



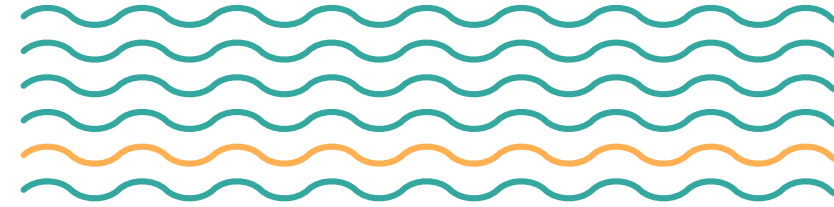


2-3





ABOUT THE PROJECT



Hydra PACE – Platform for Artistic Collaboration and Exchange

is the collaboration of three partners from Ljubljana, Ramallah and Košice, aiming to form a growing network of existing and new international artist-in-residency programs for established and emerging artists.

The idea evolved on the threshold of the pandemic crisis that challenged us to reconsider and redesign numerous projects and programs, including artistic residencies. Hydra PACE thus offers a model of concurrent residencies, with an emphasis on combined live–online activities for artists to network, collaborate, exchange practices and experience different social, political and cultural contexts. The platform focused on intercultural dialogue as a method for artistic research and creating projects that reflect current topics and issues, communicated in the open call under the keywords: co-living, community, connecting and co-experience. During the nine months of the project, six artists from Slovenia, Slovakia and Palestine participated in networking, communication and educational activities.

Hydra PACE aims to connect cultural organisations in order to enable artists to co-experience and research various cultures, discuss social phenomena, and share knowledge and artistic practices with local communities and internationally in the form of residencies, as they are possible in the given circumstances. With a focus on live-online crossing and concurrent artistic residencies, Hydra is aiming to become an internationally relevant platform for artistic collaboration and exchange. ■



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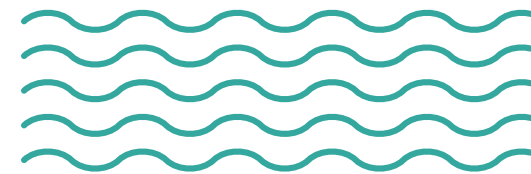
The name Hydra is borrowed from Greek mythology, as it marks an imaginative side of Mediterranean history. It leans on the multiplying feature of the mythological water creature and expresses our goals of interconnecting all the participants and the future step-by-step expansion of the network in the EuroMed territory.

ARTISTS

1/2



DEJMI HADROVIĆ



I am a media artist working with photography, video, installation and performance art. As an integral part of mass culture, video art gives a voice to those marginalized by the elite that dominates in the reproduction of identity. When presented on the screen, those on the margins of society build a discourse against the dominant hegemon in society.

Feedback

During my residential stay at KAIR, I met people with whom I have developed a professional relationship that fosters my artistic practice. One of them is Mina Petrovic, a filmmaker from Belgrade who filmed an experimental documentary about my art and will screen it in Serbian cinemas, with printed QR codes on the tickets leading to my art project on Instagram. As part of my Feminist Fight Club workshop, I had the privilege to host internationally renowned artist Adela Jusic, who presented her artwork Sniper and spoke to an audience about life in besieged Sarajevo via an online Zoom meeting. ■

I Have Met

- I have met an artist who criticised capitalism and big corporations while his favourite drink was Pepsi Zero Sugar.*
- I have met an LGBT activist who was a homophobe.*
- I have met a feminist who was beaten by her husband.*
- I have met a vegan wearing leather shoes.*
- I have met a couple preaching about a healthy lifestyle while micro-dosing.*
- I have met a white racist married to a Chinese person.*
- I have met left-wing liberals smoking weed while being afraid of black people.*
- I have met conservatives who attend swing parties.*
- I have met a transsexual being misogynist.*
- I have met polyamorous groups expecting their partners to be monogamous.*
- I have met a lesbian being straight.*
- I have met a gardener who hates plants.*
- I have met a butcher who loves his dog.*
- I have met people but I have never met myself.*



