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PRESS

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Sanja Iveković. Works of Heart (1974-2022)

4/10 2022 – 12/3 2023

PRESS CONFERENCE: Tue 4/10 2022, 11 am

OPENING: Tue 4/10 2022, 7 pm

CURATOR: Zdenka Badovinac

CURATORIAL ASSISTANTS: Maja Alibegović & Andrea Popelka

EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE: Ana Martina Bakić

EXHIBITION VENUE: **kunsthalle wien** Museumsquartier

Since the 1970s, Sanja Iveković's artistic practice has taken a clear feminist and activist position and has continuously confronted issues of gender and politics—a practice driven by the desire for the transformation of current social and political relations. Iveković appropriates mass media and commercial advertisement strategies, subverts their messages, and exposes their manipulation mechanisms, thus drawing attention to the capacity of images to influence and transform the way we see things. Through this uncompromising manner of bringing together aesthetic and political investigations, she has influenced generations of artists and curators.

kunsthalle wien is proud to present *Works of Heart (1974-2022)*, an exhibition that brings together works spanning the whole of Iveković's prolific career: from early feminist pieces that focused on the relationship between mass media and ideology, created as part of the *Nova umjetnička praksa* [New Art Practice] movement in Yugoslavia, to her later projects that examined the transformation of Balkan countries from socialist to capitalist political systems, as well as ongoing projects such as *Ženska kuća* [Women's House], which engages with a wide variety of issues related to violence against women, including the sex industry in Bangkok, honor killings in Turkey, and the impact of war in the former Yugoslavia.

Iveković's works often start from very personal settings and life circumstances, which are juxtaposed with official histories and mainstream depictions in order to explore representations of female identity, female history, violence against women, state oppression, and manifestations of ideology through mainstream media. While covering the wide range of subjects addressed by the artist's practice,

Works of Heart (1974–2022) looks into neglected histories of antifascism and socialism through the prism of her personal history, and it addresses one of the key concerns of her work—the relationship of history to contemporaneity. With her works, **Iveković** builds different narratives, the narratives of those who were expelled from history: anti-fascist heroines, refugees, Romani and Sinti. For example, her iconic work *Gen XX (1997–2001)* appropriates the presentation of famous fashion models in the media to spread knowledge about women who fought against fascism in Yugoslavia in World War II.

But her works also try to return the forgotten and repressed to collective memory, and **Iveković** works similarly with her own personal memory: *Works of Heart (1974–2022)* is also about “me and my mother”. The mother-daughter relationship is one of the central issues in the exhibition, but this personal dimension of her retrospective can also be misleading, as this “me” is constantly placed in the context of modern media and is thus cynical about the very existence of an authentic self. In the performance that the artist prepared for this exhibition in collaboration with dancer and choreographer **Mitja Obed**, she stages a dance that deconstructs stereotypical ideas about the mother-daughter relationship but also about performance as a medium.

An important part of this project is the book of poems by her mother **Nera Šafarić-Iveković**, who is also one of the heroines of *Gen XX* and who was arrested as a young communist in 1942 and taken to Auschwitz. The title of one of her poems is *Jao si ga onome tko se boji duhova* [Woe betide anyone who is afraid of ghosts], which could be associated in the context of this exhibition with loss, disappearance, and unrepresented, erased histories. The poems are compiled in the artist’s book with the same title *Weh dem, der sich vor Geistern fürchtet* [Woe Betide Anyone Who Is Afraid of Ghosts] that is published on the occasion of the exhibition.

Works of Heart (1974–2022) is retrospective in nature, but, at the same time, **Iveković** works here and now, just as throughout her career she has been an active protagonist in the unfolding of history. Her works are a chronicle of the last two decades of the former Yugoslavia, followed by Yugoslav wars and the transition from socialism to wild capitalism in Eastern Europe, largely won by mobilizing national sentiments and traditional values. Her recent works, however, take a critical and engaged position on the current state of Europe. **Iveković’s** art wants to leave traces in reality; it has a performative power that strives for gender equality, anti-fascism, emancipation of collective memory, and solidarity.

From the very beginning, **Iveković’s** art has revealed how different forms of propaganda work, while she herself has become an activist artist who is able to use the power of art for emancipatory purposes. The activist side of her artistic production is characterized by the direct exchange of experiences and mutual learning, so many of her works do not have a singular and defined form— instead, she applies various strategies of display and presentation depending on the geopolitical context of a particular location, and the works are often dispersed in different media. What defines them is not their final form of presentation, but that they carefully built through collaboration and exchange of resistance strategies with feminist and activist organizations, many of which **Iveković** either formed or has actively taken part in over the years.

