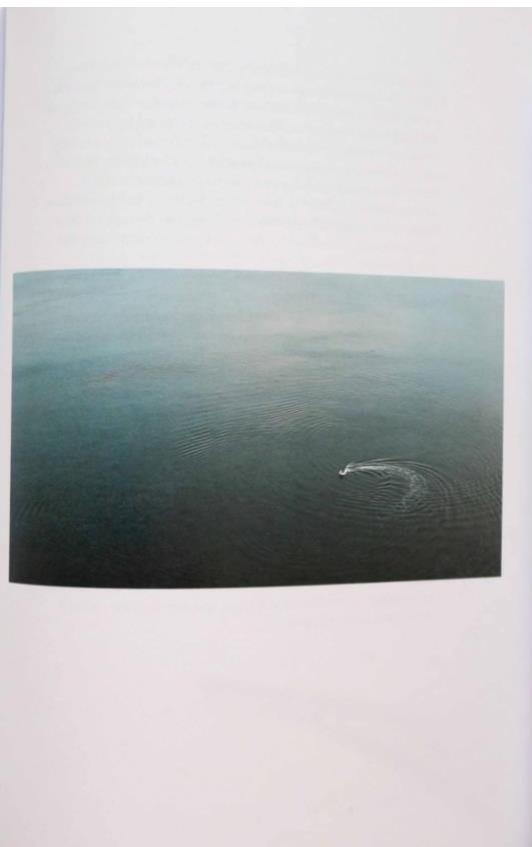




Images in Language and the Language of Images, Dom Museum Wien, 2017, catalogue



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A rubber dinghy leaves its traces in the water; these are not the straight lines of a movement with a clear destination but searching arcs that keep returning to themselves. If one watches the boat's movement for some time, one will realize that it is trying to spell a word: "impossible." This is also the title of this video work, in which the Bulgarian artist Kamen Stoyanov is set on making the impossible possible. In the seemingly meaningless, repeated attempt to write words into water lies the expression of an unbroken will and at the same time a sign of permanent change, which underlies everything.

Movement is an important element in the work of Kamen Stoyanov, a recipient of the Otto Mauer Prize. He engages in the force within movement—not only in actuality by using the kinetic energy of the boat to write, but also in terms of content. Movement makes change possible; it is only movement that allows for development to occur in the first place. In addition to this theoretical approach, Stoyanov also likes to play with the link between art and everyday life. The everyday elements he includes in his works often create a discrepancy, where strange and absurd things have a designated place. Such an element is the rubber dinghy, which brings back images of our favorite vacation, used here in an activity that at first glance seems like a fool's errand. It makes the work accessible and the artist's intellectual approach tangible. The dinghy, of course, is an object that conjures immediate associations, especially in our time of human catastrophes caused in the context of war and persecution—in this sense the idea of change in combination with the impossible yet attempted, opens its own dark chapter.

Ein Schlauchboot hinterlässt seine Spuren im Wasser: nicht die gerade Linie zielstrebiger Bewegung, viel eher suchende Bogen, die immer wieder zu sich zurückkehren. Beobachtet man die Bewegung des Bootes über längere Zeit, erkennt man, dass es ein Wort zu schreiben versucht: „impossible“, unmöglich. Das ist auch der Titel der Videowork, in der sich der bulgarische Künstler Kamen Stoyanov dem Versuch verschiebt, das Unmögliche möglich zu machen. In der scheinbar sinnlosen Wiederholung des Versuchs, dem Wasser Worte einzuschreiben, liegt ein Ausdruck ungebrochenen Willens und gleichzeitig ein Zeichen für die permanente Veränderung, der alles unterliegt.

Bewegung ist ein wichtiges Element im Werk des Otto-Mauer-Preisträgers Kamen Stoyanov. Er nutzt die Kraft, die in der Bewegung liegt – nicht nur tatsächlich, indem er die kinetische Energie des Bootes zum Schreiben nutzt, sondern auch im inhaltlichen Sinn. Bewegung ermöglicht Veränderung, nur durch sie kann es überhaupt Entwicklung geben. Neben diesem theoretischen Ansatz spielt Stoyanov gern mit der Verbindung von Kunst und Alltag. Die Elemente des täglichen Lebens, die er in die Werke einbindet, schaffen oft einen Zwiespalt, in dem Seltsames und Absurdes Platz haben. Die Verwendung eines Schlauchbootes, das Urlauberin-nerungen wachruft, bei der Umsetzung von etwas, das im ersten Moment wie ein Schildbürgerstreich wirkt, ist ein solches Element: Es öffnet einen Zugang zur Arbeit, hinter dem die Denkansätze des Künstlers greifbar werden. Das Schlauchboot ist freilich gerade in der heutigen Zeit menschlicher Katastrophen im Zusammenhang mit Krieg und Vertreibung ein Objekt, das unmittelbar Assoziationen hervorruft – in diesem Sinn erschließt die Idee der Veränderung in Kombination mit dem Unmöglichen und dennoch Versuchten ein eigenes, dunkles Kapitel.