CRISIS.THUGHTS



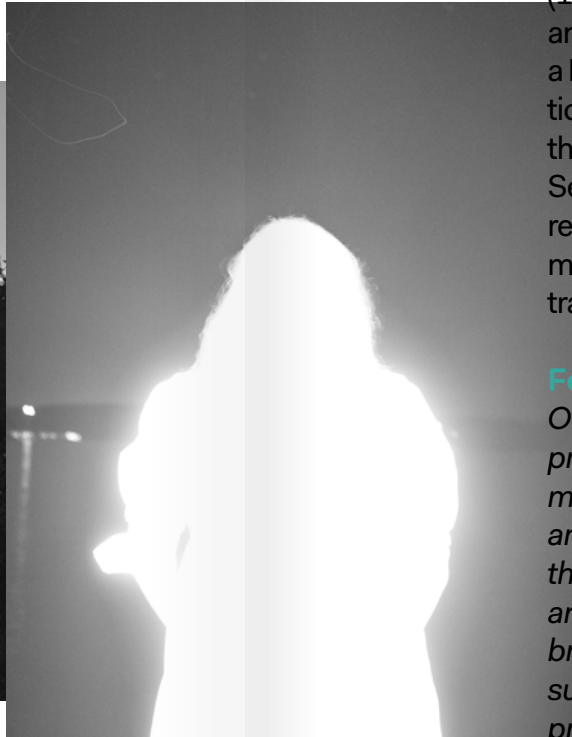
MICHAELA NAGYIDAIOVÁ



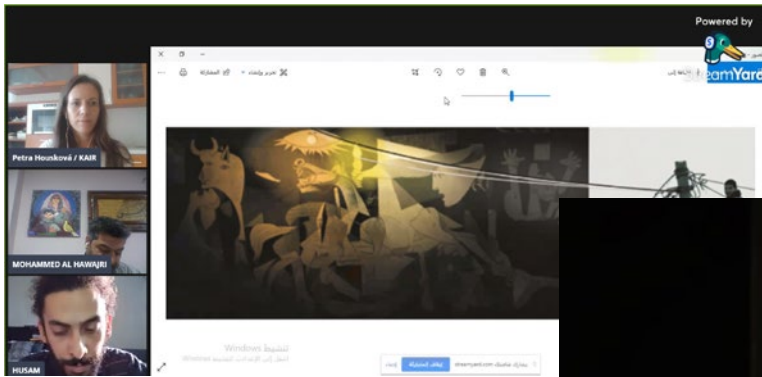
I am a Slovak documentary photographer, born and based in Bratislava. My projects usually rethink the connection between landscape and memory, identity, ancestral heritage, and the transformation of post-socialist spaces into more capitalist environments in Eastern and Central Europe. Similarly, I examine historically significant landscapes that have become hidden in our contemporary life over time. In 2019, I graduated from the London College of Communication, where I received an MA degree in Photojournalism & Documentary Photography. My two ongoing bodies of work, *A Sense of Direction* and *Where the Wildflowers Grow*, explore family narratives that have been concealed for decades, the Greek Civil War (1946–1949), and its long-lasting impact on communities and land in Greece. Moreover, *th By the Creek, Opposite of a Meadow* project addresses the transgenerational connection to the land in Slovakia, its political and historical climate, through the documentation of places within the country. Serving as a connection between my parents' and my own recollections of youth, the core of the work are childhood memories, experienced against the backdrop of two contradictory political systems – socialism and democracy.

Feedback

One of the huge benefits was that there was not really any pressure during the Hydra PACE residency, which helped me concentrate on my work quite well. Overall, I met amazing artists from Palestine and Slovakia, as well as the local Slovenian scene, which was extremely inspiring and valuable. Moreover, I enjoyed my time working in DobraVaga's gallery space and Ljubljana very much, being supported/advised by a great curator (Ajda Kocutar) and presenting my work to the local audience. ■



MOHAMMED AL HAWAJRI



The humanitarian situation remains dire, as evidenced by high rates of unemployment, poverty and food insecurity, while sporadic outbreaks of violence are threatening to explode into a wider confrontation. Despite the difficult circumstances, I always try to take advantage of these circumstances and make them part of my artistic work. Each time, I use different techniques, such as drawing, video, photography, design, and installation art. I am also always searching for possibilities, dialogue and new techniques with which to build my thoughts, which emerge from an often bitter reality.

My artworks reflect the daily conditions in which I live, as well as the lives of people in the Gaza Strip, who experience constant political, economic and social disruption. These changes are directly and indirectly reflected in my artistic work. It is my wish to transform these circumstances into critical and sometimes sarcastic interventions. I use critical sarcasm as a tool to bring people closer to the realities that are related to humanitarian issues. My interest in contemporary art stems from my belief that art has a great role in creating awareness in society, raising questions and opening the door to dialogue between peoples with different cultures – because art is a language that does not need translation.

Feedback

An Unattained Happiness

I was overjoyed by the news of being selected as an artist in residence in Slovakia, especially after more than two years of being locked down in Gaza due to the pandemic. However, this feeling of joy deteriorated more



and more due to the unprecedented situation I live in Gaza on a daily basis and the inability to plan ahead or even predict whether I will be able to break free from the more than 14 years-long siege on Gaza once again. The feeling of joy kept deteriorating with every complicated step of preparation and bureaucratic stuff to obtain a visa. However, an alternative plan had to be developed to overcome these circumstances and to allow myself to continue practicing art. Currently, my default way of communicating with the outer world is virtually in order not to lose such important opportunities! I felt that it is my duty to insist on overcoming the emergency circumstances. Therefore, I virtually connected with the other artists and curators to start developing the project, and through this continuous communication, we created several creative ideas and developed the projects that took place in two showrooms at the end of the residency. From a distance, we got to know each other well and shared beautiful moments and funny situations during virtual meetings. But I still harbor a great hope that I will meet the artists who became friends in the real world someday, eventually. ■

