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MUST SEE

Luchozar Boyadjiev

Public Space, Private Size
June 22 - July 29, 2023

The first part of the project Thought Experiment
Curated by Aksiniya Peycheva

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Luhezar Boyadjiev at Sarieva

September 17, 2022



Artist: Luhezar Boyadjiev

Exhibition title: Christo For Beginners

Venue: Sarieva, Plovdiv, Bulgaria



Photography: all images copyright and courtesy of the artist and Sarieva, Plovdiv

“Christo for Beginners” by Luchezar Boyadjiev is a project about what’s private and shared in both the physical space and the imagination. The artist engages with the public space and that involves the urban, the media, and the virtual environment. Luchezar Boyadjiev is activating them with artworks, visions, exhibition displays, actions and lectures while involving the collaboration of both his fellow citizens and colleagues. Luchezar Boyadjiev is a known expert on the projects, the practices and the methodologies developed and used by Christo and Jeanne-Claude. However, this is the first time he is implementing such a project as an artist, rather than as an art critic, a theoretician, a lecturer or a historian of art. “Christo for Beginners” is the pilot project of the Sarieva / Gallery and the Open Arts Foundation within the Sarieva Open Arts program.

First stage

CHRISTO FOR BEGINNERS

Exhibition opening, info zone with works and other materials by Luchezar Boyadjiev

Friday, August 5th, 2022, Sarieva / Gallery, Plovdiv, 17:00 – 20:00

Walk and Talk – Lecture tour in urban environment with Luchezar Boyadjiev

Saturday, August 6th, 2022, various locations, Plovdiv, 10:30 – 12:30

(Gathering of the group of participants in front of artnewscafe, 10:30)

For good and/or for bad, in our country, just like elsewhere in the Balkans, our centuries-long history is both alive and constantly challenged, everywhere by everyone. It tends to create the conditions for the production of much more actual reality – living, breathing and throbbing with energy, then our multitude of small states and proud peoples can realistically handle. Sometimes the world history is “unloading” all its might on our Balkan shoulders. But we are pretending not to notice our chaotic vitality; indeed we are living here and now as if this is the “always and everywhere”. The heroes, the leading characters of these ages-long processes either already have dedicated monuments at 5-to-15 meters high, or are the targets of constantly debated projects for such totems, idols and fetishes of the long-gone past.

What might happen though, if the debate on saturating the public space in our cities with monuments of the glorious past and heroes, is supplemented by the whole register of art and culture heroes from the modern and contemporary age? For instance, does Belgrade need a monument to Marina Abramović? Does Zagreb need a monument to Mangelos

(www.moma.org/artists/29439); to Sanja Iveković or Ivan Mestrovic? Does Sarajevo need a monument to Braco Dimitrijević or to Jusuf Hadzifejzović although these two are very much alive and kicking artists? We do have a monument indeed to Vladimir Dimitrov, the Master but do we also need to have monuments to Boris Angeloushev and George Papazov in Sofia, or to Jules Paskin in Vidin? How big do these need to be, and where are we to place them – where they lived or where we need to impress both ourselves and the tourists? Should they be 10, 15, or 20 meters high? And last but not least, what kind of visual style do we need to ask for from the artists who would compete with their visions in a public tender?

The goal of the project “Christo for Beginners” is to create a space for debate and to kick off this debate – asking questions about the past, as well as about the future in our culture. The first stage of the project “Christo for Beginners” by Luchezar Boyadjiev within Sarieva Open Arts program will manifest an “exploratory mandate” for the creation of a massive, equestrian monument to Christo in Plovdiv. The so titled exhibition in Sarieva / Gallery and the „Walk and Talk” lecture tour given by the artist in the city environment will investigate the format, the locations, the public attitudes and the fantasy needed for the erection of such a monument.

The exhibition will display the scale model for the monument created by Luchezar Boyadjiev, his project drawings, visualizations and other material. Within the format of the „Walk and Talk”, we will walk to and talk about various potential locations for the erection of the monument.

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Luchezar Boyadjiev (Sofia, 1957) is among the most prominent artists, born and based in Bulgaria. An author with extensive international practice, he is a public figure with a clear critical stance on the Balkan and international art scene. As an artist, curator, and lecturer, he contributes to establishing new definitions of art and practice, to new discourses and to the emancipation of a younger generation of artists in his home country. His media ranges from drawings and painting, to photography, installations, video and his, by now famous guided tours/performances in various cities, and art exhibitions. Luchezar Boyadjiev is one of the first in his generation of artists that have put down the foundations of contemporary art in Bulgaria after the mid-80s. With background in art history and theory, Boyadjiev creates art that defies both traditional norms and the social conditions of his country; in his work the whole ambivalence of the socialist past is put in relation to global changes.

Sarieva / Gallery was founded by Vesselina Sarieva in September 2021 as a third generation gallery space. Sarieva / Gallery represents leading artists from the Bulgarian contemporary art scene. At the same time, it is not only a space but a gallery situation, a program and a statement in art which extends beyond any physical borders while encouraging dialogues and the deeper knowledge of the artists' works. The abundant, ambitious and innovative program reaches beyond the model of either the white cube or the black box. Sarieva / Gallery is part of the hybrid environment of Sarieva HUB together with the Open Arts Foundation and other related organizations.

The Open Arts Foundation was established in 2007. It is recognized as one of the main factors in the cultural life of Bulgaria that has changed the cultural environment and the audiences' expectation through its well-known projects such as the NIGHT/Plovdiv, "Introduction to Contemporary Art", FLUCA – the Austrian cultural pavilion, Open Art Files and many others. Open Arts Foundation provides access to art and creativity, builds up concepts and projects at the crossroads between culture, art, the city and its inhabitants, visitors; it rediscovers locations while making new life possible in unexpected places.



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A New Game: "ThisPlay" at Arter



ThisPlay, exhibition view at Arter, 2022. Photos: Orhan Cem Çetin.

