

IVANA IVKOVIĆ

selected works

INDEX

THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS
MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST - PORTO
MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST - AFTERPIECE
DISOBEDIENCE
MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST
AFTER YOU
IN HIM WE TRUST
HEAVEN #14
I DID IT FOR YOU
I ONLY WANT TO LOVE ME
AMUSE ME
BABYLON THE GREAT
LINES, ROWS, COLUMNS (DORMITORY)
LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW
WHEN WE WERE SAD
SINCE I MET YOU I HAVE NO PEACE
PRESENTE 6
61 DAYS IN HARLEM
ARTIST STATEMENT
IVANA IVKOVIĆ BIOGRAPHY
TEXT BY NATALIJA PAUNIĆ

THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS

Academy of Athens | University of Athens | Goethe Institute Athens | 2023
site - specific durational performance, sound

The performance is part of the long-term exhibition project EVROVIZION: CROSSING STORIES AND SPACES by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), and realised in collaboration with Goethe-Institut Athen and EMST, the National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens.

Directed by Ivana Ivković

Text: Jordan Cvetanović

Actors: Željko Maksimović, Đorđe Živadinović Grgur and Aris Papadopoulos

© Ivana Ivković

The new site-specific performance by the artist Ivana Ivković entitled MONUMENT: THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS is part of MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST, a series of delegated performances created for the long-term exhibition project EVROVIZION. CROSSING STORIES AND SPACES by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen). The series explores the relationship between the human (male) body, identity, and the specific context of place. It reflects on contemporary time, its (post-)apocalyptic nature, and the sense of the end of the world as we know it, questioning whether there is room for certain new options and choices that depend on the individual. The inversion of a gaze between exposed male bodies in formation on one side, and the audience on the other, makes it function like a mirror that reflects various issues, layers of history, prejudices, and taboos present in different societies.

The initial metaphor – the visual and ideological point of reference for the performance in Athens – is Raphael's eponymous masterpiece The School of Athens, a fresco located in the Apostolic Palace in Vatican City. In this complex allegory of secular knowledge and philosophy, Raphael presents a scene with some of the most important ancient and classical philosophers, scientists and artists, contemplating and debating in a splendid architectural setting inspired by ancient Greece. The performance MONUMENT: THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS starts from the ambiguity of the fresco itself, representing the values of Western civilization rooted in ancient Greek thought and renewed through the Renaissance and humanism, pointing out the connection with the present time, in which the world is in a state of extreme exhaustion and experiencing numerous ecological, ethical and political crises. Inspired by the humanistic vision of the painting, the performance is also a call for communication on these themes, as well as an invitation to engage in exchange and dialogue about the issues and dilemmas that we, as humanity, face today. The performance addresses questions of Greek identity and the image of classical Greece, pointing to the tension between different narratives – one coming from outside, created and nurtured by the West, and one existing within Greek society, both historically and in the present.



























MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST

Mala voadora | Hošek Contemporary Berlin, Porto, Portugal | 2022
site - specific durational performance, sound

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST - AFTERPIECE , performance and installation – scaffolding,
Directed by Ivana Ivković
© Ivana Ivković

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST by Ivana Ivković presents a continuation of the artist's multimedia research started several years ago, in which she creates performative tableau vivant situations in specific contexts and places. Issues of identity and gender stereotypes figure strongly in Ivković's work, whereby she uses the naked and/or semi-naked male body as a performative instrument or medium of specific sensitivity and sensuality. Ivković's works have always been focused on their viewers' experiences, i.e. their emotional and psychological perception of ambiances and events.

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST problematises the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of gender roles in the political, ethical and symbolic reflection of the biopolitics of female perception. The series explores the relationship between the human (male) body, identity, and the specific context of place. It reflects on contemporary time, its (post-)apocalyptic nature, and the sense of the end of the world as we know it, questioning whether there is room for certain new options and choices that depend on the individual. The inversion of a gaze between exposed male bodies in formation on one side, and the audience on the other, makes it function like a mirror that reflects various issues, layers of history, prejudices, and taboos present in different societies.















MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST - AFTERPIECE

Humboldt Forum Museum | Berlin, Germany | 2022

site - specific durational performance, sound

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST - AFTERPIECE , performance and installation – scaffolding,

Directed by Ivana Ivković

© Ivana Ivković

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST by Ivana Ivković presents a continuation of the artist's multimedia research started several years ago, in which she creates performative tableau vivant situations in specific contexts and places. Issues of identity and gender stereotypes figure strongly in Ivković's work, whereby she uses the naked and/or semi-naked male body as a performative instrument or medium of specific sensitivity and sensuality. Ivković's works have always been focused on their viewers' experiences, i.e. their emotional and psychological perception of ambiances and events.

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST problematises the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of gender roles in the political, ethical and symbolic reflection of the biopolitics of female perception. The series explores the relationship between the human (male) body, identity, and the specific context of place. It reflects on contemporary time, its (post-)apocalyptic nature, and the sense of the end of the world as we know it, questioning whether there is room for certain new options and choices that depend on the individual. The inversion of a gaze between exposed male bodies in formation on one side, and the audience on the other, makes it function like a mirror that reflects various issues, layers of history, prejudices, and taboos present in different societies.















DISOBEDIENCE

Edšeg Palata | Novi Sad, Serbia | 2022
site-specific durational performance, sound | 2022

Directed by Ivana Ivković
Text by Jordan Cvetanović
© Ivana Ivković

Every time in my life I say 'I'm so happy' something awful has happened.
Every time in my life I say 'I'm so happy' something awful has happened.
Every time in my life I say 'I'm so happy' something awful has happened.
Every time in my life I say 'I'm so happy' something awful has happened.

I know that I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart of a king, that beats hard, so strong, that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe, would dare to attack the borders of all my kingdoms; I will be your general, your judge and reward for each your virtue that you bravely show to me. But you seem to have nothing.

Remember well: All palaces are temporary palaces! And if anyone ever asks you for me, tell them love killed me. The love I never had. And it will kill you too!

I am leaving you this letter, these few words on paper, because I have nothing more to give you. I leave you my empty heart buried in the ground and a letter, so that when someone finds it sometimes and really reads it, you will know that I was right. That I didn't lie to you and that this world is cursed. Cursed without love.

Live long and see,

Only my own, forever
Queen









MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST

Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina | Novi Sad, Serbia | 2021

exhibition with durational performance, site-specific installation, video, sound | 2021

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST, video performance and installation – scaffolding,
3-channel video, 20 min, sound, colour, Novi Sad/RS, 2021.

Directed by Ivana Ivković

Cinematography by Ivan Zupanc

Editing by Vladan Obradović

© Ivana Ivković

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST by Ivana Ivković presents a continuation of the artist's multimedia research started several years ago, in which she creates performative tableau vivant situations in specific contexts and places. Issues of identity and gender stereotypes figure strongly in Ivković's work, whereby she uses the naked and/or semi-naked male body as a performative instrument or medium of specific sensitivity and sensuality. Ivković's works have always been focused on their viewers' experiences, i.e. their emotional and psychological perception of ambiances and events.

MONUMENT: NO ONE IS LOST problematises the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of gender roles in the political, ethical and symbolic reflection of the biopolitics of female perception. A larger group of male performers arranged with minimal choreography within the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina act out a scenario representing a developed composition of The Last Judgment – a deconstruction of this biblical play that "re-enacts" the momentum just after it. What happens next? After every revolution, a new heaven is created, but what does an individual do in that space of newly conquered and acquired freedom? What exactly do the processes of the deconstruction of old beliefs leave behind? This work is about the fear of the unknown, about seeing ourselves through confronted others, and about what happens after we have understood the other within a wide spectrum of all the challenges of acceptance and of living in freedom.