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Stopover - Ways of Temporary Exchange, MuseumsQuartier Wien, 2017, exhibition brochure

EVENT+
EXHIBITION

Kamen Stoyanov
New Istanbul Dream

New *Istanbul Dream* is an experimental documentary movie that investigates the construction site of the new Istanbul Airport. It will be the third airport in Istanbul, situated to the north-west of the city centre on the Black Sea coast. Before the construction began, the area had been home to villagers, animals, and vegetation. Now the area is home to Erdogan's big dream: to build the biggest airport in the world. The film shows the transformation of these two types of homeland from personal to national spaces. Therefore, the film uses different layers, such as documentary shots, to show how the environment changes as the construction work proceeds. A performative layer based on the traditional Karagöz shadow-play theatre structures the movie and opens a space for imaginary and activist movement. The diverse soundtrack includes recordings from the construction site and the surrounding area, of people from the villages around the airport, as well as answers to a questionnaire from the Istanbul Grand Airport company given by an inhabitant of the village of Akpinar, which many villagers have left to move to the city.

Concerning his artistic practise Stoyanov comments that 'Movement as process plays an important role in my practice – movement as an intentional act of changing a given condition, whether social, urban, cultural, or institutional. Movement is an instrument for shaping the space. My actions occur on the street or in the fields or in art spaces. They are often reactions and comments on political and social processes or interactions with the environment. The accidental appears not as a problem, but as a driving power or force. My work can be seen as hybridisations of artistic language and the lively cultural practices that are considered to be "outside" the art field. I get inspiration from ordinary daily processes, which I use to transform the conditions under which I work. In the specific tension between "high art" and "low non-art", the idea of the absurd, misaligned, or strange plays a crucial role'.

