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The Ninth Circle of Obsession - the project for group exhibition

Obsession is a mental state, the inability to free yourself from intrusive thoughts, images, or from performing the same actions. Obsession is also a type of anxiety disorder, reflected by the presence of irrational thoughts and impulses, which are accompanied by the conviction of their absurdity and the desire to free themselves from them. They often have a cultural background (i.e. obsessions religious, political, erotic.)

It's hard not to notice the obsessive and impudent way with which commercialism invades our lives, as we are blinded by utopian visions, to follow well-being and safety. People do their daily activities mechanically and mindlessly, they act without reflection and according to the media. Any system of norms, do's and don'ts, pushes some actions to the margin, forming a neutral area, which allows the formation and the control of societies.

The exhibition's title also refers to the Divine Comedy by Dante, and more specifically to the last circle of hell, the place of traitors. Betraying our instincts, the primal or natural behaviour, we have build the foundations of obsession.

What could be the ninth circle of obsession? Is this what is most pushed into the mind? Or maybe this what we are scared of, ashamed of, or what we hate? Perhaps it is a repetition of the same topics, forms and shapes? Or a permanent analysis of our inherent problem?

This exhibition is aimed at seeking answers to these questions and creating new ones;

Finding the definition, but above all to create a space that will clash with what lies deep within us, what we call the dark side of human- a sphere of taboo.

Proposed artists:

Ruben van Klaveren (NL) <http://www.wix.com/rubenvan/klaveren>

Amanda Koelman (NL) www.amandakoelman.nl

Paweł Matyszewski (PL) <http://endprojekt.blox.pl/2009/12/end-projekt-3-PAWEL-MATYSZEWSKI-Komplikacje-akryl.html>

Izabela Ołdak (PL) <https://picasaweb.google.com/izabela.oldak> and www.izabelaoldak.com

Natasa Kokić (SRB) <http://www.saatchionline.com/profiles/index/id/90778>

Ivana Ranisavljević (SRB) <http://www.saatchionline.com/profiles/index/id/175000>

Concept: Izabela Otdak

Development

The societies grow in a way that the good is separated from the bad, there are many rules to follow, and this what is not socially accepted is oppressed and pushed to margin. It cause a confusion and it thorns personal morals. I see this exhibition as a big potential for deeper analyses of the darker side of human nature. It is an opportunity to lose the conventions and be free in artistic expression.

Artist I selected work in different media like: painting, collage, performance, video and installation. All of them are very dedicated to their work, they have clear statements and the path they follow. Their works are deep analyses of themselves, the weaknesses of humans nature and the spirituality.

They are also coming from different countries and cultural backgrounds. Thanks to this multiplicity we could create broader spectrum of thought and use of the medium. I find very important to show the dynamics, similarities and differences of approaching one subject, so as to find a link between eastern and western artists.

I would like to invite chosen artist to have the time and the space for preparation and exhibition. To share the ideas, and to create the exhibition organically, by working on it together. To work with less boundaries and rules, so the artist can be a curator and take the responsibility for the show.

Costs

Production costs and honorarium for each artist: 1000 €

Travel expenses up to 200 € per person

Stay : 300 € per person

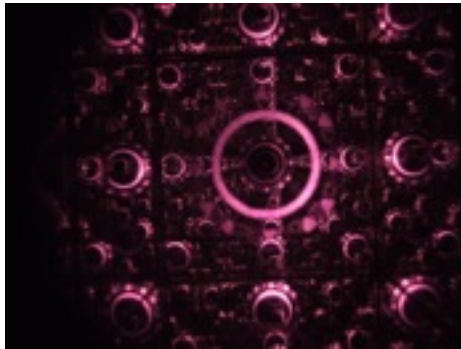
Publication/brochure: 1000 €

In total about 10 000 €

Possible funding:

Polish Ministry of Culture
Stichting Stokroos Utrecht
BKVB Funds

Mondriaan Funds
Amsterdam Funds



Serbian Embassy

Artist statements:

Ruben van Klaveren

1977

The Netherlands

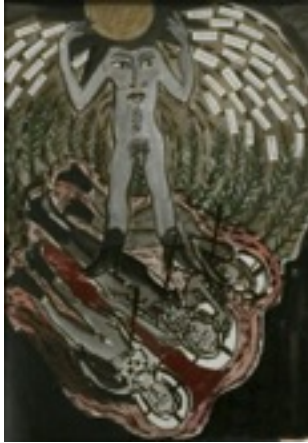
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web: <http://www.wix.com/rubenvan/klaveren>

An artist can transform his ideas, emotions, passions into a work, if it stays within his sphere, it is a product of his inner dialogue/a vessel for self realization/contemplation/analysis, and is in my view purely restricted to himself. If this work is released into the public realm, it becomes a means of communication in a much broader sense.

The observer is allowed, or cannot help to project his own context on the artwork and start his own inner dialogue with the artwork, and I do mean the artwork rather than the artist. Depending on, amongst other factors, the language the artist uses and the language the observer speaks, the intention of the artist is understood. The level of similarities between the (sub) cultural contexts of both artist and observer play an important role in conveying/understanding the intentions behind an artwork.

If an observer has a different set of associations with the colours, shapes, sounds, symbols the artist uses, it creates a different interpretation of course. For me as the artist it is a challenge to successfully convey a message/expression while transcending the use of conventional symbols. Symbol can be understood here in a semiotic as well as a psychological way, especially the tradition of Jung.



Amanda Koelman

1985

The Netherlands

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I CREATE I DESROY IN BLACK AND WHITE

I fill up empty space,

use the space as a stage.

I build up and break down,

re-build and break down again.

I use only black and white, white and black, black as white as black.

