

Jusuf Hadžifejzović

PRODAJALNA PRAZNIN SHOP OF EMPTINESSES

4–22 June 2018

artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor, Slovenia

Jusuf Hadžifejzović, internationally acclaimed artist from Bosnia-Herzegovina, was born in 1956 in Prijepolje, Serbia. He completed the School of Applied Arts in Sarajevo, and graduated in 1980 from the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade, under the mentorship of Professor Stojan Čelić. He pursued and completed his postgraduate studies at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf, Germany, in the class of Professor Klaus Rinke.

He is one of the founders and initiator of the project »Yugoslavian Documenta«, as well as of the Sarajevo Biennial of Modern Art, which launched the 1980s local Sarajevo art community to the very top of the existing Yugoslav, and even world art scene. Since then, he has continued to be regarded as the most provocative Bosnian-Herzegovinian artist.

He works with installation art and »depotgraphy«, and recently also analytical painting. He has participated in numerous prominent international contemporary art exhibitions, from Berlin to Korea.

He is also one of the co-founders of the Ars Aevi Collection of the then-forming Sarajevo Museum of Contemporary Art. Today, he lives and works in Sarajevo and occasionally Antwerp.

Hadžifejzović is widely known as a performer. One of his most remarkable performances is Strah pred pitno vodo (The Fear of Drinking Water), which was performed first after the Balkan war at the Cetinje Biennial, and then later at the Charlama Gallery in Sarajevo that has been running under his management. In 2016, the performance was featured at the MIG21 exhibition in KIBLA PORTAL; the following year as part MIG21 on tour (within the frame of the Art Capital project) in Szentedre near Budapest, Hungary, and also at the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana. Both this year and last year, he has been artist-in-residence at the Center for Contemporary Arts in Celje, where his work was shown in a solo exhibition.

Jusuf Hadžifejzović began his career as a painter, but since as far back as the 1970s, his main focus has been on performance (his earliest public performance dates back to 1979 in Pula) and a special type of practice, based on an almost "archeological" investigation of depots: he has been collecting the stored items and depositing them again, rearranged, in the form of installations in the exhibition space.

The same kind of approach to creating art works will be on display in Maribor, where Jusuf has been first collecting objects as part of his residency stay, then manipulating them artistically, and finally showcasing them and presenting them through a performance and installation called the Shop of Emptiness. Alongside the collected, often found objects, which are a kind of 'objets trouvés', he also exhibits his paintings, onto which he places various shapes in his own minimalist repetitive rhythm, melodically playing through color harmonies and contrasts and composing structures of some kind of a patterned primordial community, equal in differences and different in equalities.

Hadžifejzović's so-called depotographies, as Ugo Vlaisavljević writes, have a strong political sense: they "release deposited things from captivity. To offer an exit from depots is to acknowledge the worth of things previously removed from the public eye. By taking them from the dark shadows of depots and putting them under the bright light of exhibition rooms, he restores their lost dignity, as if they were amnestied prisoners."

Since Hadžifejzović is a renowned performer, who also deals with installation art and »depotgraphy«, and in recent times also (again) with analytical painting, the exhibition in Maribor will feature all three most fundamental dimensions of his artistic work: performance, installation and painting.

In 1994, Hadžifejzović, who was living in Belgium as a war refugee at the time, was invited to participate at the Cetinje Biennial in Montenegro as an eminent artist. Although his depotgraphy practice primarily targets gallery and museum depots and focuses on the items that they store, at the Cetinje Biennial, he decided to gather and exhibit (re-deposit) his "deposited kith and kin": instead of focusing on depots of the Montenegro museums and galleries, he invited all the members of his large family to attend the biennial exhibition. The Fear of Drinking Water is a family portrait documenting this first family reunion after a three year separation during the war.

On the basis of this photograph, Hadžifejzović later developed a series of performances with the same title that dealt with the collective trauma of separation and loss and were staged in museums and galleries in Rome, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Pula, Podgorica, Seoul, Antwerp, Dubrovnik, Split, Prijepolje, Zagreb, and Maribor, where he appeared for the first time as part of the international group exhibition Migratory Interdisciplinary Grid 21 – MIG 21. The exhibition at artKIT is his first solo exhibition in Maribor.

– Peter Tomaž Dobrila

Presentation of the residency program will be on Friday, 22 June 2018 at 6 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.