

## The LISTE Interviews: Vesselina Sarieva

The second in a series of interviews with newcomers to the LISTE art fair – in partnership with E. Gutzwiller & Cie, Banquiers



Vesselina Sarieva. Courtesy Sariev Contemporary, Plovdiv and Sofia

**The LISTE Interviews: Vesselina Sarieva**

Artviewer.com, 2019

[https://artreview.com/previews/partnership\\_liste\\_2019\\_vesselina\\_sarieva/](https://artreview.com/previews/partnership_liste_2019_vesselina_sarieva/)

**LISTE first opened its doors in 1996 and since then has developed into a key art fair for new galleries. E.Gutzwiller & Cie, Banquiers has been a supporter from the beginning, and has been the main partner since 1997. The private bank, with its head office in Basel, was founded in 1886 by Carl Gutzwiller and is still owned and managed by the Gutzwiller family and their partners. ArtReview spoke to four galleries new to LISTE this year, or who first exhibited at the fair last year. Vesselina Sarieva is the founder of Sariev Contemporary in Plovdiv and Sofia. The gallery's artists include Rada Boukova, Pravidoliub Ivanov and Nedko Solakov.**

**When was the gallery established? Does it have any particular philosophy or focus?**

Sariev is an experimental gallery and to say the exact year of its foundation is difficult. I would say that in its structure it is an ambitious, non-conservative, performative gallery – flowing from one stage of development to another depending on particular goals.

Around 2011–12 we established a list of artists (mostly young or unknown to the market) and began our international activities by participating in contemporary art fairs. It has always been important for us to be discoverers, to present new directions, trends, to stimulate even the established artists with whom we work to make something different and to surprise themselves, or to reveal a trait in them that was unsuspected. That is why we focused on little-known Bulgarian contemporary art – art that was then unfamiliar both in Bulgaria and abroad. With the foundation of Sariev Contemporary [in 2011], we launched an 'Introduction to Contemporary Art' programme with an 'Introduction to Bulgarian Contemporary Art' line. Since then we have published a book in English and, last year, launched a website.

*The LISTE Interviews: Vesselina Sarieva*

Artviewer.com, 2019

[https://artreview.com/previews/partnership\\_liste\\_2019\\_vesselina\\_sarieva/](https://artreview.com/previews/partnership_liste_2019_vesselina_sarieva/)

Our activities happen in a variety of spaces, not just our main white cube gallery in Plovdiv or the studio in Sofia. We have had pop-up galleries for example and often our exhibitions are realised in more than one venue. We are currently collaborating with the St. Joseph Catholic Church in Plovdiv where we have been putting on shows. In addition, we develop programmes for contemporary art and culture through our other organisations – the **Open Arts Foundation**, **Artnewscafé** and **Fluca**. The latter functions as a open air stage for arts and culture, not just visual arts, but also contemporary music, dance, literature, cinema, etc.

We seek constructive dialogue with the artists who make projects with us. For us, this dialogue is determinant for their projects. There is an interesting dialogue with the audience too, and the way we work with collectors and collections – international and local – represents to most of them an entry into a completely new culture.

**Aside from sales, what do you hope you gain from participating in LISTE?**

Sales are extremely important because they support our artists and our development, but they have never been an end in itself. As I mentioned, our artists are not so well-known and displaying their work is only the start. For me, selling is above all establishing a dialogue, exchanging ideas and discovering values in the work of an artist with whom the collector wants to identify. The same goes with meetings with critics or curators. I always say – I'm no different from the artist, nor is the collector different from me or the curator. Everyone has their own important contribution to make with their own resources, but we are together in sharing a common emotion around art.

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[https://artreview.com/previews/partnership\\_liste\\_2019\\_vesselina\\_sarieva/](https://artreview.com/previews/partnership_liste_2019_vesselina_sarieva/)

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**How many art fairs do you do a year and how does that sit alongside the gallery programme?**

About three fairs a year – that might not seem much, but we choose the fairs very precisely. Of course, at the very beginning we made mistakes, but who doesn't! For the last few years, our key events were at Art Brussels and Artissima. This year we also added LISTE, where I've always wanted to show, and Art-o-rama in Marseille.

**What are you showing in Basel? How did you decide?**

At LISTE we will **stage** a solo exhibition of **Vikenti Komitski**, a young artist of Bulgarian origin who lives in Berlin. There will be six new big wall objects and five collages, plus a video in the fair's Joinery Programme. I think of these works as an 'exorcism' of Bauhaus and modernist aesthetics by a savage Internet user!

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'Sometimes From a Different Angle Things Look Quite the Same' Vikenti Komitski



**'Sometimes From a Different Angle Things Look Quite the Same' Vikenti Komitski**

KOLEKTIF is a platform for contemporary art and design founded in 2009 by Teodora Kotseva (art manager), Rossi Sotirova (artist) and Nikoleta Tashkova (designer). KOLEKTIF dedicates its program to showcasing artists internationally. Main goal is to broaden the exhibition opportunities for talented artists and contribute to the promotion and presentation of their work. The organization functions without a physical base, since the three founding members operate from different countries, namely the Netherlands, Italy and Bulgaria. KOLEKTIF seeks to facilitate a dialogue with a diverse public, through network of contacts and collaborations on various occasions.