AFTER YOU

Salon of the Museum of Contemporary art in Belgrade | Belgrade, Serbia | 2021
exhibition with durational performance, site-specific installation, video, sound - 17:01 min | 2021

After You by Ivana Ivković presents a continuation of the artist's multimedia research started several years ago with the works *Lines, Rows, Columns* (56th October Salon, Belgrade City Museum), *Babylon the Great* (Eugster II Belgrade Gallery), *Amuse me* (Contemporary Gallery Subotica), *I Only Want To Love Me* (Hošek Contemporary, Berlin), *I DID IT FOR YOU* (EICON gallery Museums Quartier, MQ 21, Vienna), *IN HIM WE TRUST* (Bitef Theater), which were conceptually and thematically developed around the different contexts and narratives of the spaces in which were displayed. Another important problematic framework concerns the issues of identity and gender experiences, the re-examination and deconstruction of gender role stereotypes, which Ivković emphasizes in her works by introducing the naked or half-naked male body as a performative instrument or medium of specific sensitivity and sensuality. Realized in the form of site-specific interventions featuring some sort of tableau vivant situations and arrangements involving a larger number of participants/performers, for Ivković, the mentioned works have always dealt with the issues of the viewers' experiences, i.e., their emotional and psychological perception of the ambiances and events. After first designing the stage/setting through a careful selection of visual and spatial elements that meaningfully and symbolically situate and contextualize the place of exhibition, the artist puts her work with the performers, characterized by minimal and improvised choreographic interventions, at the center of the installation's significant communicative potential – the vitality of the scene, allowing the audience to connect with it more directly and provocatively. In the practice that Ivković has been intensively developing over the last few years, drawing remains a significant constitutive element and event in the articulation of the idea. The author has been continuously dedicated to it from the very beginning, exploring the flexibility of its limits and the possibilities of its formal and interpretive transpositions to other media (photography, spatial and site-specific installations, textile and lighting objects, performances, and orchestrated scenes). Whether they are meant for a two-dimensional form or a particular spatial situation and context, all her works are primarily experienced in the emotional processuality, the gradual building of subtle and complex relationships between pictures, texts, and objects, between associative and symbolic meanings in the show. The contents deeply permeate the act of permanent introspection and the search for personal and artistic identity, intertwining intimate, personal stories with a specific perception of socio-political and cultural-historical circumstances and the sensibility of the atmosphere of various geographical regions (from North and Latin America to the Middle East), deriving from the author's personal experience of frequent travels and many years of living a nomadic lifestyle, as another constructive segment of her artistic practice. On the one hand, *After You* is the sum of Ivković's artistic achievements, but it is also a step further in her research procedures, this time achieved by opening new chapters in the experimental approaches to exhibition formats, stage-performative practices, media, and genres. Teamwork, which remains crucial to the realization of the mentioned performances, is further expanded with collaborations and the inclusion of various other artists in the creative process, resulting in a full-format transdisciplinary expression and multifaceted ways of communicating the thematic content.

Designed in a form bordering on a play, an exhibition, and expanded cinema, *After You* at the very beginning introduces the viewer to an atmosphere of moods and suggested states rather than a space with representatively defined and seemingly observable contents, which is first read from the setup that raises associations to a conserved film set, an open theater stage, an abandoned TV studio, or even a psychedelic video. Situations in which the viewer is confronted with different sensations – 3D visualization of an ancient temple on the wall, lighting fixtures, accompanying stage props and furniture, cameras, and monitors that register every change and every movement in the gallery – create the impression of a time limbo of sorts, a non-place, a zone of thin boundaries between a sense of reality and complete displacement. The experience is additionally intensified by the presence of performers/narrators, their days- or hour-long physical being in the space or virtual presence via a purposefully built video installation and live online broadcasts, as they act out Jordan Cvetanović's dramatic text based on the main starting point of the project – the thematization and problematization of the social context of everyday life in Serbia during the 1990s and 2000s. It is important to mention here that both in the realization and the conception of this exhibition-event, unlike in previous works, Ivković shifts her focus towards a moment of pure masculine appearance (as we have already seen, with all the potential forms of vulnerability and sensitivity) as the symbolical determinant of a society or a dominant factor in the shaping of heteronormative patterns and models of (co)existence and human relations. *After You* puts gender fluidity on the stage and, hence, the uncertainty and playfulness of identity as well, or more precisely, introduces a polyphony of possible gender existences and manifestations, strongly underlined by the choice of participants, their costume design, and the drama in which HE, SHE, and IT play the leading roles. The inclusion of a transgenerational perspective (Child, Parent, Adult) as a form of a collective memory record about the destiny of a country and society significantly contributes to the layers of the dramatic text, but also to the idea of thematic exploration of one of the most traumatic periods in modern local history. For some, it was a time of dramatically disturbed upbringing and maturation; to others, the era of a painful breakdown of values and transition into uncertainty. The end of the twentieth and the beginning of the new century and millennium, in the local socio-political and historical circumstances, would bring a general and generationally undivided confrontation with the reality, which has often appeared as pure fiction or a repetitive, absurd and never-ending nightmare. Fragmentarily structured in dialogues consisting of quotations, excerpts, and references to various media, pop-cultural, political-economic-propaganda contents from the 1990s, but also reflections on the present moment that we are living or perceiving in the context of the new reality of social networks, Cvetanović's dramatic text functions as a kind of cacophonous metanarrative and time echo. *After You* is also the artist's specific dedication to Belgrade, a story about its generational historical trials, its (anti) heroes, the expectation of their departure, about the unofficial anthems, applauses, and disappointments, about manipulation as a way of life and an instrument of power, about responsibilities, self-censorship, guilty pleasure, short-lived revolutions and consequences without sobriety. Designed as an ambiance-metaphor of social and personal experiences in a period of great changes, deep crises, ideological confusions, value shocks, and our persisting disorientation in the hypnotic loop of political failures and high hopes, *After You* is a complex project that escapes definitions, just like the age that it is trying to review and understand. On this occasion, Ivković is making a new step forward when it comes to the participatory dimension of her work because the audience is faced with more than a simple task: they are invited and encouraged to contribute their own memories, (dis) agreements, resistance, discomfort, (non) acceptance, (non) belonging, individual and common confusions, and doubts. Where are we, and what are they? Is this real, and who is directing this?

After You is a visual-performative experiment in a gallery space
After You is everything held back before authority figures and
unleashed unto friends
After You is an exhibition with dramatic pauses
After You are footnotes of great narratives and
the finest dystopian quotes
After You is a theatrical play with live streams
After You is the mobilization of tenderness
After You is a history lecture from the background
After You is a movie set minus the sound of the clapperboard
After You is April u Beogradu and Proleće je, a ja živim u Srbiji
After You is a direct broadcast from the backstage
After You is about the thunder of the 1990s and the slush of the 2000s
After You is a hug in a crowd
After You is a medium of (un)controlled social performances
After You is the real vs. reality
After You is gender and generational polyphony
After You are short cuts of collective memory, personal trauma and joint great expectations
After You is as virtual as the reality
After You is directing emotions for feelings
After You is an atmosphere of continuous change speaking of times of
major changes
After You are meaningful stories, common-places,
true confessions and a pose for the public
After You is as fictional as the TV chyron with today's
most important news from the country and the world
After You are memories that fade and replicas that live
After You is about ideologies, traumas, responsibility, mistakes,
taboos, freedom, auto-censorship, guilty pleasures, short-lived
revolutions, consequences without sobriety
After You is an echo of the transgenerational stories that are
too loud or have never been heard
After You is the question of whether a certain WE will ever
see our turn come
After You is about the experiences and trials of Belgrade
After You is about crossed limits and social regressions,
about the breakdown of values and nerves
After You concerns many and most of all those who feel invited or incited



