structures and hierarchies of object veneration, whilst observing the processes and conditions of late-stage capitalism. Within these overarching themes the composition of Amankulov's sculptures are imbued with an ephemerality that is both physical and conceptual in disposition. For each piece the works are composed of found objects that are left unaltered in their individual physicality but instead balanced, combined and contorted into material and metaphorical dialogue with each other and the space. The fragility and impermanence is furthered through structural tension created between the materials and their placement. This can be discernable through elements such as the balanced pieces of a metal Christmas tree base, arranged as if a whole branch leaning against the wall, or a wooden box laid on top of a plastic balloon slowly compressing the latter. The temporality of the objects is reinforced by a practice of disassembling the work after the period of the exhibition and reintegrating them into the economic cycle with the composite objects being repurposed for new sculptures, re-sold or donated in their original state and corresponding economic value. This practice ultimately questions the permanence and veneration of the art-object, and the fluidity of the practice thus exists in opposition to economic and cultural power structures within artistic production.

The temporality of the work and its apathy towards reverence in the context of the art-object is combined with further subtle references to destruction. Within several of the works short narratives play out in the combination of objects often with multiple interpretations. For example, in 'Crystal Vessel', from one perspective reading a glass apple sits under a tilted thick wooden shelf as though it were about to be smashed were the shelf not held in place by a yellow strap. In 'Squirrel in the Nutshell', a small porcelain squirrel sits inside a metal nutcracker staring out into the room oblivious to an impending danger of being crushed. This underlying allusion to a force of domination or suppression amalgamates with a broader political context within the work. In this sense, although not an overt political statement, the works are infused with an undertone of displacement and despondency in relation to the political-economic situation in Belarus and the continuing cooperation and inertia of the international community. Amankulov explores this psychological inertia through interrupted narratives exploring historical and perpetuating ties between Austria, the Russian Empire and current day Belarus that form a latent and non-linear undercurrent throughout the exhibition.

From a historical perspective, 'Kiss' references the Austro-Russian Alliance of 1781 between the Habsburg Monarchy and Imperial Russia. The treaty formed part of a recurring collusion between the two empires directed in part against the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth including current day Belarus. 'Kiss' examines this history through featuring a segment of a sofa from the time of Joseph II and two metal candle holders each featuring a double headed eagle comparative to the coat of arms of both the Russian Empire (1721-1917) and the Habsburg dynasty. Compositionally, the candle holders are then intertwined as if in embrace

with a fragile glass droplet precariously held between the two. Adjacent to 'Kiss' lies 'In the Yellow Hand', featuring a ceramic vase stamped on the underside with 'Kaiser 1872'. Here Amankulov makes further reference to the military and diplomatic affinity between the two states with an allusion to the 'League of the Three Emperors', an alliance between the Kaisers of Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Tsar of Russia. The league was intended to maintain a 'balance of power' and control in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, ultimately inflicting the political subjugation of the corresponding populations .

Running concurrently throughout the exhibition are various references to the continued relationships between the power structures of Austria and Belarus. In this respect, there lies a concentration on Austrian companies currently doing business with the country and thus cooperating with the regime of Alexander Lukashenko and his authoritarian administration since 1994. Within several works the assemblages feature items in relation to said companies interwoven with the other materials, hiding, concealed and obscured as if a foundational network within.

'In the Yellow Hand' associates the historical and the contemporary in this respect by including a blow-up balloon of a hand from the merchandising of *Raiffeisen Bank*. Veritably the branding items from Raiffeisenbank form a bass note in several works including: 'A Little too Tight', 'Ganz persönlich', 'Squirrel in the Nutshell' and *Crystal Vessel*. In 'Squirrel in the Nutshell' for instance the composition of the piece is reflective of the bank's official Belarusian affiliate *Priorbank*, which resembles a squirrel. In 'Ganz persönlich' the piece draws focus to the wording on a bank branded suitcase belt reading: 'Reisen, Ganz persönlich' (Travelling, very personally). The work holds a bitter ironic weight given that the artist and many other Belarusians have difficulties with visiting or returning under the current political regime. Other companies whose goods or merchandise feature include a rolled up t-shirt from telecommunications company *A1 Telekom Austria (A1 Belarus)* in 'Cover' and a piece of wood dated from June 2024 from manufacturer *Kronospan* in 'Display on Rent'. Though not featured in object form, 'Figure II' is composed from an initial allusion to a toll system created and serviced on Belarusian roads by *Kapsch TrafficCom* of the *Kapsch Group*.

The clandestine nature of this undercurrent becomes reflective of the surreptitious manner within which the commercial and diplomatic relations Austria has with Belarus appear to Amankulov and others affected by the regime throughout daily life. Despite the protestations and official comments of the respective companies that 'to leave the market would be to punish the population not the regime', there lies a reality that cooperation with the Belarusian authorities allows them to maintain that they have not been condemned as authoritarian or of violating human rights. In this regard, the objects become a reminder of the contradictions between foreign policy, rhetoric versus action, covertly creating feelings of implied political and economic indifference.

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Gleb Amankulov (b.1988, Minsk, Belarus) currently lives and works in Vienna. Amankulov completed his MA in Fine Arts in 2022 at The Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna in the Sculpture and Spatial Strategies department under Prof. Monica Bonvicini and Prof. Iman Issa. Previously he also studied at the Belarusian State Academy of Fine Arts, Minsk (Printmaking Department, BA, 2013) and the College of Arts and Design, Minsk (2007).

Previous solo exhibitions include: 'In the Salt Storage', Efes42, Linz, 2023; 'Stalagmite Eyes' (2022), Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, 2022; 'Hans C. Winter: Early Works' (2015), Galerie 19/20, Vienna, 2015. Selected previous group exhibitions include: 'Fragment I', COMMUNE, Vienna, 2024; 'Spinning around oneself', with Andreia Santana, curated by Hugo Canoilas, WAF Galerie, Vienna 2023; 'Über das Neue', Belvedere 21, Vienna, 2023; 'Identity Paradox',

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Improper Walls, Vienna, 2023; 'Unfreezing The Scene', Kunsthalle Wien Prize 2022', Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2023; 'Handeln im Jetzt', Leopold Museum, Vienna, 2022; 'Separating Lines', AG18 Gallery, Vienna, 2022; 'Three Course Menu', Ffriedrich, Frankfurt, 2022; 'Ok, Regina', Reginastrasse 16, Kassel, 2022; 'The Poiesis of Composting', Xhibit, Vienna, 2021; 'CROP', WAF Galerie, Vienna, 2021; 'Haus Wien', Vienna, 2021; 'Oh Mini Golf!' Kulturzentrum F23, Vienna 'Becoming a Dog', MUMOK Vienna, 2021; 'Secret Museum of Workers Movement', Hoast, Vienna; 'Exile Summer Camp', Exile Gallery, Vienna, 2020.

Amankulov was nominated for the 'Belvedere Art Prize' in 2024, was a recipient of the 'Arbeitsstipendium', City of Vienna, 2023, 'WHW Akademija Fellowship', WHW, Zagreb, 2023, 'Academy Prize 2022', Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna and the 'Kunsthalle Prize', Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2022.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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