

Šejla Kamezić:

»I Really Really Really Really Really«

9 November 2018–1 December 2018
KiBela / MMC KIBLA & artKIT

The World I Live In

Šejla Kamezić was born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. She has received widespread acclaim for her poignant intimacy and social commentary. Her work is based on her own experiences, memories and dreams. Taking us to spaces of displacement and discrimination, the works insist that the delicate and the sublime are not pushed aside by catastrophe or hardship. Rather, they exist simultaneously, revealing a complex, psychogeographic landscape and the tenacity of the human spirit. The sadness and beauty, the hope and pain that emerge are part of the stories we share. The weight of her themes stand in powerful contrast to her particular aesthetic and choice of delicate materials.

The Maribor exhibition features an overview of her works, which remain committed, both from the wider social (i.e., political), as well as her personal perspective. Although the Balkans have changed since the slaughter of the 1990s, the basic structures persevere, and with them, prejudice. Europe and the world have also changed, unfortunately, not really for the better, as in the 21st century we are witnessing the greatest exodus following the Balkan/Yugoslav wars. At the end of the 20th century, migrants sought chances for survival and a better life in Europe. The Europe of today prevents migrants from entering by means of »technical obstacles«, a euphemism for barbed wire and all kinds of legislation, to which individual countries refer to, when they feel they have to protect their purity, provide arguments in support of their closed borders, and prevent diversity.

Her most known shocking and poignant work is from 2003, a poster of a young, attractive, beautiful girl and the inscription: »No teeth ...? A moustache ...? Smells like shit ...? Bosnian girl!« Šejla Kamezić came across this graffiti by an unknown Dutch soldier in Srebrenica, where it was created in 1994 or 1995, when the Royal Netherlands Army as part of UNPROFOR was responsible for the protection of Srebrenica, and partly responsible for the genocide that occurred there between 1992 and 1995.

And while history repeats itself, Šejla Kamezić's artistic oeuvre shows us that thematizing war in Bosnia-Herzegovina has never become *passé*, but rather the other way around: the Balkan war has become a kind of paragon for the way migrants are currently being treated by state authorities. At least in the 1990s there was no barbed wire, even though antitank units were positioned alongside our borders, and even though the countries involved imposed administrative obstacles such as visas, to make the border crossings more difficult, or often impossible.

At Slovenian border crossings, like at all European borders, we see at least two kinds of entrances, two signs, »EU«, and »others«. Who are these »others«? And who are the first? Segregation begins already upon entering a country. The borders are not only inside our minds, they are facts. Šejla Kamezić confronts us with these and similar paradoxes, which she manifests through different

procedures and media, to highlight all the contradictions of the (contemporary) world and the discord of society maintained by politicians, in order to be able to rule according to the ancient Roman principle »divide and conquer« (*divide et impera*). The world and Europe are increasingly becoming a web of differences, a jigsaw puzzle of different sides, for starters the »first« and the »others«, which happens right at the borders.

The reality with which the artist confronts us, travels with people, with migrations, and from the personal experience, upon which Šejla Kamberič builds, this becomes a social reality, a social truth, sold to us by the politicians, the media, and certain groups of people.

In what way, then, should we be contemplating the free world and a borderless Europe? How can we imagine a common life in Europe, when it is being denied to so many, regardless of the reasons, which may be political, or social? Where is the place of finding out who we truly are? These are some of the issues addressed by the artist as part of her first art exhibition in Maribor.

Šejla Kamberič is a comprehensive artist, whose works, as a rule, intrigue the audience, and this is also how she is going to be presented at the MMC KIBLA. Among the exhibited art works there is an entirely new work, to be presented for the first time in Maribor.

Peter Tomaž Dobrila

Kamberič's works have been on view in numerous solo exhibitions, including at CAC Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius; Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade; Kunsthaus Graz, Graz; Sharjah Art Foundation – Sharjah Art Museum; Museum of Modern Art Ljubljana in 2012 and MACBA, Barcelona; Manchester International Festival MFI; Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb in 2011. In 2011, Kamberič received The ECF Routes Princess Margriet Award for Cultural Diversity and in 2007, a DAAD-Berlin Artist Residency Fellowship. 2015 was marked by two extensive solo exhibitions, at ARTER Space for Art, Istanbul and the National Gallery of Kosovo, Pristina.

Her work is included in renowned collections such as the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; MACBA, Barcelona; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb; ERSTE Collection, Vienna; Vehbi Koç Foundation, Istanbul; Art Collection Telekom, Bonn.

Exhibition opening: Friday, 9 November, at 7 p. m., MMC KIBLA / KiBela

Breakfast with the artist: Saturday, 10 November 2018, at 10 a. m. / artKIT

Venues:

MMC KIBLA / KiBela, Ulica kneza Koclja 9, Maribor, Slovenia

ArtKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor, Slovenia

The exhibition will be showing on both locations until 1 December 2018.

MMC KIBLA / KiBela, space for art, Maribor, Slovenia

Open on weekdays between 9 a. m. and 10 p. m., Saturdays between 4 p. m. and 10 p. m.

artKIT Gallery, Glavni trg 14, Maribor

Tue–Fri 10 a. m.–1 p. m. and 5 p. m.–7 p. m., Sat 10 a. m.–1 p. m.

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