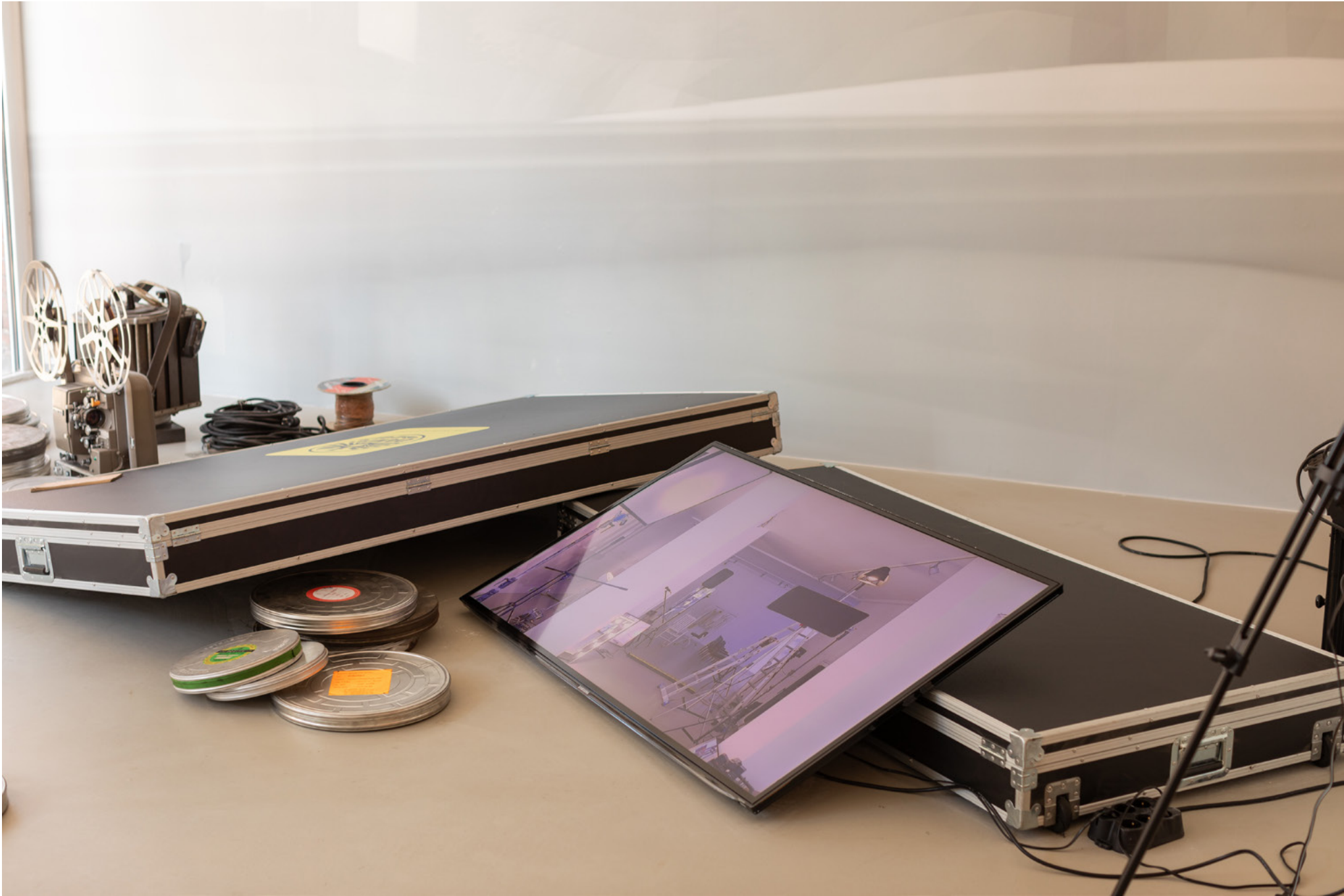








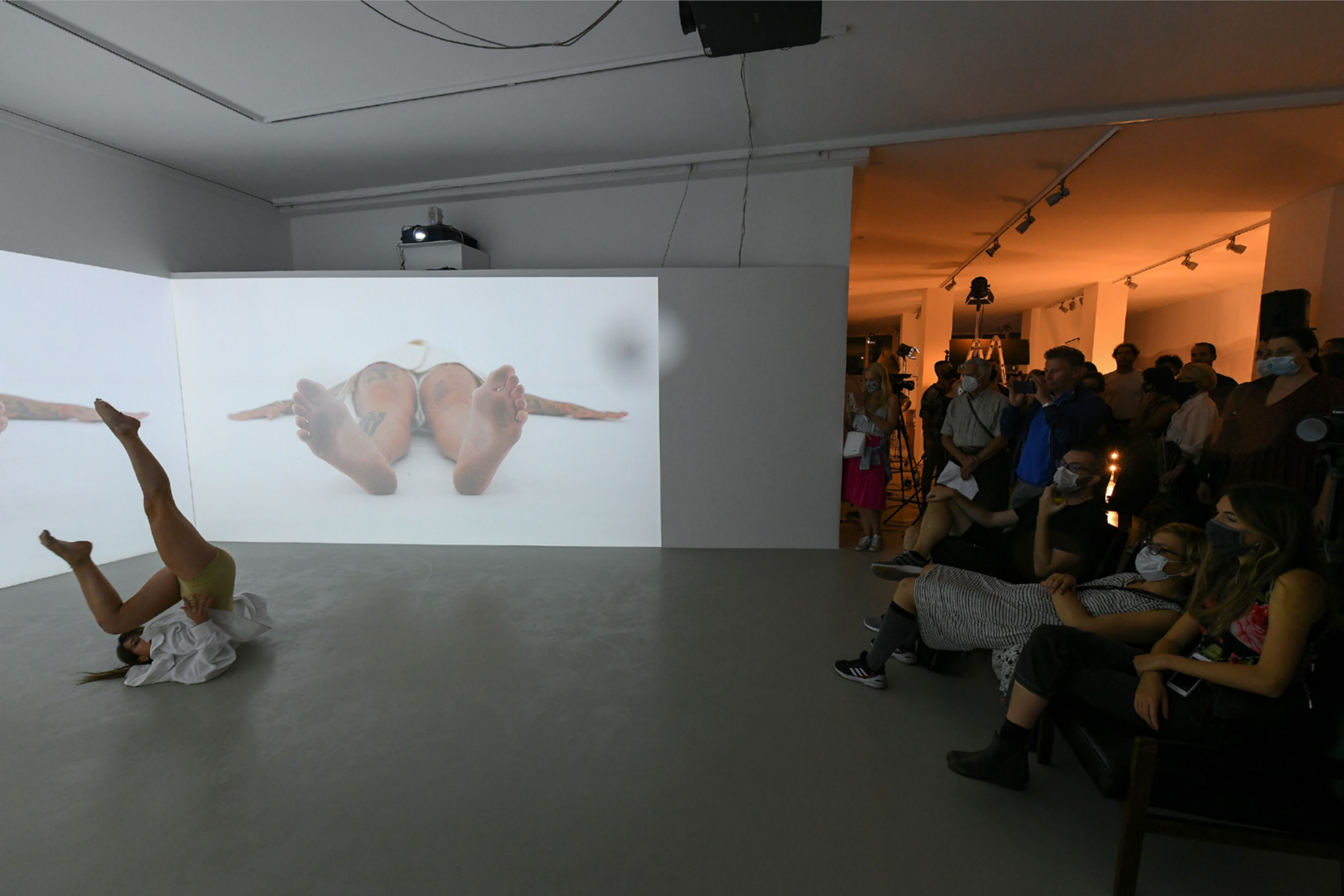




















IN HIM WE TRUST

BITEF Theatre | Belgrade, Serbia | 2020

8 hour long performance with 42 male participants, inspired by the biblical theme and scene of The Last Judgment, in the space of BITEF Theatre, which is set in a never completed cathedral of the German Evangelical church

"In Him We Trust" is the last part of a trilogy and the continuation of two previous site-specific works: "Lines, rows, columns (Dormitory)" and "Babylon the Great". These works examine the constructs of personal relationships on issues of gender identity and integrity, trying to understand/ interpret the limits of one's own / female perspectives in perceiving and understanding the otherness – men. In these performative installations, the male body is experienced both as a subject and as an object. In the process of understanding and encountering the other who is desired and longed for, and starting from our vulnerabilities and exposures, by replacing the classic and expected roles of the naked and exposed male body, which becomes a medium of sensitivity, uneasiness and sensuality.

The performance "In Him We Trust" touches the topic of belief and re-examines what we believe in through the literal imitation / play of the well-known scene of The Last Judgment. The Last Judgment or Judgment Day represents the belief of eschatological religions in the last and final judgment, which at the end of history will be performed over people to separate them. The righteous man will receive eternal life as a reward and the sinful man will have the final death as punishment.

Performers play the roles from the standard iconography of this composition that becomes alive and moving. The work was intended to be performed once as an eight-hour site-specific performance. It is directly related to the building of BITEF Theatre - a never completed cathedral of the Evangelical church. Throughout the performance, the audience will be able to come and go, sit, observe or contemplate a reenactment of the religious composition, which doesn't only enlivens a particular scene or event but engages the potential of the object itself by transgressing to its original purpose. Body and movement are a key factor and an emotional association to the work. The scene is shaped by a spontaneous choreography made by natural body movement of the performers who are free to interact without acting while performing on a scaffolding construction that mimics the renaissance impression of perspective. The work emphasizes the direct and intimate confrontation with one of the most representative biblical themes which is brought into life, happens, improvises, transforms and lasts in front of the audience.



















HEAVEN #14, Unprotected Collector

Museum of African Art | Belgrade, Serbia | 2019

site-specific installation with performance, from the exhibition "Unprotected witness I: Afrodisiac", curated by Jelena Spaić and Ana Knežević

"Heaven # 14" - a palm tree in the hallway of the Museum of African Art, and behind it, a monumental curtain with a million times seen print of a desert dune. The work seduces with the commodification of pleasure and its instant iconography (palm, desert, sky), so well known in the general consumerist culture. This promise of paradise devoid of any secret is related to all inclusive destinations, quick solutions, instant gratifications and false promises of love with a conspicuous desire to be true. With a generic depiction of the apotheosis of seduction, Ivana Ivković brings the constructed spaces of seduction to the same level: museums and Africa as the other / otherness. through its portal of desires, hopes and expectations, this time we can pass unhindered if we move the curtain. Then we may meet a handsome man in an expensive suit who walks nonchalantly through the museum sipping whiskey, or, slightly reclining in a Cameroonian chair, visibly bored, still shaking a drink in a crystal glass. It is not the fulfillment of the prophecy You Will Meet a Tall Dark Stranger, but the Unprotected Collector, Ivana's second part of this work. It is a performance that was performed at the opening of the exhibition, in which another ephemeral intruder and destabilizing factor violates the etiquette of behavior in the museum. Ivana confronts us again with another seductive cultural construct, another system of codes of economy, selection, evaluation, valorization, market values and power - the incarnation of collectors.

District 9 - 8 artists and 1 invisible curtain, Jelena Spaić (text from the exhibition catalog)









I DID IT FOR YOU

EICON Schauraum Galllery | Museums Quartier -MQ21 | Vienna, Austria | 2019

4 hour long performance in the space of EICON Schauraum Galllery with Austrian artist Dan Vogt who was acting Caravaggio behind the window glass in the seting which reminds of Baroque style paintings

Exhibition I did it for you is inspired by the work of English film director and author Derek Jarman - his famous film Caravaggio (1986) and the Brutal Beauty exhibition from 2008 at Kunsthalle Wien. Specific Baroque architecture of MuseumsQuartier is connected with Caravaggio, master of Baroque style to create an atmosphere and setting for the story about masculine identity in the contemporary context. Changeable in a time with temporary performance site-specific installation I did it for you deals with poetics of intentional exposure and revealing of one's own identity.