PROJECTS



LOCATION: LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

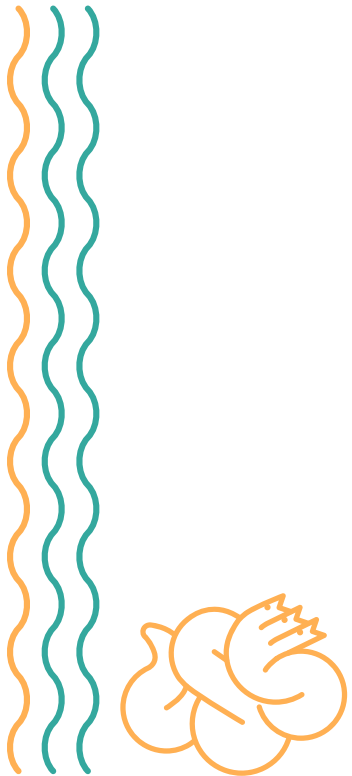
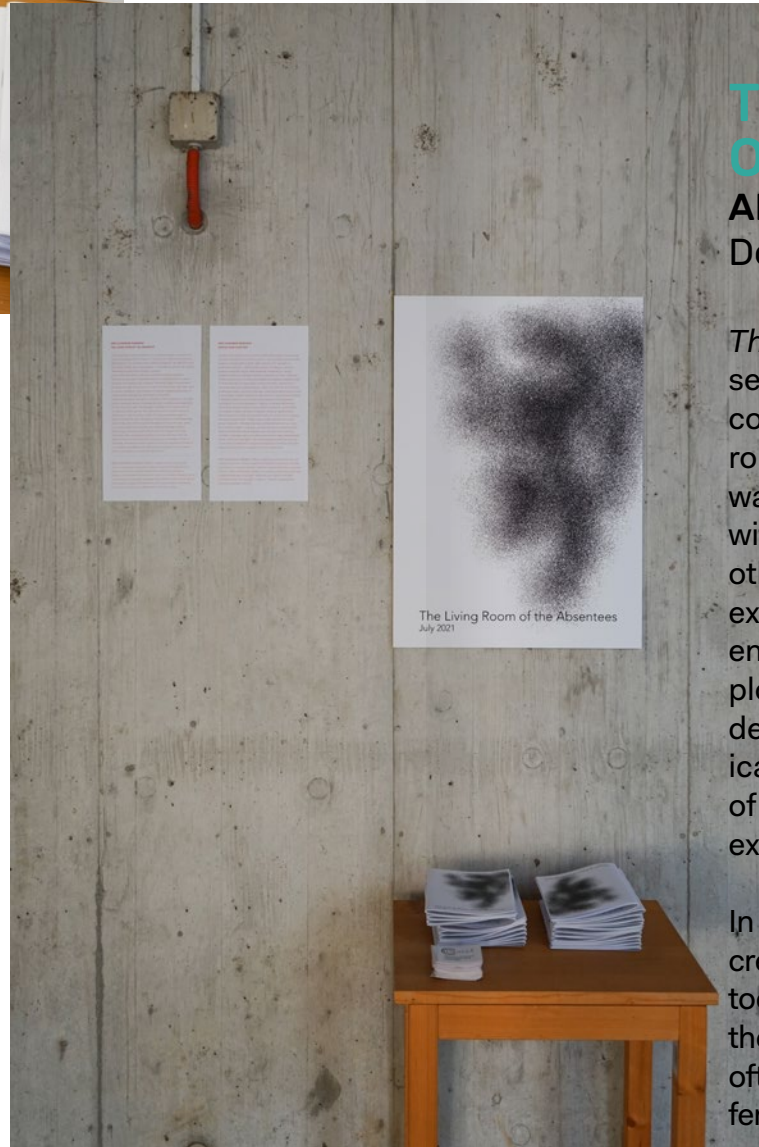


THE LIVING ROOM OF THE ABSENTEES

ABED ALRHMAN SHABANEH
DobraVaga

The Living Room of the Absentees is a curatorial research project that aims to challenge the concept of co-existing and test the assumptions attached to it, its romanticization, and its prospects. The idea of a room was used to think about the problem – co-existence, without fail, implies the existence and often exclusion of others. Author Abed Alrahman Shabaneh researched existing academic literature on the topic, lived experiences of marginalization as well as artworks that explore such concepts. The initial stage in the project's development here took a form of a zine, a format historically often used by artists, dissidents, and members of socially marginalized groups to communicate and express themselves to the public.

In general discourse, the term co-existence often increases in use when crisis is imminent, when it is already too late to achieve any meaningful social coherence, after the damage is already done. The promise of co-existence often ignores the historical and economical frames of difference in order to affirm a claim of “living peacefully together”, which is hardly the case. The project *The Living Room of the Absentees* looks at the case of the Erased



in Slovenia as it is one of many cases around the world that manifests the collateral damage made by fabricating a national state's official narrative. A glitch infiltrates the social order, co-existence freezes, bureaucracy fails, when the state normalizes the boundaries among groups of people. Conflict is inevitable. The research project aims to point out moments of failure of co-existence and address the delicacy and fragility of the concept as well as the need for its constant maintenance. ■

Urška Aplinc, curator

18 - 19



BURNT LANDSCAPES, CONFLICTING CULTURES

JANA ZATVARNICKÁ

DobraVaga

On Jana's landscapes of antagonisms

The artistic practice of the Slovak artist Jana Zatvarnická is determined by her profound interest as well as knowledge of prehistoric art and culture, mythology, ancient rituals, traditional customs and habits. By intertwining autobiographical stories, her own cultural background and its traditions with those of the given place her work emerges through physical experience of the environment and material she works with; it should be seen as a performative process, defined by immediacy, corporeality and experimentation.

