

Study of a Collection. Simeon Markov

Group exhibition

Nikola Kazakov, Ivo Dimchev, Luchezar Boyadjiev, Nedko Solakov, Pravdoliub Ivanov, Dimitar Shopov, Mariela Gemisheva, Kalin Serapionov, Tekla Aleksieva, Krassimir Terziev, Sasho Stoitzov, Miná Minov

May 31 – June 29, 2024

Opening: May 31, Friday, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Simeon Markov in conversation with Vesselina Sarieva

June 1, 2024 г., 2 p.m., Kabinet (former artnewscafe)

Sarieva/Gallery, Plovdiv

40 Otets Paisiy Str

Visiting hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 2 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.

No collector could love a work of art as much as a fetishist loves a shoe.

Georges Bataille

Sarieva/Gallery Plovdiv is pleased to present its joint exhibition with young collector Simeon Markov – *Study of a Collection*. The exhibition continues the gallery's long-standing initiatives for getting to know and developing the collector's environment in Bulgaria. *Study of a Collection* will enable more people to see fragments from a private contemporary art collection, to learn about its logic, ethics, principles of compilation, but also about the challenges it is confronted with. The program will provide an opportunity for a broader and more engaged conversation about art collecting and its significance for the artistic environment in Bulgaria and abroad.

Simeon Markov started collecting at the age of 14, while still a student in his hometown, Plovdiv. Today he is a law student in Sofia. His collection includes family heirloom artworks, subsequently recognized by him as the main source of his interests, as well as other works of personal choice. His collector's passion awakened during the years of self-formation and refers to various subjects: individual-individualism, society-community, education. The artworks present controversial personages and propagandists who gravitate between heroism and outsidership, edging along the accepted norm. Excluding the collection's intimate aspect, certain parts of it practically supplement Simeon Markov's activist experience in the field of student self-government and youth policies.

A characteristic feature of the collection is the fact that Simeon very often recognizes artefacts and accompanying materials from the authors' artistic practice, organizing their new life as artworks through the act of collecting them. This particular unearthing, sometimes bordering on co-authorship, is quite often made possible by Simeon's deep knowledge of an author's collective work, the history of the artworks and the young collector's analytical endeavors in studying archival documents and books. These objects were desired with a feeling of respect for their own artistic context and environment, but also with a passion for their decontextualization and incorporation into one's own collector's narrative.

It is according to this logic of "desired and acquired" that the exhibition shows works from Simeon Markov's collection, as well as still unacquired ones. The exhibited part of the collection includes artworks by Nikola Kazakov, Ivo Dimchev, Luchezar Boyadjiev,

Nedko Solakov, Pravdoliub Ivanov, Dimitar Shopov, Mariela Gemisheva, Kalin Serapionov, Tekla Aleksieva, while the desired ones are by authors Krassimir Terziev, Sasho Stoitzov, Miná Minov. These works range from drawing, painting, photography, video, object, amongst them are also valuable books. Many of them are shown to a wide audience for the first time.

In regard to the invitation for the exhibition *Study of a Collection* in Sarieva/Gallery Plovdiv, the young collector shares a quote by Georges Bataille: "To collect, that is, to decontextualize artworks and artistic endeavors. To blur the boundaries between acquired and unacquired, to resist your collector's perversions, which you lack the audacity to call "fetish", to speculate with them and thus affirm them. To create an alternative, parallel narrative, to nurture within yourself a care for the narrative, to accept the authority of this narrative as your own. When in the embrace of Stendhal and Plyushkin your obsessions become manners, then you own a collection, then you own yourself."

Last but not least, the collective exhibition *Study of a Collection. Simeon Markov* emphasizes the close relationship between author-gallerist-collector and the intellectual exchange of ideas and topics in which all three parties recognize each other in symbiosis. In relation to its creators, the present exhibition can be perceived as an intuitive continuation of the gallery's multi-genre project of 2021 *Future Unforgettable*, which propagated the principles of narrative construction and proposed a focus on independent collector's practices in Bulgaria as a possibility for parallel historicity.

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Simeon Markov is a law student at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. In 2023 he completed his secondary education the country's first class working on the "1:1" model at the first Google reference school on Balkan Peninsula – Ivan Vazov Language High School. Founder of the Plovdiv Youth Council, organizer of the National Forum for Student Self-Government. Pending publication is his first book – *Pathos and Speeches* - which reflects his experience in the field of student self-government and youth policies.

Study of a Collection is envisaged as a two-year program. The initiative follows Vesselina Srieva's close work with collectors in recent years and the larger arts and education projects developed since 2011 in collaboration with Open Arts Foundation. Some of them include Collectors Forum, the website Open Art Files: Topics, People, Spaces, Files in Bulgarian Contemporary Art, the monthly guide to exhibitions in Bulgaria *Artnewscafe Bulletin*, the educational readings and the monograph *Introduction to Bulgarian Contemporary Art, Focus: Bulgaria* at *viennacontemporary*, *Background: Young Authors*, *Portfolio Den*, *Working Visits for International Curators and Art Critics*, *Future Unforgettable* etc.

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