5 UNEASY PIECES + AN OPEN investigation

9.6.—30.7.2016, Gallery UM, nám. Jana Palacha 80, Prague 1

open: Mon–Sat 10am–6pm, entry free, umprum.cz

OPEN FROM WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE AT 7 PM, TOGETHER WITH THE ARTSEMESTR EXHIBITION

5 UNEASY PIECES features works by *Adam Chodzko*, *Stephan Dillemuth*, *Constantinos Hadzinikolaou*, *Anja Kirschner*, and *Nova Melancholia* with *Dora Economou*, that deal with notions of being 'behind the scenes' and looking at another person through the prism of their work and the 'horror' that may have accompanied the conditions of its making.
As such it is not only about display, but also about processes. Therefore, there will be no "opening night" in which a fixed arrangement can be taken in as a whole, rather the 5 pieces will get partially assembled and disassembled throughout the duration of the exhibition so that each can be seen in turn, in changing configuration with the others. At different intervals, rehearsals, performances and screenings will change the character of the space, inflecting it towards being a stage, backstage, auditorium and investigations room, without ever 'easily' settling for just one or the other.

Throughout, a proportion of the space will be used for *AN OPEN INVESTIGATION* dedicated to the work and influence of the seminal Czech screenwriter, production and costume designer, dramaturge, director and artist *Ester Krumbachová* (1923 - 1996), best known for her long-term collaboration with Věra Chytilová (*Daisies*) and other leading directors of the Czechoslovak new wave, such as Jan Němec (*The Party and the Guests*) and Jaromil Jireš (*Valerie and her Week of Wonders*).

In dialogue with and through the other works, this on-going DIY research effort, undertaken together with students, invited guests, and the interested public, will manifest itself as a series of encounters, events and actions, opening into Krumbachová's formidable contribution to cinema.
Krumbachová's practise here figures as both a concrete and exemplary beacon which illuminates the hidden and often more opaque side of working-with-and-through-others. As the scholar Antonín J. Liehm noted, giving impetus and direction to the inquiry:

"[Ester Krumbachová] long anticipated the artistic and visual fin-de-siècle inspiration that has since become a fad throughout the world. Her thinking and what she wrote (which for the most part went unpublished) became an ideological hinterland, a framework, for many films. And because she never refused to help anyone who was at his wit's end [...] we will frequently find the imprint of her hand where her signature is missing. That is why it is so difficult to measure the degree of her artistic influence, which, in its own way, was a very fundamental one."

(Antonín J. Liehm, Closely Watched Films – The Czechoslovak Experience, International Arts and Science Press, New York, 1974.)

In bringing 5 UNEASY PIECES and AN OPEN INVESTIGATION to bear upon each other one may detect non-synthetic affinities between Nova Melancholia and Dora Economou's invocation of Sachtouris' poetry (in *Ectoplasms*), Hadzinikolaou's reverent ventriloquising of the figure of Aspa Stasinopoulou (in *Aspa* and *Lost Spring*), Chodzko's surprising find behind Pasolini's Salò (in *'*Reunion*; Salò'*), Dillemuth's «hard way» into meanings and materials (in *'the pleasures of now'*) and Kirschner's incursion into the horror genre (in *Moderation*).

The exhibition and related program are curated by Anja Kirschner and organized by Are | are-events.org in association with UMPRUM in Prague and LUX, London. Supported by the Goethe-Institut in Prague, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of Czech Republic, the Ministry of Culture of Czech Republic, and Prague City Hall. Special thanks to The Emblem Hotel.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL WORKS

ADAM CHODZKO
REUNION; SALÒ

I made a piece in 1998 called *'*Reunion*; Salò'* where I searched for the 16 murdered adolescents from Pier Paolo Pasolini's 1975 film *Salò* or 120 days of Sodom. I was going to stage a reunion party for these 'dead' teenagers and expected to find maybe a third of the original actors. I had a structure planned; in my head it was all going to be quite elegant!
Anyway, after three months I had only found one of them. I was becoming worried. To cut a very long story short I decided to stage the reunion with her as 'guest of honour' and all the other lost ‹dead adolescents› I would replace with their ‹doubles›. Afterwards, when the one ‹original› performer, Antinisca Nemour, was leaving I was thanking her for participating and was trying to think of questions to ask her about her involvement in Pasolini›s film. I asked her finally how she was ‹murdered› (because I realised, that unlike all the others, she is not shown being killed in the film, nor in any of the archive material from the filming). She replied that actually she had asked Pasolini if she could avoid this act (she felt uncomfortable about it) and he had respected her wishes. This was amazing! The one person who had reappeared in the present had eluded her fictional death. I had to change the piece completely having heard this response. It was both the worst and best possible answer to my search.

Adam Chodzko

STEPHAN DILLEMUTH
'THE PLEASURES OF NOW'

'the pleasures of now' is assembled from casts taken of the artist's own body and body parts of students from UMPRUM.

This Bellmeresque stock of body parts will be recombined and configured in the opening days of the show.