*'Sometimes from a different angle things look quite the same' Vikenti Komitski.* Author: Teodora Kotseva  
Alternative Art Guide, 30 June 2017  
<https://alternativeartguide.com/21-2/>

For the Naked she has chosen artists who are active both on the local art scene and abroad. In Bulgaria most of the artists work without formal affiliations since the gallery sector is rather small and fragmented, and there are scarcely any art initiatives and collectives operating on permanent basis. The artists presented at The Naked represent distinctive styles and different artistic quests, nevertheless they can offer only a limited view over the current practices on the local contemporary art scene.

Vikenti Komitski (b. 1983) works in Berlin, DE

Vikenti Komitski brings his wit artistic commentary on objects, installations and ready-mades. His acts are minimal in expression and yet exuberant in saying. His work is characterized by thin humor sometimes bordering cynicism and parody. In a playful manner Komitski comments on various aspects of our life, both personal and socio-political. The art works he creates are characterized by subtle and intelligent humor, which touches the viewer in very direct and insightful manner. Deliberately he chooses to work with existing objects, twisting their situational reference. Comment and artistic intervention leave a trace, which is always recognizable in his style.

In his work 'Monument of Missed Opportunities' Komitski displaced a street sign and put it on the ground. The sign does not point anymore at the right direction, it does not direct, instead it now exists in a different context, and it points to nowhere. 'WEST' is another work that has been subverted to the laws of the artist. Instead of the four principal directions we commonly associate with a compass, now we read one and only direction. If it is not the sign or the compass, then it is the artist himself who shows the direction, as seen in the video work called 'Permanent', where Vikenti tattoos an arrow on his finger. This work echoes the statement of Marcel Duchamp who argues that the artist is not the hand, which creates, but the finger that shows. In the EAST of BEST exhibition catalogue author Viktoria Draganova argues that the ironical taking of Duchamp's words is a 'permanent subjection to the legacies of Western art theory, where Duchamp plays a key role, or even an aesthetic subversion to those rules'.



'Who wants to live forever?' (2010), polyester tents, 4.50 x 6.60 x 3.15 m  
'Pyramids are dwellings for eternal residence and tents – for transitory...the tent could be seen as a symbol of life, assuming that life, in a more general sense, is a transitory experience'



'Monument To Missed Opportunities', (2009), found object, rotating engine, 53 cm in diameter



'Being Clever Doesn't Help', (2008), wooden object, 100 x 20 x 70 cm

**'Sometimes from a different angle things look quite the same' Vikenti Komitski.** Author: Teodora Kotseva  
Alternative Art Guide, 30 June 2017  
<https://alternativeartguide.com/21-2/>



'Broken Book', (2009) book (short political dictionary), 12 x 19 cm



'WEST' and 'I Wish I Was That Cool' (2012), exhibition view EAST of BEST, Roodkapje Gallery, Rotterdam

**'Sometimes from a different angle things look quite the same'** Vikenti Komitski. Author: Teodora Kotseva  
Alternative Art Guide, 30 June 2017  
<https://alternativeartguide.com/21-2/>





'Sometimes From a Different Angle Things Look Quite the Same', (2008), 2 min video loop, TV set, architecture-video footage of a gallery corner is projected in the opposite one.



**'Sometimes from a different angle things look quite the same'** Vikenti Komitski. Author: Teodora Kotseva  
Alternative Art Guide, 30 June 2017  
<https://alternativeartguide.com/21-2/>



'Why in Love', (2012), screen-printed t-shirts, unlimited edition

This project was first shown in NUTURE Art gallery, Brooklyn NY, as part of the 'Is it free.?' exhibition, where visitors were invited to take free t-shirts. The following text fragment has accompanied the work:

'...Love is thus not only an ontological motor, which produces the common and consolidates it in society, but also an open field of battle. When we think of the power of love, we need constantly to keep in mind that there are no guarantees; there is nothing automatic about its functioning and results. Love can go bad, blocking and destroying the process. The struggle to combat evil thus involves a training or education in love.'

Reference:

Hardt M. Negri A. (2009), Commonwealth, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press

EAST of BEST exhibition catalogue:

<http://issuu.com/blacktropik/docs/eastofbestcatalogue>

Kiril Kuzmanov (b. 1981) works in Sofia, BG.

Kiril Kuzmanov's approach to art making is based on deep research, both personal and topical. In his work the artist deals with artistic processes and experiences, transformed into actions related to particular space, situation or a person. According to Kiril the art practice is an occasion to represent oneself in a field, in which the opportunity for self-positioning in a specific dimension or situation becomes visible. To that end he distances himself from the works he creates, questioning or even ironizing his own artistic position.