ThisPlay

Arter

February 17 through April 9, 2022

By ZOË HOPKINS, June 2022

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New Game: "ThisPlay" at Arter, article. Author: Zoe Hopkins
WHITEHOT, June 2022

Arter

February 17 through April 9, 2022

By **ZOË HOPKINS**, June 2022

Who might the contemporary Surrealists be? In Istanbul, Turkey, Arter may have found the answer to this question. Spilling out across walls, ceilings, and corners, on multiple floors, the exhibition “ThisPlay” is an unruly child. It is a whimsical adventurer seeking new truths through the absurd and mischievous. The show, curated by Emre Baykal, brings together an impressive roster of fifty-nine artists—most of whom are from Turkey but several hailing from across the globe—to test the limits of childish imagination and change the rules of art history’s proverbial game.

The exhibition is intentionally, deliciously, open ended. The title, itself a play on words (play simultaneously invoking playfulness, performance, and games), does not submit to determinacy. What exactly is the “this” that it is defining? And does play refer to theater, games, or general amusement? The exhibition luxuriates in being all of these at once: it is defined by nothing but its multiplicity and free play. Likewise, the works on view elude definition. They come to us as tricksters, rebuffing expectations, rejecting logic, and refusing to grow up. We encounter glass ladders suspended in the air out of reach, chairs made out of spaghetti, two clocks that face one another and tell time to nobody but themselves. One doesn’t have to come to the exhibition with context to realize quickly that nothing in this exhibition intends to conform to our definitions of “sense.” Instead, they embody Andre Breton’s famous dictum that “the mind, placed before any kind of difficulty, can find an ideal outlet in the absurd.”

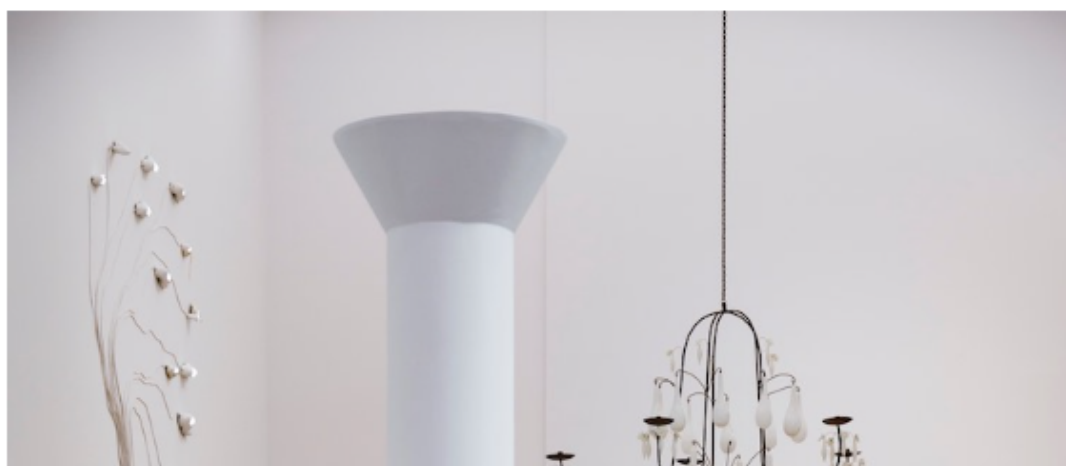


ThisPlay, exhibition view at Arter, 2022. Photos: Orhan Cem Çetin.

New Game: “ThisPlay” at Arter, article. Author: Zoe Hopkins
WHITEHOT, June 2022

Held at the unsparing whim of the absurd, viewers are challenged to submit themselves to new (sur)realities. Over and over, objects are defamiliarized once, and then again. Take for example the work of Finish artist Maaria Wirkkala. For her sculpture installation *Backstage (Water Piano)* (2009), Wirkkala has removed a grand piano of all of its keys and accouterments and placed it on the floor—corpse like—with its legs up in the air. An inverted and keyless piano is already a strange thing to encounter, but it is made entirely uncanny by the presence of a little zebra figurine who appears to drink water from a cavity in the piano's underbelly. What kind of world is it when a toy animal gets more use out of a piano than we can? The artworks are playing, and their game—the subtle trick of it all—is directed at us.

Calcifying the metaphorical play that is happening here, games appear as a literal reference throughout the exhibition. Luchezar Boyadjiev's *Endspiel; or The Good, The Bad, and the Lonely* features a chessboard that has been stretched out, the usual 64 squares multiplied to the point where it is impossible for a player to reach from one side of the board to another. In *Rise to the Score* by Bulgarian artist Pravdoliub Ivanov, a basketball hoop—an almost hackneyed icon of athletic games—finds itself penetrated by a massive, upside down palm tree. The work is a laughably, confrontationally absurd assemblage of ready-mades taken to the extreme. The basketball hoop is emptied of its use value—for who can shoot hoops when a tree has permanently assumed the place of the ball?—and the palm tree is similarly mocked as it stands on its head. Here, play is doubled: the literal game that is basketball is made subject to Pravdoliub's metaphorical and artistic one. It seems, once again, the game is unrelenting.



