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No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection

20/4 2023—28/1 2024



Elfie Semotan, *Untitled (Museum of Contemporary Art), Skopje, 2022/2023* •
COURTESY STUDIO SEMOTAN

PRESS CONFERENCE: THU 20/4 2023 • 10 AM

OPENING: THU 20/4 2023 • 7 PM

ARTISTS: Brook Andrew • Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska • Siniša Ilić • Iman Issa • Gülsün Karamustafa • Barbi Marković • Elfie Semotan

ARTISTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF MOCA SKOPJE: Pierre Alechinsky • Getulio Alviani • Dimitar Avramovski Pandilov • Enrico Baj • Georg Baselitz • Anna-Eva Bergman • Maria Bonomi • Alberto Burri • Zofia Butrymowicz • Alexander Calder • Luis Camnitzer • Christo & Jeanne-Claude • Bronisław Chromy • Peter Clarke • Božidar Damjanovski • Josip Demirović Devj • Josip Diminić • Slobodan Filovski • Michel Gérard • Ion Grigorescu • Sheila Hicks • David Hockney • Alfred Hrdlicka

• Bogoljub Ivković • Olga Jančić • Olga Jevrić • Jasper Johns • Alex Katz • Zoltán Kemény • Rudolf Krivoš • Boško Kućanski • Wifredo Lam • Sol LeWitt • Oto Logo • Petar Lubarda • Nikola Martinoski • Roberto Matta • Zoran Mušič • Meret Oppenheim • Olga Peczenko-Srzednicka • Dushan Perchinkov • Pablo Picasso • Bogoja Popovski • Joan Rabascall • Vjenceslav Richter • Bridget Riley • Ivan Sabolić • Niki de Saint Phalle • Francesco Somaini • François Stahly • Henryk Stażewski • Gligor Stefanov • Kumi Sugai • Aneta Svetieva • Beáta Széchy • Dimo Todorovski • Victor Vasarely • Vladimir Veličković • Tomo Vladimírski • Marjan Vojska

CURATORS: What, How & for Whom / WHW (Ivet Ćurlin, Nataša Ilić and Sabina Sabolović)

CURATORIAL SUPPORT: Laura Amann (curator) • Hannah Marynissen (curatorial assistant) • Hana Čeferin (curatorial intern) • Eva Kovač (collection research)

EXHIBITION DESIGN: Gerhard Flora

EXHIBITION VENUE: **kunsthalle wien** Museumsquartier

A joint exhibition of **kunsthalle wien** and the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) Skopje, North Macedonia



Alexander Calder, *To Skopje*, 1965
• PHOTO: MARIN DIMESKI • COURTESY
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SKOPJE
© CALDER FOUNDATION, NEW YORK /
BILDRECHT, VIENNA 2023

No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection revolves around the Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA) Skopje's unusual collection of modern works, as well as the historical and political context of this extraordinary project.

After the massive earthquake that hit Skopje (then Yugoslavia) in 1963, there was a huge effort to help rebuild the devastated city, as a large-scale gesture of international solidarity. The decision was made to establish a museum of contemporary art as a key cultural element of the reconstruction, and thousands of works were donated to Skopje by artists from around the world—following a call by the United Nations. Unlike most modernist

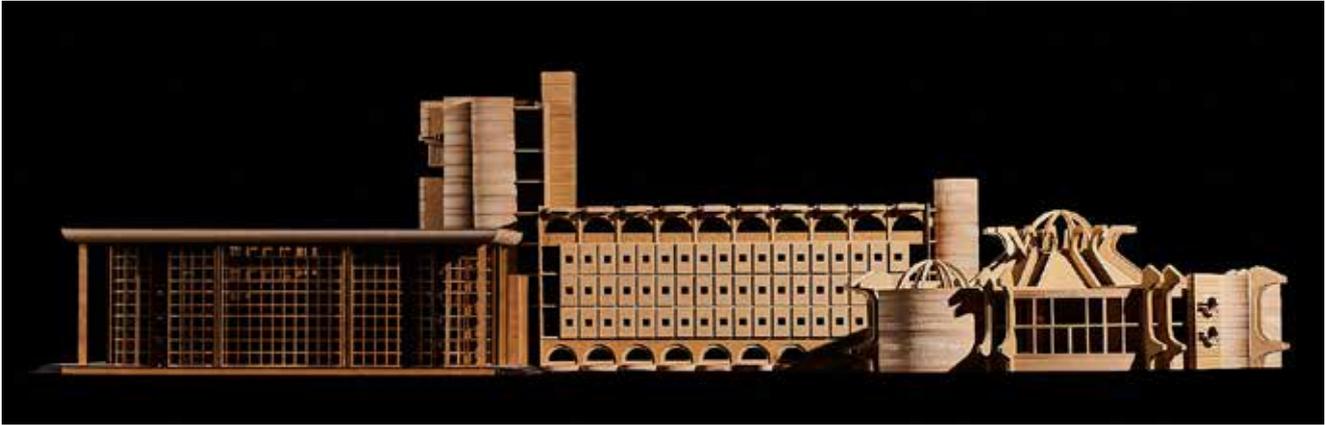
art collections based on private tastes or national representation, the resulting Solidarity Collection emerged from the history of the city and the ambition to rebuild it for a new, socialist society.