Kiril employs different artistic measures ranging from moving images, objects, sculptures and installations. He admits that the objects he creates are associated with the provocation of certain actions, where the object becomes 'an acting object'. Most of his installations are site-specific and contextual, where 'the specificity of the space they interact with or construct, is a possible field for the objects' action. In this field the spectator is placed in a situation of constant 'subjective' communication with the object, which in itself becomes a reason for the object's action'

Video

'Jing, Jing, Jing' (2008-2010) is a part of the on-going research project- 'Wild is the Wind', which started back in 2008. This project consisted of eleven months of travel mostly by land throughout Asia (Turkey, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Altai Republic, Mongolia, China, Tibet, Nepal, Kingdom Lo Mantang, India, Kashmir) and over 2000 km trekking and climbing in Tian Shan, Altai, Mt. Genyen in West Sichuan, Tibet, Nepal Himalaya, and Kashmir. With this journey the artist explored the most untamable sites of Asia. Kuzmanov collected photo, video, audio and text documentation, which served as a basis for his fellow research. 'Jing, Jing, Jing' brings us in contact with the almost meditative play of two kids, a small window to another world, through the sneak view of a stranger.



'Wild is the Wild' (2008-2010), route map of the 11-month travel journey throughout Asia



'Jing, Jing, Jing' (2008-2010) video still from the series (Being By Itself) 7' 26", part of the on-going project 'Wild is the Wind'

**'Sometimes from a different angle things look quite the same' Vikenti Komitski.** Author: Teodora Kotseva  
Alternative Art Guide, 30 June 2017  
<https://alternativeartguide.com/21-2/>

INTERNATIONAL ARTS

# Vienna Looks East for Fine Art

By PALKO KARASZ OCT. 13, 2015

VIENNA — This summer, a message appeared in the lobby of a leading museum here. Shaky hands had written “cer variabil,” Romanian for “changing skies,” with candle smoke, on the white stucco ceiling.

The graffiti was in fact a painting by Mircea Cantor, a fitting foreword to a rare showcase of Romanian works at the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art, or MAK, which ended this month. The exhibition combined works by artists like Mr. Cantor, whose art is collected and often displayed internationally, with that of artists not often seen by people outside Romania, giving them crucial exposure.

Through this and similar events, Vienna has gained a reputation as a cultural hub for the region east of its borders — an image that many of its arts institutions have been working to promote, benefiting from funds from local and federal governments.

The Vienna Business Agency, which is financed mostly by the city, organizes shows in contemporary art galleries set up by international curators every fall. Local companies, which were among the first to expand eastward when the Iron Curtain came down more than two decades ago, also offer

**Vienna Looks East for Fine Art**, article. Author: Palko Karasz

**The New York Times**, 13 October 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/14/arts/international/vienna-looks-east-for-fine-art.html>

support through foundations and sponsorships.

“It’s very important that curators come to Romania and integrate the artists’ work in exhibitions” elsewhere, said Bärbel Vischer of MAK, who traveled the country during a year spent researching for the show. “It’s all one cultural sphere in Europe and the separation was political and not cultural,” she added, referring to the political barrier that cut East from West during the Cold War.

For centuries, this cultural space was defined by a multiethnic empire with Vienna at its center. Reminders of this past are rife throughout the region, from architecture to dining, and have defined Vienna’s current identity.

Even as the Iron Curtain divided this region, artists continued to trickle across. Austria has long been a transit point for hundreds of thousands of people making their way to the West — as the world has been seeing again in recent months with the most serious refugee crisis since World War II. But since the borders of former Soviet bloc countries opened in 1989 and border controls were eased within the European Union, Vienna has truly become a platform and stepping-stone for artists on their way to Paris, London or New York.

Viennacontemporary, the city’s main art fair, is a prime example of how the city has become a showcase for East European artists. When it took place late last month, it attracted close to 28,000 visitors and just shy of 100 galleries, with a third of the galleries from Central or Eastern Europe. While four days of dealing resulted in modest numbers compared with the big international fairs like Frieze London and Art Basel, artists and collectors alike praised the event as successful.

“People are not aware that this region has so much sophistication,” said Christina Steinbrecher-Pfandt, the artistic director of the fair.

Among this year’s dealers at the fair was Vesselina Sarieva, who in 2004 founded a contemporary art gallery with her mother in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. As the focus of the art scene moved to Sofia, the capital, and to the West, she refused to go with the flow. She stayed and worked to promote Bulgarian artists through her gallery, Sariev Contemporary, and a foundation she started.

The tiny gallery space in Plovdiv is not enough to gain influence and a wider audience, so she works through international contacts. Her gallery first

exhibited at the Vienna fair in 2011. This year Sariev Contemporary was the only Bulgarian exhibitor at Art Brussels.

“Now Plovdiv is on the map,” Ms. Sarieva said, speaking passionately of the work she does in her native city as she leaned over a wooden counter in the shape of her country. The counter was the centerpiece of a stand that showcased Bulgarian artists and curators, with many of the works reflecting on corruption, among the most pressing issues in one of the poorest countries in the European Union.