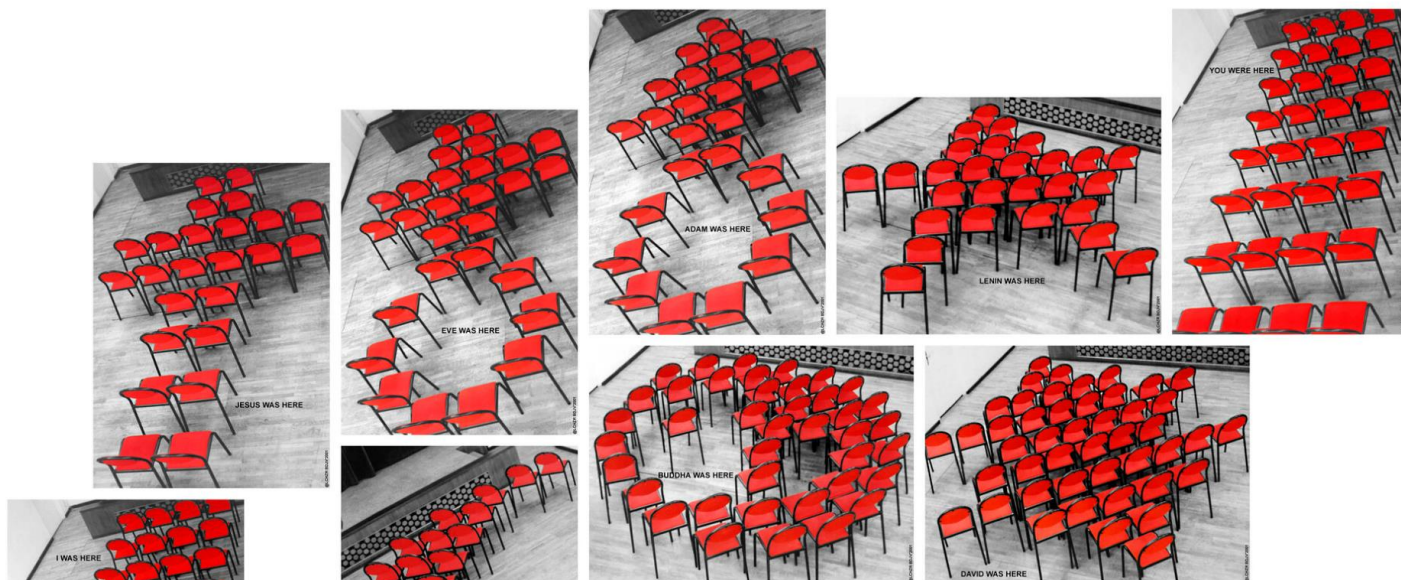


ThisPlay, exhibition view at Arter, 2022. Photos: Orhan Cem Çetin.

I have written that the artists of “ThisPlay” are the Surrealists and Dadaists for a new age. But it is not just that these artists are taking up the conceptual mantle of these movements, but also, they are figuring them within the material lexicon of the twenty-first century. While there is a fair amount of sculpture and assemblage, there is a rigorous attention to new media works that encourage performance and participation, as well as kinetic installation, and video work. A contemporary social reality also emerges from the gloss of play. In Turkish artist Erkan Özgen’s video *Lost Body* (2005), the camera follows a boy’s seemingly disembodied feet as he kicks a soccer ball. It seems we are witnessing an impersonal, universal scene of recreation, that the absence of the boy’s face invites us to imagine ourselves participating in the action. But the video’s fanciful vision of disembodied play is undercut by realities of class: as the boy dribbles the ball, we are guided through a landscape of dirty, impoverished streets, and sounds of struggle. We are watching a dreamlike state of play, but Özgen insistently reminds us that we are also watching a work of social realism, a testament to the material reality of the world at this moment. “This Play” is a game, but perhaps it is one that we must take seriously. **WM**

Lucezar Boyadjiev: *Re-building the World of Images. 1991-2019*

MOMus – Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki



March 9, 2020

Lucezar Boyadjiev
Re-building the World of Images. 1991-2019
 June 30–September 27, 2020

MOMus-Museum of Contemporary Art-Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art and State Museum of Contemporary Art Collections
 154 Egnatia Av. (TIF-Helexpo premises)
 54636 Thessaloniki
 Greece

www.momus.gr
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Lucezar Boyadjiev is among the most prominent artists, born and based in Bulgaria. An author with extensive international practice, he is a public figure with a clear critical stance on the Balkan and international art scene. As an artist, curator, lecturer, and a founding member of the Institute of Contemporary Art in Sofia, he contributes to establishing new definitions of art and practice, to new discourses and to the emancipation of a younger generation of artists in his home country.

The first museum show of the artist in Greece manifests nearly 30 years of creative practice, while featuring works from the early 1990s until the present. Among the works presented across the vast, sprawling two floors of the MOMus-Museum of Contemporary Art-Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art and State Museum of Contemporary Art Collections in Thessaloniki, Greece are essential and rarely exhibited works from various collections, those earliest works created in the chaotic times of euphoria and hopes for change following the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall. Many were exhibited in major international exhibitions, by now awarded a historic aura, such as: *Beyond Belief: Contemporary Art from East Central Europe* (1995-97) at the MCA in Chicago and the ICA in Philadelphia; *After the Wall: Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe* (1999-2000) in Stockholm's Moderna Museet, Berlin's Hamburger Bahnhof, and Budapest's Ludwig Museum; *Blood & Honey / Future's in the Balkans* (2003) in Vienna, among many other shows that marked historical events and stages in the recognition of the Other in art. Over the years, Lucezar Boyadjiev has participated in numerous biennials, group exhibitions, conferences and residencies spanning from Sao Paulo to Gwangju, and from Santa Fe to Singapore, as well as most everywhere in Europe. His works are part of museum, corporate and private collections worldwide.

Lucezar Boyadjiev's oeuvre represents an intense, richly humorous, knowledgeable and critical visual study of the present, of the world of images and of their multiple connections which the artist reevaluates and rebuilds. His work is based on extensive knowledge of Bulgarian and world history, culture and art as well as of the current concerns with modernity, post-colonial reality, and ecological engagement. The artist is willed to the reorganization of social, ideological and religious power hierarchies, to the shifts in values and to a study of the relations between personal and public space, global and local territories, to the search for points of intersection of capitalism and democracy, consumerism and new lifestyle patterns. The works merge the vectors of the past and the future into the flavor of the present.

Lucezar Boyadjiev is one of the first in his generation of artists that have put down the foundations of contemporary art in Bulgaria after the mid-80s. With background in art history and theory, Boyadjiev creates art that defies both traditional norms and the social conditions of his country; in his work the whole ambivalence of the socialist past is put in relation to global changes. His media is everything from drawings and painting, to photography, installations, video and his, by now famous (Schadenfreude) guided tours/performances in various cities, and art exhibitions.

This exhibition is part of the larger focus of the MOMus-Museum of Contemporary Art programs on the Balkans region and its artists and contexts.

Curated by Iara Boubnova and Theodore Markoglou.

