

# Valerie Wolf Gang

## (POD)ZAVEST / (SUB)CONSCIOUS

6–21 May 2016

KiBela, space for art

MMC KIBLA, Maribor, Slovenia



Year of production: 2016

Concept, video set-up and poetry by: Valerie Wolf Gang

Laser-cut signs by: v3d.si

Music by: Chairs and Kevin MacLeod

The videos are a combination of original recordings made by the author, and various other cell phone videos shared by people who witnessed different kinds of events, including natural disasters.

Life is good, especially when we realize how precious it is precisely because it is transient. This is the fundamental message behind the work of artist Valerie Wolf Gang, who is presented to us in this exhibition with a video installation titled (Sub)Conscious. The spatial installation comprises seven documentary video clips, which demonstrate the visual facet of our inhumaneness towards the world in which we live, and in which we entirely neglect the very same values that are supposed to be essential to our own existence. The conditionality of this statement reflects the artist's questioning about whether such a thing, i.e. a positive shift in the awareness of humanistic values, is even possible anymore.

The artist invites us into her original creative sphere by means of cut-out visual messages that cover the screen where she plays her installation video. In this way we are forced to see the recordings only "through the prism of" her own positive attitude; in a meta-static way, she thus attempts to imprint messages that are more than "just" words, into the subconscious part of our brain. Valerie Wolf Gang artfully guides us through her intimate view of the world, which is affirmative, and positive; the videos are accompanied by original poetry through which she reveals certain facts that are crucial for all who exist: to be born and to live, to learn and thereby unfold the essence of life.

It was thus that the cut-out slogans were created: Life is good, through which we observe natural disaster videos, floods and fires, all of which are an everyday part of our lives; Enjoy the little things, and behind it a video on poverty and precarious work, i.e. work carried out in impossible conditions. Dream imagine believe is a visualization testifying to the violence that goes on in the streets, to the burglaries, fights, and protests pointing to global violence. The theme behind Make your dreams happen is Black Friday, when huge masses of people raid shopping malls for special price offers and discounts, it is concerned with consumerist hysteria in general. Relax is about industrial food production and factory farming, where animals are being massively raised and then slaughtered one after the other – to become food for all of us. Do more of what makes you happy is a documentary on human trafficking and illegal prostitution, while Worry less live more tells the story of our "hospitality" towards immigrants, which is only temporary or seeming, or is not there at all, pointing to our total lack of compassion and understanding of what "being different" stands for.

The artist uses these positive signs to call attention to the mundaneness that we come across every day in mass media – on television, in the newspapers, on the radio and the internet. She unveils how the media blows things out of proportion, which is an obvious consequence of capitalism and the information era; warns about the media war, which we have witnessed only a short time ago during the Balkan maelstrom. Inevitably, of course, she touches upon the subject of the present-day migrant explosion, which is causing fear and alarm among people, most of whom have never seen a single migrant person in their life, except on television, yet somehow they believe these people are malicious...

The overload of negative information on social networks, the hostile hate speech inciting hatred, dissolving humanism and manipulating human emotions, therefore causes a negative propaganda, or, paraphrasing the words of the upcoming American presidential candidate: "Some bad PR going on here." This propaganda creates a negative and unrealistic image in our subconscious. And the subconscious (or, in Freud's terms, the unconscious) is a mental activity that strongly, if not crucially, affects a person's behavior, whereby the trauma finally comes full circle.

This time Valerie Wolf Gang, thank God, reverses the picture.

Nina Jeza

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"As an artist working, apart from my own art projects, in television production, I am very much aware of the power of manipulation possessed by the television medium. I know that television reality is a different kind of reality than what I imagine, and at the same time it exploits people's misery to increase the ratings and produce sensational headlines, which bring profit. One of my observations regarding both the industry and the users is that people react less and less to all kinds of tragic news, precisely because they perceive the world shown on television screens as another kind of reality. News about hungry or thirsty people does not even move people anymore, they prefer to stay safely in their comfortable armchairs, and open a bar of chocolate, or change the station and find something more entertaining and cheerful to watch. The work (Sub)Conscious is a recent production, dedicated to all those who have lost their lives over the past few months due to one of the many unfortunate events we have seen in the media – all in the hope of focusing our attention to the present reality, where, with the help of past experiences, we can take better steps that will ultimately help to create a different kind of future. Life (can be) good." (Valerie Wolf Gang)

The work of visual artist **Valerie Wolf Gang** (1990) focuses on video and contemporary artistic practices. The esthetically demanding production practice which comprises her work focuses mostly on current topical issues in present-day society. She treats the medium of video as a mixture of social signs, by means of which she addresses the social contrasts using a highly articulated visual language. She graduated from the Ljubljana School of Design and Photography, then obtained her BA in Digital Art and Practices from the School of Arts at the University of Nova Gorica, and continued her studies on the MA Media Art and Practice Master's Program in Video and Contemporary Art. She improved her theoretical and practical knowledge at the FAMU Film Academy in Prague and at the Art Academy ESAD in Portugal. She is actively involved in different forms of artistic production, video and film projects, international exhibition selections and artistic residencies.

<https://valeriewolfgang.com/>



The exhibition will be showing until 21 May 2016.  
Opening 6 May 2016, at 8 p. m.  
KiBela / MMC KIBLA Maribor

KiBela, space for art, is open on weekdays between 9am and 10pm and Saturdays between 4pm and 10pm (closed on Sundays).