One of the artists was Kamen Stoyanov, who moved here on a university scholarship 15 years ago. He said that moving to Vienna helped him adapt to the Western art market and find business models for his work. “It’s totally different if you produce a piece of art and don’t have the pressure of the market,” he said of his time back in Bulgaria.

A generation earlier, Pravdoliub Ivanov first came to work just outside Vienna on a grant from Kultur Kontakt, a government organization that has funded residencies for artists from the region for more than 20 years. When the grant ended in 1996, he returned to Bulgaria. “Maybe I had illusions, maybe I was afraid to be an immigrant and wash dishes,” he said. As a lecturer in Sofia, he has seen his best students, including Mr. Stoyanov, migrate to the West. But he refused to complain. “Vienna is really not far,” he said, adding, “We need to focus on a way to take this process and use it in our favor,” suggesting that today’s students could become tomorrow’s teachers or exhibitors back home.

“It’s not enough to have good artists or ambitious galleries,” said Annamaria Molnar, a gallery owner in Budapest, explaining that Vienna provided a stronger cultural environment that could attract international collectors. She came to the fair with a curated selection of work by emerging Hungarian artists who explore how humans recede in urban landscapes.

Her gallery sold a number of works for 1,000 to 4,000 euros, or \$1,140 to \$4,550, this year. Such income alone, at first, would not have allowed her, or others, to participate in international fairs like this one. But sponsorships are available in Vienna that enable Central and East European galleries to pay a reduced fair fee. “This fair has grown into a meeting point,” Ms. Molnar said. “There are experts here, leaders of institutions and collectors who are open to this region specifically.”

**Vienna Looks East for Fine Art**, article. Author: Palko Karasz

**The New York Times**, 13 October 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/14/arts/international/vienna-looks-east-for-fine-art.html>

Besides the fair, Vienna offers a rich cultural program for visitors, with a number of art institutions of international standing — the Albertina, the Mumok Museum of Modern Art, the MAK or the Vienna State Opera — that are unequaled elsewhere in the region. The city often tops rankings in terms of quality of life and Austria is by far the wealthiest country compared with its Eastern neighbors. According to data from the European Group on Museum Statistics, museums here have several times more to spend than their Eastern counterparts and are visited by much larger crowds.

“We can do a lot for Eastern European art,” said Rainer Fuchs, deputy director of Mumok. “And Eastern European art does a lot for us.”

He added: “It’s important for the local art scene to internationalize and to learn political and historical sensibility, for instance, from the artists of the region.”

But as the refugee crisis has grown in intensity, many questions about the future were being asked here. Politics came up in most conversations: The far-right Freedom Party made significant gains in regional elections this month, especially in Vienna, a bastion of the left and a bellwether for the country’s voting landscape. With the right gaining momentum from the refugee crisis, many questioned whether Austria would extend the same welcome to people of other cultures as it has to Eastern Europe, and whether decades of generous cultural policies would be upended.

“More and more, Europe is like a big country,” Mr. Ivanov, the Bulgarian artist, said in a wishful thought shared by many here. “I still believe in this European project despite the obstacles and challenges.”

A version of this article appears in print on October 14, 2015, in The International New York Times.

**Vienna Looks East for Fine Art**, article. Author: Palko Karasz

**The New York Times**, 13 October 2015

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/14/arts/international/vienna-looks-east-for-fine-art.html>

GALERIEN

## Der Stoff, aus dem die Schäume sind

34

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▪ Galerien

vom 12.05.2015, 16:49 Uhr | Update: 02.06.2015, 20:14 Uhr



Josef Trattner: O.T., Aluminiumguss, lackiert, 2014.  
© Andreas Buchberger

**Der Stoff, aus dem die Schäume sind**, article.

Wiener Zeitung, 12 May 2015

[https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569\\_Kunst.html](https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569_Kunst.html)



(cai) Was zuvor noch weich war, ist auf einmal hammerhart. Nein, pfui! Nicht was *Sie* grad denken! Es geht hier nicht um . . . einen verkohlten Toast. Sondern? Wäscht Josef Trattner seine Handtücher etwa ohne Weichspüler? Falsch. (Obwohl es durchaus Handtücher gibt, mit denen man einen Nagel einschlagen könnte.) Er gießt jetzt vielmehr seine mysteriösen Gebilde aus dem Stoff, aus dem die Putzschwämme sind, in Alu. Oder in Bronze. Sein Material ist der Schaumstoff. Den knautscht, biegt, verschnürt er. Macht Fotos davon, komponiert wie abstrakte Gemälde. Dekorativ brutal. Den *harten* Objekten sieht man den Schaumstoff aber echt nimmer an. Gutartige Tumore in kräftigen Farben, herzhaft, bunte Blähungen, die irgendwie positiv stimmen.