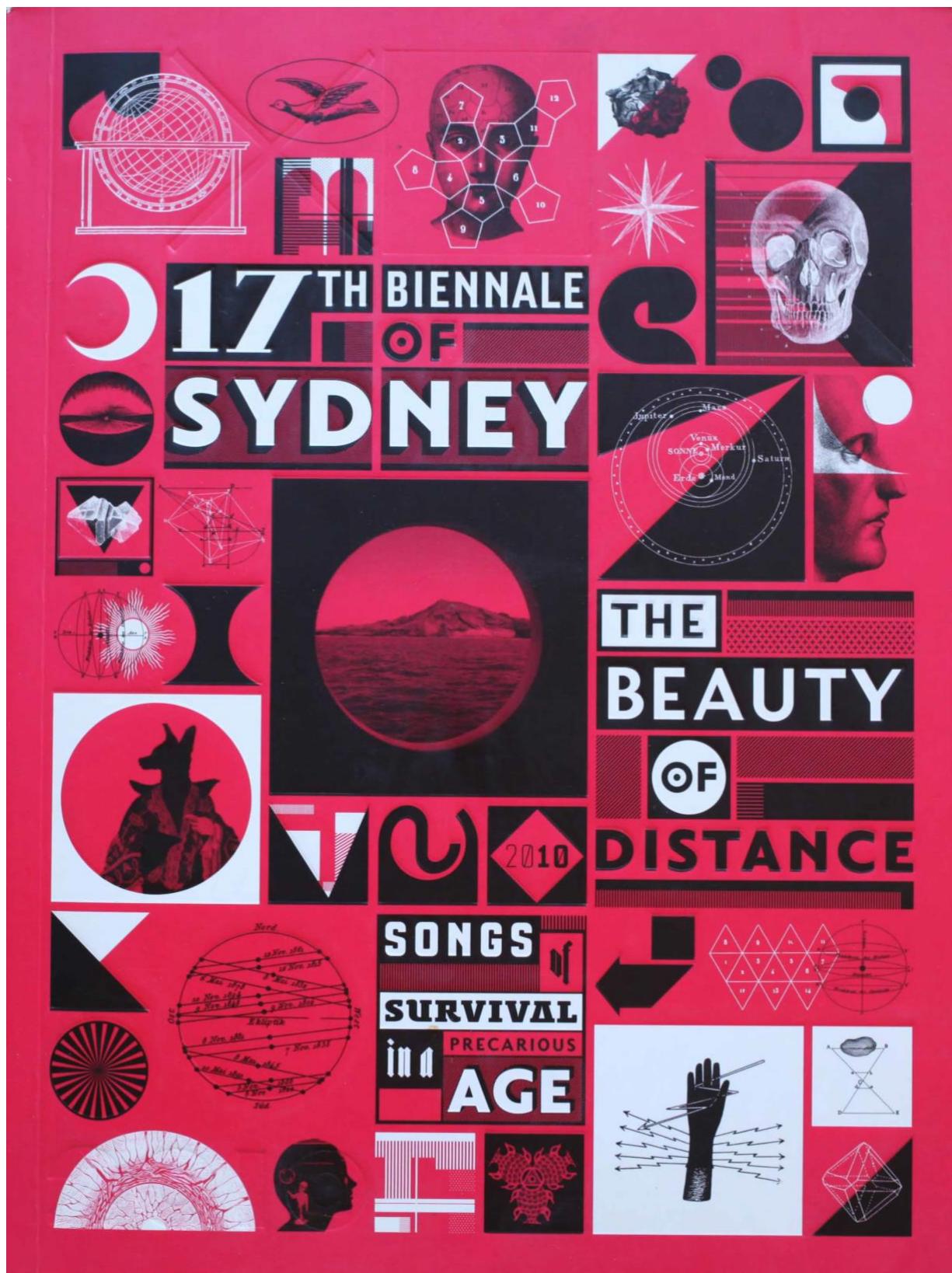
Kamen Stoyanov

Kamen Stoyanov lives and works in Vienna.

19 OCTOBER, 4:30-7 P.M.
Art Aid: Social Movements and Activism
Project presentations, panel discussion

40 2017 Video, 28 min

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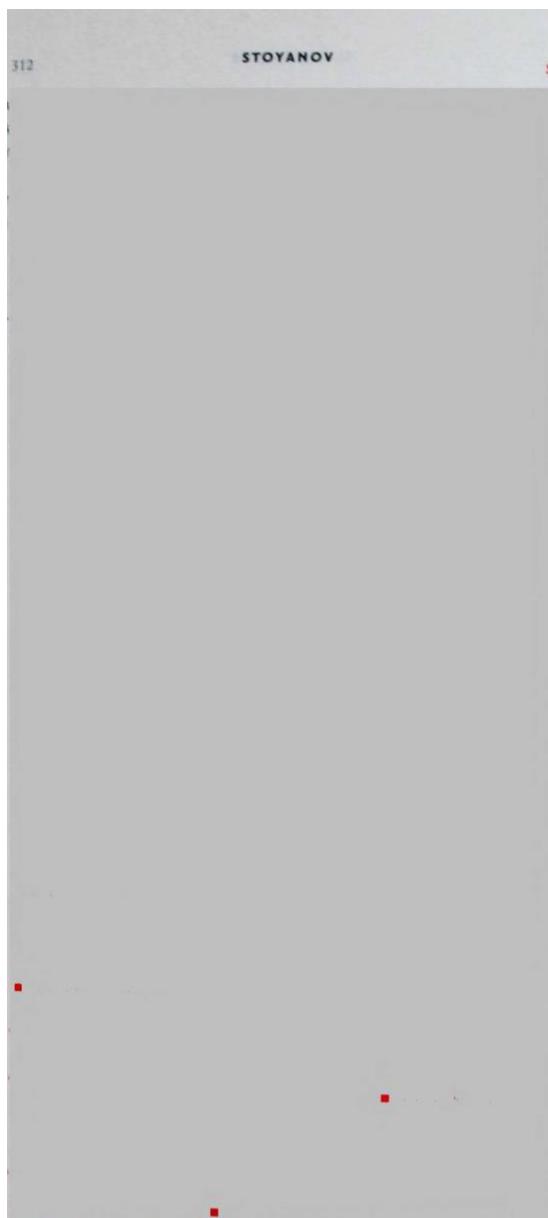


KAMEN STOYANOV

Move Your Hands | 2007 (video still)
HD video, 5:30 mins | Courtesy the artist

phantom | 2007 (video still)
HD video, 12:28 mins | Courtesy the artist

BIOGRAPHY | PAGE 312



KAMEN STOYANOV

Born 1977 in Rousse, Bulgaria

Lives and works in Rousse and Vienna, Austria

→ ILLUSTRATION | p. 229

Kamen Stoyanov studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna from 2000 to 2005. His videos, drawings, installation and performance work deal with society's unconscious interactions with power and marginality.