The spatial installation *Burnt landscapes, conflicting cultures*, created during the artist's residency in Slovenia, consists of several monumental paintings on fabric. These were intentionally made outside of the privileged institutional space, in uninhabited caves and forests, using soil, ash and natural pigments. Paintings, imprinted with traces of the artist's body, were subsequently burnt and installed in the gallery.

The artist's transfer of numinous imagery from the relentless and primal nature to the artificial landscape of the gallery is an eloquent metaphor for ubiquitous antagonisms, of both the present and the past. Alluding to the responsibility we have when confronting them, her works, though intimate and contemplative, are therefore not only poetic, but above all political objects: by unveiling these antagonisms and subsequently unifying them, thus transcending pervasive dichotomies, the artist proposes other possibilities of coexistence, another future that could succeed, even transcend the exploitative anthropocene. ■



Anja Guid, curator

MOULDING

MICHAELA NAGYIDAIIOVÁ

DobraVaga

Ajda Ana Kocutar, curator



In this ongoing project Michaela Nagyidaiová finds *Moulding* to be the common denominator for her way of observing and documenting her time and encounters in Slovenia and for the socio-political processes in motion in a country that has only been independent for the past 30 years.

The artist observes and photographs with a certain empathy and understanding that are only possible because what she sees is strangely familiar to her. Indeed her native Slovakia shares in some of the transitional processes of a post-communist state. With significant differences still in both countries' past, the question remains: how to connect or understand the continuity between past, present and future from a position of someone who is in fact younger than both countries?

If history can be subjected to manipulation and still seems to have a prominent role in daily politics, it is nature on the other hand that concerns the younger generation and bad environmental policies are the trigger that makes young voters take full advantage of the democratic state. This relationship between past and present struggles shows in Michaela Nagyidaiová's work from a unique position of a "not too foreign outsider" and someone who is at the same time looking for signs of what the future may hold and attempts to connect them seamlessly to the visual timeline.

Artist statement

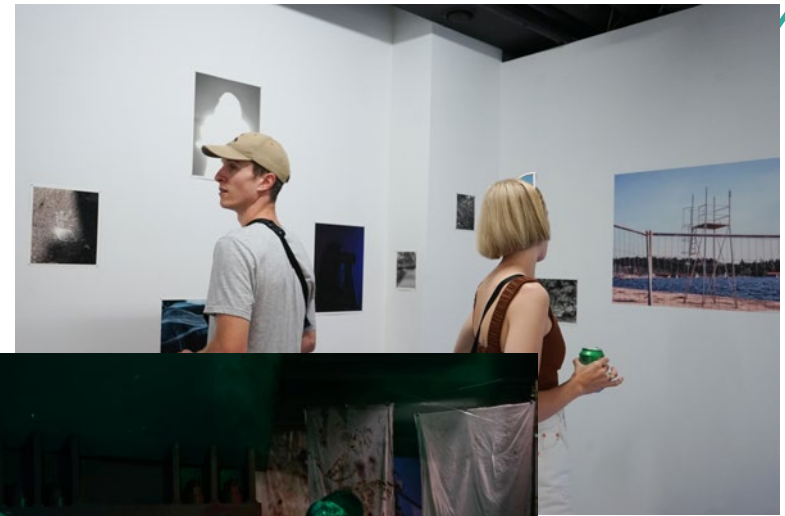
Just like its title, *Moulding*, this project is a process. Conducted within Slovenia, it is an exploration that occurred during my two-month residency in Ljubljana's gallery

DobraVaga. Through this work and as an “outsider”, I inspect my experiences here, the contemporary country, its foreseeable future, and its past. Only a five-hour drive from my hometown; Bratislava, Slovakia but I can already relate to so much, yet so little at the same time.

Some circumstances join these two dissimilar nations; our Slavic-ness, the ability to understand our languages to a small degree, current populist ruling parties, and perhaps an amount of past trauma, which has not been fully resolved to this day.

Common threads have been traversing the Central & Eastern EU topographies; populism, far right political parties, laws discriminating against marginalised communities, migrants, women, LGBTQ+ communities, all of this and more. Though, Western Europe seems to have been affected by the same phenomena. Parts of history are being moulded, taken advantage of by political propagandas.

Moulding would like to visually discuss topics such as “eastern/central-futurism”, with an emphasis on the past, present but also the future. Similarly, there is an added layer of my personal experiences that have taken place within Slovenia, from discovering more about the country’s ongoing protests against the government, referendum for water, and other intimate occurrences that happened throughout the time I have spent here. ■



LOCATION: KOŠICE, SLOVAKIA



The exhibition presents the results of the two-month residency by artists Đejmi Hadrović and Nežka Zamar as part of the Hydra PACE international project. The project brings together artists from Palestine, Slovenia and Slovakia, both in person and online. Their task is to analyze the current situation and think about our future as regards coexistence, communities, connection, and co-experience. The artist Mohammed Al Hawajri, who lives in the Gaza Strip, was initially invited to realize his project in Košice, but at the time of his planned departure, the conflict with Israel was escalating, which, combined with pandemic measures, made it impossible for him to travel. Thanks to the collaboration with Nežka Zamar and the Ramallah Municipality, Mohammed is taking part in the exhibition through their joint video-installation and the individual artwork produced in Košice. ■