MOMus

Lucezar Boyadjiev: *Re-Building the World of Images, 1991-2019*, article.
 e-flux, March 2020

taz ☛ dinstag, 14. Juli 2020

kultur 17

„Denkmäler sind Bedeutungsvehikel“

Wie man aushandeln kann, was ein Denkmal erzählt, und wie man Kritik einbringt, damit beschäftigen sich Elizabeth Sikiaridi und Frans Vogelaar



„On Vacation: Zhukov from Moscow, 2008“



„On Vacation: Friedrich the Great from Berlin, 2005“ Fotos: Courtesy the artist

Interview **Brigitte Werneburg**
Fotos **Luचेzar Boyadjiev**

taz: Frau Sikiaridi und Herr Vogelaar, Sie betreiben Hybrid Space Lab, ein Thinktank und Design Lab für Architektur, Design und digitale Kultur. Zuletzt beschäftigen Sie sich aber mit historisch problematischen Denkmälern. Wie kam es dazu?

Elizabeth Sikiaridi und Frans Vogelaar: In den letzten Jahren haben wir mehrere Projekte zur Umdeutung und Umwandlung von belasteten und kontroversen Denkmälern, Kulturstätten und Erinnerungsorten entwickelt: von den Projekten „Humboldt Dschungel“ und „Humboldt Vulkan“ zur Transformation und Aneignung des Berliner Humboldtforums bis zur Erschließung der mehrschichtigen, traumatischen Dimensionen der Landschaft an der koreanischen Demilitarisierten Zone (DMZ). Im Kontext des „DMZpace“-Projekts organisieren wir auch einen Austausch zwischen koreanischen Natur- und Kulturspezialist*innen und den Initiator*innen des Projekts „Europäisches Grünes Band“, das sich durch ganz Europa entlang des gesamten ehemaligen „Eisernen Vorhangs“ durchzieht.

Mit unserer Arbeit zielen wir auf kulturelle Innovation, auf das Entwickeln von Ideen, die zu positiven Veränderungen in Gesellschaft und Umwelt beitragen. Unsere Arbeitsweise ist interdisziplinär. Dies erlaubt uns zu unerwarteten künstlerischen Lösungen zu kommen, die es ermöglichen, Räume völlig neu zu lesen und zu erschließen. Wir haben wiederholt erfahren, dass in kontroversen Situationen Kreativität helfen kann, die Auseinandersetzung mit Konfliktlandschaften zu fördern und den Verhandlungsstau zu durchbrechen.

Sie plädieren also dafür, über Sinn und Unsinn von missliebigen Denkmälern zu verhandeln, ohne dass es zu Zerstörungen kommt. Wie kann das geschehen?

Wir erleben zurzeit weltweit eine Flut von ikonoklastischen Aktionen gegen Denkmäler und Symbole, die die kontroverse, ausbeuterische und ungelöste



„On Vacation: Bismark from Bremen, 2008“

On Vacation

heißt die Serie des bulgarischen Künstlers **Luचेzar Boyadjiev**, die seit 2004 auf inzwischen über 80 Bilder angewachsen ist. Auf seinen Reisen fotografiert er in den Städten die Reiterstandbilder. Die Monumentalkulpturen wollen in ihrer Zeit für bedeutend gehaltene Personen und Ereignisse im Gedächtnis der Nachwelt präsent halten. Die Nachwelt in Person des Künstlers schickt die Reiter freilich in Ferien, auf Fotografien, die digital manipuliert wurden. Boyadjiev nimmt den Denkmälern „die politische Belastung“, wie er ironisch sagt. Boyadjievs Ausstellung „Re-building the World of Images, 1991–2019“ in Thessaloniki läuft bis 27. September.

Geschichte verherrlichen. Die Reaktionen dazu reichen von Befürchtungen, dass die Beschädigung solcher Statuen eine Bedrohung für das kollektive Gedächtnis selbst darstellt, bis zur Empörung, dass diese Handlungen zu spät kommen, wenn man sich mit dem Ausmaß des Leidens konfrontiert, das systemische Unterdrückung und Ausbeutung seit Jahrhunderten verursacht. Daher ist es dringend, integrative Community-Werkzeuge und -Methoden für die notwendige Aufklärungsarbeit zu entwickeln, um die ungelösten historischen Wunden der Vergangenheit zu verarbeiten.

Warum sollen kontroverse Denkmäler eigentlich nicht abgerissen werden? Es werden die Denkmäler doch, seit sie errichtet werden, auch gestürzt.

Denkmäler sind ein greifbares Zeugnis von Erinnerung und Vergangenheit in ihrer kollektiven Dimension, auch wenn diese Vergangenheit belastet und umstritten ist. Denkmäler sind somit Bedeutungsvehikel, die die öffentliche Aushandlung von Narrativen beeinflussen. Es gibt viele Ansätze, ein Denkmal in ein Mahnmahl umzuwandeln, indem man es in einem neuen Kontext setzt, etwa mithilfe von temporären Interventionen, die die Prozesse der Aufklärung und Verarbeitung begleiten und unterstützen, und mithilfe von Gegendenkmälern.

Wir arbeiten daher an künstlerischen und innovativ-partizipativen Methoden, die eine kollektive Erinnerungskonstruktion und -verarbeitung

unterstützen, ohne die betreffenden Denkmäler zu zerstören. Mit solchen Werkzeugen ist es möglich, sich mit Denkmälern und Kulturstätten unterschiedlicher Größenordnung und Art auseinanderzusetzen, auch im Maßstab der Stadt oder der Landschaft.

Sie haben für Rotterdam und Amsterdam ein Projekt entwickelt, wie die Erinnerung an die koloniale Vergangenheit heute aussehen sollte. Worum ging es dabei?