His works study the economy of art, and the indifference to art not only of the general public but also among key players in the art market. In the video work *Which One Should I Buy?* (2008), Stoyanov captures the process undertaken by gallerists and collectors when a work of art is on the market, revealing the paradoxical values at play in the duration of the negotiations. In the neon piece *Forget It, We Can Not Afford This* (2008), the translated sentence refers to a conversation overheard between a married collector couple from overseas. The artist offered the proceeds of this work to Labor, a small gallery run by the Studio of Young Artists in Hungary, as an

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indictment on a Hungarian art scene that struggled to support artistic culture. Finally, as part of 'The Come and Take' project, the artist enlisted an established advertising technique to attract new patrons to the Studio Gallery in Budapest by handing out 500 fliers in major shopping malls around the city, offering a limited copy of his video work, *Come and Take* (2008), to the first three visitors to the exhibition. The challenge posed to question the interests of the public in contemporary art through incentive.

Stoyanov has created a body of work that take street-life snapshots as markers for wider conditions of political, cultural or economic discord. Two such video works will be shown at the 17th Biennale of Sydney: *Move Your Hands* and *Phantom* (both 2007). In *Move Your Hands*, he focuses on a Bulgarian gypsy woman who sits at the foot of a huge sculpture by Jean Pierre Raynaud outside the Centre Pompidou in Paris. Ineptly playing a monotonous tune on her worn-out folk instrument and sustained by a bottle of water and makeshift matting, she is interrupted by two men who arrive to remove graffiti from the wall beside her. In the ensuing minutes, the woman plays on determinedly whilst the men hurriedly tend to the defaced wall, drowning out the woman's tune with a water jet and threatening to soak her entirely in the process. The old woman eventually moves to drier ground, and continues to play her instrument. The wordless interplay between the migrant woman and the French workers – called to the scene to remove an unsightly act of vandalism – arouses questions of belonging; the background art institution, built on the interests of a commercialised artworld and itself a monument to modern culture, contrasts with the woman's largely ignored performance on the pavement. In a similar vein of enquiry, Stoyanov's headless accordionist in *Phantom* is the Italian musician Niko Milantoni, a philosophy graduate who supports himself in Paris by busking. As an illegal performer, and wearing a unique costume so as to appear without a head or face, Stoyanov's 'phantom' protagonist represents the survival technique of street performance and, unlike the old woman outside the Centre Pompidou, actually captures his audience. Milantoni's oft-played 'Bella Ciao', a renowned battle song of the European labour movement, adds a twist to the musician's symbolic presence in the Parisian streets – embracing his own lack of identity in order to survive – and need to charm the tourist market. Both works, paradigms of folk art and music, challenge those conventional value judgements that regard art as little more than a commodity, as well as the power systems on which they are based.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2009 'Looking for an Art Piece', Kunstverein Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria □ 2009 'Chinese Rap and Other Stories', Inda Gallery, Budapest, Hungary □ 2008

'At Arm's Length', Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, Austria □ 2008 'Forget It, we can not afford this', Studio Galeria, Budapest, Hungary □ 2008 'Just a Photo', Galerie Dana Charkasi, Vienna, Austria ■ Selected Group Exhibitions

2009 'Common History and Its Private Stories', Museum auf Abruf, Vienna, Austria □ 2009 'After Ego', Art Today Association Center for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv, Bulgaria □ 2008 Manifesta 7, Rovereto Train Station, Rovereto, Italy □ 2008 'Transformation of History or Parallel Histories', 6th Gyumri Biennial, Gyumri, Armenia □ 2008 'Am Sprung', OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria ■

