

Arcieve / Press Release

Contingent Identities

(V part of Border Disorder)workshop-exhibition

4-21 May Depo, Istanbul 2009.

Organizers:

Isidora Ficovic (multimedia artists in front of Border Disorder, self-organized group of artists)and Depo/Tutun Deposu

Artists: Elmas Deniz (Turkey), Erinc Seymen (Turkey), Suat Ogut (Turkey), Kukka Pavilainen (Finland), Isabel Schmiga (Germany), Michael Wojnar (Switzerland), Keti Stoiljkovic (Switzerland), Leona Dodig (Great Britain), Mark Brogan (Great Britain), Jelena Radic (Serbia), Freudmann Fduard (Austria), Darinka Pop-Mitic (Serbia), Isidora Ficovic (Serbia), Nisrine Boukhari (Syria), Dr Protic(Serbia), Goran Micevski (Serbia), Mohamed Abdel Karim (Egypt), Tunc Ali Cam (Turkey).

Border Disorder is a collaborative project aiming to create an open platform of investigation. Its particular focus concerns social changes and cultural developments caused by the European integrative processes in the West Balkans (including Turkey). An additional collaborative module within the project seeks to understand the ways in which these transformations may communicate or interact with the Nordic experience—a region similarly perceived as a place on the periphery of European artistic life.

The contingent nature of changes in the socio-economic realm, particularly in the case of contemporary Balkan society, concerns first, the contingency of many nations in the region asserting historic identities in contemporary guises. In turn, these regions of redefine themselves vis-à-vis Europe. Thus, the first realm of contingency involves facing the demands of globalization. These large-scale changes are felt in the formation of individuality and affect the most basic sense of citizen identity as an evolution over time. Border Disorder captures these personal moments of negotiation with larger forces in a changing landscape through art projects of examination.

Contingent Identities investigates the concept of identity through what plagues and pleasures it, so to speak. One of the main points of contention troubling a 'New Europe' as a recurrent issue resulting in rapid changes across integrating nations, and the West Balkans in particular, is this: How is the most basic unit identity—the citizen-individual—subjected to both internal and external change within the larger field? How, in other words, does a subject dynamically negotiate a personal sense of identity with various 'public' identities that are forced upon it? These include gender identity, affinity within a social or professional group, national and ethnic inheritance, and all those measures of self that demand specific behaviors from the citizen-subject.

Key Questions: Do such aspects of what we are calling 'contingency' equal a state of emergency at the micro- as well as macro-level of human organization? Does everything solid and established, including 'traditional' identities, really turn into mist before becoming a new national institution or international currency, monetary or otherwise? In the reifying frontal assault of global capitalism there is an ongoing materialization of previously metaphysical proportions that dates back to the early stages of modernization, it defined the twentieth century, and it is an evolving, hard to name force that we all experience today. Contingent Identities looks to places where this force may be experienced with increased magnitude in the individual due to engagements with history made at the highest levels. These engagements, what we could call 'states of being' often reflect choices that sought a renegotiation with history. One of the most challenging aspects of integration is thus dealing with historical conflicts between traditional groups coping with contemporary problems. These new circumstances inherently affect communities and communities of art making.

Contingent Identities also manifests the latest project in an ongoing series of exhibitions, workshops and events under the joint title Border Disorder. This latest installment is planned to take place in Istanbul in 2009, as a way to, in part, re-converge with artistic minds on issues specific to the Balkan region.