I ONLY WANT TO LOVE ME

Hošek Contemporary Gallery | Berlin, Germany | 2019

2 hour long performance on the boat in Mitte, Berlin inspired by the work of German filmmaker and author Rainer Werner Fassbinder

The boat on the water, which is flowing and not stable as the earth, gives the feeling of the place of temporary safety. As in some kind of bubble, a whole different world exists there freely, in parallel to the official norms of the majority outside. The performance I only want to love me is inspired by the works of German filmmaker and author Rainer Werner Fassbinder and also recalling the period of Berlin's history, the thirties of 20 century. Fassbinder's movies are neither direct criticism nor the rejection of the gay liberation policy - they stand alongside them. This position implies the understanding of sexual identity as a social role, a performance articulated in relation to public cultural discourse, providing resistance to the norms imposed by a moral majority. Queer context of this work is not reserved for homosexual identity, but for those who do not feel comfortable in socially determined frames. This performance aims to function as a mirror reflecting social pathologies, allowing the viewer to notice the connection between changes in social power structures and the constant transformation of sexual roles / identities in individuals. Identity questions and issues - personal, sexual, political always remain open, fluid, subject to unexpected changes. Nothing is stable, everything is in constant flow.

Male bodies divided into two columns make up a line that crosses the ship's womb. The two sides of the ship suggest the two sides of our personality - the public person we show to others and the hidden side we guard in ourselves and which is often called the dark side. Is our dark side rightly so named, and how much we hide under the influence of the environment, society, and taboo things that we should not hide? The audience is called to exceed the barrier made of male bodies, in order to suggest the transition to the other side of ourselves, and importance of accepting the otherness and diversity as such. Men's bodies on the ship's floor suggest a complex identity issue from sexual to social sense. Sailors or migrants, gay clubbing guys or men confused about their sexuality, queer people or people who feel they belong to a particular group? Squeezed in one corner, their bodies reflect all these questions and possible scenes from ships - from the sailors on the overseas boats and cruisers where they are being stuck for days to migrant ships that often lead people who search for a better life into the death up to people in the clubs able to express all their sexual desires and passions ...Polaroid photos serve to capture the passing moment of performance on board and all of the above meanings.









Čin fotografisanja polaroid kamerom bio je sastavni deo performansa "I Only Want To Love Me" a snimljenih 48 polaroid fotografija deo su istoimenog rada.



AMUSE ME

Contemporary Art Gallery Subotica | Subotica, Serbia | 2018

Site-specific installation in the upper level of the Raichle palace, 7 different rooms linked with a story about fake history of the life of architect Ferenc Raichle - the creator and first owner of the house, through the collection of objects, sculptures and drawings, which are connected by the voices of two female performers singing famous and long forbidden "suicidal" song Gloomy Sunday of the Hungarian composer Reszo Seress

Interventions in the space of the Raichle palace within the exhibition Amuse me, created as site-specific installations, are reconstructing and reinterpreting the history of the building itself. The palace is one of the most important and most interesting architectural works of the Hungarian Art nouveau and lifework of the famous architect Ferenc Raichle who designed it to be his family home and work bureau. With great investments it was built in 1904, but Raichle himself lived in it only for a few years. Further destiny of the building, as well as the owners, was highly influenced by the political and historical situation, and since 1968. this protected cultural monument houses the Contemporary Art Gallery Subotica. An interesting fact about the existence of a certain secret passage represents the intrigue from the life of the palace. According to beliefs, this corridor led to the neighboring house where Ferenc Raichle's mistress lived. The hidden part of the history of the palace is a direct inspiration for the exhibition Amuse me, while the invisible passages, through the incurability and mysteriousness they carry, bring us into the experience of the whole space as the metaphor of the inner life of the individual and the human psyche. The secret passage becomes a symbol of the transition to the other side, in the darkest and most hidden part of ourselves...The contradiction between the notion of a harmonious life on the surface and what, really, exists below this surface, served as a motive for a series of drawings - interventions on the reproductions from the book Russian Museum - watercolors and drawings, XVIII-XX century, V. A. Puskarev.

A fictional historical narrative leads us through the entire ambience of the house, its fictional collections of drawings and sculptures, enchanting the fragility of the human existence, which is as well visible in the sensitive rooms paved with ceramics that are cracking under the weight of our steps. The voices of two singers which overlap through the house are connecting all the rooms into a unique space, atmosphere or emotional state. The song Gloomy Sunday is performed in the original Hungarian version and also translated to Serbian language. This famous song was composed by Rezso Seress at first as an anti-war statement that the world we know disappears but only two years later, Hungarian poet Laszlo Javor wrote his love lyrics which will become official. Soon after his verses originated, the song gained the epithet of the saddest, while the urban legend says that it was associated with a large number of suicides, which is why it was forbidden for public performances until the nine-ties. The song, however, has become more and more popular around the world, and even the legendary jazz singer, Billie Holliday, recorded her own, more relaxed, version. Composer Rezso Seress performed it in Budapest until the end of his life. Gloomy Sunday is also linked to Subotica itself as the favorite song of the writer Danilo Kiš, whose quotations are written on some of the exhibited drawings.





MYSTERY
SOMETIMES A WIND
AND KISS
DREWER THE DARKNESS
MAY THE MYSTERIES OF LOVE
COME CLEAR
AND DANCE IN LIGHT
AND SHOW THAT WE ARE LOVE
SOMETIMES A WIND BLOWS
AND THE MYSTERIES OF LOVE
COME CLEAR







BABYLON THE GREAT

Eugster II Belgrade Gallery | Belgrade, Serbia | 2017

4 hour long performance inspired by the legend of Babylon with 12 male performers

Ivana Ivković addresses the above-mentioned questions in the exhibition *Babylon the Great* by exploring the male body as a central motif and a performative instrument that she, in various ways, orchestrates through scenes and in different relations within the exhibition space. The works presented at this exhibition are related to her project *Lines, Rows, Columns (Dormitory)*, which was performed during the 56th October Salon in 2016. She is using the segments of this ambiental installation through photographic documentation that serves as a starting point, i.e. a visual pretext for the creation of large-scale tapestries, which are placed on the gallery walls. Scenes and visual fragments from the previously created installation with performative character are transferred into a woven image and complemented by text that additionally complicates the possible meanings of the artist's gesture, simultaneously indicating the continuous self-reflection as a constituent element of her practice. The culmination of Ivković's examination into the persistent interest for the feeling of intimacy, which is performed by means of denuding the tangible (physical) body, and through it the concealed (emotional) state as well, occurs in the center of the exhibition architecture where the scenes from the tapestries are being embodied in the space, recreating the performative environment in which the bodies participate in an orchestrated event of a monumental structure with ephemeral consequences.

excerpt from the text *On ephemeral consequences of Ivana Ivković's art* by Ana Bogdanović