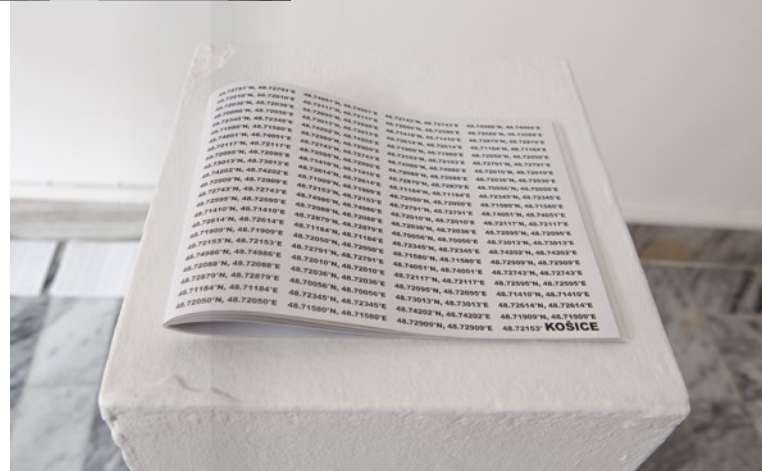
A SOUNDWALK

NEŽKA ZAMAR

in collaboration with Orhan "aib" Kavradioğlu
K.A.I.R

A Soundwalk is a project at the threshold between visual arts, literature, performance, sound, and street art. Pushing the limits of painting as a medium, it focuses on visual research of unmaterialized images. It is structured as a soundwalk, and its main component is a web of narratives, mapped out through the city, assigning collected records to their specific locations.

Adding another layer to the cityscape, this interactive sound map operates outside the perceived timeline. The sounds of the re-created environment reproduce intangible imagery that remains on the verge between fiction and reality. ■



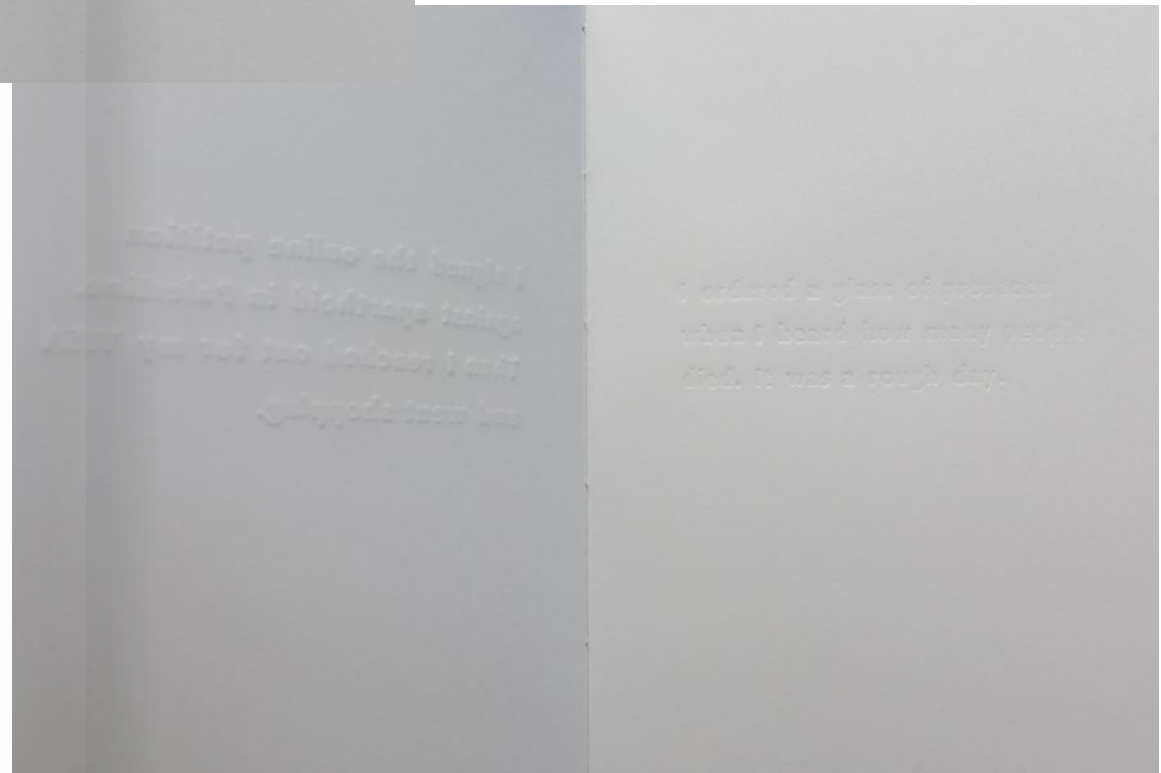
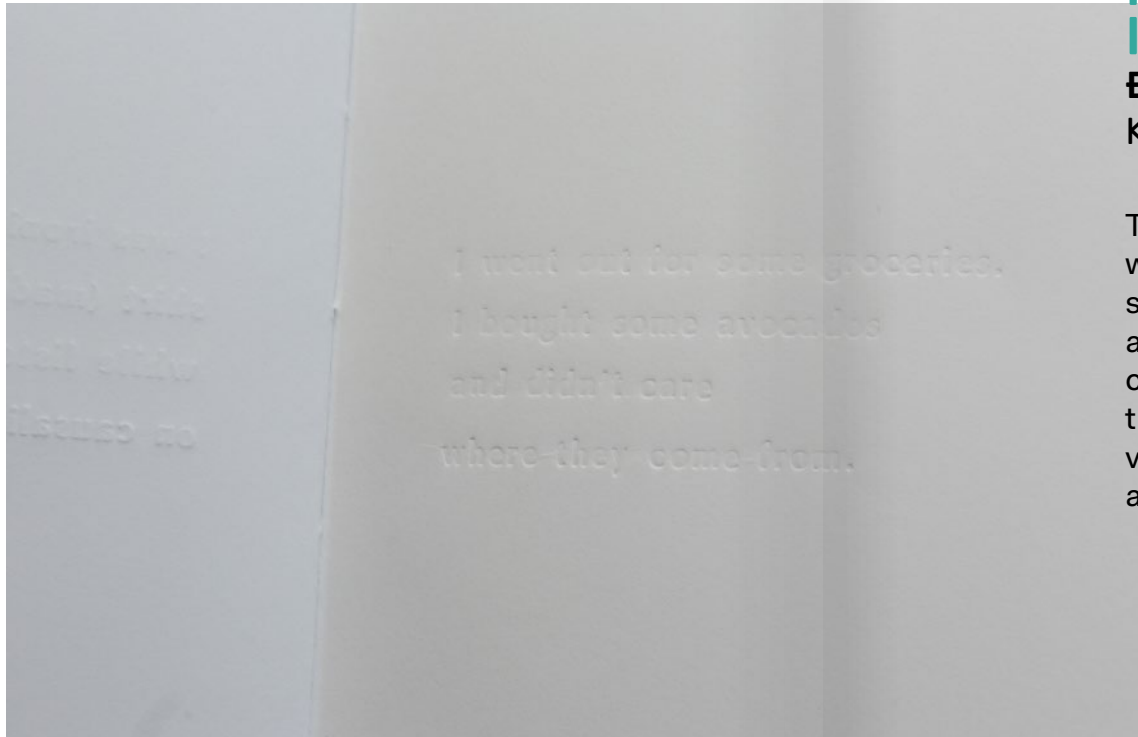