Das „Voiced Space“-Projekt untersucht die postkolonialen Spuren von Rotterdam und Amsterdam und wie diese in den heutigen alltäglichen Gebrauch der Stadt integriert wurden. Dabei wird die Stadtlandschaft im Lichte ihrer historischen Beziehungen zu früheren Kolonien analysiert: Welche Verbindungen und Stimmen werden beim Lesen der Stadt priorisiert und welche ausgeschlossen? In Architektur, Städtebau- und Landschaftstudien ist ein solcher Diskurs nur sehr begrenzt vertreten. Die Amsterdamer Grachtenhäuser und Kanäle werden selten als Ergebnis und als notwendige Infrastruktur für das Behalten von kolonialen Beziehungen betrachtet. In der Architekturdiskussion fehlt bei der Auseinandersetzung mit den westlichen Metropolen meistens die globale Perspektive, also das Lesen der Stadtlandschaft im Kontext von internationalen Interaktionen, die (post-)koloniale Beziehungen wir einen Prototyp für ein „anderes Beispiel ist die Ikone des niederländischen Modernismus und Unesco-Weltkulturerbe, die Rotterdamer Van-Nelle-Fabrik zur Verarbeitung der traditionellen Kolonialwaren Kaffee, Tee und Tabak. Mit der Kolonialware Tabak als „Filter“ kann das koloniale und postkoloniale Erbe der Stadt untersucht werden – und auch inwieweit dieses die gegenwärtigen urbanen Segregationsbedingungen noch prägt.

Was verbuchen Sie als Erfolg ihres Workshops in Madrid, den Sie zum sogenannten „Tal der Gefallenen“, einem nationalkatholischen Weiheort für den Caudillo Franco, gemacht haben?

„Valle de los Caídos“, die große franquistische Gedenkstätte in der Nähe von Madrid, umfasst eine ganze Landschaft. Die megalomane Anlage ist Massengrab und beherbergt die sterblichen Überreste von über 33.000 Gefallenen beider verfeindeter Lager des spanischen Konflikts, die aus Massengräbern überall im Land herbeigeschafft wurden. Erbaut wurde das „Tal der Gefallenen“ zum Teil in Zwangsarbeit durch republikanische Häftlinge, die aus dem Berggarnit eine über 250 Meter lange unterirdische Basilika schlagen mussten. Es ist das umstrittenste aktive Denkmal der Welt, da die Benediktinermönche täglich die Messe – und bis zu Francos Exhumierung letzten Oktober, an seinem Grab und ihm zu Ehren – zelebrieren. Bis heute gibt es für die Besucher des „Tals der Gefallenen“, das weiterhin als touristische Destination fungiert, keinerlei Informationen zu seiner komplexen, schwierigen Geschichte.



„On Vacation: Alexander II from Sofia, 2004“

Im Jahr 2018 haben wir einen ersten interdisziplinären Workshop mit internationalen und spanischen Teilnehmer*innen veranstaltet, mit Künstler*innen, Architekt*innen, Landschaftsarchitekt*innen, Kurator*innen, Ethnolog*innen, (forensisch) Archäolog*innen, Historiker*innen, Politolog*innen, Psychoanalytiker*innen, Fachleuten für digitale Technologien und anderen Expert*innen. Der Workshop schöpfte sein Potenzial aus der Außenperspektive, um eine neue Sicht auf eine scheinbar unauf lösbare Konfliktsituation zu bringen, wie sie sich auch in anderen historischen Fällen als hilfreich erwiesen hat. Wir haben dabei die umgebende Landschaft analysiert und Vorschläge für Wege und Standpunkte, die den Ort in seinem ganzheitlichen historischen Kontext erschließen, entwickelt. Gleichzeitig wurden auch Konzepte für die Umwandlung der Anlage, zum Teil mithilfe temporärer Kunstprojekte, zum Forschungszentrum und zum globalen Friedenszentrum, formuliert.

Glauben Sie, dass das „Tal der Gefallenen“ jemals ein Erinnerungsort im Sinne Ihres Konzepts wird?

Das Projekt ist sowohl in Spanien als auch international sehr gut aufgenommen worden, besonders die Strategie, das Monument zu transformieren, ohne es erst einmal physisch zu verändern, überzeugte. Zurzeit entwickeln wir einen Prototyp für eine „andere Reality“-Anwendung, in der reale und virtuelle Welten verschmelzen, mit der Besucher die verborgenen Schichten der komplexen, kontroversen Geschichte des Monuments vor Ort erkunden können. Dies würde helfen, das zu zeigen, was Franco hier verborgen wollte, um das totalitäre Narrativ des Denkmals zu durchbrechen und es zu einem polyphonen Mahnmahl umzuwandeln. Würden die unsichtbaren Schichten des Ortes erlebbar werden, könnte das einen Weg von der Anerkennung zur Aussöhnung ebnen.



Hybrid Space Lab sind Elizabeth Sikiaridi und Frans Vogelaar. Sie riefen Thinktank und Design Lab, die sich auf kulturelle Innovation richten, ins Leben. Hybrid Space Lab setzt auf Gestaltung mit stark kultureller Komponente und entwickelt räumliche Interventionen, die Orte neu erschließen und interpretieren. „Hybrid“ steht für Interdisziplinarität, „Space“ für Raumexperimente und „Lab“ für die innovative Arbeitsweise, die einen transdisziplinären Gestaltungsansatz bevorzugt, wo Stadt, Natur und das Digitale zusammen-gedacht und entwickelt werden. hybridspacelab.net

„Denkmäler sind Bedeutungsvehikel“, interview Brigitte Werneburg, photos Luचेzar Boyadjiev taz, 14.07.2020

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Dystopian cozy: An artist's guide to eternal sunshine

Dystopian Cozy, Luchezar Boyadjiev's first solo show at SARIEV Contemporary takes a look towards one of the artist's favorite themes – the city - as a territory, as a private and shared space, as a way of living and a place of memory.