Das Buchladen-Ambiente mag den Besucher anfangs verwirren ("Jö, geile Buchstützen!" – und dabei sind es ja "Sockelbeschwerer", also Skulpturen). Bis er das besondere Konzept der Galerie Splitter Art überreißt: Kunst schauen, blättern (in den Publikationen der Edition Splitter – oh, là, là, "unser" Stephan Eibel Erzberg, der jeden Samstag in der "Wiener Zeitung" den Versen ordentlich auf die Füße steigt, fordert da mit Todesverachtung: "Gräber raus aus den Friedhöfen!") und plaudern. Mit der Verlegerin und Galeristin, Batya Horn. Eventuell ein Leiberl kaufen mit einem Zitat drauf wie: "Ich möchte durchbrennen in meine Welt." (Hat Horns demenzkranke Mutter gesagt, deren geistreich verquere Aussprüche die Tochter in einem Büchl versammelt hat.)

Der Kreis, oder: das *Buch*, schließt sich mit den Sofafahrten. (Sofa, nicht Mofa.) Trattner fährt herum, ja, *schön* mit dem Auto, doch er hat dabei ein Schaumstoffsofa aufs Dach geschnallt, und diverse Literaten versenken ihre vier und mehr Buchstaben im Schaumstoff.

#### **Galerie Splitter Art**

(Salvatorgasse 10)

Josef Trattner, bis 26. Mai

Mo. – Fr.: 11.30 Uhr – 13.30 Uhr

und 15.30 Uhr – 17.30 Uhr

**Der Stoff, aus dem die Schäume sind**, article.

Wiener Zeitung, 12 May 2015

[https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569\\_Kunst.html](https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569_Kunst.html)



Kleine grüne Strichmännchen: Bei Vikenti Komitski ist Giacomettis schreitender Mann "Still Walking". - © Tamara Rametsteiner/Galerie Krinzinger

### Plasticalypse Now

(cai) Wer fürchtet sich vor den kleinen grünen Männchen? - Niemand! - Und wenn sie kommen? - Dann schieben wir sie ab! (Und wo sind die kleinen grünen *Weibchen*? Hocken die alle, während ihre Männer mit dem Ufo lustig im All herumfliegen, daheim vor der Waschmaschine, die ja in Wahrheit ein Stargate ist, öffnen ein Wurmloch zu einer Waschmaschine auf der Erde und entführen aus Langeweile Socken?) – Keine Angst, bei den grünen Männchen, die die Galerie Krinzinger überrannt haben (im Parterre), handelt es sich eh nicht um eine Invasion vom Mars. Sie ist "Made in China".

Vikenti Komitski (der Name klingt aber überhaupt nicht chinesisches; na ja, vielleicht weil er bulgarisch ist) hat Giacomettis "schreitenden Mann" in einer Fabrik in China aus Plastik nachmachen lassen. In Armeestärke. Grün wie Spielzeugsoldaten. Jetzt lassen also auch schon die Künstler ihre Werke in einem Billiglohnland produzieren. Ihre? Ist doch sowieso alles geklaut. Gibt halt nix Neues mehr in der Kunst. Oder sind das lauter echte "Giacomitskis" (respektive "Giacomitskinesen")? Hm. Postkreative Kunst? I wo. Concept Art!

Und die hier ist eigentlich ziemlich raffiniert. Reflektiert kritisch die heutigen Produktionsbedingungen. Womöglich sogar Europas Angst vor den Flüchtlingen. Die MaxIn picken ja wie eine Völkerwanderung der Untoten auf dem Podest: "The Walking Dead", nein: "Still Walking." (Den Zombie-Film "The *Swimming* Dead" wird wohl *nie* einer drehen. Viel zu pietätlos.) Dann verteilt Komitski auch noch genüsslich Haare im Essen. Okay, nur in Werbeprospekten. Trotzdem. Den Sonderangeboten setzt er Frisuren auf. Dem Faschierten etwa. (Iiiii! Eine faschierte Blondine!) Was die Massenware aber individualisiert. Danke! Nun wird's mich immer recken, wenn ich zum Hodl (Name von der Redaktion geändert) einkaufen geh.

Galerie Krinzinger/Parterre  
 (Seilerstätte 16)  
 Vikenti Komitski, bis 23. Mai  
 Di. – Fr.: 12 – 18 Uhr  
 Sa.: 11 – 16 Uhr

*Der Stoff, aus dem die Schäume sind*, article.