PRIVATE THOUGHTS IN PUBLIC CRISIS

ĐEJMI HADROVIĆ

K.A.I.R & The Ramallah Municipality

The only private space that we possess is our mind, where no one has access to our thoughts. This installation works in favour of private revolutions that are mostly invisible. The text offers a whimsical, sarcastic, yet critical stance towards the global events that we endured during the lockdown. It shares one's view of the world's issues from a couch in a comfortable zone. ■



OH SEA, ARE YOU ... MY FATHER?

MOHAMMED AL HAWAJRI,
KAIR & The Ramallah Municipality

The work, consisting of several juxtaposed photographs, creates a fictional panoramic view of a seascape. It documents, celebrates and narrates the tales of Gaza and the Mediterranean, beyond humanitarian aid and crisis and into the daily life of Gazans and their eternal belonging to the besieged sea. ■



THE BLUE IN-BETWEEN

NEŽKA ZAMAR
and **MOHAMMED AL HAWAJRI**
K.A.I.R. & The Ramallah Municipality

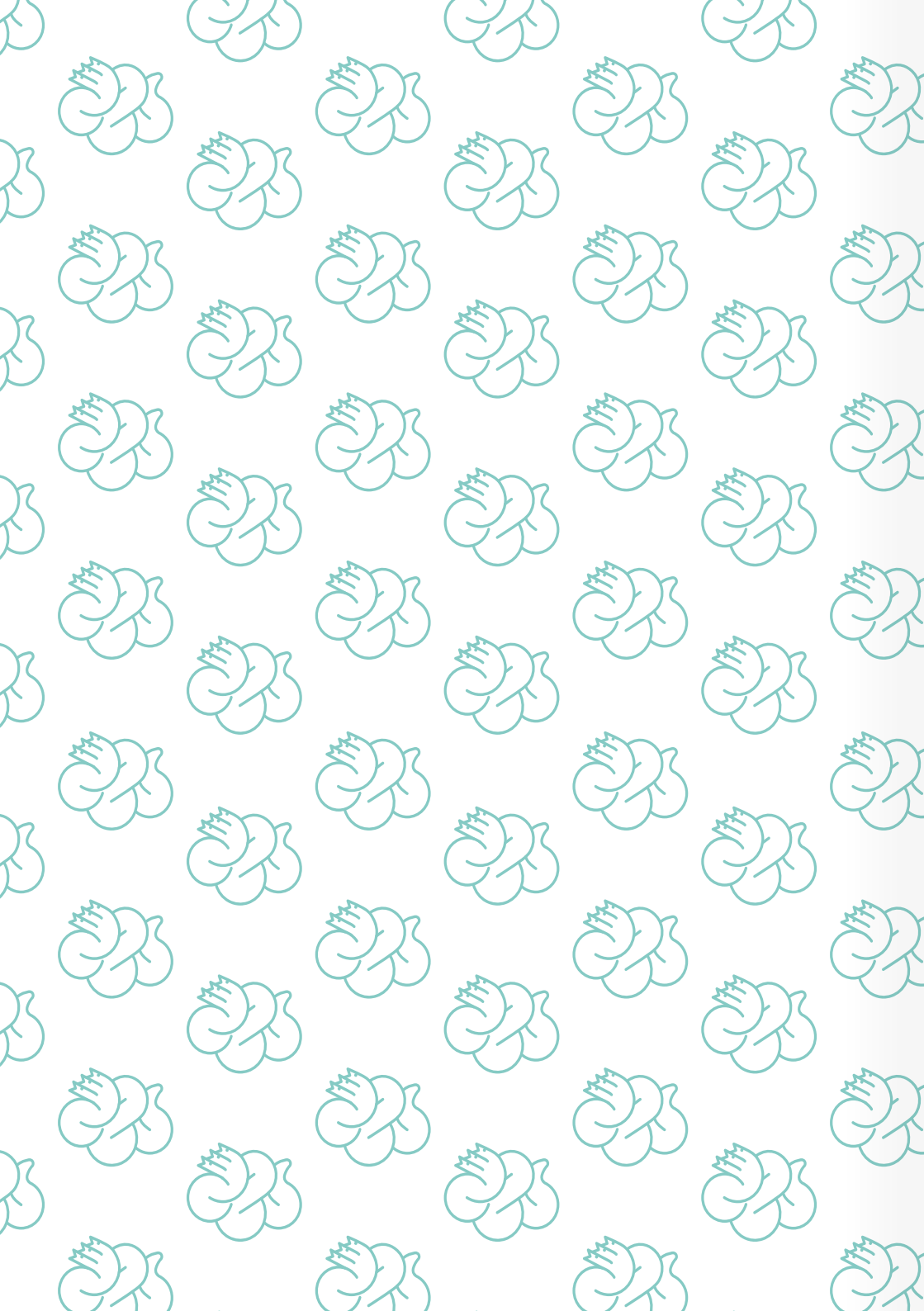
The Blue In-between is a video installation, created in an attempt to overcome the status quo of physical borders. The installation consists of two video projections and voiceovers by the two artists, narrating their personal relation to something familiar to them both: the sea, uniting and separating them simultaneously.

