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**Nedko Solakov**

**Random Jumble**

solo exhibition

11 October – 24 November 2024

Opening: 11 October, Friday, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., in the presence of the artist

Sarieva/Gallery @ DOT Sofia

ul. Bratya Miladinovi 46, Women's Market, 1303 Sofia, Bulgaria

Visiting hours during shows: Wednesday – Saturday: 1:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., Sunday: 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

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Sarieva/Gallery has the pleasure of presenting the solo exhibition "Random Jumble" by the world-renowned Bulgarian artist Nedko Solakov at the Sarieva/Gallery in Sofia.

Following "A Sentimental Show" (together with Dimitar Solakov and Mityo Solakov), 2013; "Nature," 2016; and "(almost) Paintings," 2019, this is Nedko Solakov's fourth exhibition with the gallery and the first in its Sofia space. The artist has taken part in a series of the gallery's initiatives and exhibits and has been represented by it since 2014. Even though the gallerists know the approach, work and context around Solakov very well, it turns out he always can find a way to surprise them.

Nedko Solakov is famous in the world of contemporary art for his stories, which he tells through drawings, texts, paintings, objects, sculptures and installations. An essential part of his work is his sense of humor. However, his body of work and achievements, which have become a high bar for success, are always taken seriously. The spontaneous lightness and boldness with which the artist creates his work and guides the creative process might remain invisible. So it seems the goal of the current exhibition is precisely to reveal that invisible Nedko Solakov. But how can you make the invisible visible? By first closing your eyes, it turns out.

When Katrin and Veselina Sarievi arrived at Nedko Solakov's studio, they had no idea they would select the works for the upcoming exhibition without seeing them. The artist had prepared yellow stickers numbered 1 through 13 and invited his gallerists to use them to identify the works selected for the exhibition, but without moving them from their places on the shelves. Quickly, in synch and guided by intuition alone, they picked out all the works, orienting themselves only from the backs, the frames, the size and trying to guess the technique.

Completely randomly, the Sarievi managed to include in the exhibition paintings, drawings and objects from the artist's earliest works in the '80s until today. The order of the selection of works was also crucial for the way they will be arranged in the gallery – from left to right, they will entirely follow the order in which they were chosen, from 1 to 13. Displayed in this way, the works offer knowledge about the artist's works, yet not in a narrative, linear and holistic way, but rather fragmentarily and in pieces – like various cracks through which we can peer into his oeuvre.

This playful whim, which the artist has used for the first time, deconstructs the conventions of selection. This letting go of control is valid for both sides – for him as well as for the gallerists. And here, we cannot help but wonder – is such a "random" exhibition representative of the artist's work? Would this approach work with every artist? Which is the artistic fact – the process of selection or the exhibition itself? How do these completely randomly selected works function together?

The exhibition also makes a joking nod towards prejudices about and mistrust of contemporary art, which see it either as not serious or as too uptight, feeling the need to constantly explain itself and to formulate conceptions.

Of course, it is precisely the trust between the artist and the gallerist, the latter's deep knowledge of the artist's work that gives them the freedom to choose "with closed eyes."

"Random Jumble" is a joke, a game, but it is also freedom. This is an exhibition that contains many things at once – frivolity, joy, humor and discovery.

Since the early 1990s, Nedko Solakov (b. 1957, Cherven Bryag, Bulgaria; lives in Sofia) has exhibited extensively in Europe and the US. His work was featured in Aperto'93 (Venice Biennial); the 48th, 49th, 50th and 52nd Venice Biennial; the 3rd, 4th and 9th Istanbul Biennial; São Paulo'94; Manifesta 1, Rotterdam; the 2nd and 4th Gwangju Biennial; the 5th Lyon Biennial; Sonsbeek 9, Arnhem; the 4th and 5th Cetinje Biennial; the 1st Lodz Biennial; the 7th Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates; the 3rd Tirana Biennial; the 2nd Seville Biennial; the 2nd Moscow Biennial; documenta 12; 16th Sydney Biennial; Prospect 1, New Orleans Biennial; Singapore Biennial 2011; dOCUMENTA (13); Kathmandu Triennale; 1st Riga International Biennial for Contemporary Art, and Lahore Biennale 2.

He had solo shows at Museu do Chiado, Lisbon; Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam; CCA Kitakyushu, Japan; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Centre d'Art Santa Monica, Barcelona; Kunsthaus Zurich; Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli; Sofia City Art Gallery; Galleria Borghese, Rome; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; BOZAR, Brussels; ICA Sofia; La Panacée, Montpellier; Mudam Luxembourg; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean; MAXXI – National Museum of 21st Century Art, Rome, and Belvedere, Vienna. In 2003 – 05 an extensive mid-career "A 12 1/3 (and even more) Year Survey" was presented at Casino Luxembourg, Rooseum Malmoe and O.K Centrum Linz, and in 2008 – 09 the "Emotions" solo project was exhibited at Kunstmuseum Bonn, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, and Institut Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt. In 2011 – 12 his retrospective "All in Order, with Exceptions" was presented at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Fondazione Galleria Civica Trento ("All in (My) Order, with Exceptions"); S.M.A.K., Ghent, and Fundação de Serralves, Porto. His works belong to more than fifty international museums and public collections, among them MoMA New York, Tate Modern, London, and Center Pompidou, Paris.

Translation: Angela Rodel

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