

Show 2 (Rest and Labor)

Elena Kovylyna
Miriam Laura Leonardi
Marija Delić

Opening: 8 February 2025
On view: 8 February - 5 April 2025

Tikveška 1
11010 Belgrade

As a whole, the exhibition explores activities and states that confuse the terms *rest* and *labor*. The two videos by Elena Kovylyna and Miriam Laura Leonardi, respectively, examine the relations between participants in unwritten social contracts: those between artists and their patrons; and those between models and their observers. Elena Kovylyna invites various collectors (among them, Patrizia Sandretto whose foundation approved the loan of this video) to “a cup of coffee” in public, at a table that eventually catches fire and leaves the guests in temporary uncertainty. Miriam Laura Leonardi films her friend Sylvia Anne, whose primary occupation used to be “video girl”, who appeared in hip-hop oriented music videos, and Kim Kardashian’s body double for advertisements and photo-shoots. Occasionally putting herself on display too (as her hair gets caught on camera, for example), Miriam documents the body that works by simply existing, but also herself as the storyteller of this body.

The third space is “dressed” in couture made specifically for the room, by Marija Delić. The fabric reverses the in and the out, inviting the viewer inside the dress and hosting a series of collages that the artist made in reference to her mother’s shoes. Abstract shapes become graphic patterns and associative lumps that draw the parallels between leather and skin, sole and meat, seams and spine, in tones that are equally earthy and bodily. The dress, which now feels like a room, surrounds the painting made by Marija’s mother, Ljiljana Filipović Delić. The painting depicts a rock. In exposing objects of personal value and obscuring their many nuances at the same time, Marija Delić gives us a third kind of social contract between the memory and the present. Just by keeping her mother’s shoes, Marija is keeping the traces of their history: the different agencies of shoes that move (labor) and shoes that rest.

About the artists:

Elena Kovylyna (*1971, Moscow) is a Russian artist who has been mostly active in performance art during the 2000s, before changing her main medium to figurative painting in recent years. She created intense, provocative pieces through which she reflected on contemporary society, looking into the role of women, the utopia of democracy and of equality, human rights and freedom in post-Soviet Russia. Kovylyna studied at the Surikov Art Institute, in the F+F School for Art and Media Design in Zurich and the Universität der Künste Berlin. Recently, her work was shown at V-A-C Foundation, Moscow, Russia (2024), Winzavod Contemporary Art Center, Moscow (2023), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2022), MO.CO. Hotel des Collections, Montpellier, France (2021), Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2021), MEP, Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris, France (2017), University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA (2017), Blue Oyster, Dunedin, New Zealand (2015), Erarta Museum of Contemporary Art, St. Petersburg, Russia (2015), Manifesta 10, St. Petersburg (2014). The work on display (‘Would you like a cup of coffee, or Burn the World of the Bourgeoisie?’) is an homage to Luis Buñuel’s ‘The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie’ and has been kindly provided as a loan by Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin.

Miriam Laura Leonardi (*1985) received her Master of Fine Arts from the Zurich University of the Arts after studying photography in Paris. In her multimedia work, she scrutinizes language, social behavior and media signs as constructions of meaning, which are received differently due to temporal or geographical changes. Therefore, she maneuvers between the increase in accessible knowledge and the simultaneous decrease of vocabulary and our ability to adequately convey psychological and political realities. Her works have been exhibited most recently at the Fondation Vincent van Gogh Arles (2023), Kunsthalle Zürich (2023), Jenny’s New York (2022), CAPC Bordeaux (2022), Swiss Institute New York (2022), MAH Geneva (2022), Centre d’art contemporain Geneva (2021), Kunsthau Glarus (2021), Kunsthalle Bern (2020), Centre Culturel Suisse (2019), Bel Ami Los Angeles (2018), Kunsthalle Fri Art (2018). She has received several prizes for her work and was a fellow of distinguished residency programs, including the Studio of the South run by Laura Owens for the Luma Foundation in Arles, the Swiss Institute New York, Gasworks in London and the Istituto Svizzero in Rome. Texts about her work have been published in Artforum, Texte zur Kunst, Phaidon’s Prime: Art’s Next Generation, Cura Magazine, T Le Temps Magazine, Visionaire World Magazine and T Magazine NY Times. Miriam is lecturer of video-art in the Bachelor of Fine Arts at ECAL in Lausanne.

Marija Delić (*1983, Nikšić, Montenegro) currently lives in Belgrade, Serbia. She graduated from the Academy of Arts in Belgrade, with a degree in photography (2009). Her practice explores personal experience and deep sentiment, with an interest in experimental, conceptual solutions through photography, sound, video and prints. She works, individually, in fashion photography and contemporary arts, as well as part of Serbian fashion design groups. While she was living in Lyon, France in the years following the pandemic, she developed several projects: among them was Ancient Ancienne, which led to this exhibition. Ancient Ancienne explores the relationship between her mother’s shoes as objects, relics, wearable items and a memory, and herself as the inheritor and interpreter.