



Miklós Erhardt, Havanna, video, 16'18", 2006. Courtesy of the artist.

100 HUNGARIAN MINUTES

Curated by

Gergő Horváth (RO)

Participating artists:

Miklós Erhardt, Zsolt Keserue, Gyula Július, Erika Baglyas, Gyula Pauer, János Sugár, Á. ç. Ö. ^•^ Á. S. •

Screenings:

(with a Q&A with Gergő Horváth)

Bucharest: 16th of January 2104, 19.00 hours
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The Westernisation of the ex-soviet bloc by Gergő Horváth

Hungary has known a very rapid economic growth after the fall of communism, subsequently becoming at the end of the '90s the model-state for many of the countries in Central and South-eastern Europe, having an open-minded and democratic ideology. Living its communist history as an accumulative experience, rather than a nostalgic one, it was maybe one of the first and only countries in the ex-soviet bloc where a rupture between recent history and the contemporary world was apparent.

‘What I am worried about is how the far-right, what was 20 years ago the domain of the far-right, is setting, even if they are a minority [sic], they’re setting the general agenda.’, said Slavoj Žižek. After a clean drift from communism to democracy, an oscillation can be observed between right- and left-wing politics, lately the right side gaining more and more terrain. Is it just a transitional period or will the Zeitgeist change forever? Hungarians always were nationalists. Is this the key to their success, or will it be the element which will ruin the state? Can a country founded on Christian principles uphold, even after a millennium, the same ideals and at the same time call itself a democratic state? If this mentality will win, it will be a Pyrrhic victory.

In a country which produced Nobel laureates, important artists and curators and a prestigious school of psychoanalysis, for the last years the contemporary artists have been struggling with censorship, traditionalism, racial and ethnic inequality, and a nationalist, aggressive mental mechanism of the deciding masses. In a country in which extremist movements are gaining ground and are inciting to hate on a national and international scale, the political pressure can be felt as much in the institutional practice as in the artistic discourse, generating debates in the Hungarian academic and artistic field.

A paradox appears. How can a country which has such a blood-filled and extremist history become the image of liberalism in Europe, after which becoming an example of discretionary politics asserted by radical governments? Maybe this liberalist image only exists on the surface. If the past government sent combat vehicles against revolts from Budapest caused by the same government, the actual leadership modified the Constitution without a referendum and says that a state without military force cannot be a powerful entity. The lack of coherence in the discourse of the leadership, be it political or spiritual, is producing a societal imbalance and a notable fracture between the progressive and the traditionalist parties. Nationalism and conservatism vs. progressivism and contemporary thought.

Modelul occidentalizării fostului bloc sovietic de Gergő Horváth

Ungaria a cunoscut o creștere economică foarte rapidă după căderea comunismului, ulterior devenind la sfârșitul anilor '90 statul model pentru multe din țările din Europa Centrală și de Sud-Est, având o ideologie deschisă și democratică. Trăind istoria comunistă ca o experiență acumulativă în loc de una nostalgică, a fost poate printre primele și singurele țări din fostul bloc sovietic unde a fost evidentă ruptura dintre istoria recentă și lumea contemporană.

“Ce mă îngrijorează cu adevărat este cum dreapta radicală, ce a fost acum 20 de ani domeniul dreptei radicale, setează, chiar dacă sunt o minoritate, ei [sic] setează agenda generală.”, afirmă Slavoj Žižek. După o alunecare netedă de la comunism la democrație, s-a putut observa o pendulare între politici de dreapta și de stânga, în ultima perioadă dreapta câștigând tot mai mare teren. Este oare doar o perioadă de tranziție, sau se va schimba spiritul epocii pentru totdeauna? Ungurii tot timpul au fost naționaliști. Este acesta cheia succesului lor, sau se va dovedi în timp a fi elementul care va ruina statul? Poate o țară, care a fost fondată pe principiî creștine, să susțină aceleași idealuri chiar și după un mileniu și în același timp să se considere un stat democratic? Dacă această mentalitate se va dovedi câștigătoare, va fi, totuși, o victorie pirică.

Într-o țară, care a produs laureați Nobel, artiști și curatori importanți și o școală prestigioasă de psihanaliză, în ultimii ani artiștii contemporani se luptă cu cenzura, tradiționalismul, inegalitatea rasială și etnică și cu mecanismul mental naționalist și agresiv al majorității decidente. Într-o țară în care mișcările extremiste prind tot mai mare avânt și instigă la ură atât pe plan național, cât și internațional, se simte presiunea politică atât în practica instituțională, cât și în discursul artistic, generând dezbaterei continue în zona academică și lumea artei ungare.