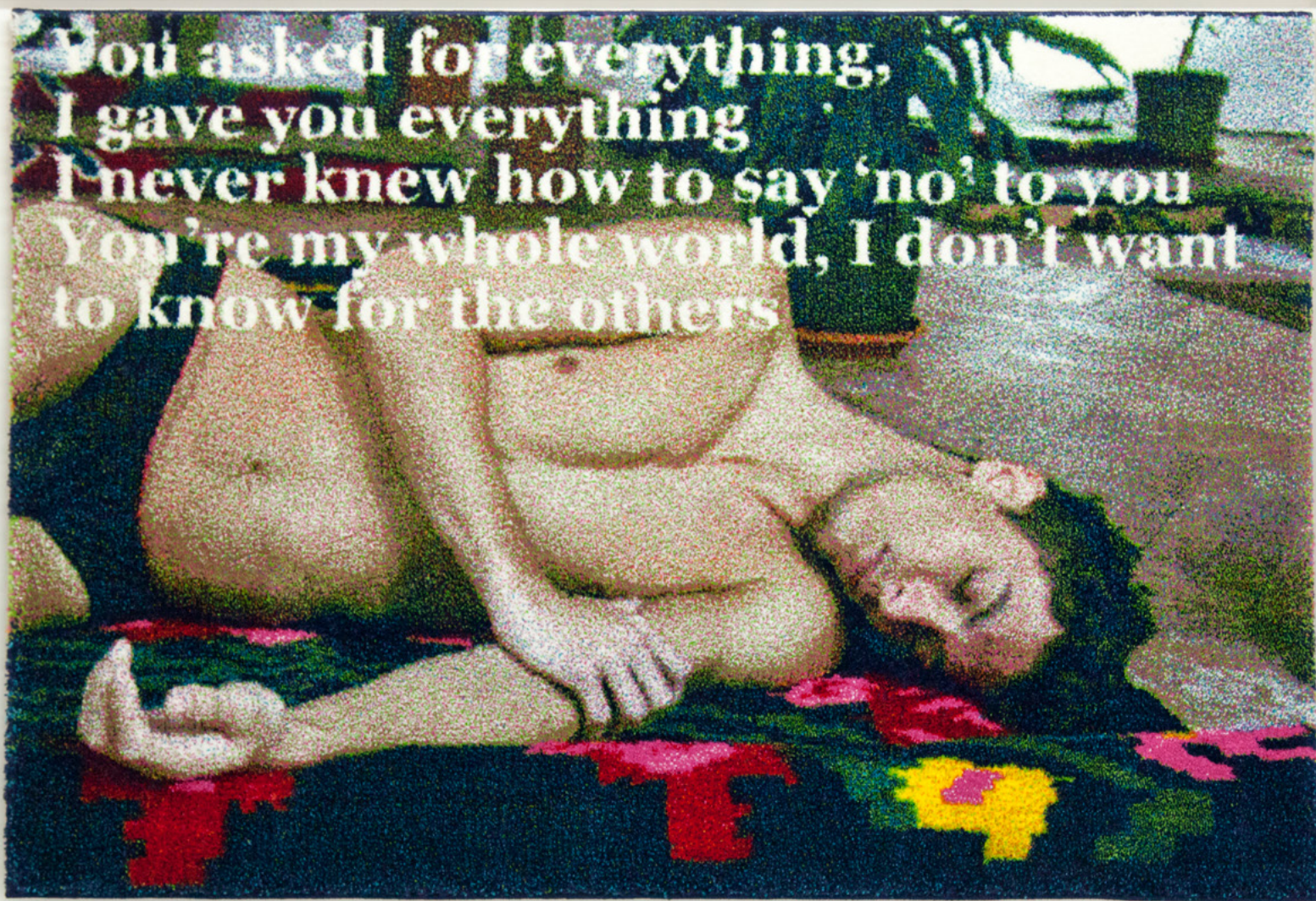


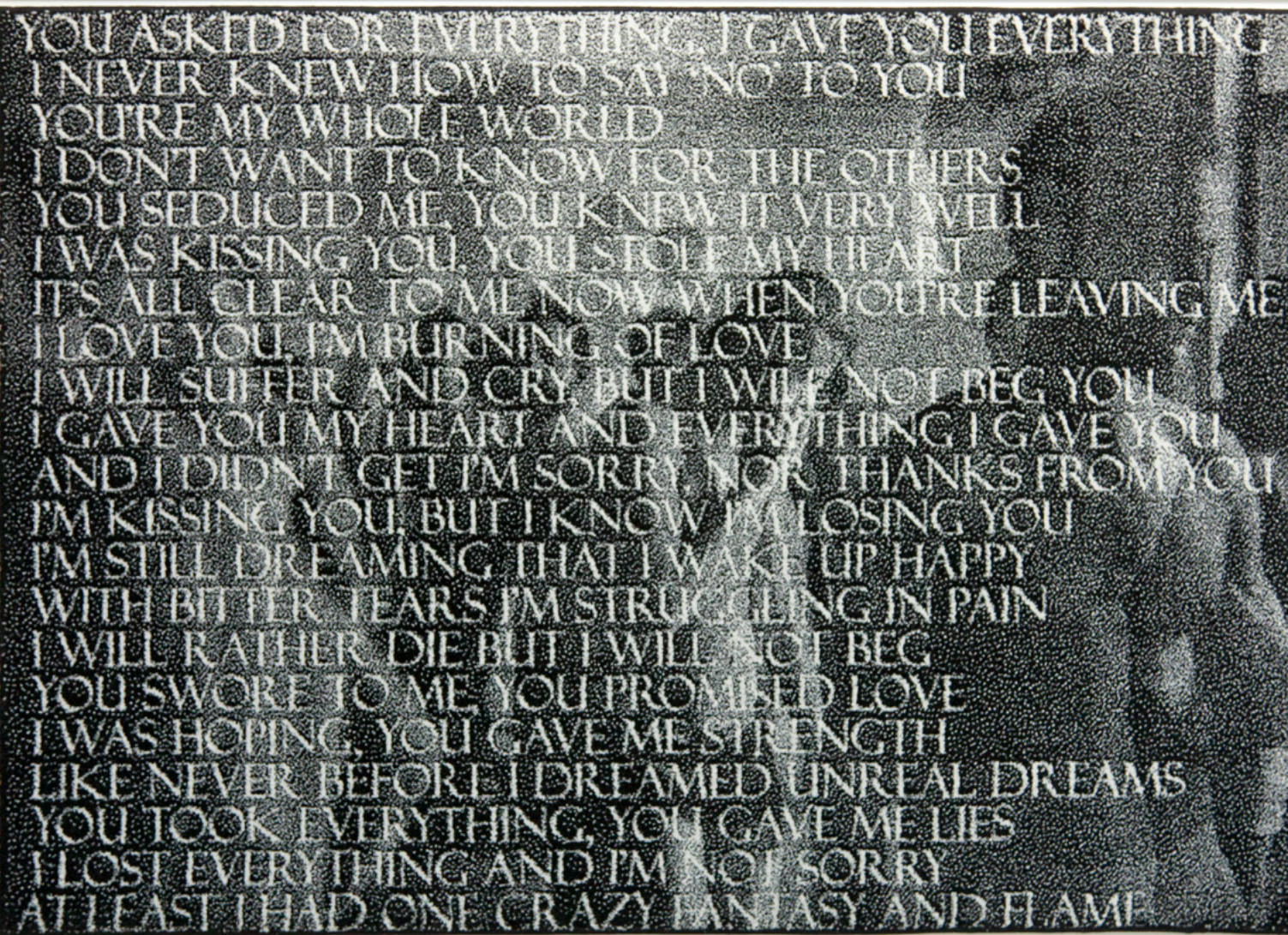




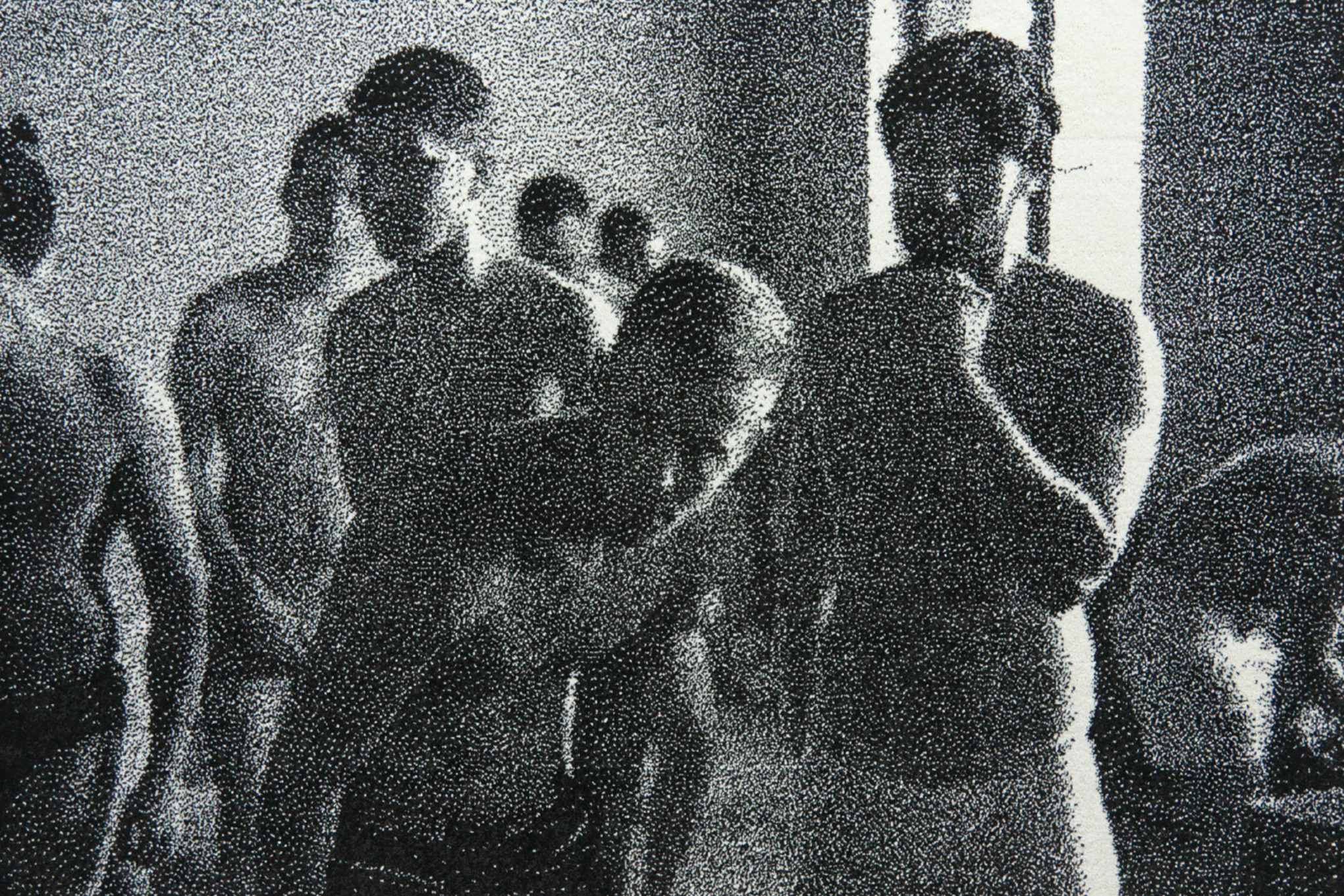


You asked for everything,
I gave you everything
I never knew how to say 'no' to you
You're my whole world, I don't want
to know for the others