Two different experiences, two personal stories meet at a point that provides the audience with a sense of the importance of the sea in different contexts and the wide range of feelings associated with the Mediterranean. ■



LOCATION: PALESTINE RAMALLAH



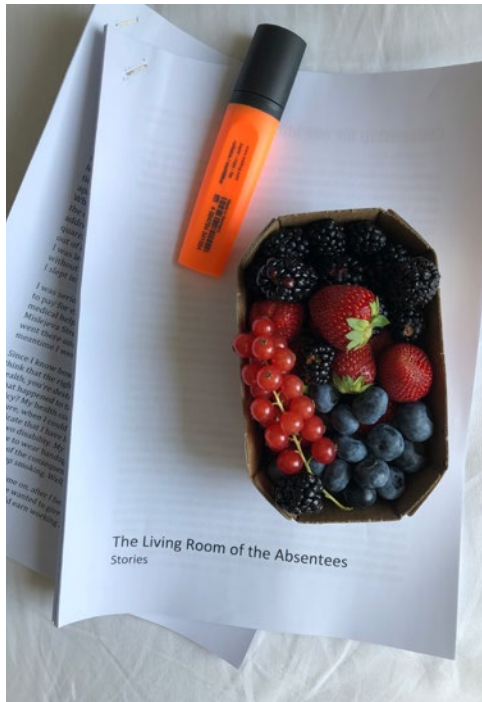
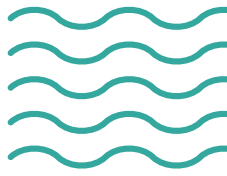


ARTISTS

2/2



ABED ALRAHMAN SHABANEH



Curatorial research stimulates my understanding of social dynamics. Through artistic interventions and revisiting literature with a contemporary eye, I aim to explore the ways we coexist and produce culture. In addition to my curatorial practice, I fulfil my interest in languages by experimenting with writing in various forms, such as poetry, short stories, novels and editorial writing.

Feedback

The Hydra PACE residency provided a valuable platform for exchanging artistic and cultural experiences. Staying in Ljubljana allowed me to encounter remarkable artists and practitioners from the local art scene. The rich natural and historical background of the city inspired me to work and write for the whole time period. ■



JANA ZATVARNICKÁ



In my work, I use different materials, through which I can experience the process. My primary media are painting and installation, but I also like to include other disciplines. My focus is the “direct touch”, where I experience the process of creation and the topic itself through immediate transfer onto the canvas or paper. The physical interaction with the materials I am working with plays an important role.