Wiener Zeitung, 12 May 2015

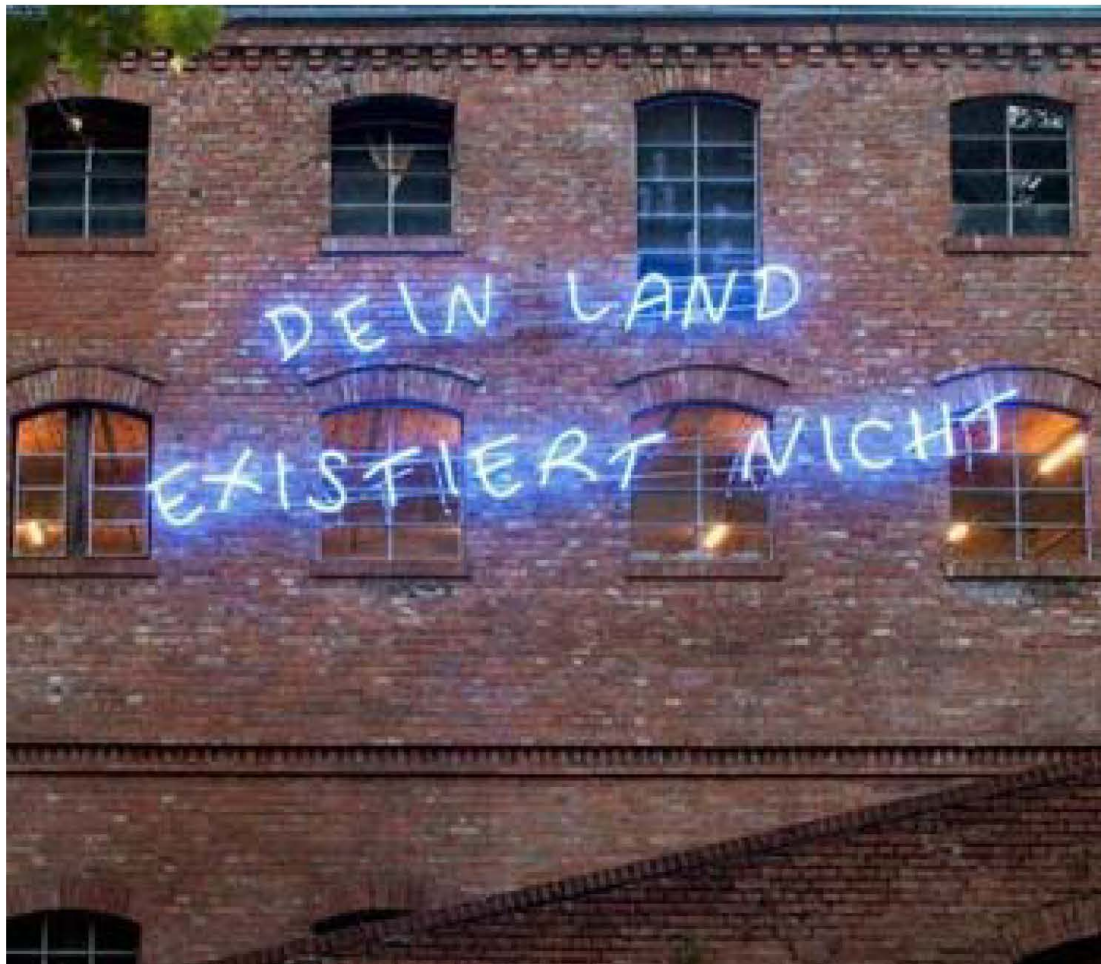
[https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569\\_Kunst.html](https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569_Kunst.html)





January 22, 2014

## Places of Transition



Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson, *Your Country Doesn't Exist*, 2013–14.  
© Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson.

### ***Places of Transition***

January 24–March 13, 2014

**Opening:** January 22, 7pm

***Places of Transition.***

**e-flux**, January 2014

<http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/31652/places-of-transition/>



1070 vienna

Austria

**Hours:** Tuesday–Sunday 1–7pm

[www.quartier21.at](http://www.quartier21.at)

Curated by Gülsen Bal and Walter Seidl

In search of possible futures, the exhibition *Places of Transition* at freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL brings together a variety of international works of art that engage in an evolving process of producing pluralistic approaches, which, in their multiplicity, provoke an encounter on both a visual and discursive level. Furthermore, these processes of transition refer to the global changes of recent years that arise in response to historical conditions.

While the East-West divide in Europe is drawing to a close, the power struggles in the Middle East have crushed the hopes of the Arab Spring and fostered the debate on political periods of transition on a global scale. *Places of Transition* evokes new kinds of creative connections and formulates a radical break with traditional forms of representation. As a result, critical voices about the past, present, and future emerge and create new territories of thought.

Oliver Ressler's film *Socialism Failed, Capitalism Is Bankrupt: What Comes Next?* was shot in the largest bazaar of Yerevan, called "Bangladesh." Merchants tell about their battle for survival in the crisis of a post-socialist state. The video and photo piece *Portrait of My Mother* by Milica Tomić was produced in the days after the Nato bombardments of Belgrade and examines the complex relationship between the trauma of the lost Yugoslavian modernity and the new identity policies of the Milošević years.

In Akram Zaatar's video *Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright*, two former lovers have a conversation ten years after separating. The words they exchange are written on an old-fashioned typewriter. In his installation *Monika Ertl's Pistol*, Marco Poloni refers to historic circumstances. Underground fighter Monika Ertl is alleged to have murdered consul Roberto Quintanilla Pereira in 1971 at the Bolivian Consulate General in Hamburg.

