

Press release
Zurich, 3 June 2010

Kunsthhaus Zürich shows videos and paintings by Albanian artist Adrian Paci

From 4 June to 22 August 2010, the Kunsthhaus Zürich will host the first museum exhibition in Switzerland of the work of Albanian artist Adrian Paci. New videos and a painting inspired by Pier Paolo Pasolini are at the centre of the exhibition 'Motion Picture(s)'. The works reflect pivotal moments of humanity and condense the consequences of conflicts and societal rupture.

'Electric Blue' is the title of the new video work created by Adrian Paci especially for the Kunsthhaus exhibition. The title is that of an erotic TV series on what had been Yugoslavia's state channel, one of the few entertainments available under communism. This work, produced in collaboration with the Kunsthhaus Graz, is situated in Paci's hometown of Shkoder (Albania). The artist had already used that location for the production of his video 'Turn on', which was shown at the 2005 Venice Biennale and marked Adrian Paci's international breakthrough.

HAUNTING IMAGES OF THE 'CONDITION HUMAINE'

In 'Electric Blue' Paci tells the story of a man who attempts to secure the economic survival of his family in the chaotic collapsing state that was Albania in the 1990s. But the video, approximately 15 minutes in length, is far more than a historical document. It grapples with primordial questions of humanity: with failure and the impact of war and societal rupture on humans; with the yearning for an escape from poverty; with love, sex and passion. In this video, the artist manages to create striking and impressive images of the 'Condition humaine' that imprint themselves on the viewer's memory.

PAINTING INSPIRED BY PASOLINI

Adrian Paci (born 1969 in Shkoder, Albania) was originally trained as a painter. For this reason, curator Mirjam Varadinis chose for his first exhibition in a Swiss museum an entirely new painting, 'Secondo Pasolini' (2010), which transfers the medium of film to that of painting. For this large-sized work Paci virtually dismantled the famous film *Racconti di Canterbury* (1972) by Pier Paolo Pasolini by detaching single frames and painting them. This attitude – between moving image and freeze frame, film and painting – is characteristic of Paci's work. Paci had created similar works containing references to Pier Paolo Pasolini early in his career, and it makes sense that the young artist's examination of painting and film should prominently feature the renowned director, as the latter had himself cited paintings of the Italian Renaissance in his films.

THE SCREAM: A VIDEO-PAINTING

A second video in the exhibition is closely related to the history of painting. The 2009 video is entitled 'Britma', which means 'scream' and refers to Edvard Munch's famously iconic painting. Paci's work features two children, obviously excited, one of whom seems to be screaming. It holds a stone in its hand, ready for throwing. But the blurriness of the shot makes a clear understanding of the context impossible. Is it one of so many images of regions in crisis, where children throw stones at soldiers – or are the two children simply playing? Paci leaves the question unanswered. In extreme slow-motion the image changes almost imperceptibly. Only the most attentive viewers will notice that, with time, the blurriness increases and the face of the child begins to approximate that of the figure in Munch's 'Scream', until it dissolves into a totally abstract colour landscape of digital brush strokes.

In addition to this entirely new piece, the exhibition will also feature Paci's earliest video work, 'Albanian Stories' (1997), and 'The Last Gestures' (2009), his four-part video installation. In a painterly fashion akin to that of Paci's other works, 'The Last Gestures' captures the very end of a bride's leave-taking from her birth family, a ritual deeply ingrained in Albanian culture. Indeed, Paci is less interested in the representation of a particular reality in his homeland than in the ritual character of the gestures comprised by this custom.

CONVERSATION WITH THE ARTIST

Adrian Paci's works are pervaded by a dire and primordial undertone. In conversation with Mirjam Varadinis on Sunday, 13 June at 12.15 p.m. at the Kunsthaus, Paci will discuss his artistic practice and present additional works. In addition, a slim publication on the occasion of the exhibition affords insight into the background and creation of 'Electric Blue', his new video. Akin to a magazine, the 60-page booklet is published in English and German by Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg. It contains an interview with the artist and can be purchased for the price of CHF 18 at the Kunsthaus shop.

Supported by Swiss Re – Partner for contemporary art
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GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthaus Zürich, Heimplatz 1, CH-8001 Zurich, www.kunsthaus.ch

Sat, Sun, Tues 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thurs, Fri 10 a.m.–8 p.m.

Admission CHF 14 / concessions CHF 10

Public Guided Tours: Wednesday, 9 June at 6.30 p.m. Friday, 25 June at 6 p.m.

Artist in conversation featuring Adrian Paci: Sunday, 13 June, 12.15 p.m.

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Private guided tours can be arranged by phoning +41 (0)44 253 84 84 (Mon–Fri 9 a.m.–12 noon).

Advance sales: RailAway/SBB Kombi-Ticket, with 10% reduction on rail travel to Zurich and entrance to the exhibition, at SBB stations and by phoning Rail Service: 0900 300 300 (CHF 1.19 per min.). Fnac (admission only): tel. +33 1 4157 3212, www.fnac.ch.

NOTE TO MEDIA

Press visuals can be downloaded under <http://www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/information/press>

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