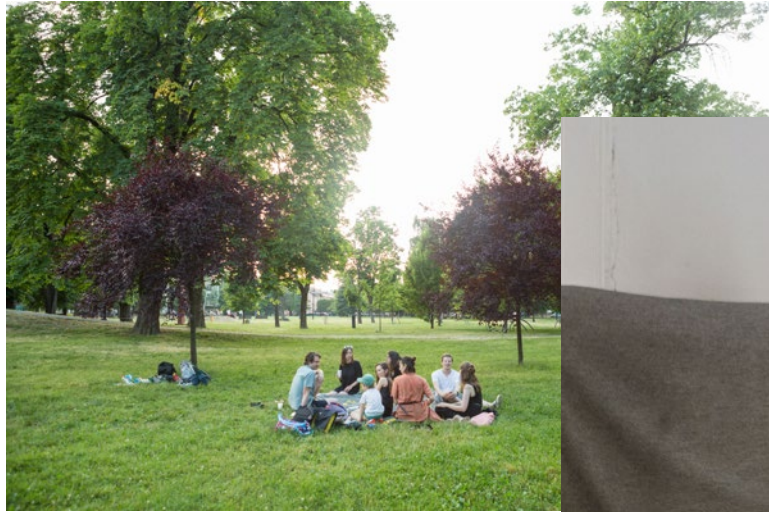
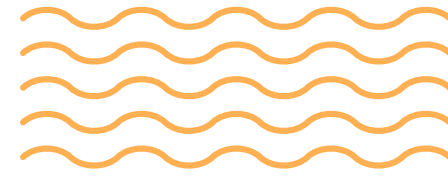
In my paintings, my brushstroke is reduced and replaced by a gesture, printmaking techniques or other supplies that I use instead of a brush (my body, hair ...). To me, using different tools and materials and embedding the “canvas” into the chosen space, thereby creating an “individual mythology”, is a way to express not only figurative aspects, but to transcend myself through the work. In doing so, I am leaving Traces: of body, of spirit and of touch. These traces could also symbolize an archaic universal language. ■

Feedback

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NEŽKA ZAMAR



An inherent part of my working practice is a hermeneutical approach to Chaos regarding all the elements that constitute it: a precious collection of *objets trouvés* and their interchangeable relationships. My practice operates within the interspace where the concept can be considered a found object and the found object considered a concept. An integrative approach to artistic languages used for representation is also a part of it; each of them can be considered the *subiectum*, a focal point of artistic research. I follow this *modus operandi* throughout the entire working process, starting with reinterpretation, occurring through the act of observing, and documentation. This approach is further elaborated on through work with different media, developing the materiality alongside the concept, applying them to each other accordingly, analysing them and pushing their limits. Considering myself a sidekick of artworks-in-process and a translator of the stories surrounding us, I more often than not find myself researching down numerous rabbit holes, not just to understand the particularities of the subject in question, but to draw the lines, to repurpose, reproduce, and find new connections.



Feedback

PROCESS and DEVELOPMENT of A Soundwalk

A Soundwalk is a project I developed during the two-month residency at KAIR, Kosice Artist in Residence, and in collaboration with Hydra PACE – Platform for Artistic Exchange and Collaboration, DobraVaga Gallery and Ramallah Municipality. The concept of A Soundwalk, as well as the plan for its realization, was

PARTNERS

developed in line with my artistic practice, focusing on visual research and pushing the limits of artistic mediums. The working process of the project was divided into various stages. Collecting stories through sound recordings, onsite documentary photography and mapping were integral for the progress of the project, and allowed me to engage and understand my surroundings. As a visual artist, I consider the established collaborative relations that exceeded my expectations an important turning point. ■



DOBRAVAGA

DobraVaga is a venue in the wonderful environment of the central city marketplace, which is the work of world-famous Slovenian architect Jože Plečnik. It is an exhibition and project space, commercial gallery and open studio of various contemporary artistic practices, styles and content. The program places an emphasis on the aesthetic reflections of the younger generation of artists, the generation that represents the junction of (possi/a)bilities, explorations and current contexts of artistic production in contemporary times. DobraVaga also includes a public zine library and reading room, inviting browsing and exploration.

The Open Studio residency programme was established for young regional artists who do not have their own space to create. With the increasing international presence of DobraVaga, it has also taken on the form of an international residency programme mostly including artists at the beginning of their professional artistic career. It is intended for all artists in contemporary visual and interdisciplinary production, regardless of their medium of expression – its main aim is artistic creation.

DobraVaga is part of Kino Šiška Centre for Urban Culture and was established by the Municipality of Ljubljana. ■

<https://dobravaga.si/en>

K.A.I.R.

International artist-in-residence program K.A.I.R. Košice Artist in Residence was implemented in 2011 as one of the key projects within the frame of “European Capital of Culture” by the NGO “Kosice 2013”. After the European Capital of Culture year, the NGO transformed to Creative Industry Košice, an organization, where K.A.I.R. had stable ground to develop the international activities and network of partners. In 2016, KAIR became an independent association.

The residency program is for artists from all over the world and out of all artistic disciplines and expressions. We give them the possibility to work in the inspiring environment of Košice’s singular cultural surrounding to realize art projects, collaborate with the agile local art scene and present themselves to the local and national public.

We choose artists based on open calls in cooperation with our international partners. Until now, we have sent and invited artists from different countries like Poland, Germany, Georgia, Ukraine or Japan. We can host 3 artists at the same time to encourage exchange and support the dialogue between different scenes. In Kosice, we provide accommodation, studios, financial and production support. ■

<https://www.kair.sk/en>

44 - 45



RAMALLAH MUNICIPALITY

Ramallah municipality seeks to build bridges of communication with the world, through which it may promote Palestine and the Palestinian cause internationally. The municipality provides strenuous efforts to intensify its activities on the local and international levels.

The Ramallah Municipality is a sustainable, strong institution that provides an umbrella to local organizations and institutions and a strategic partner to many. Mamarat (Paths) is the residency programme of Ramallah Municipality. The residency hosts artists in contemporary visual and interdisciplinary production, regardless of their medium of expression. ■

www.ramallah.ps

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kair



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46 - 47

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