I am working dressed in black, or un-dressed, in white. With this I create a magical, mythical world in which The Holy, The Fantastic, The Erotic and The Bizarre are used as way to frame /understand the values of life and death.

I work with different kind of materials. Such as paper, cardboard, ink, paint, photography and film, always in a collage kind of way, because this way of working gives me a freedom that allows me to play, to CREATE and to DESTROY.



Paweł Matyszewski

1984

Poland

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In my works I touch upon social aspects, paradoxes, human anxieties - those justified as well as imaginary. I am also interested in the niche matters, both cultural and biological. I join them into a tissue of senses, meanings and understatements, leaving the viewer the pleasure of discovering and the opportunity to confront problematic issues. I procreate biological patterns and body maps which are the fields of complications - those ironical as well. I talk about emotions or I attempt to stimulate them. I extract organic curiosities, recesses of nature that delight, wonder, and become the symptom of aversion / aggression resulting from the fear of the unknown. I create paintings and objects between which the boundary is often blurred.

Izabela Oldak

1982

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Artists don't make objects. Artists make mythologies.

Anish Kapoor

Art has the power to cause a revolution, to change minds. It is for me a communication aimed at the search for truth, in life, in reality. Art has an immense philosophical potential, it is a form of freedom to express thoughts, emotions, observations and 'conclusions' on the world around us.

In my art and research I am trying to get to the source of things, to understand more the reality I live in. To see and to name things, to find the legacy of mythology, folklore, tradition and believes which are still present.

Myths are universal and timeless stories that reflect and shape our lives- they explore our desires, our fears, our longings, and provide narratives that remind us what it means to be human.

Karen Armstrong (A Short History of Myth)

I feel the connection with nature, but I can barely see it in my daily life. The absence of spirituality, and the harmony in community, the consumer lifestyle and commercialisation deepen the feeling of being in abeyance, a detachment from nature and the life of our ancestors.

That is the reason why I am trying to get back to the roots, when human life was connected to the natural environment and when the arts were considered spiritual, magical, a secret language used in many rituals and rites. In my creative process I use the eternal symbols of humanity embedded in the unconscious as the archetypes. I bring back the original meaning of these to become closer to the universal truth. As an artist I want to take the role of the shaman, the medium, so I can create a bridge between past and present to give new meaning and value.

I work with a traditional medium, but most of the time I try to go beyond it. I started to built installations out of paintings, I painted on my body and objects. The act of drawing I extended to turn it into an art action. I used materials such as pigment, salt, sand, soil and ashes for an artistic and most of all symbolic expression. Further I began to create site-specific installations, which would grow from the research and the experience of the place where I would work. Mostly my artworks are a reaction on the environment, the nature, the tradition and culture. Sometimes they would attain social or spiritual aspects (*Realm of the Gods, Going back to the roots , Hope*). Visually I put all these elements together to create a personal, kaleidoscopic expressive language built from linear, layered forms and illusory psychedelic patterns.



Natasa Kokić
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Growing up, I used to imagine that there was a landscape behind the last row of houses that I could see from my balcony. I used to stand there at dusk, looking at the space between two houses, and since I couldn't see anything except sky and the top of one tree, I would imagine that there was a meadow leading into the hills, instead of a huge factory that was really there. I noticed that the balcony was turned westwards and that became symbolic to me. In the nineties, everyone in the surroundings thought that "the west" meant spiritual freedom and a normal, relaxed life. That new life was so close, right behind that last row of houses.

My work is dealing with the relationship between the individual and society and how that relationship works; in what way society changes our views, our wishes and priorities. The works are depicting what sort of life we should lead, or what is offered in comparison to what we want. They illustrate everyday situations and backdrops, representing the examples of how a normal life should look and feel. Those scenes were cloaked with melancholy, owing to the fact that our preferences have changed and that our wishes and longings will perhaps never come true. Therefore, the paintings and drawings were creating a hermetic world, parallel to the one that exists.

My latest works have a more optimistic feel. They are depicting what you might call "safe places" - images and thoughts that can give us strength and will to persist. The drawings are representations of (non)places, spaces that don't have a defined theme, like a patch of grass between two buildings. Those spaces are intimate, a personification of some indeterminate desire, that is yet to be discovered; it leads us onwards and gives us potency to create new narrative.

The drawings are a wish to live somewhere else, in a different way, to spend time more beneficial. They represent daydreaming, slowing down and going one step backwards - to go back to whom we are. They are the memory of something good that waits to happen.



Ivana Ranisavljević
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Is a young artist, who very early discloses her deep understanding of the interactive unity of the outward and the inward, the full and the empty, and who suggests her profound, dominant interest in the direct issues of man's physical, psychological and spiritual life within the context of his social conditionality. She uncovers the high abilities to articulate the issues of man's rituality and its role in the differentiation and development of his ethical and aesthetic being.

In her latest series of drawings and photo-collages under a common name "Liberation", this young artist suggests that man's loneliness is an inevitable consequence of the being as a discontinuity.

Using primarily her own body as a medium, through a very defined, seemingly 'ritual' gesture of an artist-shaman, she simultaneously places herself into the role of the narrator, the subject-mediator and the passive object, who, as a unique symbol, indirectly suggest the various spheres of human existence and man's ultimate purpose. In her creative process, she brings to life the eternal symbols of humanity embedded in the unconscious, and through upgrading and shaping them, using the language of archetypes, she overpowers that which she designates, simultaneously raising it to the sphere of permanent existence and artistic activity - she raises a personal destiny to the level of the destiny of the humanity. The very foundation of the communicability of Ivana's artistic work lies in her inclination towards modern inscenation and spectacularization of the basic issues of human existence.

In her approach, she interweaves in a very homogenous manner the various traditional and new media: drawing, collage, photography, performance.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Isabella Ordoñez