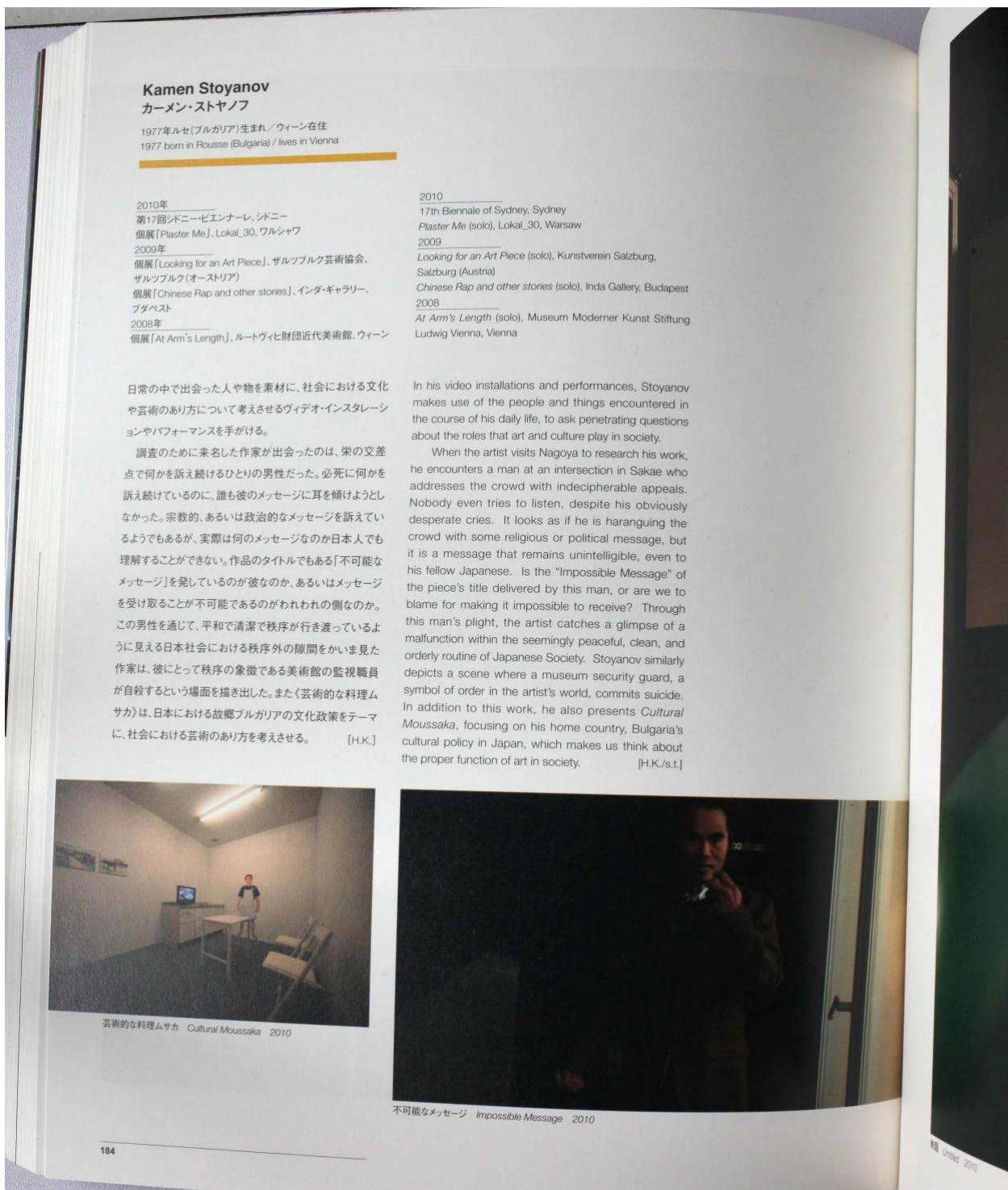
Selected Bibliography Milena Dimitrova, 'At Arm's Length', *Umlauf*, 2009-10, pp. 54-55 □

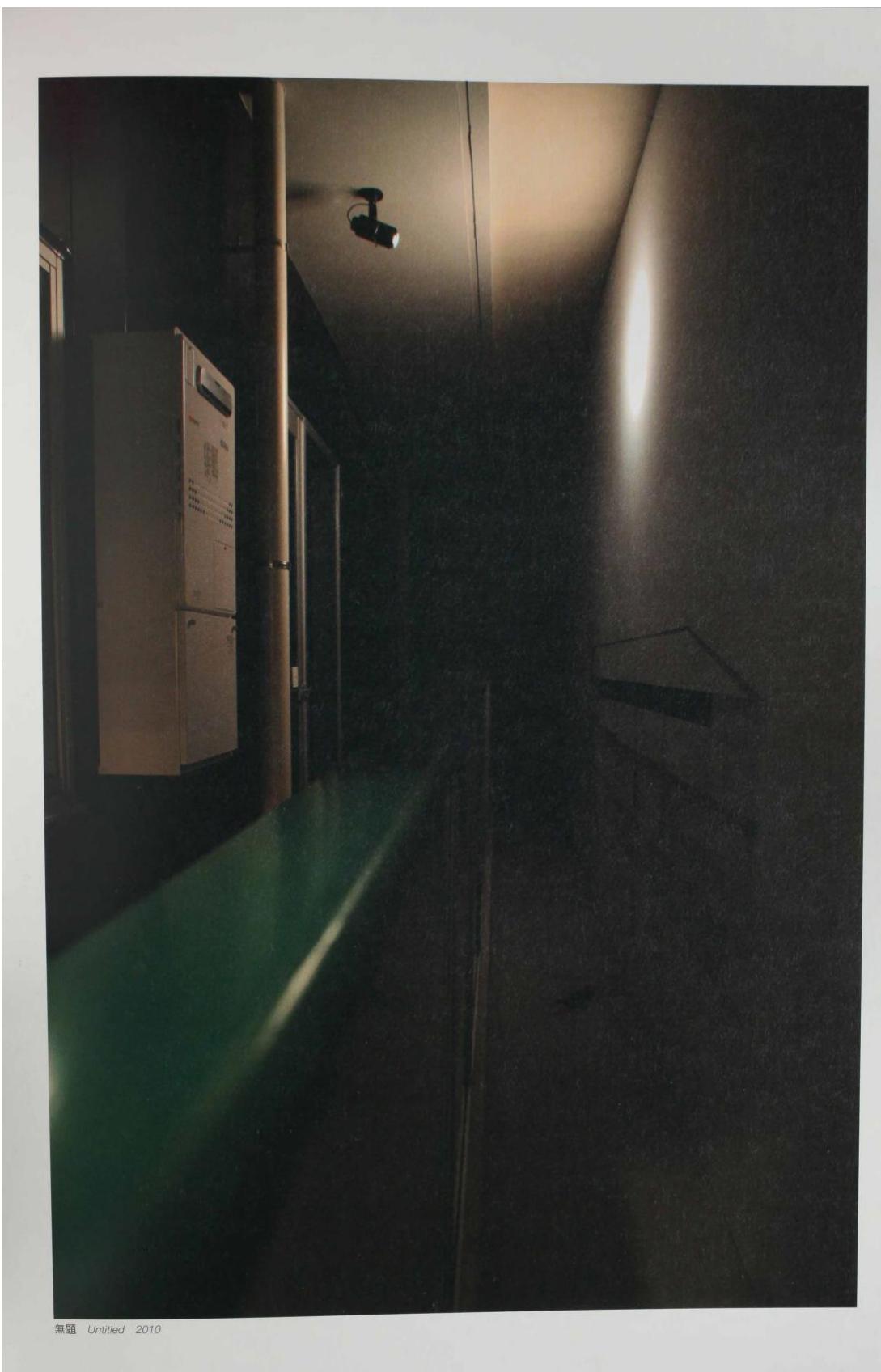
Vladia Mihaylova and Kamen Stoyanov, 'Way of seeing', *Lifk*, vol. 10, Sofia, 2008, pp. 42-44 □