YOU ASKED FOR EVERYTHING, I GAVE YOU EVERYTHING
I NEVER KNEW HOW TO SAY 'NO' TO YOU
YOU'RE MY WHOLE WORLD
I DON'T WANT TO KNOW FOR THE OTHERS
YOU SEDUCED ME, YOU KNEW IT VERY WELL
I WAS KISSING YOU, YOU STOLE MY HEART
IT'S ALL CLEAR TO ME NOW WHEN YOU'RE LEAVING ME
I LOVE YOU, I'M BURNING OF LOVE
I WILL SUFFER AND CRY, BUT I WILL NOT BEG YOU
I GAVE YOU MY HEART AND EVERYTHING I GAVE YOU
AND I DIDN'T GET I'M SORRY, NOT THANKS FROM YOU
I'M KISSING YOU, BUT I KNOW I'M LOSING YOU
I'M STILL DREAMING THAT I WAKE UP HAPPY
WITH BITTER TEARS I'M STRUGGLING IN PAIN
I WILL RATHER DIE BUT I WILL NOT BEG
YOU SWORE TO ME, YOU PROMISED LOVE
I WAS HOPING, YOU GAVE ME STRENGTH
LIKE NEVER BEFORE I DREAMED UNREAL DREAMS
YOU TOOK EVERYTHING, YOU GAVE ME LIES
I LOST EVERYTHING AND I'M NOT SORRY
AT LEAST I HAD ONE CRAZY FANTASY AND FLAME



LINES, ROWS, COLUMNS (DORMITORY)

Museum of Belgrade City | Belgrade, Serbia | 2016

Lines, Rows, Columns (Dormitory), 2016, is a site specific installation with 5 hour long performance (25 participants) made for a particular place in the Museum of Belgrade building (New Military School, arch. Dimitrije T. Leko, 1899) | 56. Oktober Salon - The Pleasure Of Love, curated by David Elliott

Naked male bodies, lying still and sideways, form a symmetrical 5 x 5 metre composition. The scene is static except that every 30 minutes the figures shift their positions to change the side on which they are lying, a simultaneous movement that alludes to the changing of the guard in this formerly military building. Beside the bodies brightly coloured rugs are set in the same order and palm trees also add to the ambience. The lines and rows of rugs and bodies evoke a dormitory in the former military school. But this scene is also a metaphor for the intimacy of a bedroom in which the powerful presence of the nudes suggests lovers (in rows) that counteracts, perhaps, a personal vacuum or hollow feeling of insufficiency. These figures (between 25 and 50 years of age) are at the peak of their physical power, but the supine posture of their bodies suggests tension because it signifies a loss of power and control. In spite of their order, their exposure and helplessness create an impression of sensuality within this space. Yet we wish to set and preserve order in all areas of life: in love, politics, personal life, state, military and power.

The scene mutates and changes whenever the male nudes are present, then the void of absence is replaced by the fullness of their physical presence. During the exhibition participants come and go, taking their positions randomly without any timetable or schedule. This creates a dynamic but tentative state of visual and physical flux in which the spectator is unsure of what will be witnessed.











LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW

long term site-specific art project set at different locations and places (selection)

The message LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW, activates different spaces in which it is installed and exposed, showing the specificity of a certain community or society related to the current time we live in and its challenges and complexities, and so each time it gets new meanings and readings.

LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW I Beirut Art Residency I Beirut, Lebanon I 2015

Installation at the rooftop of the gas station in Gemmayze (part of Beirut): billboard, carpets, old neon signs and palm trees

LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW - behind the scene I REMONT Gallery I Belgrade, Serbia I 2016

Installation in the form of textile object/ a curtain behind which is the selection of drawings and prints. The work was the part of the exhibition From diaspora to diversities, international program curated by Miroslav Karić

LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW I National museum of Šabac I Šabac, Serbia I 2019

Intervention on the facade of the museum building, the work was the part of the exhibition Memory of the city, curated by Nela Tonković



LIKE THERE IS
NO
TOMORROW

M

Ceral

Coral
BP Lubricants
Ticket Auto

A black and white photograph of a large tapestry hanging in a room. The tapestry features a dense, repeating pattern of tropical leaves, possibly palm fronds. Overlaid on the tapestry is the text "LIKE THERE IS NO TOMORROW" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. The text is arranged in three lines: "LIKE THERE IS" on the top line, "NO" on the middle line, and "TOMORROW" on the bottom line. The room has a wooden floor and a window on the left side. The lighting is soft, coming from the window.

LIKE THERE IS
NO
TOMORROW

WHEN WE WERE SAD

National Museum of Montenegro | Cetinje, Montenegro | 2018

Site specific installation with a performance at the opening, inspired by the story of centuries of migration of young men in this part of Montenegro.

The installation was a part of the exhibition From Diaspora To Diversities, curated by Miroslav Karić

"...The eternal, compulsory, and chosen migrations were connecting us ... the feeling of the alienity from which both of us suffered, secretly, sometimes publicly, but never gave up, as if it seemed to us that it was the worst, but and the most valuable factor in our destiny When I was again his guest, of course, in one of his asylum rooms in Paris, for several days, it seemed to me that my first task was to arrange the room for him. "If you think that you will arrange my life, do not bother." He said watching me with some pity. "My life is not in the things." He said, this man who by essentially naming all the things touched with his gift possessed much more of them, more than us who wanted them, if they were pleasant, or if they were terrible to give up ... We confessed "the painful lives" ... in the end, in the whirlpool of the awakening, and the shame that each confession implies, one of us said: "Perhaps life does not hurt. It may hurt to know that it is not being guided in the right way. "The other said:" Maybe exactly that is - life." *

The feeling of alienation, the eternal forced or chosen migration, the decaying of life, the uproar of waking and "Is this life ?!" - precisely these graded states in Pekić's text inspired by talks with Kiš, are the conceptual framework of the work When we were sad. Transition from the motherland which, whatever it was, was unknown or different, as a complex, lasting or impossible process, regardless of whether it comes from need or necessity. The psychological background of wandering and searching related to geographical movement in search of a better life is a thematic framework of a site-specific installation that points to the fragility of our existence and the sincerity of our inner system in which the relationship to origin takes an important place. The burden of this relationship, in fact, the very burden of origin and heritage, is a very symptomatic phenomenon in the Balkans. What do we bring with ourselves from the environment from which we come from and how much the relation to origin changes and breaks down from a distance.

**quotation from the text of the writer Borisav Pekić (Podgorica, 1930) on the occasion of the death of friend, also the writer Danil Kiš (Subotica, 1935)*











SINCE I MET YOU I HAVE NO PEACE

SULUJ Gallery | Belgrade, Serbia | 2012

Machine woven rug made of 100% New Zealand wool, dimensions (164 x 240 cm); in the preexisting Persian motif from the factory's catalogue of rugs, my drawing and text were integrated by digital intervention and woven together

Since she appeared on the art scene in the middle of the last decade, Ivana Ivković (1979) has gained the affirmation of a professionally curious, ambitious and concentrated person, and each of her new projects explores the power of reading various communication codes and their enigmatic layers with provocation and strong metaphors. After a dozen exhibitions / projects that she has realized so far, among which we would single out last year's work "Presenta 6" presented in the Gallery of the Cultural Center of Belgrade, the ideological matrix of this artist - traveler, nomad - citizen of the world, whose works often have a travelogue character and who personalizes her active presence mostly in the field of feminine empathy. It can be said that in this discourse the empathy of the femina is one of the translators and connections with the context of one's own time as well as the reflections of historical facts. On that basis, Ivana Ivković builds her own creative strategy by testing the permeability of the boundaries between the public and the intimate and, as she says, connects, intervenes, mixes autobiographical content with social, geographical, historical, and within a philosophical topic or issue that occupies her. In the realization of her ideas, she sovereignly rules various media - drawing, painting, photography, installation, ambience. The concept of the new work is complex both ideologically, and visually, and spatially because it relates to the chosen location. And the bold poetic title "Since I met you I have no peace" is set as a trap and / or a kind of signpost through the labyrinth on the path between our desires and possibilities. Thus, the space of the SULUJ gallery is an active factor in the exhibition, whose ambience is emphasized by the intimacy of the two connected rooms. The very title of the work, with its indicative message and the potential of the apartment, contextualizes the setting whose artistic interventions consist of excellent drawings, lightbox and floor installations of two carpets, which allows you to literally enter and walk through the ambience. In the first place, Ivana Ivković focuses on the issues of the male-female principle in this work, confronting their scattered, often difficult to read, enigmatic projections. At the same time, it uses completely different documentary-emblematic and linguistic-visual properties of well-known personalities (Basque, Chegevara), relativizing to the end our idea of permanent models, it further violates standard sources and combines the incompatible. The striking work is a two-part woolen carpet in whose existing peaceful Persian pattern is woven a drawing of two huge disturbing black eagles. It is obvious that in this contrast of diametrical differences - the transposed drawing on the existing eastern uterus which accompanies the text as a leitmotif "Since I met you I have no peace" - a dramatically deepened idea of gender differences and prevailing prejudices, the search for harmony and mutual peace in spite of everything. Balancing in this delicate project the duality of phenomena and ideas as well as the ambiguous interpretation of public and private, the dominance of power and fragility of being, general places and personal / autobiographical, global and local, archetypal and new, Ivana Ivković boldly marks the problems of her generation and time in which the individual finds it difficult to find the true nature of people and phenomena, energy balance, healthy and spontaneous communication, foundations in disturbed impersonal and aggressive consumer alienation.

