

Filip Markiewicz CELEBRATION FACTORY

Thursday 11 May, 2017

20 May–15 July 2017

Opening night: Friday 19 May 2017, 6–8pm

Co-commissioned by NN Contemporary Art & Casino Luxembourg
Curated by Catherine Hemelryk & Kevin Muhlen

“Europe is Lost” sings the British spoken word artist Kate Tempest in her protest song of the same name.

The headlines of the international media announce the crisis, some even talk of war. The French singer Jeanne Added sings elsewhere “A war is coming”. Today’s Europe is evidently in a challenging period since the crisis of migrants, the rise of populist parties and terrorist attacks. Beyond these events the consumer society and the world of entertainment continues to perform. Despite the terrorist attacks, people continue to make art, attend rock concerts, go to the theatre, dance, go clubbing...

Artist Filip Markiewicz’s new body of work responds to these crises in an exhibition that will evolve over the coming 18 months. The exhibition’s migration is, in part, an autobiographical mirror for the artist from the project’s debut at NN Contemporary Art in Northampton, home to a significant Polish diaspora, and the artist’s native Luxembourg. The exhibition will be held by Casino Luxembourg in 2018 and will also include work he’s preparing with the Theater Basel (CH) and a series of Euro drawings currently presented at the Kunsthalle Tübingen (D)

The Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman talks about a “liquid modernity” where the individual is in the centre. Nothing is fixed, the neoliberal world teaches us a new way of conceiving our existence. The aim of CELEBRATION FACTORY is to try to represent this aspect of our society through the form of entertainment. The exhibition is not intending to be a kind of political activism, but rather to develop an almost surreal language consolidating different expressions, music and celebration; to find a liquid and artistic language fitting our moving and evolving society.

Some of the works comprising the exhibition draw from a retro-futurism with a nod to Z series cinema. Political power structures are represented by a *mise en scène* close to the absurd where many genres are mixed. It is a phenomenon that can also be seen in our media-political society in which we distinguish less and less the star-system from the politics, and where a kind of vampirisation of contemporary pop culture takes place. Northampton is the place of origin of the post-punk band Bauhaus, whose famous song Bela Lugosi is Dead became a dark anthem of the 80s subculture.

The exhibition sees a factory of drawings with imagery including the detritus from big night’s out such as Polish Zywiec beer bottles, Daily Mail’s Brexit frontpage, Motörhead frontman Lemmy, Albrecht Dürer’s Jesus portrait with Pepsi cans, European hymn composer and *Clockwork Orange* icon Ludwig van Beethoven with a melting Volkswagen Logo. The soundtracks to these hand-drawn multiples are provided by a new film by Filip exploring Northampton’s music scene. The piece was filmed over one weekend and includes conversations with Professor of Punk Roy Wallace, behind the scenes footage of Northampton’s Male Voice Choir recording their new album, rappers Phundo Art, Molly Mikes & Jack Parker performing at the legendary Labour club (now known as The Lab) and avant-garde black metal band Denigrata rehearsing and more. What began as a search for Bauhaus, became a snapshot of the resilience and panoply of creativity in one British town during this time of seismic political change.

About the artist:

Luxemburger of Polish origin, Filip Markiewicz (b.1980) is a multidisciplinary artist expressing himself through, a.o., drawing, video and installations thereby creating a coherent visual body of work using diversified media. The artist, who is always looking for explanations to our daily lives, explores the omnipresence of image and puts in perspective the message they convey. Applying criticism and a certain political twist to “the news”, he underlines the vacuity of our overproducing visual world where news becomes reality, and not the opposite. While capitalism has become an ideology and banks the new cathedrals of mass expression, Filip interrogates some aspects of the European populations’ discontent: social welfare, migration, wars outside our borders, religious integristism, the use of national and private wealth, the value of art as a reflection of culture. His willingness to go back to the pencil and

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the paper emerges from the need to use drawing as a widespread technique of expression that leaves a “real” imprint in a digitalized world of abstract evidence lead by forms and colours. Markiewicz was selected to represent the Great Duchy of Luxemburg at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) with his project *Paradiso Lussemburgo*, that was particularly appreciated for its cohesion though complexity and variety of artistic disciplines. (© aeroplastics)

A series of events will accompany the exhibition including Open Mic Night's, Drawing workshops, Protest song-writing workshops and the exhibition is part of Northampton Music Festival 2017.

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