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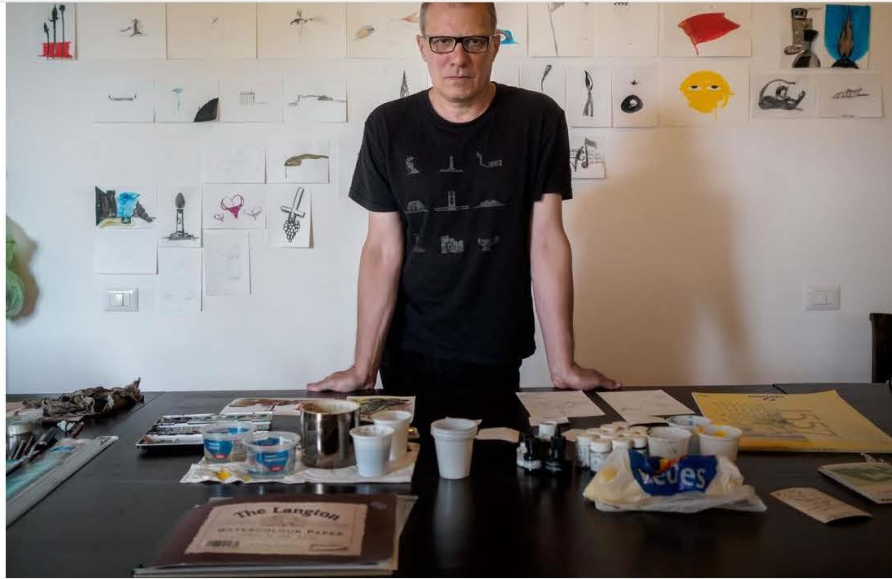


Luchezar Boyadjiev, *Dystopian Cozy*, view from the exhibition, ©Maria Djelebova, 2018

For twenty years now, Luchezar Boyadjiev has not stopped working with the city. His involvement in the expert-artistic council of Sofia Municipality, his participation in the Visual Seminar of the Institute of Contemporary Art – Sofia, the realization of artistic projects including photography, graphic works, installations and performances in several cities around the world are only part of the expressions of his heterogeneous but constant interest in the urban space and visual culture. One should not also forget his tours in the city of Sofia, part of the educational platform "Introduction to contemporary art" which offered a new approach to exploring and seeing the public spaces of the Bulgarian capital.



Search by artist, gallery, etc.



Luchezar Boyadjiev © Marco Giugliarelli for the Civitella Ranieri Foundation, 2017

Boyadjiev says he finds it difficult to portray himself as a "*Van Gogh-type artist who suffers in the province*" and deems it "*important for a contemporary artist to be at the center of the "quarrel"*" which he claims is taking place in the cities. In them, he sees "*both a goal and means, the place where the relationship between art and the public is formed at highest speed, [...] where all the effects and defects of contemporary life are accumulated and are visible everywhere – from civil activities and relations with authorities, to ecology, demography, new technologies, and all the way to the artist's inner life*". It is namely this attitude of the artist, strained by personal experiences, professional observations, questions about memory, mixed with the wit and irony typical for his work that urges the observer of "Dystopian Cozy" towards series of visual and mental conundrums with an unlimited set of possible answers.



Search by artist, gallery, etc.

Luchezar Boyadjiev, *Dystopian Cozy*, view from the exhibition, © Maria Djelebova, 2018

The title of the exhibition sets a start for the process. The questions of coziness and dystopia and their possible existence together lead to a number of intrinsically related political, economic, religious and cultural systems that Boyadjiev chooses to examine in a series of drawings realized between 2004 and 2018. Placed as main accent in the exhibition, the drawings explore the connections between the ways of inhabiting a city, the sharing of space and the memory within, and propose, in the artist's words, "*utopian solutions for the dystopic problems of some cities*", thus offering rather a comment on the present than a vision of the future.



Search by artist, gallery, etc.



Luchezar Boyadjiev
Paris needs to reboot!, 2004-2018
SARIEV Contemporary

"In my work, the dystopia is really here. The seemingly absurd proposals are aimed at transforming thinking, turning the perspectives – not necessarily into the future, but at resolving some dilemma today. For example, in Jerusalem, the tension between people is almost palpable; and Paris, a city that seems unable to truly see itself and thus needs to be redefined, reinvented in order to become not only an attractive destination for tourism and migration, but also to offer equal access to itself to all its residents and visitors."





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In the vicinity of these drawings, Boyadjiev, not unlike Lorenzetti at the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena, offers as well visions of the Utopian. *New-found Flag for a Missing Country* expands the geographic perimeter and leads with its visual elements – the shiny golden-brown fabric and green palm leaves –to the myths of the island as a microcosm and a suitable terrain for experimenting with various utopian scenarios. The work, along with the installation *Eternal Sunshine*, which is nothing else but a wood stove, create, in the words of the author, "something like a double utopia of the dream, designed to inspire the idea of coziness and warmth in a world increasingly impossible for living, in which people are becoming more and more divided and seem to forget about simple things like "the eternal sunshine" that every utopian idea suggests at least on a metaphorical level."



Luchezar Boyadjiev
Joie de Vivre, 2017
SARIEV Contemporary

The exceptionally colorful collage *Joie de Vivre* seems to be seeking to reconcile the utopia with the dystopia, equally inherent, according to Boyadjiev, to man and to reality. The two-headed pigeon, erected more as a connection than as a

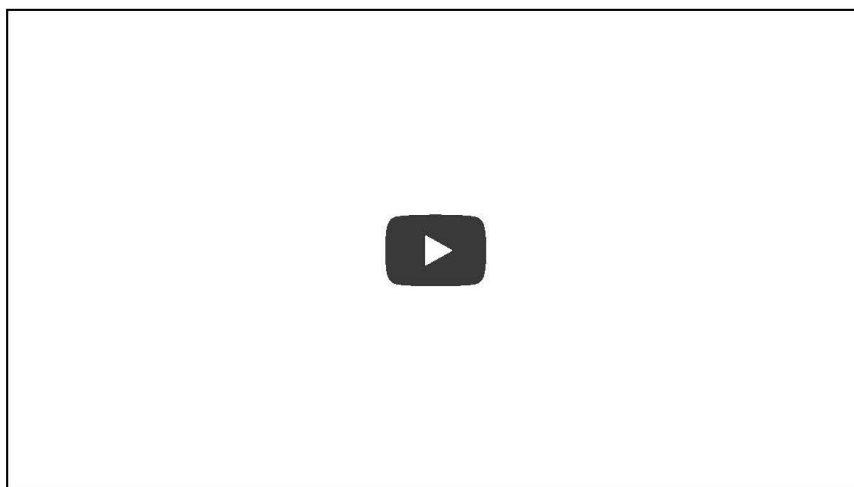


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utopias and turned into dystopias. Furthermore, the expression, in truly French fashion, contains the idea of a possible enjoyment of life, even in the worst of times and thus offers a pleasant dose of inner coziness.