Köken Ergun reacts to a specific situation in Turkey, when the Republic Day Ball took place.

***Places of Transition.***

e-flux, January 2014

<http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/31652/places-of-transition/>



addressing parody.

Libia Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson are showing a neon sign installation with the phrase: “Your country does not exist.” With this statement, they are making reference to present-day migration movements prompted by political, economic, or professional conditions. Santiago Sierra is showing his video *Burned Word* in which the word *Future* is publicly burned. The video was produced in El Cabanyal, a historic district and fishing quarter in Valencia threatened by the potential development of a new roadway crossing through the area. Aslı Çavuşoğlu’s audiovisual installation *191/205* refers to the fact that in 1985 the General Directorate of the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation TRT banned the use of 205 words in television and radio broadcasts.

Some of the participating artists are artists-in-residence of quartier21/MuseumsQuartier in connection with the exhibition. In his installation *Pop-Up Wall*, Vikenti Komitski addresses how borders are still drawn up to protect ~~the~~ **e-flux** *Press Europe*. His work refers to Bulgaria’s current attempt to build a border between Turkey and Bulgaria in order to prevent Syrian refugees from entering the country.

Artists:

Libia Castro (ESP)\* & Ólafur Ólafsson (ISL)\*, Köken Ergun (TUR), Vikenti Komitski (BUL)\*, Aslı Çavuşoğlu (TUR), Marco Poloni (SUI)\*, Oliver Ressler (AUT), Milica Tomić (SRB), Santiago Sierra (ESP), Akram Zaatari (LIB)

\*quartier21/MuseumsQuartier Artists-in-Residence

Display: Nicole Six and Paul Petritsch

*Places of Transition* is organized in cooperation with International Affairs.

Director of the MuseumsQuartier: Dr. Christian Str:

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MQ Press Relations: Irene Preissler, [ipreissler \[at\] n](mailto:ipreissler[at]mq)

**Places of Transition.**

e-flux, January 2014

<http://www.e-flux.com/announcements/31652/places-of-transition/>

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# BEAST

FASHION — CULTURE — ATTITUDE  
FOR THE NEW EUROPE

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## PHOTO I, PHOTO YOU


- by Alex Jackson

Eastern Europe: (failed) Russian Empire or extension of the West? Twenty years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern Europe perhaps seems to have forsaken the right to be interesting as a geopolitical whole. What used to be the East's defining factor, Socialism and belonging (or not belonging) to the Soviet sphere of influence, is what makes a revisiting of the region and its ideologies most interesting - at least to the artists being shown in *Photo I, Photo You*, the latest exhibition at London's [Calvert22 gallery](#).

Opened in May 2009, the cool art space just off Shoreditch High Street is the city's first not-for-profit foundation specialising in and promoting Russian and East European art. Finally, London's own creative eastern-bloc has a place to get its fix of Eastology.

The aim of this, the gallery's fourth exhibition, is to trigger a double-take on the East of Europe, leading us to reconsider what is presented. "Most things in the world that we think we know, in fact demand a second glance," explained Moscow-born exhibition curator, Iara Boubnova. "The known demands attention just as much as the unknown," she said. So nothing is here obvious, nothing is what it seems.





Getting us revved was Boris Mikhailov arresting *Yesterday's Sandwich* 1960-70s series, featuring his signature superimposed photography that hybridizes the seemingly mundane into scenes imbued with fresh statements and complexities. Jan Mancuska's *The Other (I asked my wife to blacken all the parts of my body which I cannot see)* 2007, not only blurs boundaries between author/subject/object but also questions the (un)known and the misleading tendencies in the obvious. Kiril Prashkov's *Responsible Painting* 2006, of flaking apartment buildings presents an unofficial Utopian 'alt-art' while Olga Chemysheva's peeping-Tom style video installation, *Windows* 2007, a meditatively exposes the beautiful banality of strangers' lives beyond the curtains of an unknown tower-block - such as our favourite, a forlorn guy gazing from his kitchen before simply standing up, swigging from the kettle-spout and leaving the frame. Melancholy magnificence.

"This exhibition is about challenging our collective assuredness over what we think we already know," said Boubnova. "It all comes down to the mission of art: to show us something that usually we don't see. There is something about these artists and their works that helps to better define their subjects of interest which, in turn, helps understand and remember that we are now all together and not really divided by walls anymore. I think that each of the works confirms the existence of 'others' - whoever they are and regardless of East or West."

**Above right:** Jan Mancuska; *The Other (I asked my wife to blacken all the parts of my body which I cannot see)*, 2007; Developed photographic negatives, Perspex and MDF light-box, aluminium hanging rail Courtesy of the artist; West London Projects, London; Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna.

**Above:** Boris Mikhailov; Photograph from the series *Yesterday's Sandwich*, 1960s-70s; C-Print, 136 x 95 cm (framed) ed.5; Courtesy of the artists and Suzanne Tarasieve, Paris.