Ursula Maria Pobst and Kamen Stoyanov, 'Just a Photo', *Spize*, vol. 18, Wien, 2008, pp. 104-5 □

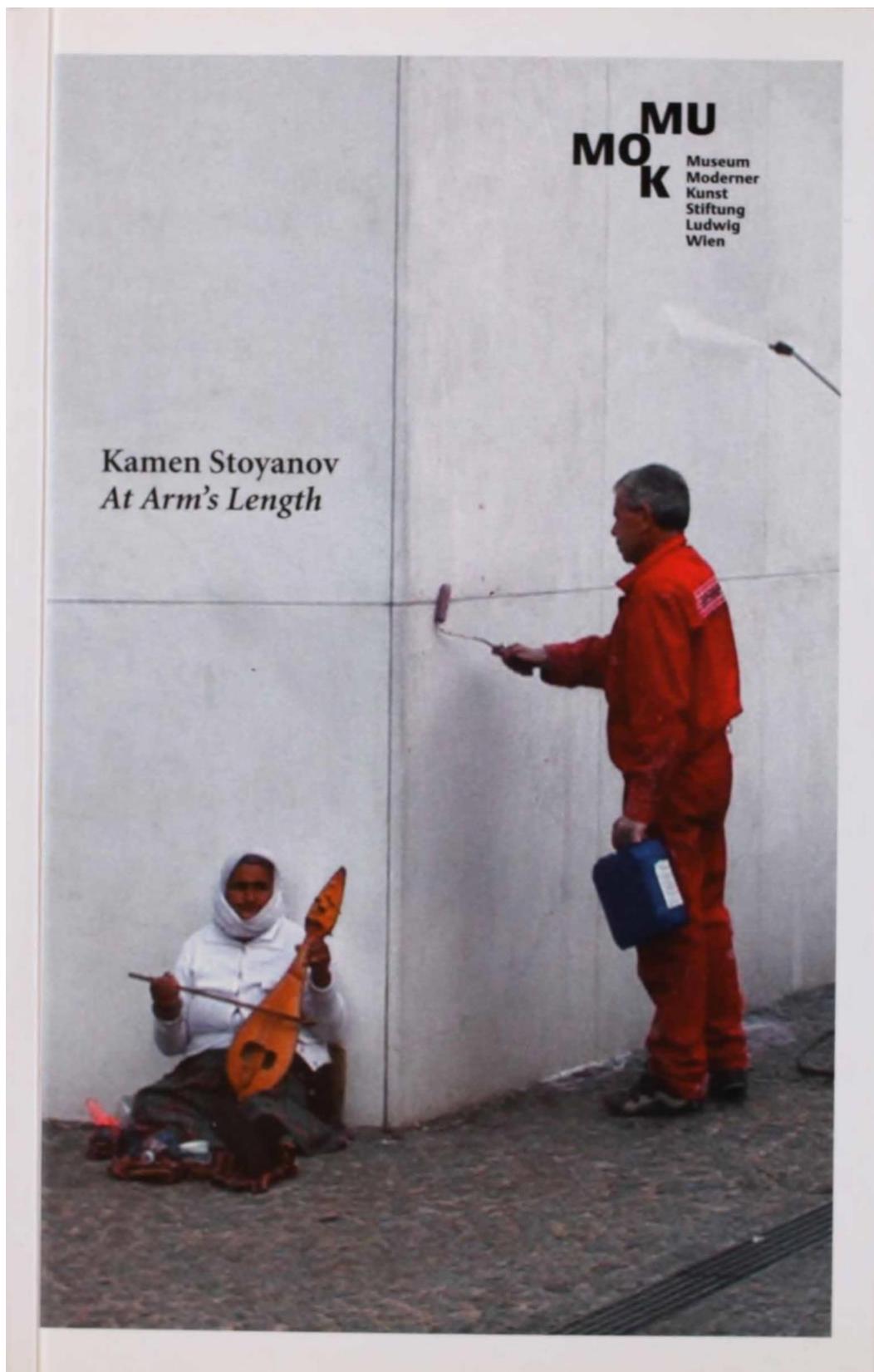
■ Walter Seidl, Kamen Stoyanov, 'Roma Open Air Museum', *Springerin*, vol. 3, Wien, 2007 ■