Road through the labyrinth, Ljiljana Ćinkul



SINCE I MET YOU I HAVE NO PEACE

PRESENTE 6

Art Gallery of Belgrade Cultural Center | Belgrade, Serbia | 2011

Drawing installation - graphite and graphite pencils on the paper, 285x800 cm

„... for freedom for our families, you were taken away alive, we want you back alive“

This is a translation of the slogan in a documentary photograph, exhibited at the National Museum in Lima, showing a group of six Peruvian women in a silent and peaceful protest. Looking at it today, in the time of post feminism, it can be concluded that we have forgotten the essence of women's action, the voice of ordinary, often deprived, women. Now, when we are all equal on paper and with equal rights in the eyes of the law, we have the opportunity, in numerous media, to hear only the voices of female intellectuals, politicians and entertainers while ordinary women are just forgotten and put aside. In the period after the Second World War, the most brutal and bloody of all wars, people believed that the lesson had been learnt and that the world was entering a period which would be marked by progress, peaceful coexistence and religious tolerance. Unfortunately, the second part of the 20th century was marked by numerous conflicts caused by ideological struggle of the Great Powers and their old non-eradicated imperial ambitions. One of the saddest episodes in the struggle for human rights and basic liberties took place in the Seventies and Eighties in many countries of Central and South America. Persecutions, taking away and killing of people (especially men), became the everyday life that marked this period. The vanished disappeared without any trace and their families have never found out why they were taken away and what happened to them. Their struggle has not been over.

This exhibition is based on a documentary photograph which the Belgrade artist Ivana Ivković saw and photographed on her journey. By careful reframing, she puts the emblematic image of six protesting women in the foreground. The position and character of the presented women in combination with the inscription suggests that it is about a powerful and highly important moment with political connotation, even if you do not understand the text. The body rhetoric of its participants suggests peacefulness and tranquility that hide the hideous and disturbing truth. As if they want to show how much their peaceful protest differs from all those unthinkable actions due to which their loved ones have become absent, captured and murdered. The message has been delivered; by 'repeating' the photograph in the form of a monumental drawing throughout the gallery wall, the artist actually repeats their protest. Therefore, her drawing is not a mere copying of the situation from the photo, it has a personal tone, a characteristic style and persistence in sending the message that can be compared with the persistence of the presented women struggling for their rights and the rights of all the vanished people. It is also a giant political poster, a banner, which – in the best tradition of Soviet Agitprop – joins art intervention and active political and ideological attitude.

excerpt from the text *The Presence of the Absent* by Saša Janjić

CONSTRUYAMOS UNA AMÉRICA LATINA EN EL PRESENTE
¡POR LA LIBERTAD DE NUESTROS FAMILIARES!
VIVOS LOS LEVARAMOS — VIVOS LOS QUEREMOS!
AYAC 83



61 DAYS IN HARLEM

FLU Gallery | Belgrade, Serbia | 2012

Light-box installation (410x130cm) NO MATTER WHAT TONIGHT YOU ARE GOING HOME was a part of the exhibition inspired by twomonth stay in New York - „61 days in Harlem“. It consists of several titles – advertising slogans from the NYC subway, selected from a collection made by choosing and writing down one advertising message per day. By isolating textual messages from their visual context, a new possibility for different, multilayer reading of the messages emerges.

The world changes with our measurement methods, our inter-sets. The borders of the world are the borders of our middle... We are riding on the underground, and the stations are marked by a row of advertisement messages on billboards. Ads can tell us in which part of the city we are. The words are borderlines: Harlem- health insurance, Bronx-SOS numbers and Stop the Violence action, Manhattan- summer vacations, enterprises of all kinds, Queens- ads for kindergartens and private schools, Long Island-sports, drinks and restaurants.... To what degree, the objective reality depends on the eye of the beholder? After the intervention of the perspective during renaissance and the theory of sets, in 19th century, we are know that the image of the world depends of the observer's position in it. Endless, lonesome, idle rides change the perception, and the world is speeding by, while we slowly drag our eyes across the lines of slogans! We are beingdragged away, further, from the discovery of the unchangeable, constant repr sentation, by the visual sequences and relativistic distortions with the viewer's repetitive movements resembling a constant head nodding/jiggling (because everything jiggles and shakes in the train). Ivana comes up with a solution to that problem! Illuminated monolith, like a Kubrick's Light box, in the center the gallery of FLU, which is in the very heart of the city. Right there, where everything is covered with ads, Ivana positions topos, Genius loci protective spirit of the place, causing an Archimedean shake. Every viewer made of particles in a random thermic movement is in an amazing dynamic correlation with the rest of the world. NO MATTER WHAT TONIGHT YOU ARE GOING HOME- insecurities are fading, the turmoil within the viewer is transposing into chaos outside, anticipating another inner constant- " typical duration time", that will expire, the moment we return back to the sanctuary. Ivana pulls us in, to safety, into the gallery space, a warm inner sanctum, with certitude of a relief. Hyper-intermediate as an instant hibernation was encouraged by suggestive contrast of form and the body of the text. The moment of encounter is the moment when we find out that no matter what, everything will be all right. " In fact, for reality to begin its existence, it has to be comprehended in contrast to something that is not a reality..." NOTHING BUT A GOOD TIME ultimatum that includes all our pursuits and failures, beauties from the magazines and smiling elder people in front of banks, long white sandy beaches and wild nights, forgotten crafts, skills and rows of literature about Self-help. It is an imperative that draws a smile on your face. It eases. And the day- dream can begin. Ivana's neon lights radiate "Condensed oneiric matter", at the end of this summer, in the gallery of FLU.



**NO
MATTER
WHAT
TONIGHT
YOU
ARE
GOING
HOME**

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work unfolds through a dialogue with personal emotional experiences, and it is based on a re-examination of not only the domain of lived experience, but also that of wishful and imaginary thinking, thus opening up questions about the complexity of intimacy as a space of uncovering and concealing, sharing and revealing of self and otherness.

I am foregrounding the problematic framework that relates to questions of identity and gender experiences, as well as of the deconstruction of the imposed stereotypical (gender) roles, through the introduction of the naked or semi-naked male body as a performative instrument – a medium characterised by a specific sensitivity and sensuality. By inverting the “classic” division of the roles, I treat the male body as a symbol, a litmus paper test in which prejudices, taboos and social beliefs in the Balkans, as well as beyond it, are reflected. Men – equally venerated and demonized in the Serbian culture of the 1990s – and their physical presence and appearance became an obsession in pop-folk songs, films, as well as in real life as the result of social changes, war, trepidation and fear. The vision of man as a soldier, dangerous criminal or disturbed street kid has, paradoxically, placed the male body in a position where it becomes objectivised and vulnerable. As I grew up in the midst of political turmoil and conflicts, painful social changes represented an integral part of everyday life and existence. My works, although starting out from romantic topics, always take into account the social atmosphere and its complexities, remaining engaged in an effort to present a multi-layered relation between the individual and the system in our contemporary moment.

Through performances that comprise certain tableau vivant situations and arrangements with a larger number of participants, I also deal with the question of the experiences of the spectators, of their emotional and psychological perception. I conceptualise the scene by choosing visual and spatial elements which serve to significationally and symbolically contextualise the place of the exhibition, and through work with performers, characterised by minimalist choreographies, I place the lifelikeness of the scene at the center of the artwork’s potential for communication, and thus a more immediate and provocative connection with the audience. Most of the performers have no previous stage experience coming as they do from various and disparate backgrounds, something which makes them authentic and which the audience quickly recognises and allows, like a mirroring effect, the transfer of the feeling of being exposed and makes visible the audience’s own prejudices. I am examining and getting to know my position through working with masculine, queer, fluid identities, and understanding for the sensitivity of the other. As a woman I was interested to get to know and to come to terms with male sensitivity, believing that presenting naked men might abolish certain taboos and transform existing attitudes around masculinity. The given social role which turns men into pillars of stability and puts them in a position of power determines, but also undermines, their identity as well as the identity of women.

