**In your trace.**

**Inspirational forces in Russian and Hungarian contemporary art**

**Central exhibition of the Budapest Art Week**

The exhibition of contemporary Russian and Hungarian art ***In your trace. Inspirational forces in Russian and Hungarian contemporary art*** is devoted to the current situation of the Russian and Hungarian art community. The show brings together twenty-nine artists/groups from Russia and Hungary. The exhibition raises the question whether what are the influential voices within the two scenes and how do they influence the younger generation?

In Russia, from the end of the 1990s onwards a generation of influential artists, such as Andrei Monastyrski and Anatoly Osmolovsky gave rise to a specific artistic vision that inspired the now established next generation and also led to the creation of self-organized, non-governmental spaces and collectives. Monastyrski’s Collective Actions initiative influenced the scene following the Moscow Conceptualists, the IPSI (ICA, Institute of Contemporary Art) was founded by artists and theorists and Osmolovsky also founded his own school called Baza that aimed to fill a gap in contemporary art education.

From this generation the group AES+F have become artist superstars, the Blue Noses group enjoy international recognition, and the Chto Delat, a socio-politically sensitive art collective exhibits in the most important art institutions. The latter group also pride themselves with their own school called School of Engaged Art where socio-conscious art education is the aim. The graduates of these and other similar schools have shaped their own artistic voice that is outstanding in its quality and complexity, in their sense of humor and in speaking an international artistic language that balances sensitively on the border of art and activism. Thinking in collectives is a characteristic of these artists, and most events are initiated by self-organized spaces.

APXIV (Archive) is a collective consisting of young professionals in which art becomes an event. Exhibitions take place at the “headquarters” of the group, in an old factory building. The events/ exhibitions often last for 24 hours and they are real-time happenings in which the artwork is shaped with the participation of the visitors, therefore they cannot be repeated. Electrozavod Gallery is an artist-run space that rather concentrates on individual exhibitors. To this generation the video-artist film-maker Evgeny Granilshchikov belongs who, in a special artistic tone juxtaposed by music creates images about Moscow’s present, its socio-political issues, and young people’s future. Dmitry Filippov works in distant fields and creates a kind of post-land-art projects, u/n multitude and the ZIP group present strong socio-critical, philosophical yet humorous works, in which they stretch the boundaries of art and political action.

In Hungary, the situation is different, yet we can find defining artistic visions. The exhibition, without the aim of presenting a complete picture, showcases artists who represent a particular spirit in art and affect the next generation either within a university context or simply through their pivotal artistic mindset. The artistic practices of Attila Szűcs, his interdisciplinary approach and respect for the tradition of art is influential for the following generation. Dezső Szabó’s approach to the image, the nature of pictorial representation, its truth-value and the responsibility of the artist as a ’maker’ of images is an eternal topic in art and is a pressing subject today. Ádám Szabó stretches the boundaries of sculpture with philosophical humor. This courage is pushed further by the hands of the young artists of the Dél Gallery. The internationally renowned conceptual attitude of Little Warsaw is inspiring for many and Ákos Birkás’s international career and his ability to reinvent himself as an artist over and over again is exemplary by itself.

Csaba Kis Róka erases the border between figurative and abstract and reinterprets the symbolic language of the body and its organs in his paintings. Péter Mátyási treats plants and nature with a poetic elegance, while Áron Galambos uses clichées to show an apocalyptical, mediatized world. Kata Tranker’s free associative forms emerging from everyday phenomena seem strange yet very familiar to everybody.

The connection among the oeuvre of the exhibiting artists is complex. In some cases the there is a strong influence as many of these artists have worked together and taught each other. In other cases they do not even know each other, yet their works meet under a common *Zeitgeist.* A common point for all exhibitors may be the use of a unique artistic voice in the sense that they address actual socio-political issues and problems, however their works are not political commentary or activism. Indeed, they follow a universal artistic language that continues tradition, yet in its tone, it is unquestionably contemporary.

Délia Vékony - curator