

# PLATEAU RESIDUE

## Sub Persona II

12–30 April 2021

MMC KIBLA/KiBela

*Sub Persona II* is an iteration of the research project *Sub Persona* (2019), by the artistic tandem PLATEAU RESIDUE, consisting of a geographer and photographer Aljaž Celarc and art historian Eva Pavlič Seifert. *Sub Persona* »is a video installation project that explores the importance and ethics of human forest management. It emphasizes the shared responsibility of all people to use modern methods to examine the intertwining of forest ecosystems and develop sustainable management methods that take into account the simultaneous ecosystem, economic, recreational, and cultural functions of the forest that people all too often take for granted.«<sup>1</sup>

The tandem with various visual art tools intensively explores the formations of new ecological realities emerging due to the socio-political, economic, and technological shifts of recent centuries, always motivated by capital. In their engaged and distinctly interdisciplinary practice, they deal with the multifaceted and mutual relationship between humans and nature and draw attention to our collective and individual responsibility for it and, last but not least, our shared future. This point is manifested in atmospheric, almost immersive installations, where one's critical (self)reflection in the viewer is stimulated through an aesthetically perfect and sensory-stimulating installation. The complex consequences of unstoppable human desire for domination over nature and its economic exploitation, its long-term colonization, and consequent climate change have already been discussed in previous projects or spatial installations *Ex-Topia* (2017) and *Alma Mater* (2018) when they researched the state of the almost completely melted Triglav Glacier and the disappearance of cave ice. The exploration of cave ecosystems in the Kočevski gozd led the artists to an even more intensive and precise exploration of forests.<sup>2</sup>

The multimedia installation *Sub Persona II* is adapted to the architectural specifics of the KiBela art space. Through sensory perception, it encourages visitors' critical reflection of the phenomenon in question. The unique spatial and ambient layout stimulates all our senses, with artists' exceptional sense for the presentation or the execution of an artwork where the form and content complement each other.

The central element of the installation is a short documentary and experimental film, consisting of sequences, where next to the forest, the leading roles are played by a forest expert, forest logger, and forester and hunter as living entities, each from his/her point of view on its concrete encroachment on forest ecosystems. By juxtaposing the opinions of different protagonists, who are directly involved in the maintenance of forests, but who approach it in diffe-

The film starred Tomaž Hartman from the Slovenia Forest Service, forest logger Nevenka Gregorčič, SiDG d.o.o (Slovenian State Forests), sawmill Bela Voda from Loški Potok, and forester and hunter Brane Poje. The music was created by Domen Učakar with the creative name Lifecutter, who makes music with various guitar effects and sound synthesizers. It leans against the background of noise and draws from multiple electronic music branches, especially technoid sounds.

Video and production PLATEAU RESIDUE

Music: Lifecutter

Sound processing: Simon Kavšek

Support: Municipality of Ljubljana x Atol Project Institute x Slovenski državni gozdovi (Slovenian State Forests), d.o.o

Webpage: 

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.plateauresidue.com/sub-persona/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://mihacolner.com/2020/02/13/sub-persona/>

rent ways, the authors of the project highlight the complexity and sometimes contradictions of individual approaches, and at the same time problematize the relationship between the »personal« and the »professional.« The carefully structured twenty-minute narrative outlines the significant role of forests in our lives, emphasizes the importance and necessity of thoughtful maintenance of forests, and the elimination of the consequences of climate change and the exploitation of this natural resource. At the same time, it subtly exposes the fact that there is no straightforward approach to which extent and in what way humans should encroach on forests.

P L A T E A U R E S I D U E in this short film, with experimental editing, framing, and black-and-white imagery, creates a visually impressive narrative and subtly shapes and guides the viewer's perception. The atmosphere created by the artists with the already mentioned elements, functions due to the change of the color spectrum, which is otherwise profoundly rooted in our imagination of forest ecosystems, alienated and anxious, but at the same time aesthetically attractive. The alteration between the shots also contributes significantly to this - a storytelling figure, a figure merging with a fallen tree's roots, a void created by extensive tree felling, and threatening and roaring mechanical figures, machines that cut into forest tissue. The strong visual component is complemented by music created for the project by Domen Učakar with the creative name Lifecutter. The music further captures the relationship between humans and the forest; the calmness soon spills over into an eerie and brutal sound that simultaneously evokes restlessness and serenity with its sharpness and cuts into the visual material.

Film shots are gradually moving into the gallery space. The color spectrum returns to familiar colors, and the basic natural elements of the forest ecosystem - trees - unfold along the massive white pillars of KiBela. Roots, untreated trunks, peeled trunks, and chiseled beams gradually spread into space and, as protagonists, step out from the film frame, dominate the gallery's conceptual space and, with their various forms, further emphasize the economic, social, and cultural functions of the forest and the human dependence on it. The visual layering in this layout also continues with a magnified black-and-white still image from the film. The selected shot confronts the viewer and is complemented by a longer video in which all the figures are removed, and the musical background of Domen Učakar ensures an additional meditative and sensual journey.

The setting also balances between the intimate, the personal, and the collective, the public. In the juxtaposition of opinions and sensory perception, manifested in the (self) reflection and understanding of the responsibility we bear to nature and each other. Therefore, the topics that P L A T E A U R E S I D U E tackles seem particularly urgent. This urgency, however, at a time when the world is reconfiguring itself, when brutal manifestations of climate change, such as extensive forest fires, melting ice, rising sea levels, and the extinction of species, which are of course the result of human capital-oriented greed, are occurring globally and daily, is even more pronounced.

- Živa Kleindienst

# BIOGRAFIJA

Webpage:



**P L A T E A U R E S I D U E** (Slovenian: OstanekPlanote) is an imaginary identity of the artistic duo Aljaž Celarac (graduate geographer [Faculty of Arts] and master of photography [AKV St. Joost, NL]) and Eva Pavlič Seifert (graduate art historian [Faculty of Arts]) and M.Sc. in Visual Culture [Aalto University, FI]). Their works deal with landscape ecology and new media and are looking for new ways to raise public awareness. The starting point of their artistic production is video installations. In their video works, they give voice to project participants and collaborators, natural forms such as rocks, air, organisms, and other sets of substances, which they reorganize into new material forms and new media systems. They presented their works in most major art institutions in Slovenia. For their work in 2019, they received the Tesla Award of the Museum of Transitional Arts MoTA and participated in exhibitions abroad. Eva and Aljaž have been living and working in Novi Kot since 2019, in the hinterland of the forests of Gorski kotar and Snežnik, where they designed the Mandrova House/Hiša Mandrova project in 2020. They are dedicated to creating regenerative self-sufficiency, manual woodworking, and reviving the area's construction heritage in question.

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P L A T E A U R E S I D U E

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MMC KIBLA/KiBela, Ulica kneza Koclja 9, Maribor

Opening hours: Monday–Friday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m.–2 p.m.