The collection of MoCA Skopje represents both a time capsule of international art at a moment when modernism was still in its prime and a rare artistic encounter across the Cold War divide between East and West: it includes many artworks by predominantly white and male figures who will be well recognizable to an art-loving public, but it also goes beyond the established canon of modernism and incorporates often fascinating works by artists who hail from the former Eastern bloc, including Macedonia, as well as from the Global South.

Among the artists in the Skopje Solidarity Collection are Pierre Alechinsky, Getulio Alviani, Enrico Baj, Georg Baselitz, Anna-Eva Bergman, Maria Bonomi, Alberto Burri, Alexander Calder, Luis Camnitzer, Christo & Jeanne-Claude, Ion Grigorescu, Sheila Hicks, David Hockney, Alfred Hrdlicka, Olga Jevrić, Jasper Johns, Alex Katz, Wifredo Lam, Sol LeWitt, Roberto Matta, Zoran Mušič, Meret Oppenheim, Pablo Picasso, Joan Rabascall, Vjenceslav Richter, Bridget Riley, Niki de Saint Phalle, Henryk Stażewski, Gligor Stefanov, Victor Vasarely, and many more.

The uniqueness of this collection was the reason for the curators to go back to its roots and approach it as a "true artists' collection", including giving a central role to contemporary artists in creating the displays. For *No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection*, Kunsthalle Wien invited four artists and one artist duo—**Brook Andrew** (Melbourne), **Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska** (Skopje), **Siniša Ilić** (Belgrade), **Iman Issa** (Berlin), and **Gülsün Karamustafa** (Istanbul)—to select works from the collection and to add their own contemporary works to the mix, bringing their vision of MoCA's Solidarity Collection into intimate relation with their respective artistic practices. Many of the contributing artists were interested in engaging with lesser-known artists and works in the collection, especially those from Macedonia and Yugoslavia. The exhibition also shows some of the collection's more familiar and classically established modern artists in Vienna, as a way to highlight the wide scope of works that arrived to Skopje in response to the call for donations.

Alongside these commissioned works, which engage with the collection, renowned photographer **Elfie Semotan** (Vienna) was invited to document the cityscape of Skopje and the museum through her unique way



Model of the Telecommunication Center, Skopje, 1972/1989 •
PHOTO: VASE AMANITO

of photographic storytelling. Her precise and sensitive photographs both introduce the city and focus on particularly remarkable modernist buildings. They weave through the exhibition from beginning to end, forming a link that grounds the exhibition in Skopje at every turn.

Writer **Barbi Marković** (Vienna)—known for her sharp mix of fiction and social reality—contributed a travelogue of her experience of encountering Skopje's and the museum's complex histories. Her text *Back, back to positive things* is part of the extensive exhibition guide which is available free of charge to all visitors to the exhibition.

The exhibition also aims to connect the artworks from the collection to the place where they are housed and cared for. Therefore, the history of the city of Skopje, the 1963 earthquake, and the rebuilding are part of the exhibition's story within an extensive context section, expanded by loans from the City Museum Skopje; among them **Kenzō Tange's** model of the Master Plan of the City Center. This model stands alongside a variety of maps from the Institute for Town Planning and Reconstruction Skopje, which demonstrate the research and analysis done locally in rethinking what the new city could be. To highlight the quality of the structures actually built back then, models from the collection of the Skopje-based architectural team consisting of **Ana Ivanovska Deskova**, **Jovan Ivanovski**, and **Vladimir Deskov** are also on view. The exhibition guide also includes an essay by the historian **Ljubica Spaskovska** (*The "City of international Solidarity": Skopje, the United Nations, and the Search for a Modernist Utopia*) which offers a detailed analysis of the geopolitical context of Skopje's reconstruction.