My need for personal growth through my works enabled me to present myself to the audience in a more sincere manner, and through my own moot points to open a channel of communication and to eventually understand and surpass certain limitations. Drawing remains a constitutive element and activity in the articulation of my ideas. I have been dedicated to it from the very beginning as I explore its limits and the possibilities of transposing it into other media (photography, ambiental and site-specific installations, textile and light objects, performances). My site-specific approach to art is the result of my experiences of frequent travels and an enduring nomadic life. The contents of my artworks are permeated by acts of introspection and a quest to establish a personal and artistic identity, intertwining elements from intimate stories and political, cultural and historical circumstances as well as the ambiance of various geographic areas. Over the past couple of years, I have been based in Belgrade since it allows me to realise more demanding projects and to practice art in a more continuous manner. I am interested in communication with the audience as there are some questions that are essential and worth posing in my own country. The experiences of traveling, performing and adapting my artworks to other/different milieus as well as the chance to compare different ways of working in the local environment have given me valuable self-confidence. I have collaborated – through which I further develop – with curators, dramaturges, actors, performers, directors of photography, editors, sound designers, based on trust as the key component. I gain fulfilment from team work, from exiting the personal and going into the collective, and from creative polyphony.

In my projects, I also tackle the question of the deconstruction of the exhibition narrative in the context of engaged, transformative and processual contemporary artistic practice. I combine the languages of the fine arts, theatre, mass media culture, television, the internet in a post-media or hybrid artistic practice that opens up the oculocentric concept of art to immersive experiences and tactile, auditory and corporal affects. In this way, a site-specific installation becomes a space of unstable sensory experiences, an open hyper-dynamic system that simultaneously comprises the sphere of personal and collective space and activities, and re-examines the position of the individual in the exhibition space, of her/his identity as well as her/his connectedness with the social environment.

Ivana Ivković
from The Secondary Archive

Ivana Ivković (*1979, based in Belgrade) gained recognition with her frank and intensely private, self-reflexive approach. Her nomadic style of life – travels, frequent geographical dislocations and exposures to different cultural surroundings, had a major influence over her work, which involves personal history and real and invented memories. The notion of identity and gendered experience are the main elements in her works. In the most unexpected way, Ivković shifts the infamous classical roles between women and men in art, using the naked or semi-naked male body as a performative instrument within orchestrated scenes, tableau vivant. Recently, Ivana Ivković has shown her work at: Humboldt Forum Berlin, Salon of the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade, Biennale Internazionale Donna in Trieste, Museums Quartier in Vienna, History museum of Bosnia in Sarajevo, TAF Athens, Kibla portal in Maribor, Slovenia, National Museum of Montenegro, Hosek Contemporary in Berlin, among other places.

Ivković gained international recognition mostly by shifting the infamous classical roles between women and men in her drawings, performances, and site-specific works. The notion of identity and gendered experience plays a key role in her work. Ivković examines gender roles between women and men in the art using the naked or semi-naked male body as a performative instrument within her orchestrated scenes or tableau vivant. Exposed in different relations within the exhibition space and with minimalistic choreography, the male body in Ivana's performances becomes precisely a medium, a channel of sensitivity, vulnerability, discomfort, and sensuality.

Evolving between personal history and transitory memories, Ivana's artistic practice encompasses a wide range of media through which she creates site-specific interventions and distinctively remarkable environments in exhibition space. Ivana's work is primarily associated with the medium of drawings, revealing technical, expressive, and interpretive potential in its flexible boundaries through the articulation of conceptual and thematic contents that are in the focus of the author's research: ranging from personal reflections, intimate stories and immediate surroundings to various phenomena of global socio-political context resulting from the artist frequented dislocation through travel and nomadic way of life.

Whether they are staying as the two-dimensional play of lines and shapes, or they are monumentalized and build for a certain space, all of Ivana's work is, above all, connected through associativity of the scenes, complex symbolic meanings of chosen motifs, subtle and poetic but at the same time a very strong statement. Distinctive and individual creative process which Ivana constantly builds in the drawing and then further develops through work with other carefully chosen media (photography, ambient, and site-specific installations, textile and luminous objects, performances, and orchestrated scenes) most accurately can be understood as a reflection of a specific sensibility and perception of the world. This process of reflection in the author's search for personal and artistic identity faces and deeply permeates intimate narratives and autobiographical references with the socio-political realities of space and environments from North and Latin America, through Africa and Europe to the Middle East.

You Are Not My Brother, Brother: Transitory Masculinity in the Art of Ivana Ivković

Natalija Paunić

Much like in the West, Serbian culture was built on patriarchal foundations that were encouraged rather than deterred during the 1990s. In the age of Freedom¹ for a world with George Michael in its midst, there was an age of war on the outskirts of Europe—and we had our local pop stars as well. Popular media and music served as a mirror for the way people lived—but more than just a mirror, they became a tool. Channeling the desperation of young and lost generations, the music industry found a pattern to sustain the melodrama long after the critical years of Yugoslavia's collapse. While men were soldiers and inevitably missed, their sons became troubled underdogs and alfas with toy guns, and their daughters searched elsewhere for father figures. Popular music and its lyrics circulated throughout this infinitely fruitful social context that spoke to the majority of the working class. In such a setting, male gender identity is placed under a strange spotlight and into a stereotyped narrative: The more and further they go away, the more longing their lovers experience. As a consequence, men often take on the role of bad boys who never truly commit and run away, alone or with other women, successfully playing their part in the tacit Balkan tragedy that exists through national music and films, rooted in and inspired by real life.² This behavior is followed by their respective partners' initial damnation or sadness, quickly replaced by forgiveness and adoration in spite of all obstacles. The image of love prevails and the cycle repeats ad infinitum.

Investigating everyday life in the Balkans, Ivana Ivković presents this unique perception of men that has developed over the course of the last thirty years. Her exploration is visual and observant, without actual scientific data, but developed with empathy and an inquisitive eye. While being praised and adored by their anxious avoidant offspring and lonely partners, the men in these stories are expected to live up to God-like standards. This is how their person becomes detached from their body, as well as how their objectification begins. Their bodies are totems, their figures are action figures; their spirit, however, fades into the background, unattainable and unknown. The perception of modern man in Serbian popular music is thus that of a well-bred, strong, powerful, and good-looking man with no character.

1 Freedom! '90 is a pop song by George Michael, released in the year 1990.

2 An example for such a problematic relationship is elaborately depicted in the movie *Klip* (2012) by the Serbian director Maja Miloš.

Reflecting in his own image created by the system, man himself becomes a tableau vivant, which is precisely the medium Ivković employs for her art. In these constructs—born out of the heteronormative order—women are the ones who inadvertently take on the role of the creator, giving the impression of the closed-off male counterpart through projection and imagination. Being an occasional victim of this system herself, Ivković observes the script closely and breaks it down with its own weapons. She gives us living pictures, exaggerated emotion, and ambivalent silence, as in the installation *Lines, Rows, Columns (Dormitory)*, 2016, where an army of men at the peak of their power and strength are presented almost nude and vulnerable, even if oddly static and arranged in a militant manner. Men in her installations look like objects, and this latently feminist twist raises questions: Is this the revenge for the long objectified female body? Is this the emancipation of the macho? Is this queerness or masculinity?

Ivković speaks to her audience through lyric poetry, minimal choreography, and imagery. In her works, words are appropriated from folk songs and even more often from the contemporary hybrid alternative, colloquially called “turbo-folk.” In translation from BCS¹ to English, the lyrics the artist uses become even more ambiguous, and both the visual and the verbal are characterized by a certain lack of definition, which gives the work its interpretative qualities. When looking at the lyrics of the song *Brat* (2013) by Ceca, one of Serbia’s most popular living singers who is often cited in Ivković’s work², one could easily confuse a story about romantic love with a story about civil war “frenemies” reminiscing or reuniting: “I’ve only got one hour, you are not my brother, brother, no, no, no, no; you’re like a spaceship, we’re only related by booze, no, no, no, no; some fires, they never stop burning; bad relationships, they never die—so let’s do it all over again.” The possibility to understand the lyrics in different ways is what gives Ivković’s work its final touch, as this gets translated in visual terms as well, as in drawings with textual snippets that are on the verge between irony and genuine emotion, between love and delusion, and between what is being appreciated as high art and what is part of the mundane.

1 Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian.

2 The title of and elements in Ivković’s seminal solo exhibition at Eugster || Belgrade, *I Gave You Everything* (2017), referred to one of Ceca’s most famous songs, titled *Tražio si sve* (You Asked for Everything, 1994), originally sung by Hanka Paldum and titled *Ja te volim* (I Love You, 1982). In keeping with the theme, Ivković utilizes a song that transitioned from the past niche of folk music into the “turbo-folk” zone that became increasingly popularized in the 1990s.