*Photo I, Photo You*, article. Author: Alex Jackson  
The Beast, 2010

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**Artist's Favourites**  
 → NO. 17 / AUTUMN 2008

## By Nedko Solakov

We invited Nedko Solakov to present artists in whose works he is interested particularly. Nedko prepared his first German retrospective in the Kunstmuseum Bonn. Some of the following texts are written by himself, for two others he invited the curator Vladiya Mihaylova and the critic Nadia Timova from Sofia.


Cristina Lucas, *Feminine Europe*, 2007, Courtesy the artist & Galeria Aizpuru


Cristina Lucas, *Masculine Europe*, 2007  
Courtesy the artist & Galeria Aizpuru


## Cristina Lucas

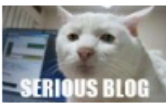
I saw a video by Christina Lucas for the first time at the Istanbul Biennial 2007. *Pantone* is a spectacular piece: an animation of political world maps that shows the »development« of the world from 500 BC until today. All the kingdoms and states that ever existed appear and disappear, come together and divide again. It is a hypnotic experience to relive the history of mankind in this way. Recently I saw her wickedly sweet »male« and »female« maps of Europe at the Museum for Contemporary art in Roverto: *Feminine Europe, Masculine Europe* (2007). One sees the terms for reproductive organs in each respective language, thus clarifying the borders of each country (with buffer zones where neighbouring countries use »dirty words« for each other) in a singular, seemly vivid, and no less legitimate way. It was refreshingly charming. I have never met the artist in person, I just like her work. \*1973 Jaén, Spain, lives in Madrid and Amsterdam













**Artist's favorites, Nedko Solakov presents 5 artists.**

**Spike Art Quarterly, Autumn 2008**

[http://old.spikeart.at/en/a/magazin/back/Artist\\_s\\_Favourites\\_9](http://old.spikeart.at/en/a/magazin/back/Artist_s_Favourites_9)





Frances Goodman, Banner Series, 2007  
Courtesy the artist, Goodman Gallery

## Frances Goodman

Frances Goodman is based in Johannesburg. She is one of the best young storytellers I have encountered in the last few years. She manages to tell a story in such an ambiguous way that one hardly can say if the »moral« of the story is a good/proper one or just the opposite. Visually the works vary from beautifully made objects (with a not-so-nice content) like the *Toilet Graffiti Embroideries* (2007), or wall sculptures like the *Banner Series*(2007), to complicated sound installations that revolve around the relationship between human and house pet, a girl and her pop idol, and around observations of daily conduct or personal memories or stories. A master storyteller from the farthest tip of Africa. \*1975 in Johannesburg, lives in Johannesburg

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Ante Timmermans, installation view »#2«, 2006

## Ante Timmermans

Perhaps one of the best young artists making drawings today. I still remember the magic experience I had when entering the dark room of his #2 (2006). There was a slightly old-fashioned overhead projector that projected an almost black, barely visible Gotham-like city on the wall, with giant buildings and tiny lit-up windows. An amazing atmosphere; one had the feeling that this is it – the city of the future and the past at the same time. Out of curiosity I went closer to the projector to see what the source material for this city could be and I was surprised. On the glass glowed a classical drawing in graphite, of no-less-power than the projection, done on an a bit of dirty »old« looking paper, presenting a landscape like one done by Peter Brueghel The Elder's followers. And then, upon close inspection, I finally understood the trick and saw the little pinpricked holes on the landscape the projector's light coming through them and realized that the hills and valleys on the paper became the uncanny masses of urban scenery. \*1976 in Ninove, Belgium. Lives in Zurich

*Der Stoff, aus dem die Schäume sind*, article.

Wiener Zeitung, 12 May 2015

[https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569\\_Kunst.html](https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/kultur/kunst/751569_Kunst.html)



Vikenti Komitski, installation view »Frame 1«, 2008

## Vikenti Komitski

He is from the youngest generation of artists in Bulgaria that grew up in a time when the processes of globalization affected the whole structure of society and the new perspectives of the information age started to create new social networks. The gap between the old education system and real life was big enough to sweep the classrooms clean and to have the students know more as their teachers. Loss of orientation, hanging around on the street, and parties are the themes of Komitski's works. He makes a number of sketches, drawings and small paintings, often with short texts, that resemble the scrawling on school desks or public toilets. Sometimes he uses old manuals or maps that he paints over almost completely with black paint or colourful decorative elements. In *Frame* (2008) he replaces the canvas with paving stones, thus subtly questioning the art institution and the status of the artwork. Images without memories and broken toys are the themes of his objects, as in the sculpture *It doesn't help to be too smart* (2008) exhibited recently in Sofia. (Vladiya Mihaylova, curator, Sofia) \*1983 in Sofia, lives in Sofia

*Der Stoff, aus dem die Schäume sind*, article.

Wiener Zeitung, 12 May 2015

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