In the context of *Works of Heart (1974–2022)* a part of the *Ženska kuća (Sunčane naočale)* [Women's House (Sunglasses)] series will be shown in a public space on Yppenplatz in collaboration with Brunnenpassage, while a new version of *Shadow Report* has been produced in collaboration with a member of the GBV-MIG *Project on violence against women migrants and refugees*, Sieglinde Rosenberger. At **kunsthalle wien**'s shop, Iveković presents publications and postcards created in the context of her previous exhibitions. The proceeds from these sales will be donated to Verein Autonome Österreichische Frauenhäuser [Autonomous Austrian Women's Shelters Association] (www.aoef.at).

Through her activism, two principles of Iveković's work become increasingly evident: the deconstructive, which unmasks how oppressive propaganda and its mechanisms of manipulation work and what interests stand behind it; and the constructive, which empowers women, who thus become the subject of their own lives. Her art becomes a safe territory where survivors of violence dare to tell the truth without fear. Emancipatory propaganda is present in both of her two modes of working: one intended for the broad audiences and often made for public space; the other, in direct work with women and their organizations, which function as intimate propaganda. And in many of her works, these two methods are intertwined within the same project.

Detailed information on the works within the exhibition, a complete list of works as well as an introduction by curator Zdenka Badovinac can be found in the comprehensive exhibition guide.

Artist's bio

Sanja Iveković was born in Zagreb, Croatia, where she currently lives and works. She was raised in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and belongs to the artistic generation covered by the umbrella term *Nova umjetnička praksa* [New Art Practice] that emerged after 1968. Iveković was the first female artist in Socialist Yugoslavia and one of a few in so-called Eastern Europe at that time to assume a strong feminist stance, an aspect that remains prominent in her practice today. She has participated in numerous international biennials and major exhibitions.

In her artistic practice, she explores and probes sociopolitical themes, focusing on strategies and methods of resistance to the ruling relations of power, while the main characteristic of her work is to speak from the position of the female subject. In addition to her artistic activity, Iveković is engaged in women's activism and is the founder and member of several Croatian women's NGOs.

Curator's bio

Zdenka Badovinac is a curator and writer, who has served from 1993 to 2020 as Director of the Moderna galerija in Ljubljana, comprised since 2011 of two locations: the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova. In 2022, she has been appointed director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb.

In her work, **Badovinac** deals with historicization of Eastern European art and situated institutionality. She also initiated the first Eastern European art collection, *Arteast 2000+*. Her most recent exhibition is *Bigger Than Myself: Heroic Voices from Ex-Yugoslavia* that was on view at MAXXI, Rome in 2021.

Her most recent books are *Unannounced Voices: Curatorial Practice and Changing Institutions* (Sternberg Press / Thoughts on Curating), 2022 and *Comradeship: Curating, Art, and Politics in Post-Socialist Europe* (Independent Curators International, New York), 2019.

She is a founding member of L'Internationale, a confederation of seven modern and contemporary European art institutions, and was president of CIMAM (International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art) from 2010 to 2013.

Artist's book

The artist's book *Weh dem, der sich vor Geistern fürchtet* [Woe Betide Anyone Who Is Afraid of Ghosts] consists of around 50 poems written by **Nera Šafarić-Iveković**, mother of **Sanja Iveković**, as well as excerpts from her diary, facsimiles of letters she sent and received during her incarceration in Auschwitz, and numerous photographs from **Iveković's** personal archive.

Weh dem, der sich vor Geistern fürchtet

Artist's book by **Sanja Iveković**

Published by: **kunsthalle wien** / Stadt Wien Kunst GmbH

Editing of the poems: **Miloš Đurđević**

Texts: **Miloš Đurđević, Sanja Iveković**

Translation into German: **Katharina Wolf-Grießhaber**

Artistic design: **Sanja Iveković**

Graphic design: **Barbara Blasin**

Print run: 200 copies, the first 50 copies were signed by the artist

Price: 115 €

Available at the **kunsthalle wien** shop

Book presentation at Buch Wien: Sat 26/11 2022, 12 pm

New Performance

Majka i kći (Kokoš i jajce) [Mother and Daughter (Chicken and Egg)] is a new performance developed for this exhibition by **Sanja Iveković** in collaboration with dancer and performer **Mitja Obed**.

Engaging with the audience and the artworks on display, **Iveković** and **Obed** stage a dance that deconstructs stereotypical ideas about the mother-daughter relationship but also about performance as a medium, undoing classical spatial separations of performer versus audience. While the ambient crackling sounds are recorded, manipulated and looped in real time, the staging and gestures play around with the relationship of affection and power between the universal, and, at the same time, highly specific roles of mother and daughter.

