

MEDIA INFORMATION

CRISIS AS IDEOLOGY?

Opening: TH 09 06 2016, 7:00 pm
Duration: FR 10 06 – SA 23 07 2016

PRESS TOUR: 08 06 2016 – 10:00 am
PRESS AND IMAGE MATERIAL: www.kunstraum.net/en/press

Artists: Miklós Erhardt, Marianne Flotron, Anna Hofbauer, Vlatka Horvat, Dejan Kaludjerović, Ferhat Özgür, Markus Proschek, Seth Weiner

Curators: Anamarija Batista, Dejan Kaludjerović, Karolina Radenković
Exhibition design: Seth Weiner

Supporting programme:

Artist Talks:
FR 10 06 16, 5:00 – 7:00 pm: Seth Weiner, Miklós Erhardt, Ferhat Özgür
WE 15 06 16, 5:00 – 7:00 pm: Marianne Flotron, Anna, Hofbauer, Markus Proschek
WE 15 06 16, 7:00 pm: book presentation: Hilde de Bruijn (live), Stefanos Tsivopoulos (via Skype): ARCHIVE CRISIS. Shaking up the Shelves of History: A Visual Essay on Media Images from the Recent Political Past of Greece

Since the crash of the capital markets in 2008 people fear for their future. The economy, market economy, and our social system are stuck in a crisis. Increasing unemployment, the radical redistribution of money from bottom to top, and the changes in our work world are troubling us. It's becoming more and more obvious that fundamental clefts are challenging society as whole. And the recent "Panama Papers" reveal that even the heads of state park their money offshore, therewith abdicating their roles in common welfare.

From a theoretical point of view, crises are a fixed component of capitalist cycles, as the economist Joseph Schumpeter already assessed in light of the Great Depression in the

1930s. Crisis, in his opinion, is part of the system, otherwise recovery – equally inherent to the system – would be impossible.

From June 10, 2016 the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich displays eight international artistic positions that deal with the phenomenon of the crisis in documentary, melancholic, and humorous ways.

The cry for reforms – above all, the demand for a continuous reduction of costs and higher cutbacks – is targeted towards states, companies, and ultimately the citizens. The dogma of cost cutting is being justified by the crisis and its predictable and unpredictable consequences. But how did the crisis come about in the first place? The curators of this exhibition assume that it evolved when capital became an independent reality, which only has an abstract connection to human labour, available resources, and work processes. This leads to a dangerous gap between everyday work realities and the movements of capital. The resulting “contradictions” and “cracks” define our current political and economic debates. Curator Anamarija Batista, an art historian and economist, has been investigating the phenomena of crises for several years now. With their exhibition Batista and her co-curators Dejan Kaludjerović and Karolina Radenković aim to transfer the crisis into concrete and tangible states of thought, to outfox it and to transform it into spatial constructs and relationships.

The artistic works in “Crisis as Ideology?” address notions of social manipulation, discontinuity, and value creation along with historical and contemporary precedents. The crisis has left its traces in all of these fields – and it’s here where structures emerge that reflect power relations.

MARIANNE FLOTRON (CH/NL)

Marianne Flotron examines the connection between economy and human behaviour. She looks for traces of manipulation that influence our actions. In her video project "Work" she and the Columbian Theater of Oppressed director Hector Aristizábal interview employees of a major Dutch insurance company about their everyday work environment, about their work and communication relationships. Flotron aims to reveal the ways in which the capitalist economy affects people's behaviour and thoughts.

FERHAT ÖZGÜR (TR)

Ferhat Özgür's documentary work "We are the Builders" follows construction workers in the Turkish capital Ankara who are renovating a four-storey apartment building. Under harsh conditions they hire themselves out on a daily wage basis. In contrast to the employees in Flotron's work, they speak openly about their work conditions. Özgür spent a week on the construction site conducting interviews and recordings. He dedicates his video to all construction workers working without a social safety net.

DEJAN KALUDJEROVIĆ (SRB/A)

Dejan Kaludjerović's work "Mikado" [*German name for the game pick-up sticks, jackstraws – translator's note*] from the series "Conversations" consists of a six-channel sound installation and a ninefold magnified Mikado box, which has been produced for the first time for the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich. Works from the "Conversations" series have already been realised in other countries (Russia, Serbia, Azerbaijan, Iran). For the Austrian version Kaludjerović gives the floor to children from Austria to talk about different themes: their dreams and worries, politics and random events of the day. With his questions the artist tries to trace the sociopolitical patterns which family, upbringing, and the media leave behind on children.

