



play_gallery for still and motion pictures

hannoversche strasse 1 d-10115 berlin
t+49-30-2345 5753 f+49-30-2345 5754
www.pushthebuttonplay.com
opening hours: Wed - Sat :: 14 - 7 p.m.

Play_gallery for still and motion pictures presents:

Anna Konik
Voiceless

Private View: Thursday, 23rd June 2005, 7pm

23rd June – 13th July 2005

Opening hours: Wed - Sat, 2pm – 7 pm

Voiceless is the title under which Anna Konik shows two new projects: *Transparency* and *In the Middle of the Way*. Both these works seem to contradict the title as in them the artist grants those who do not usually have a voice an opportunity to speak. *Voiceless* is the story of “others” – the aged, the lonely, the homeless. In its two component pieces, individuals who are members of socially marginalized groups get the chance to tell us about themselves, lead us along the paths of their lives, talk us through their feelings and values. Their stories are barely audible and you must stop and focus for a few moments to hear what they have to say. These encounters could hardly have been easy for the artist. Her subjects might seem comic or grotesque to others, yet she treats them with the utmost seriousness and respect, and it is her far-reaching openness, I believe, that renders her capable of this. A silent and impartial listener, she gives them the chance to tell their touching and often wise stories.

Transparency features Mija of Berlin, Mr. Thaddeus of Warsaw and Madame Wichmann and Mr. Brozy of Stuttgart – a quartet of people who are advanced in their years and very lonely. They tell seemingly commonplace life stories of unfulfilled dreams, love, devotion and solitude, but the artist presents these stories told by people aware of their own imminent end in an unusual manner. Anna Konik’s subjects have been filmed so as to be “transparent” – in their homes, sitting at tables and looking directly into the camera; their images have been doubled and their statements, at first glance merely reluctant confessions made to the artist, become original, new narratives. For Konik has filmed each of her subjects twice – each time in the same space and recounting what seems to be the same life story. Their dual images juxtaposed, her subjects seem to listen as much as they speak, sometimes agreeing and at other times disagreeing with themselves. Entering the installation, you encounter a life-size figure (Mija sitting at her table or pushing her shopping cart, or Mr. Brozy in his wheelchair) and – willing or not – witness an intimate confession that is at once a monologue, a strange dialogue and the conversation of someone with their own mirror image. The artist’s singular form of presentation is emphasized through the “oddity” of her subjects, whose behavior hardly fits our idea of “normal” life, reality.

Ania Konik has an amazing sense of people, she knows how to listen to them and make them feel comfortable. Only these abilities can explain why her collaborators seem to trust her. Without ever posing or being theatrical, they speak of their defeats and unfulfilled ambitions, of love, solitude and the houses they never built...

Ika Sienkiewicz-Nowacka

Project produced in cooperation with Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Kunsthochschule Berlin - Weisensee and CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw. Collaboration and technical support Gunter Eisermann (Kunsthochschule Berlin - Weisensee).



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In the Middle of the Way

(Warsaw, Berlin, Moscow and Dobrodzie_ – again) 2001 – 2005, work in progress

Anna Konik's *In the Middle of the Way* spans both time and space. The artist made its first part in April 2001 in Warsaw, the second in October 2002 in Berlin, the third in March 2005 in Moscow, and its last installment – focusing on herself – at the turn of April and May 2005 in Berlin, Warsaw and in Dobrodzie_, the small town in southern Poland that is the artist's hometown. The artist aims to add installments made in other European cities and perhaps even on other continents in the future.

In the Middle of the Way is a kind of performance that plays out between the artist and the project participants – though this performance has no audience, no witnesses. It is also a kind of filmed essay on "homelessness." Anna Konik spends a single day with randomly encountered individuals, asking them to tell their stories, show her the places that are important to them. Thus, we learn about these people and the cities they inhabit. In the fourth and final film the artist talks about herself, the places that played an important part in her life, her incessant traveling – her being "on the road."

In her works, Anna Konik shows us people who live at the fringes of society, people we pass on the street every day without noticing. With *In the Middle of the Way*, the artist focuses on the homeless. Her subjects show themselves to be living in constant motion, to be incessantly on the road. They belong to no specific place and have no home, and thus are simultaneously free as they can make their home anywhere. Anna Konik's protagonists live more of their lives in their own inner worlds than in the reality that surrounds them. They have found homes for themselves within themselves.

In its current form, Anna Konik's *In the Middle of the Way* links three capitals – Berlin, Warsaw and Moscow – and the small town of Dobrodzie_. We discover all these places through various stories of "homelessness." The artist demonstrates that something links these cities which are otherwise so different from each other: that something is people like Thaddeus of Warsaw, Hermann of Berlin, Svyetlana of Moscow and the artist herself – eternal wanderers living somewhere between the real world and a reality they have created by themselves within themselves.

Ewa Witkowska



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Anna Konik

Born 1974, Lubliniec, Poland. Lives and works in Warsaw and Berlin

GROUP EXHIBITIONS 2005 Polka, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland. P.S. Beyond the Red Horizon – Art of the Late 20th Century – National Centre for Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia. 2004 Beyond the Red Horizon – Art of the Late 20th Century – Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland. Sculptors as Photographers – Xawery Dunikowski Museum at Królikarnia Palace – a branch of the National Museum in Warsaw, Poland. 2003 Deviations – K&S Gallery, Berlin, Germany. Generations – K&S Gallery, Berlin, Germany. Moving Territories – Art – Public Space – New Media, Stuttgart, Germany. 2002 Das Paradies ist verrigelt – International Kleist-Festival, Frankfurt (Oder), Germany. Power of the People – Arsena? Gallery of Contemporary Art, Bia?ystok, Poland. 2001 Breaking News – Young Polish Performance, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland

Sexxx – a. r. t. Gallery, P?ock, Poland. 2000 Scena 2000 – All-Poland Art Exhibition, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland. Sexxx – Academia Theatre, Warsaw, Poland; 1999 Parteitag – Gallery of Contemporary Art, Office of Artistic Exhibitions, Katowice. A Hidden Nature – A.R. Gallery, Academia Theatre, Warsaw, Poland. 1998 First After God – Academia Theatre, Warsaw, Poland

SOLO EXHIBITIONS 2005 Voiceless, Play Gallery, Berlin, Germany, 2004 Transparency, Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart, Germany; Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland. 2003 In the Middle of the Way, Artist in Residence – Leube, Salzburg (exhibition with Krzysztof M. Bednarski). 2000 Disco Relaxation – Windows Gallery, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland.

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS 2006 Pépinières fellowship, National Sculpture Factory, Ireland. 2005 Polish Ministry of Culture. Scholarship. 2003/2004 Akademie Schloss Solitude fellowship, Stuttgart, Germany. 2003 Leube – Artist in Residence, Salzburg, Austria. 2001-2002 DAAD scholarship, Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weissensee, Germany. 2001 Nomination for \international media\art award, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe ZKM, Germany.