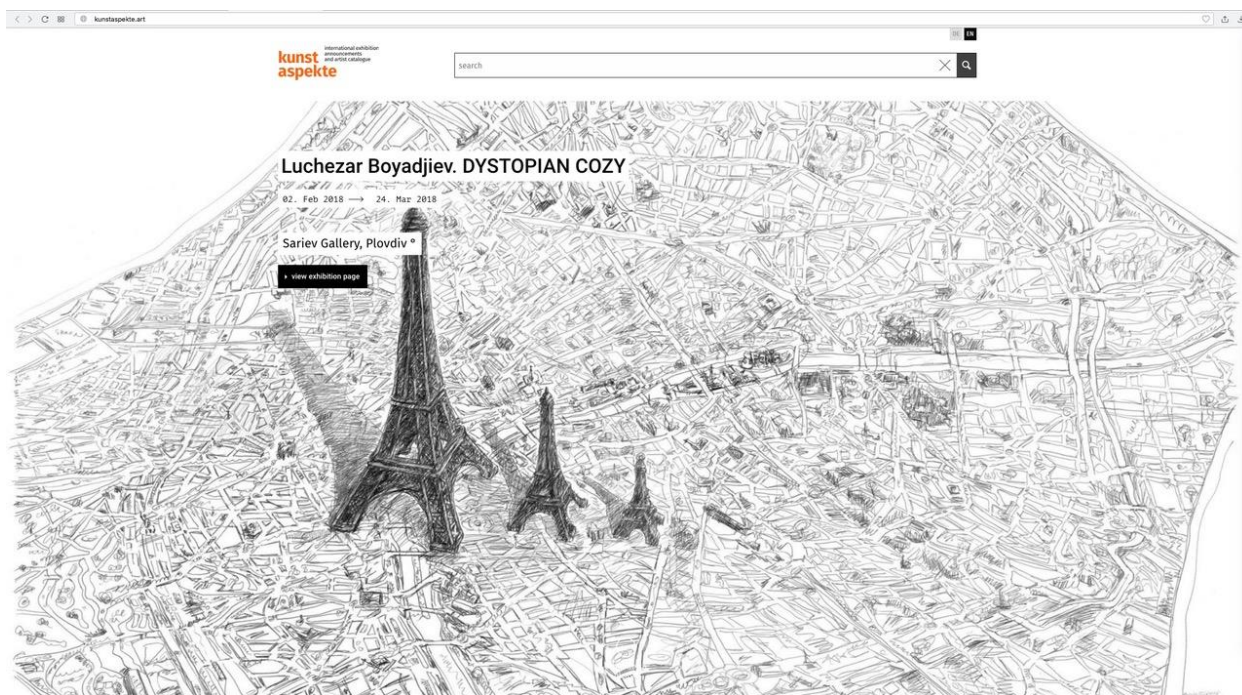
Playful and witty, Boyadjiev's dystopian-utopian suggestions explore nevertheless, different processes and changes happening in modern cities and societies and play masterfully with the intertwining of fiction and reality, possible and necessary. In observing them, one could be easily tempted to visualize the consequences of such decisions, going as much to utopia as to dystopia, considering what the way to the hell is paved with. It is, however, not the possible scenario, but the path that goes up there that interests the artist. "*It depends what we perceive as dystopia - in the narrower sense of particular fiction, or as somewhat broader, a kind of continuation of the thread of analysis, criticism and action.*" A thread that Luchezar Boyadjiev had followed for over twenty years as an artist, curator and an active participant in the construction of a different visual culture. The coziness of his "dystopias" seems to predispose the innocent viewer to follow the thread as well and demonstrates that regardless of its medium, Luchezar Boyadjiev's art is never passive.



Walk & Talk with Luchezar Boyadjiev, Introduction to Contemporary Art 2016 – Sofia, Open Arts Foundation, the 1st tour, in Bulgarian

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exhibition

Luchezar Boyadjiev. DYSTOPIAN COZY

02. Feb 2018 24. Mar 2018

opening:

02. Feb 2018 06:30 pm

**Sariev Gallery,
Plovdiv °**
(</venue/sariev-gallery-plovdiv>)

40, Otets Paisiy str.
4000 [Plovdiv](/city/plovdiv)
(</city/plovdiv>)

[show map](#)

[sariev-gallery.com](http://www.sariev-gallery.com)
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artist / participant

press release

Luchezar Boyadjiev. DYSTOPIAN COZY

02.02.2018 - 24.03.2018

Opening: 02.02.2018 18:30 in the presence of the artist

SARIEV Contemporary, Plovdiv is pleased to present „Dystopian Cozy“, first solo show of Luchezar Boyadjiev at the gallery. The exhibition is organised in the context of the retrospective exhibition “Luchezar Boyadjiev. Sic Transit Media Mundi (The present is too short and rather tight)” in Sofia City Art Gallery, 14 February – 11 March 2018.

Exhibition text by curator Iara Boubnova

Luchezar Boyadjiev is one of the most influential artists in Bulgaria and from Bulgaria in spite of the fact that he rarely does solo shows, especially in his country. However, his participations in group art events, his curatorial projects and central position in theoretical conferences and educational courses, his texts, as well as written and spoken comments on events, his involvement in debates, witty titles for exhibitions and bon mots on artists and artworks have left a unique and enduring mark over the hesitant, almost invisible and hard to define but energetic mass ambitions of the Bulgarian art scene. The presence of this artist not only in art but in our notions

Luchezar Boyadjiev. DYSTOPIAN COZY, cover and article.

Kunstaspekte, 5 February 2018

<http://kunstaspekte.art/event/luchezar-boyadjiev-dystopian-cozy>

[Luchezar Boyadjiev \(/person/luchezar-boyadjiev\)](#) pervades wide spaces – from the drawing on the cover of “Ars Simulacri”, the collection of essays from 1989, to last year walking in a pair of red high heels for the action “Walk a kilometer in her shoes” in front of the Palace of Culture in Sofia.