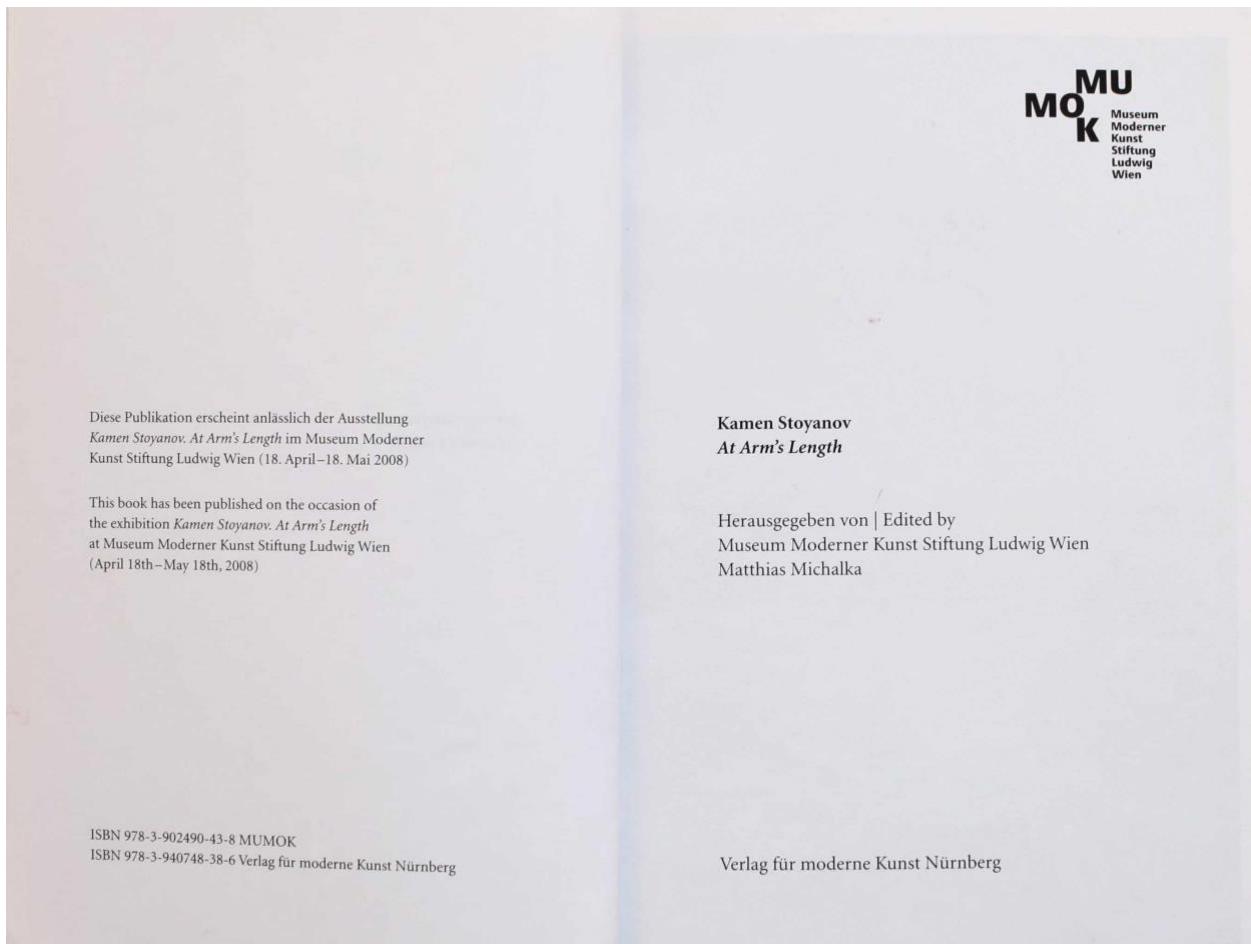


Aichi Triennale 2010: Arts and Cities, Aichi Organizing Committee, Nagoya, 2010, catalogue