These dismembered, collaged, and cobbled together members are not specific portraits or allegorical figures, but a common body that may stand for an idea of non-identity of a more general subject, reflecting what is happening to all our bodies.

Thus the non-unified, suspended figure of *'the pleasures of now'* becomes an avatar that acts out both the mutilating pressures of neoliberalism upon its living subjects ("them" refugees and drone targets as well as "us" enjoyers of the metropolis) and the ongoing struggle to invent new forms-of-life within the grinding drift.

Stephan Dillemuth

Participating students: *Yury Beryozkin, Vít Čechmánek, Viktor Dedek, Linda Hauerová, Lukáš Hofmann, Lucie Jestřabíková, Kristián Kitzberger, Marketa Oplištilová, Eva Pechová, Vladimíra Pechová, Veronika Přikrylová, Ronja Hage Tange, Adam Wallace*

CONSTANTINOS HADZINIKOLAOU
ASPA AND LOST SPRING

Aspa:

I met artist Aspa Stasinopoulou in 2014.
She talked to me about her life
she showed me her Super 8 films
we went to her studio (no light).
One day I filmed her.
After (or before)
I wrote a story.
Aspa still smokes.

Lost Spring:

A part of Greek filmography is still hidden, ignored.
There are films that you can find under the soil or in the garbage.
Sometimes you have to work as a miner if you want to watch them.
In these films
I see a shepherd of calamity
a man with an umbrella lost in sea
a fire walker.
Something's lost.

Constantinos Hadzinikolaou

ANJA KIRSCHNER
MODERATION

Moderation, set in Egypt, Greece and Italy, revolves around a female horror director (Maya Lubinsky) and a screenwriter (Anna De Filippi), whose latest collaboration is haunted by encounters with its 'raw material' and the escalation of conflicting desires.

Faced with the disintegration of their project, the director becomes more and more drawn into conversations with the actors she has cast (Aida El Kashef, Michele Valley and Giovanni Lombardo Radice), which reflect on the way horror traverses the affective and material realities of their lives on and off screen.

Departing from certain tendencies in horror cinema from cold-war Europe, Infitah-era Egypt and Metapolitefsi Greece, that refused to naturalistically represent lived experience or to sublimate it by recourse to the irrational I have been asking myself if critical recourse to the horror genre could constitute an actual revolt of reason, in a desire to ultimately prevail, albeit in a heightened and by then barely legible state? The result is *Moderation*, which seeks to answer the question through the prism of the film-making process itself.

Anja Kirschner

NOVA MELANCHOLIA
WITH DORA ECONOMOU
ECTOPLASMS

Ectoplasms was originally performed in 2013 in a private apartment in the Exarcheia district of Athens. Parts of its dramaturgy and design concept have been significantly altered to allow its mood and motifs to survive the transplantation from domestic setting to exhibition space, adding Ester Krumbachová to circle of the "dear dead ones".

The performance is a particular homemade "poetry night" during which all poems from the Miltos Sachtouris collection *Ectoplasms* (1986) are recited. A farewell at the ‹80s through poems that call upon dear dead ones, with songs played on keyboards, with cheap b-movies horror scenes... It is an exercise of habituation with horror. Our helpers are the endeared dead ones.

Vassilis Noulas / Nova Melancholia

Performers: *Lida Dalla, Despoina Chatzipavlidou, Eleni Karagiorgi, Antigoni Riga*
Text: *Miltos Sachtouris*
Direction: *Vassilis Noulas*
Sets and Costumes: *Dora Economou*
The poems *When* and *Poros 1985* have been set to music by *Vassilis Noulas*

WORKS ON DISPLAY

Adam Chodzko
'Reunion; SALÒ'
1998, SD video, colour, sound, 8 min

Constantinos Hadzinikolaou
ASPA and ASPA LIGHTS A CIGARETTE
2014, digitized Super 8 film, BW, 4 min
2014/2016, book

Stephan Dillemuth
'THE PLEASURES OF NOW'
2016, plaster casts

Nova Melancholia with *Dora Economou*
ECTOPLASMS
2013/2016, props from the performance, various materials

PERFORMANCES & SCREENINGS

9 and 10 June, 6 pm
Nova Melancholia with *Dora Economou*
ECTOPLASMS
2013, performance, 60 min

21 June, 6 pm
Constantinos Hadzinikolaou
LOST SPRING
2014 & 2016, performance lecture, 45 min

29 and 30 July, 6 pm
Anja Kirschner
MODERATION
GR/IT/EG/UK, 2016, HD video, 149 min

AN OPEN INVESTIGATION *collective research on Ester Krumbachová with Anja Kirschner, students, invited guests, and the interested public*

12 June, 2 – 6 pm
Initial meeting and film screenings
13 June, 12 – 6 pm
Small, informal symposium with invited guests
14 June, 10 am – 4 pm
Planning a common research strategy
30 July, 12 – 5 pm
Planning ahead for research in the winter semester

