

## VIDEO IN PROGRESS 2: CITY PERSPECTIVES

**Curators: Metka Zupanič and Vesna Bukovec**

**Production: Photon Gallery, 2008/2009**

The video selection presents five video works, which were created by nine Slovenian authors of the younger and middle generation. All artists take part in the representative exhibitions of contemporary Slovenian art and they are also active in the international sphere. The joint characteristic of the selected video works is a conceptual research of contemporary society's peculiarities and individual comprehension of the urban city reality. All works are based on personal narratives and intimate experience. In four videos, this is expressed by a form of individual memory of the past, which is continually intertwined with excerpts from the present. One video deals with the future or the ideal image of home. All videos explore similar starting points, however in each of the videos this is done differently and with the use of different formal approaches. The results are five different videos of six different cities (Ljubljana, New York, Moscow, Gorizia, Nova Gorica, Graz) each of them opening new aspects of experiencing a contemporary city.

In her video *EU-phoria* (2008), **Anja Medved** reveals intimate stories of individuals who live between two cities: Gorizia and Nova Gorica, and two states: Italy and Slovenia. Upon Slovenia's accession to the European Union, these two cities restarted to merge in an urban entity which reached its top when Slovenia joined the Schengen area. On December 20th 2007 the barrier was removed and the border opened. In that moment, the artists started to collect from the citizens of both cities recollections of border passing. She transformed the customs office in a video confessional and invited people to confess the old contraband sins. Rather than a customs officer, the office featured a camera, a microphone, a computer and a curtain which allowed undisturbed remembering. The confessions are charged with emotions characteristic of a historical moment of reuniting.



Anja Medved, *EU-foria*, 2008

In her video *Why Slovene Houses Look the Way They Do* (2007), **Polonca Lovšin** deals with the method of building individual houses in Slovenia from the 60's to mid-80's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hers is a first person narrative, assisted by plasticine figures' animation in "stop-motion" technique, which she combines with the presentation of documentary photography. The story tells of economical ingenuity of the artist's father and her family – the erection of the family house in Ljubljana, which was built by her father on his own is at times interrupted by statistical data revealing the difficult economic situation of contemporary young families, the unemployment rate in the country, the scope of grey economy and urbanism rules, which affect the architectural image of Slovene urban spaces. Light music in the background, the use of animation and the installation technique give this problem a humorous distance.



Polonca Lovšin, *Why Slovene Houses Look the Way They Do*, 2007

In a video from the series *Special Place in the City* (Graz, 2006), the group **KOLEKTIVA** (Vesna Bukovec, Lada Cerar, Metka Zupanič) reveals different views on every-day spaces of this Austrian city through intimate tales of chosen inhabitants. The authors use two intertwining parallel videos to show an individual in two contrast environments. In one video, the individual is in his special place, telling us of its importance, while in the other video, this same person is presented in a space of his every-day routine. A documentary approach enables control over the participant's own self-representation, with the combination of both stories giving us a unique portrait of this person in front of the camera. Intimate stories of most of the presented spaces are based on events that reveal glimpses of the past. Small stories of small spaces of average citizens present an alternative to instant tourist presentations of big stories of the city and its architectural and historical aspects.



KOLEKTIVA, *Special Place in the City - Graz*, 2006

In the *NewMocsovYork* video (2005), **Jasna Hribernik** and **Zmago Lenardič** compare two cities in different time periods in a complex way. Not so long ago, New York and Moscow were the main symbols of the two opposing political and economic world powers of the East and West. The authors combine quotations from the travelogue *Ground floor America* (1936) by Soviet humorists Ilja Ilf and Jevgenij Petrov and documentary videos of today's streets and inhabitants in both cities. Ideological quotations, ironic music and slow motion documentary videos uncover the similarities and differences, which occurred over a 70 year period, with humorous distance. The once huge discrepancies became smaller and smaller with the decline of socialism and the global reign of neoliberal capitalism – the two cities seem more and more alike.



Zmago Lenardič in Jasna Hribernik, *NewMocsovYork*, 2005

In their video work *Ideal Home* (2003), **Tanja Lažetić** and **Dejan Habicht** ask their friends about their ideal home. The exhibition includes two videos, shown simultaneously. In the first video the interviewees are sitting in a domestic environment and answering Tanja's questions directly and in the second video the images of architectural presentations of new buildings, which were being built in Ljubljana at the time of creation of this work, are shown. Idealized architectural images form a contrast to the personal preferences of an ideal home. It turns out that the interviewees prefer the content to the design of a home. Ideal home therefore is not an ideal spatial and aesthetic layout of spaces and fittings, but rather a location in the city and the warm feeling experienced only in the shelter that is home.



Tanja Lažetić in Dejan Habicht, *Idealni dom*, 2003