Kamen Stoyanov
At Arm's Length

Kamen Stoyanov. At Arm's Length, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, 2008, book



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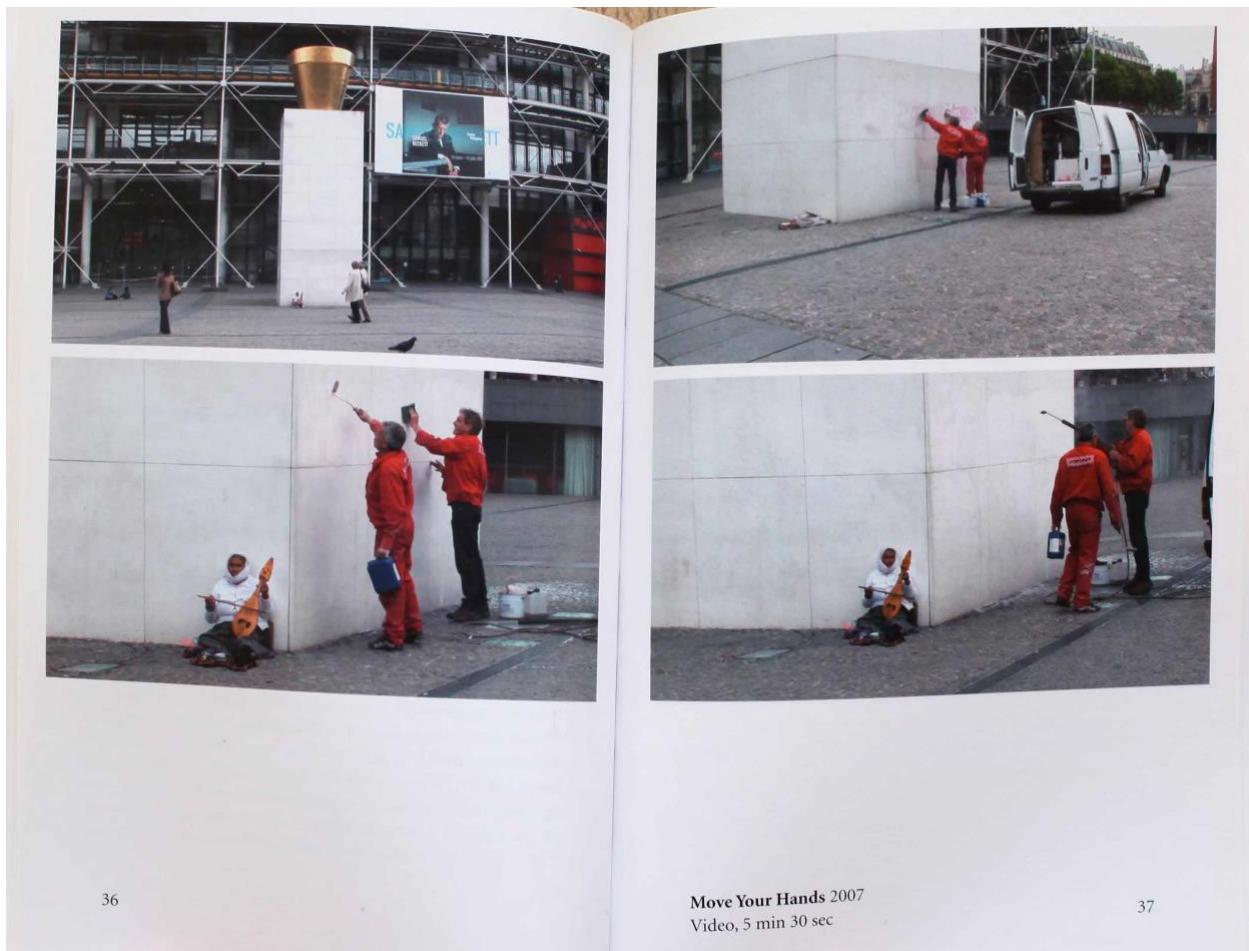
Kamen Stoyanov
At Arm's Length

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