For more information on the program of An Open Investigation and how to participate please send an email to: are@are-events.org

ARTISTS BIOGRAPHIES

ADAM CHODZKO

(lives in Whitstable, UK) explores the interactions and possibilities of human behaviour. Working across media, from video installation to subtle interventions, with a practice that is situated both within the gallery and the wider public realm, his work investigates and invents the possibilities of collective imagination through using a poetics of everyday life. By wondering how, through the visual, we might best engage with the existence of others he reveals the realities that emerge from the search for this knowledge. Since 1991 Adam Chodzko has exhibited extensively in international solo and group exhibitions including: Tate, St Ives; Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna (MAMBo); Athens Biennale, Istanbul Biennale, Venice Biennale; Royal Academy, London; Deste Foundation, Athens; PS1, NY; Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Kunstmuseum Luzern etc. Recent projects include commissions by Creative Time, New York; The Contemporary Art Society, Frieze Art Fair, and Hayward Gallery, London.

STEPHAN DILLEMUTH

(lives in Munich) believes that his possibilities as a visual artist must be conceived in light of the ongoing transformation of the modern public sphere. In thinking about his own role and what he can do with his art, he examines questions such as: to which extent can self-organization and personal and collective integrity be established within the framework of our society of control? With its inherent methods of reflection, analysis, and experimentation, art, he believes, creates beauty, but it also has the potential to change society. The results of these experiments include installations, theatrical performances, and collaborative works as well as videos, lectures, and publications. Stephan Dillemuth teaches at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Munich. Previous exhibitions include: *Neueröffnung*, Nagel Draxler Gallery, Cologne, 2015; *Öffentliche Verkehrsmittel*, Secession, Vienna, 2012; *1st Retrospective*, Uma Certa Falta de Coerência, Porto, 2011; *The Hard Way to Enlightenment*, Transmission Gallery, Glasgow, 2010; *You Have Been Misinformed* (with Nils Norman), Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York, 2008.

CONSTANTINOS HADZINIKOLAOU

(lives in Athens) studied Surveying at the National Technical University of Athens and cinema at New Sorbonne. He obtained his Master's in digital arts from the Athens School of Fine Arts. He is a writer and filmmaker. He makes films in Super 8 and video. In 2012 he received the writer's scholarship from the National Book Centres of France and Greece. In 2013 he participated in the 4h Athens Biennale. In 2015 he participated in the anthology of Greek poetry *Futures: Poetry of the Greek Crisis* (Penned in the Margins, London, 2015).

ANJA KIRSCHNER

(lives in Athens) is an artist known for her narrative films that create genre hybrids from pop culture references, factual research and literary sources. Her latest feature film Moderation (2016) was premiered at the Berlinale film festival. In 2011 she received the Jarman Award (with David Panos), which recognises artists working in the moving image. Her films have been widely exhibited internationally, including recent solo shows at Secession, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Extra City Antwerp, Kunsthall Oslo and Staatsgalerie Stuttgart and were included in the 2nd Athens Biennale, the British Art Show 7 and the Liverpool Biennial 2012.

NOVA MELANCHOLIA

is active inside the ever-changing space of theatrical and visual arts performance since 2007. The collective attempts a non-systematic mapping of various aesthetics, strategies and texts that have contributed to the configuration of today's melancholy. Since 2010, Nova Melancholia walks along with other collectives (Institute for Live Arts Research |Π|, Mavili Collective, Omonoia Collective, Green Park), actively participating in their function (organization of conferences, joined claims to the State, occupation of the EMBROS theatre). Nova Melancholia believes in the cooperative and public nature of art because they feel that thus its inherent social and political role gets empowered. Networks of collaborations that are being weaved around and with Nova Melancholia produce politics through forms and not through declarations.

VASSILIS NOULAS

(lives in Athens) is a theatre director and visual artist based in Athens. He is founding member of the performance collective Nova Melancholia. In his work, he attempts to re-approach elements of the Greek and the European traditions of "melancholy", hence gradually constructing his personal spiritual genealogy. Four books of poetry and prose of his are published by Gavriilidis Editions, in Athens.

DORA ECONOMOU

(lives in Athens) visits places, text and materials she has had a relationship with, either literal or fictional, takes samples and composes them into sculptures and sculptural installations. She frequently collaborates with the performance group Nova Melancholia and the choreographer Kostas Tsioukas. Her recent solo shows include RIBOT contemporary art, Milan; The Breeder, Athens; Francoise Heitsch, Munich and Loraini Alimantiri gazonrouze, Athens. Selected group exhibitions include Transmission, Glasgow; Family Business, New York; SEM-ART Gallery, Monaco; Zone D, Athens and Artspace Visual Arts Centre, Sydney. She participated in the 14th Istanbul Biennial, 2015; Athens Biennial, 2011 and 2009, and *In Present Tense, Young Greek Artists*, National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens, 2007 and was shortlisted for the Deste Prize, Deste Foundation, Athens, 2005.

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