For quite some time now work of the artist Luchezar Boyadjiev has been focusing on the notion of renegotiation as a mandatory condition for both human nature and social relations. Renegotiating is fundamental for what we think of as the Western intellectual thought, culture and society as a whole. From the form, the color and the media to gender, faith, ethics, architecture, science and philosophy – every system of our existence is an endless process of negotiations. Luchezar Boyadjiev has been investigating ceaselessly how imagination overcomes limitations and ultimately transforms complex social, economic and cultural systems while surmounting the distinctions between realities and notions. He is freely mixing political, religious, media, everyday life, pop-culture and so on symbols thus creating zones of fusion where thinking, fictions and phantoms are all beginning to influence life. His belief that truth cannot be owned, that it is an opinion with its related chains of meanings, makes him a firm pillar for the autonomy of creative work and for the freedom of the artist. It is not by chance that the moment when he became aware of himself as an artist happened to coincide with the flourishing of postmodernism (though not in its academic and scholastic version, which is investigating the “death” of various cultural phenomena). This moment was the moment of the vigorously vital, succulent, daring, fighting and sexy visual arts of the 1980s in New York City. He was not only a contemporary but also a “space co-inhabitant” with artists such as Robert Longo, Julian Schnabel, Keith Haring, Cindy Sherman, David Salle, Nan Goldin, Barbara Kruger, Jenny Holzer, Jeff Koons, Jean-Michel Basquiat and many others at the time. Luchezar Boyadjiev extracted the maximum artistic benefit (for us as well) from that time and space.

His art is both polyvalent and a palimpsest, it is theoretically “equipped”, playful and ironic; its orientation is geared toward the visually literate and free from clichés audiences. He pays attention not to be a hostage of predictable notions, of “what art must do

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today”, or of what should the artist do regarding this or because of that. Every time Luhezar Boyadjiev is also renegotiating things and terms with himself.

The first solo show of the artist with Sariev Contemporary in Plovdiv, titled “Dystopian Cozy” is a new approach to themes that he has engaged with for a long time – cities and territories. We already had the experience of his conceptual analysis of urban material from his “Walk-and-talk around Sofia with Luhezar Boyadjiev” cycle that was organized by the Open Arts Foundation in 2016. The new show is a deduction based on the “Walks...” – cities today are in need of what people want too – making peace with reality through coziness, kawaii, and huegge... Counting on relax rather than on revolt; on “furnishing” rather than on “projecting”; on using the methodology of private/personal decisions within the common/public spaces. The author is suggesting solutions to problems while fusing cultural codes, notional fetishes, political clichés and marketing myths all of them coexisting in our minds.

Such an idea is hugely organic for Luhezar Boyadjiev. Whoever has met him would know the he is often the first to take the floor after a lecture or during public discussions of artistic and academic themes related to visual culture. That’s because he is an eager, attentive and well-meaning listener able to grasp various positions. And also because he is always ready to help out the speaker overcome those threatening moments of silence right after the talk when misunderstanding, lack of interest and even hostile audiences might be lurking. He is after creating coziness in a friendly discussion.

In a project series Boyadjiev is demonstrating how he wants to make life more comfortable in such cities that are abused by the international art world: “Venice needs a metro!” 2007-2018 and “Kassel needs and airport!” 2007-2018. One of the drawings here displays how it is possible to solve the problems of Jerusalem – the city of conflict is cloned and the clones are positioned up along the vertical axis – well within the spirit of the avant-garde architects from the early 20th c. (“Jerusalem needs to hover!” 2008-2018). On the other hand “Paris needs to reboot!” (2004-2018), claims the artist in a drawing where the Eiffel Tower, the ex-symbol of technological progress, is multiplied. An act of making peace with Walter

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Benjamin's theories about the "mechanical reproduction" of art, as well as the new 3D printing technology provide the grounds to think about such possibilities for real. Of course, the influx of tourists will also increase though now everyone will have the chance to get to the top of the tower(s).

The artist is making his intentions clear: "Artists are always trying to re-imagine the world but the question is to shelter and make it cozy". Instead of the aggressive imperial double-headed eagles the artist is suggesting that there should be double-headed doves of peace – they should occupy all the division walls in the world, while the world itself should sink in yellow (in the painted collage „Joie de Vivre“, 2017). For yellow is the warm and bright color that artists like and use for precisely these qualities – by Van Gogh and Gauguin, Albers and Rodchenko, Christo and Kusama, Eliasson and Solakov.

And for those lucky visitors to the show coziness waits – a small stove is metaphorically heating up the space, the gazes, the hearts and the thoughts ("Eternal Sunshine", 2018).

Iara Boubnova

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Lučezar Boyadjiev (b. 1957) graduated from the National Art Academy in Sofia in 1980. One of the most famous contemporary artists from Bulgaria, his work is about personal interpretation of social processes, about the interaction between private and public, about urban visuality and the world of today split between utopia and dystopia. His media is installation, photography, drawing, objects, text, video, and performative lectures. Selected exhibitions are: the solo shows "Places of Wisdom", ICA-Gallery, Sofia (in partnership with Open Arts-Plovdiv, 2016); "Not a Library Artist either", SALT, Istanbul (2013); "Artist in the Storage" from "The Other Eye" series, City Art Gallery, Sofia (2010); and the group shows in 2016-17 "Economize", Ludwig Museum, Budapest, as well as "Symptoms of Society", Guangdong Museum of Art (Guangzhou) and Zhejiang Art Museum (Zhejiang Sheng), China; in 2016 "Cold Wind from the Balkans", PERA Museum, Istanbul; "Upside Down: Hosting the Critique", MCA, Belgrade, and "Low-budget Utopias", Moderna Galerija,

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Ljubljana; in 2015 “Inside Out”, City Gallery, Ljubljana; “The Grammar of Freedom”, GARAGE Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, and “Art for Change 1985-2015”, City Art Gallery, Sofia; in 2014 “Disconsent”, CCA “Ancient Bath”, Plovdiv; in 2013 “Economics in Art”, MOCAK, Cracow; in 2012 “The Best of Times, the Worst of Times”, 1st Biennial, Kiev, and “The Eye Never Sees itself”, 2nd Biennial, Yekaterinburg; and in 2011 “The Global Contemporary”, ZKM, Karlsruhe. The artist is a Founding Member of ICA-Sofia.

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