
Albena Mihaylova – Bendji
Lake and Tape, 1985

Land art-performance at Murla lake between Sopot and Karlovo
idea and performance: Albena Mihaylova - Bendji
assistant: Vesko Velez

April. Dam between Sopot and Karlovo. With a rowboat, I cross the lake from coast to coast, spreading paper tape over the water's surface. Landscape is appreciated and intervention is sought, opportunities for contact with the land are recognised. In places along the coast, the tape wraps around a tree's crown, covers the terrain in the shape of a spiral, encircles shrubs or stones. The more the lake "wraps", i.e., it is taken over by human consciousness and intervention, the more the body develops and releases itself. While rowing the boat, I undress. I'm sitting naked in the boat, in the center of the lake.

Albena Mihaylova - Bendji

official documentation
6 photos, tape from the performance













additional documentary photos and materials



Location

«Sopot 2 – Murla» Dam, total volume of 350 000 m³; Dead Volume 35,000 m³;
Wall height 18 m; Length of crown wall 269 m;
Water source Murla River; Float area 49 decares.

Used Material

Rowboat (2 oars) owned by the dam.
White paper tape, rolled, endless, perforated at the edges, 22 cm wide.
Purpose – used in electronic centers in the past.

Actions. Performance.

Bendji in the boat is rowing, describing concentric circles – first along the shore, then spiraling toward the middle of the lake. She unfolds the white tape on the water surface. The tape surfs and tries to fly, but manages to stay on the water surface. The paper is slightly coated and does not sink immediately.
The terrain around the lake is also part of the vision. A tree crown is wrapped in the white tape. On the shore the tape is positioned in a smaller spiral.
Bendji reaches the middle of the lake and removes her clothes. The vision of the white swimming tape and the naked woman in the boat lasts about 20 minutes. Then the tape sinks.

Existing material

Author's color slides of Albena Mihaylova–Bendji – 13 pieces, 6 of them show the beginning – boat tests, choosing places and points of view. 6 slides have an aesthetic value and show the process of handling the tape and the result.

There is a publication by D. Grozdanov in “Art magazine”, issue 9 of 1988, which mentions the Land Art–performance "Lake and Tape". A snapshot of the tape, shot in a broad, low–horizon, is printed in the article. For this publication, Bendji handed to D. Grozdanov one of the most interesting shots.

A roll of the same white paper tape is available.

The copyright of the performance and the slides are entirely property of Albena Mihaylova–Bendji

The Land Art–Performance can be repeated nowadays





Albena Mihaylova-Bendji was born on 9 June 1959 in Plovdiv. In 1978 she graduated from the Art High School in Kazanlak. She graduated from the National Academy of Arts, Sofia, in 1984 in Professor Galiley Simeonov's Graphics class. In the years 1984-1994 Albena Mihaylova-Bendji was an active freelance artist with a number of solo exhibitions, participations in international biennials and a winner of awards. At the center of her creative interest is the recreation of the interrelation between the two-dimensional image and its spatial equivalent. As a result of these quests, unique installations and performances are born. In 1989 she was one of the founders of the legendary Plovdiv art group "RUB". During that time, the artist inspired and lead the organization of one of the first private galleries in Bulgaria – the Akrafov Gallery, which functioned as a resident center for contemporary art. Within this center, she created an art school and taught art in a method developed by herself. At the same time she was Associate Professor of Drawing and Perspective at the School of Performing Arts in Plovdiv. In 1994, Albena Mihaylova-Bendji left for Zurich at the invitation of BINZ 39 Foundation as a resident artist. As a result of this exchange, she has promoted the gallery under the International Resartist Program and organized the exchange of artists, projects and festivals between Bulgaria and Switzerland. In the period 1995-1998 Albena Mihaylova-Bendji specialized in a Master class in Video Art at the Higher Art School of Basel, Switzerland. In 2008, Albena Mihaylova-Bendji was nominated for the M-Tel Award for Bulgarian Contemporary Art. Since 2008 Albena Mihaylova-Bendji works as a documentary filmmaker and is a screenwriter, director and cinematographer. In 2009, she found a platform for cultural exchange, exhibitions and film festivals at Basel Culturinstitut AM contemporary. Currently the artist works and lives in Basel. Her creative biography includes her membership in the artistic group "VIA Audio Video Art", her work in the governance of the creative union "VISARTE BASEL" and she leads workshops for Artlink Bern and Solothurn Higher Pedagogical School. She is a member of "Balimage", an association of filmmakers and video artists, and the "Art Book Forum Basel".