Performance: Wed 5/10 2022, 7 pm, **kunsthalle wien** Museumsquartier
Film presentation at Erste Campus

The Invisible Women of Erste Campus (2016) was commissioned for the Erste Campus. Iveković made the film in collaboration with a group of 20 women, mostly immigrants from Southeastern and Eastern Europe, who clean the vast premises of the Campus. On the premises of Erste Campus, the film is shown on monitors installed in the elevator areas throughout the building. Whereas these parts of the work are only accessible to the employees working on-site, during the exhibition *Works of Heart (1974-2022)*, the film is also presented to the public in the Atrium of Erste Campus.

Erste Campus, Atrium, Am Belvedere 1, 1100 Vienna
Visiting hours: Mon – Fri, 9 am – 8 pm, free entry

A cooperation of **kunsthalle wien** and Kontakt Collection Vienna, kindly supported by Erste Group Bank AG

Poster presentation: *Ženska kuća (Sunčane naočale)* [Women's House (Sunglasses)]

In the course of the initiative *Bunker 16 – Contemporary Memorial Art*, Brunnenpassage in cooperation with **kunsthalle wien** presents Sanja Iveković's poster series, which has been dealing with violence against women as an ongoing project since the late 1990s.

13 posters from of the 17-part series are on display, freely accessible in the public space in front of Brunnenpassage. The texts on the posters are provided in Croatian, German and Turkish translation.

Yppenplatz/entrance Brunnenpassage (Brunnengasse 71, 1160 Vienna)
10/10 – 10/12 2022
Opening: Mon 10/10 2022, 7 pm

A cooperation of **kunsthalle wien** and Brunnenpassage

Film screenings *Works of Heart (1974-2022): Artist's Choice*

Accompanying the exhibition, under the title *Works of Heart (1974-2022): Artist's Choice*, video works from all phases of Sanja Iveković's career will be shown at the Austrian Filmmuseum. The works, viewed together, illustrate the artist's ongoing engagement with representations of female identity and manifestations of ideologies in the mass media.

Program 1: Thu 24/11 2022, 6 pm

1. *Make Up – Make Down*, 1978, 5'14"
2. *No End*, 1983, 7'
3. *Lice jezika* [The Face of Language], 1998, 1'40"
4. *Glas tišine* [The Voice of Silence], 1989, 18'15"
5. *Übung macht den Meister 09* [Practice Makes a Master 09], 2009, 17'5"
6. *The Invisible Women of Erste Campus*, 2016, 35'

Program 2: Thu 24/11 2022, 8:30 pm

1. *Svjetionik* [Lighthouse], 1987–2001, 4'1"
2. *Osobni rezovi* [Personal Cuts], 1982, 3'35"
3. *Opća opasnost (sapunica)* [General Alert (Soap Opera)], 1995–2000, 6'25"
4. *Opća opasnost (Godard)* [General Alert (Godard)], 1995–2000, 3'10"
5. *Borovi i jele – sjećanje žena na život u socijalizmu* [Pines and firs – Women's Memory of Life in Socialism], 2002, 58'

Part 1 and 2 of the film program are taking place in the context of Vienna Art Week 2022.

Program 3: Wed 8/3 2023, 6 pm

1. *Instrukcije br. 1* [Instructions No. 1], 1976, 5'59"
2. *Slatko nasilje* [Sweet Violence] 1974, 5'56"
3. *Gledanje* [Looking at], 1974, 10'
4. *Uvjetovani pokreti* [Conditioned Movements], 1983, 7'49"
5. *Meeting Point*, 1978, 6'
6. *Resnik*, 1994, 11'44"
7. *Übung macht den Meister 09* [Practice Makes a Master 09], 2009, 17'5"
8. *Instrukcije br. 2* [Instructions No. 2], 2015, 4'52"

A cooperation of **kunsthalle wien** and the Austrian Film Museum

Ticket cooperation: With a ticket for the *Works of Heart (1974–2022)* exhibition visitors receive a discount of € 1 at the Austrian Film Museum. Holders of a ticket to the Film Museum can visit the exhibition for the special price of € 2.

Further public program

Please find the detailed public program on our website www.kunsthallewien.at as well as in the comprehensive exhibition guide.

The exhibition at a glance

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ASSISTANT CURATOR: Maja Alibegović & Andrea Popelka

EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE: Ana Martina Bakić

EXHIBITION VENUE: **kunsthalle wien** museumsquartier, Museumsplatz 1,
1070 Vienna

EXHIBITION DATES: 4/10 2022–12/3 2023

OPENING HOURS: Tue–Sun 11 am–7 pm, Thu 11 am–9 pm

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