

PRESS RELEASE

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FRAGILE SENSE OF HOPE

Art Collection Telekom

10.10. – 23.11.2014

Press conference: 9.10.2014, 12:00

me Collectors Room/Stiftung Olbricht

Auguststraße 68, 10117 Berlin

Opening hours: Tue–Sun, 12:00–18:00

- me Collectors Room Berlin/Olbricht Foundation presents Art Collection Telekom
- Art Collection Telekom with emphasis on Eastern and South-East Europe
- In a show featuring 70 works by 20 artists



With its first ever public exhibition, entitled 'Fragile Sense of Hope', Deutsche Telekom proudly presents works from its newly founded collection, Art Collection Telekom, as it takes up residency at me Collectors Room in Berlin. The exhibition reveals the storytelling power of the diverse art scenes of Eastern and South Eastern Europe. With its incipient collecting activities, Deutsche Telekom aims both to follow the exciting artistic developments as they continue to unfold in the countries of Eastern Europe and to shed light on the social and political changes that have occurred since the collapse of the Iron Curtain.

The Art Collection Telekom was founded in 2010 and has continually expanded ever since. It spans all media to include drawing, painting, photography, and video/film. Since collecting activities began, specific topics and narrative threads have evolved, which now come to the fore in 'Fragile Sense of Hope' and the 70 works by 20 artists it contains.

The exhibition's enigmatic title 'Fragile Sense of Hope' is a borrowing from a work by Šejla Kamerić and it gives voice to the underlying tone of an entire region. The collapse of the Iron Curtain 25 years ago brought dramatic changes to the everyday lives of citizens in Eastern Europe and these upheavals were accompanied by a fragile sense of hope for a better future. Ideological value systems, previously dictated by government, dissolved into thin air. Preconceived ideas about careers and the individual's passage through life became obsolete, almost overnight. It is difficult for the affected societies to decide what is worth preserving in memory and what needs to be rewritten. Artists are sensitive to the repression of memories from an epoch that lasted several generations. They question the construction of history and repeatedly address the themes of forgetting and remembrance in their works. These are, as a result, the central themes of the exhibition.

The exhibition has been curated by Nathalie Hoyos and Rainald Schumacher from the Berlin-based Office for Art, in collaboration with the Collectors Room/Olbricht Foundation.

Promoting young artists from Eastern and South Eastern Europe

Three generations of artists are represented in the Art Collection Telekom, with a particular focus placed on promoting younger artists. The collection includes figures who were still students during the planned economies of the communist era. A few selected works originate from the older generation, who were already active during the time of the Iron Curtain and whose work is currently being rediscovered.

Among the latter are **Zofia Kulik** (* 1947, Wrocław, Poland). Her final-year project, created at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw and entitled *Instead of Sculpture: Lady Halina and Cones* (1968/1971), was a rebellious act against the dominant form of academic teaching. Instead of the requested sculptural work she staged the nudemodel in different poses. Even as a student, she demonstrably broke with tradition and confronted the system by broadening the preconceived concept of sculpture.

Grandiose self-stylization, meanwhile, becomes the subject of the artist's more recent work: *The Splendour of Myself IV* (2007). The collage is composed of hundreds of photos taken from her 'Archive of Gestures', a personal photographic archive containing some 700 shots of different body poses that she made from her assistant between 1987 and 1991.

The exhibition also features three other self-portraits by the Bosnian artist **Šejla Kamerić** (*1976, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina). The break-up of the Republic of Yugoslavia and the resulting conflicts form the background of many of her works. In the war-torn areas and for the entire duration of the 1400 day-long siege of Sarajevo, from 1992 to 1995, many residents protected their window panes from shattering by sticking adhesive tape across them, which left traces on the glass once it was finally removed. The 2013 work whose title has inspired today's exhibition replicates the different patterns and textures of the tape in those dark years, in diagonal, vertical, and grid-like forms.

Forgetting and remembering – identity and social responsibility

In addition to coming to terms with personal histories and memory, another recurring strand in many of the works shown in the Art Collection Telekom is the social responsibility of the artist.

For her work *Isola Bella* (2007/2008), Bosnian artist **Danica Dakić** (* 1962, Sarajevo) worked with residents of a children's home in Pazarić, a village outside Sarajevo. Many of the inmates were brought to the home as very young children and had spent decades of their lives there. Danica Dakić gave them a stage where they could give expression to their dreams, desires, and aspirations, while simultaneously switching from the role of viewer to actor.

Questioning the predefined role of the artist and searching for alternatives is a key motivation behind the work of **Roman Ondák** (* 1966, Žilina, Slovak Republic). Containing one hundred drawings, his series *Futuropolis* (2006) sees the artist relinquishing authorship and asking a hundred friends to capture on paper their visions of the ideal city of the future. The result is very much a collective work of art. The artist steps back from the work to become an organizer and idea-giver, inspiring and guiding outsiders to join in his artistic practice.

The work of **Mihuț Boșcu Kafchin** (* 1986, Cluj-Napoca, Romania), one of the younger artists in the collection, is the product of a very different creation process. In his paintings, installations, sculptures, and videos, he designs a vision of the future, giving us revealing insights into a complex world of technoid and biological forms. *Study for Ouroboros* (2014), meanwhile, combines mysterious symbols to create a mathematical formula. The title refers to the Egyptian symbol of a snake devouring its own tail, and lends the painting its aura of mystery. Uroboros is also, as it happens, the name of a computer virus.

The five artists highlighted in this press release embody the various issues that resonate throughout the exhibition: forgetting and remembering, the reconstruction of history, questions of identity and social responsibility, and, finally, the emergence of a new language of forms.

Featured artists: Mihael Bošcu Kafchin, Danica Dakić, Stanisław Dróżdź, Petra Feriancová, Igor Grubić, Aneta Grzeszykowska, Nilbar Güreş, Petrit Halilaj, Vladimír Houdek, Šejla Kamerić, Ali Kazma, Genti Korini, Eva Kotátková, Zofia Kulik, Şükran Moral, Ciprian Mureşan, Vlad Nancă, Paul Neagu, Paulina Ołowska, Roman Ondák, Dan Perjovschi, Agnieszka Polska, Nedko Solakov, Mladen Stilinović, and Nil Yalter.

Accompanying the show is a programme of events, developed in cooperation with the Polish Institute and the Romanian Cultural Institute.

Parallel to the exhibition a catalogue with works of the Art Collection Telekom will be published by Distanz and features contributions by Yane Calovski, Dorota Monkiewicz, Joanna Mytkowska, Walter Seidl, Rainald Schumacher / Nathalie Hoyos, and a foreword by Hans-Christian Schwingen, president of the artistic board of Deutsche Telekom.

Press images available at: <http://i13.mnm.is/anhang.aspx?ID=0ae197f8774089305>

Credits and copyrights for images:

Igor Grubić, *Angels with Dirty Faces*, 2006, Courtesy Art Collection Telekom

Zofia Kulik, *The Splendour of Myself IV*, 2007, Courtesy Art Collection Telekom

Paulina Ołowska, *The Foyer, Rabcio Puppet Theater, Rabka-Zdrój, Poland*, 2013, Courtesy Art Collection Telekom

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