Apare un paradox. Cum poate o țară având o istorie așa sângeroasă și extremistă să ajungă imaginea liberalismului în Europa și apoi să devină exemplul unei politici discreționare, impusă de guverne radicale? Poate această imagine liberalistă exista doar la suprafață. Dacă guvernul trecut trimitea mașini de luptă împotriva revoltelor din Budapesta, care au pornit din cauza aceluiași guvern, conducerea actuală a modificat constituția fără referendum și spune că un stat fără forță militară nu poate fi o entitate puternică. Lipsa coerenței în discursul conducerii, fie ea politică sau spirituală, produce un dezechilibru societal și o fractură între părțile progresiste și cele tradiționaliste. Naționalism și conservatorism vs progresism și contemporan.

Artists

Miklós Erhardt, “Havanna” -- 16’18”, 2006
Artist born in 1966, living in Budapest. Since 1998 he has been working with Scottish artist Dominic Hislop and German artist Elseke Rosenfeld in the Big Hope group. Big Hope has created several participation-based social documentary projects and has been widely exhibiting on the international art scene. Since 1998 he is also a curator of the Balazs Bela Studio Archive, Budapest. Currently he is teaching, publishing, playing music, participating in exhibitions and art events, and working on his PhD at the Academy of Fine Arts. His translation of Guy Debord’s The Society of the Spectacle was published for the first time in Hungarian in 2006 by the Balassi Publishing House. Recently he has worked with Little Warsaw on a project for Manifesta 7.

Zsolt Keserue, “Who Was King Matthias?” -- 15’, 2008
Born in 1968, he is living and working in Budapest. He has exhibited in numerous institutions in Hungary, Slovakia, Germany, The Netherlands, Greece, Belgium, India, USA. He is also the curator of “Alapzaj.net” project, which deals with contemporary music and fine art, and organises symposiums in this theme, focusing on the theories of noise. Recently he works as a high school teacher.

Gyula Július, “Object” -- 6’56”, 2012

Gyula Július is an artist, curator, cultural manager, art reporter and professor. He has won several awards and has exhibited in Hungary, Finland, Italy, France, Germany, USA. He curated and organised exhibitions and participated in conferences in Spain, Netherlands, UK, Hungary.

Erika Baglyas, “Useful Knowledge” -- 8’27”, 2006-2007
Erika BAGLYAS, born in 1973, is a prominent representative of the mid-generation of Hungarian contermporary artists. The medium of her works - performance, installation, object, video, drawing, photo or actions carried out in alternative or public spaces - always reflects on the thematic chosen along a definite concept. The complex of her subjects is well represented in her DLA research - Social trauma as living situation - censored minds in the Kádár era. In her works, she studies the relation of public and private sphere by involving the historical context through her own subjectivity. As the artist's personal approach, sensibility, intuition hold social reference, she often reflects on the judgement of artists' social status. Texts, writings are always important elements of her works, often exceeding its limits and the visual environment also adds a new, unique layer of interpretation. She has been exhibiting since 2001, and often deals with topics of a sociological, psychological or philosophical layer. Besides her artistic activity honoured with numerous awards, scholarships, she regularly contributes to art magazines, writing criticism and essays.

Gyula Pauer, “A Forest of Signposts 1978 (virtual reproduction)” -- 8’03”, 1999

Born in 1941, Gyula Pauer was one of the leading figures in the Hungarian Neo-avantgarde movement. He has works include sculptures, performance and installations. He has won several awards and has been exhibited in Hungary, South Korea, USA, France.

János Sugár, “Typewriter of the Illiterate” -- 7’18”, 2001

Born 1958. Media artist, filmmaker, and a founding member of the Media Research Foundation, which organized the Metaforum conference series in Budapest. Studied in the Department of Sculpture at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest (1979-84). He worked with Indigo, an interdisciplinary art group led by Miklós Erdély from 1980-86. He has exhibited widely throughout Europe including Documenta IX, Kassel (1992), Manifesta I, Rotterdam (1996). He completed an Artslink residency at the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1994, fellowships at Experimental Intermedia, New York (1988 and 1999), and in 2001 a fellowship by the invitation of Civitella Ranieri Foundation, New York in Italy. His films were screened at the Anthology Film Archives in New York in 1998. Lives in Budapest.

Éva Emese Kiss, “Direkt demagógia” -- 6’58”, 1997
Éva Esemé Kiss is an artist from Hungary. In her work entitled "Direkt demagógia" (Direct demagoguery) the artist plays several roles: a politician, a priest and a revolutionary. The words spoken by these individuals are unintelligible reflecting upon the lack of coherence in the political and spiritual discourse. After each speech the artist is applauded by the crowd.

Curator

Gergő Horváth (b. 1993) is an artist, curator and cultural manager. He studied music and is presently a student, interested in theory and contemporary art. He considers himself self-taught, even though he attends a university. He lives in Cluj and Bucharest.

“100 MINUTES” is a program based on the curatorial process applied to video art, which reflects the artists’ position in relation to the social and political context of the country from which they come. To date, 100 Swedish, Holland, Romanian and Finnish minutes have been realized and 100 American and Greek minutes are in progress. A project realized by Răzvan Ion and Eugen Rădescu, who appointed the curators of each national section.

Special thanks to:
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