

Restless Dislocations

Radovan Čerevka, Adrian Kiss

Curator: Áron Fenyvesi

Radovan Čerevka and Adrian Kiss completely transform the space of the former Synagogue of Trnava with their immersive installations in the frame of their duo exhibition produced by Ján Koniarek Gallery. The two exhibitors forged their site-specific works in an artistic dialogue, which was focusing on creating a unique, ephemeral ambient on the basis of a tangible, sensual experience in the physical space of the exhibition venue. The common platform of the works of the two artists are hills, islands and ponds of muddy clay disseminated on the floor of the former Synagogue. The artistic intervention does not define if the viewer is meant to experience an external or an internal spatial situation, and thus creates a feeling of uncertainty and state of transition in the visitors. Furthermore the synergy of the intervention of the two artists digs even deeper and it evokes the state of decay and decomposition as well, reflecting on our common and profane experience of the history of the 20th century in the Eastern-European Region. It is important to note though that the referential play of the two artists is not only meant to be retrospective, they also reflect on the psychological aspect of the wars and of conflicts of our present and they also highlight the basic human need of stability in an increasingly destabilized and nomadified world.

Both Čerevka and Kiss have worked in their earlier works and exhibitions with the cultural references of excavations and with the hybridisation of archaic and futuristic symbols, in the frame of this exhibition they strengthen this aspect of their art together. The artist in their shared post-apocalyptic artistic universe defined aesthetically by muddy clay and rusty metal structures raise critical questions about our reality, in which we feel radically less and less safe, and the present military conflicts not only redefine our notion of safety often tied to „the home”, but they literally destroy the homes of millions of people. This general experience of ours strengthens the understanding of the exhibition of the two artists as an archeological site of our present, which is defined by common functional objects associated with home and safety, like mattresses, and blankets.

Both Radovan Čerevka and Adrian Kiss employ an artistic strategy in their exhibition with which they reappropriate found objects, thus highlighting on their fetish-like symbolic character, which otherwise is covered and hidden in their common, everyday context. The sensual and conceptual poetics of the two artists who represent two different generations of Eastern European art inspire and meet each other along the toolkit of transient, ephemeral and performative reappropriation applied in the space of the former Synagogue.

Radovan Čerevka exhibits a new body of work, a series of modified mattresses, which are built in the floor structure of the synagogue venue. The Mined Mattress of Čerevka is a hybrid of a pre-fabricated mattress, a primary safe space of humans and a mine field decorated with grenade detonators, which displays the extremely thin red line between ultimate life-threatening danger and safety, a more and more common experience for millions of humans globally. The golden candle holders built in another mattress work of his, also refer to disfunctionality of our „bourgeois” notions of home and safety, which are in danger. The mattress as a motif is also rooted with it's layers in the earlier info-graphically inspired practice of Čerevka, connected to use of data-visualisation by the media. Čerevka also plays with the relationship and the discrepancy of a real domesticated object and it's visual popularisation in sciences or media. The modified body-building machine installation of the artist also refers to the extremely masculine, military rhetorics of the lifestyle connected to aggression and it's conditioning to war.

The signature „blanket” pieces of Adrian Kiss became more performative objects in the recent practice of the artist, which are often in a transforming state during the time of the exhibition. The visibly used and old objects are often modified with quilted abstract pattern designed by the artist, which refer to the symbols of the human body. Kiss highlights with these works the basic physical and psychological need of a human to rest, this aspect of these objects are strengthened by the presence of the layered mattresses of Čerevka, and thus both exhibitors form a statement on the recent mass nomadification of humanity which is more and more becoming a global experience because of the ongoing military conflicts around the world. Other large-scale metal installations of the Adrian Kiss create a dialogue with the architecture of the space of the synagogue and strengthen the presence of other household objects, like woven baskets and used tyres, which can be also associated with the notion of an abandoned home or a storage facility.

Radovan Čerevka (*1980) is based in Kosice, where his early career was entangled with the artist group Kassa Boys founded in 2006. In 2013 Čerevka received the trendsetter Oskar Cepan Award, and he has had large format exhibitions and installations in 2020 in Kunsthalle, Bratislava, East Slovak Gallery in Kosice or earlier in Trafó Gallery, Budapest. The artist participated in residency programs of ISCP New York and Halle 14 Leipzig. Čerevka worked together earlier with Adrian Kiss in an exhibition project in Make-Up Gallery in Kosice.

Adrian Kiss (*1990) born in Miercuria Ciuc, Romania is an artist currently based in Rotterdam and Budapest. Kiss earned his BA in Central Saint Martins College in London and is presently an MA at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. Kiss has shown his work in the frame of solo exhibitions in Futura, Prague and Vunu Gallery, Kosice among many others. Kiss was a recipient of Gyula Derkovits Scholarship of the Hungarian State, and was nominated recently for Esterházy Art Award and Strabag Art Award International. He has also participated in the residency program of Art in General, New York.