VLATKA HORVAT (HR/GB)

In her collages from the work series "With the Sky on Their Shoulders" Vlatka Horvat deals with the motif of times past. She works with old family photos of her parents in an attempt to critically re-assess the past. Today, these auspicious images of a solidarity society, confident in a positive future and progress, reflect disappointed promises in the countries of former Yugoslavia.

In her second work "Peripheral Awareness" Horvat presents a table with round/rolling objects placed on its edges: they're still on stable ground, but the danger of falling is imminent. The safe centre of the table lies abandoned; its edges are animated by objects that rest in constant danger between stability and falling.

MARKUS PROSCHEK (A)

"How are values created?" Markus Proschek deals with this question in his work "The Gift_The Abolition of Economy". The artist explored George Bataille's writings referring to the ethnologist Marcel Mauss and the potlatch tradition he helped to publicize. The potlatch, the "gift-giving feast", was a ritual practiced by North American indigenous peoples, which in worst case could lead to the ruin of the chief and his tribe. The example of the potlatch demonstrates how close the act of giving and destroying can be – both serve the status of the giver as well as that of the one who ruins himself. Proschek's artistic examination of values also touches on a psychoanalytical theory that traces the connection between money, gold, jewellery, and excrement: fossilised dinosaur excrement (coprolite) is cut into gems. The material undergoes various levels of transformation and "transsubstantiation": on the one hand, the process of fossilisation, which over millions of years caused the fecal substance to turn into a beautiful semi-precious stone; on the other, the artistic transformation into jewellery, which, however, necessitates the partial destruction of the rare fossil. This destruction returns the material to the realm of the initial product: shit excreted by another system.

ANNA HOFBAUER (A/CN)

The title of the photographic series by Anna Hofbauer “Wo waren wir stehen geblieben I” – “VIII” [“Where did we stop I” – “VIII”] is a word game that refers to walking and moments of rest when snapshots were taken with an analogue camera. But it could also mean taking up the thread of a conversation that does not necessarily continue at the point where it ended. The series was taken on walks in Vienna’s Donau Park and along the Morača River in Podgorica (Montenegro) as well as on travels from Vienna to Cetinje (Montenegro, via Split, Croatia) and back from Podgorica to Vienna (via Travnik, Bosnia and Herzegovina). Anna Hofbauer developed contact prints from the unedited black-and-white film material, which constitute a sequence but time and again also reveal breaks.

“Wo waren wir stehen geblieben” is a comment on the present crisis situation. As in Hofbauer’s work – where one shot is reminiscent of the previous and the sequence of 12 pictures from one film strip cannot be coincidental – in times of crisis we search for continuities and dissonances, ultimately for the background of this proclaimed condition.

MIKLÓS ERHARDT (H)

Miklós Erhardt explores artistic modes of action in response to sociopolitical and economic issues. Two video works, “The Call” (“Parallax”) from 2010 and “Revolutio” from 2013, reveal different aspects of these thematic frameworks. Why are our life circumstances threatened and who is juggling (Revolutio) with our existences? What defines a (marginal) group, a social norm? Are we following the same call (The Call)?

SETH WEINER (USA/A)

For Seth Weiner plastic chairs are symbolic of the omnipresence of an object in a globalised economy. These chairs are everywhere: in parks, forests, mountains, hotel rooms, cafés...

We've all seen such a chair and sat in it at least once.

These chairs are uniform objects. However, they differ in details and in their various types of production – a downright paradoxical subversion of their standardisation. Seth Weiner considers them the dandelions of furniture. “Monoblocks want to be repeated. They travel,” he states. This time they land in the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich.

STEFANOS TSIVOPOULOS (GR)

The programme accompanying the exhibition includes the presentation of Stefanos Tsivopoulos' book “ARCHIVE CRISIS. Shaking up the Shelves of History: A Visual Essay on Media Images from the Recent Political Past of Greece”. “Archive Crisis” is a visual essay based on a number of to-date unpublished photographic materials from the Greek media landscape, which the artist has assembled into an archive. The book investigates the mechanisms of visual culture in a mediatised democracy and their effects on the production of collective memory.

Stefanos Tsivopoulos, *ARCHIVE CRISIS. Shaking up the Shelves of History: A Visual Essay on Media Images from the Recent Political Past of Greece*, (eds.) Stefanos Tsivopoulos and Hilde de Bruijn (Heyningen: Jap Sam Books, 2016).

Opening hours: Tuesday–Friday, 11:00 am – 7:00 pm, and Saturday 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Free entrance

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Image material: <http://www.kunstraum.net/en/press>

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