

LAVERONICA
arte contemporanea

via grimaldi 93
97015 modica (rg)
t. 09321881704
info@gallerialaveronica.it
www.gallerialaveronica.it

Igor Grubic

Traces of Disappearing in Three Acts

Opening Saturday, 17 August 2019, 8,30 p.m.

17.08.19 – 07.12.19

Laveronica arte contemporanea is pleased to announce the solo show by **Igor Grubic** *Traces of Disappearing*. It features works that are part of the project now on show at the Croatian Pavilion curated by Katerina Gregos for the 58th Venice Biennale. In particular we will have a selection from the photographic series *Deconstruction of the Factory* and *Wild House* and the video *How the Steel was Tempered*.

Igor Grubić's project for the Croatian Pavilion at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, *Traces of Disappearing in Three Acts* (2006–19), is thirteen years in the making. It is presented in its entirety for the first time in Venice. It consists of three interrelated photo essays and an animated film, set in a specially commissioned mise-en-scène. The project started in 2006 when the artist began documenting post-war, transitional reality in Croatia, particularly the fundamental shift from socialism to capitalism, from a central, state-planned to a free market economy. It explores how this shift has affected changes in habitation, the urban fabric, public space and social relations. It traces the effects of privatization, gentrification and financial speculation, and documents the violent transition from industry to post-industry, and the sweeping away of past traditions, ideologies, former certainties and belief systems in the wake of globalization and neo-liberal capital.

Grubić began the series by photographing one settlement where several homeless people built makeshift shelters to live in. He decided to follow one particular person that interested him because of his practical and creative approach to life, and his inventive way of configuring his surroundings. The result of this is the photo-series *Wild House*, the first of the three chapters or "Acts". It looks, on the one hand, into the living conditions of communities that exist at the margin of mainstream society and disenfranchised people living in "states of exception" and, on the other, demonstrates how deprivation and lack of material means fosters creative approaches to the practice of everyday life. It also examines changes in public space with the increasing privatisation of property, the consolidation of corporate capital and its physical establishment in place and space. The second part of the photo-series *Filigree Sidewalk* (Act II) examines changes into traditional vocations and local hand-crafts — such as filigree craftsmen, tailors, barbers, furriers — highlighting which professions survive, adapt, or change and which ones become obsolete with the times. Grubić shows how these changes are inextricably linked with the tide of gentrification, and the advent of the service industry and leisure economy. Finally, *Deconstruction of the Factory* (Act III) presents a series of defunct factories — a significant architectural heritage encapsulating an important chapter in the history of work and architecture in Croatia. These are monumental reminders of the transition from industry to post-industry, of changing conditions of work, of the devalorisation of the blue-collar workers and their gradual disempo-

werment in the face of hyper-capitalism today. Similarly the factories are potent signifiers of the transition from a period defined by specific ideologies, political beliefs and values (socialism) to one characterised by post-ideology, post-politics and generalised political apathy (in the period we currently call “late capitalism”). In the adjacent space, Grubić shows *How Steel was Tempered*, a poetic, captivating short, animated, experimental film made with images from the factory locations used in the photo essay. The story focuses on a father-son relationship to talk about social, political and generational shifts. With very simple but poignant means, the film movingly talks about the coming of age, of familial bonds, but also about the prospects of fruitful future relationships based on shared social space and collaborative working.

Grubić's project for the Croatian Pavilion sits firmly in the humanist dimension of documentary photography, bridging together poetics, politics and social reality. *Traces of Disappearing* expands his already significant contribution into socially committed documentary work, and the preservation of the memory of Croatia's architectural history, work and culture. Its scope is local but also ecumenical, analysing as it does the changes engendered by globalization, privatisation and the consolidation of neo-liberalism. At the same time, it is particularly resonant within the context of Venice, a city that has sold its soul to the devil of rampant profiteering; a city that is being hollowed out by the effects of uncontrolled tourism, the service industry, and corruption. Finally, *Traces of Disappearing* highlights the new situations that are coming to replace the old, while subtly inviting us to think about future ways of imagining – and inhabiting – our world.

Text written by **Katerina Gregos** – curator of the Croatian Pavilion, 58th Venice Biennale

Igor Grubić (b. 1969, Zagreb) is one of Croatia's most accomplished and internationally acclaimed artists. His work includes site-specific interventions in public spaces, photography, and film. Since 2000 he is also working as a producer and author of documentaries, TV reportages and socially committed commercials. He represents Croatia at the 58th Venice Biennale with the long-term project *Traces of Disappearing (In Three Acts)* and the short, experimental documentary/animation film *How Steel Was Tempered*, which has received several awards. Igor Grubić has been active as a multimedia artist in Zagreb since the early '90s, making photography, video, and site-specific actions. His interventions into public space, along with video works explore past and present political situations while cutting through the fabric of reality. Grubić's critical, socio-politically committed practice is characterised by the long-term engagement and investment into the subjects he chooses to work with. From the in-depth exploration of the fate of historical monuments and the demise of industry, to examination of the predicament of minority communities, his projects unfold over several years of research and grassroots, personal relationships. Though grounded in the documentary tradition, Grubić's work in photography and film is characterized by an affective and empathic approach, which is deeply humane and often poetic. Grubić has participated in numerous major international exhibitions including, among others: *Tirana Biennial 2* (2003); *Manifesta 4* (Frankfurt, 2002); *Manifesta 9* (Genk, 2012); *50. October Salon* (Belgrade, 2009); *Gender Check*, MuMOK (Vienna, 2009); *11. Istanbul Biennial* (2009); *4. Fotofestival Mannheim Ludwigshafen, Heidelberg* (2011); *East Side Stories*, Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2012); *Gwangju Biennale* (2014); *Zero Tolerance*, MOMA PS1 (New York 2014); *Degrees of Freedom*, MAMbo (Bologna, 2015); *5th Thessaloniki Biennial* (2015); *Cut / Rez*, MSU (Zagreb, 2018); *Heavenly creatures*, MG+MSUM (Ljubljana,

2018); *The Value of Freedom*, Belvedere 21 (Vienna, 2018). His work is included in the collections of TATE Modern, the Museums of Contemporary Art in Belgrade and Zagreb, Muzeum Sztuki, Kadist Collection, Kontakt Collection and Art Collection Telekom, among others.