No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection offers a present-day mirror to look at the well-rehearsed history of modern art in Western capitals, including Vienna, as well as to look at modern art through the eyes of international contemporary artists. It opens a window to the cultural and architectural history of a nearby city with which imperial Vienna has a long, shared history. Above all, this exhibition is an invitation to feel and reimagine solidarity with neighbors at a time when instability and aggression across Europe are tangibly present. ●

The artistic positions

Brook Andrew

Born in 1970, lives and works in Melbourne

mulunma wiling mangi gudhi
(inside the lip of a stolen song),
2023

The descriptions of the respective collection works as well as interviews with the participating artists can also be found in the comprehensive guide to the exhibition.

Artist and curator **Brook Andrew** challenges the limitations imposed by hegemonic power structures to make space for Indigenous systems of being and of knowing. Informed by his Wiradjuri and Celtic ancestry, his work has often led him to intervene in museal displays and to reimagine the power of objects found in museum collections. In doing so, he uncovers links to colonialism, cultural expropriation, and violence while centering Indigenous practices as an anticolonial force able to fracture Western ideas such as progress and linearity as well as the art historical canon and the institutions that support it.



Pablo Picasso, *Woman's Head*, 1963 •
PHOTO: MARIN DIMESKI • COURTESY MUSEUM
OF CONTEMPORARY ART SKOPJE
© SUCCESSION PICASSO / BILDRECHT, VIENNA
2023 &
Brook Andrew, *mulunma wiling mangi
gudhi* (inside the lip of a stolen song)
(detail), 2023

In Andrew's installation, eight works from the collection of MoCA Skopje are placed on a large-scale, strikingly patterned inflatable object and wall mural. Its pattern is inspired by Wiradjuri practices of carving. Akin to an optical illusion, the pattern is playful yet also points toward underlying truths, such as the many identity shifts undergone not only by the collection's modernist works—Western and non-Western alike—but also by the city of Skopje itself.

Brook Andrew's installation *mulunma wiling mangi gudhi* (inside the lip of a stolen song) comprises works by: Pierre Alechinsky • Jasper Johns • Wifredo Lam • Oto Logo • Zoran Mušič • Pablo Picasso • Kumi Sugai • Vladimir Veličković • Marjan Vojska

Yane Calovski & Hristina Ivanoska

Yane Calovski, born in 1973, lives and works in Skopje and Berlin

Hristina Ivanoska, born in 1974, lives and works in Skopje and Berlin

All Things Flowing, 2023



Aneta Svetieva, *Messenger (Herald)*, 1970 • COURTESY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SKOPJE

In addition to their individual projects, artists Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska have worked in tandem since 2000. Their collaborative works are characterized by a dynamic use of different media, from performance, installation, text, and theory to drawing, sculpture, and wall engraving. Their work is marked by a desire to illuminate overlooked aspects of history, whether by delving into past events or recreating imagined history in the present moment. They often structure their projects as questions instead of answers, allowing viewers to become co-creators of their works' meanings.

For their spatial installation titled *All Things Flowing*, the artists propose another look at the history of Skopje's Museum of Contemporary Art. In 1966, 89 architectural projects were submitted to the open call for building the new museum. Among them, one stood apart—the proposal by Polish architect Oskar Hansen, known for his theory of the "Open Form". The architect imagined a transformable exhibition space, able to fold entirely and then unfold in various combinations, with hexagonal elements lifted by hydraulic-powered rotating telescopes.

This ambitious proposal formed the initial template for Calovski's motorized sculptural installation and Ivanoska's large-scale mural consisting of specially devised typography. The letters reference "Open Form" and engage in dialogue with works from the MoCA Skopje collection by two Macedonian artists: the painter Dushan Perchinkov and the sculptor Aneta Svetieva. These two artists might seem like disparate choices. Yet, both of their works pointedly describe the coexisting local practices from the museum's inception until today: Perchinkov's paintings invoke an early modernist tradition of abstract geometric patterns, operating outside the Western canon of modern art, while Svetieva's unrefined and expressive terracotta sculptures speak of an almost anthropological understanding of Skopje's history.

Siniša Ilić

Born in 1977, lives and works in Belgrade

Filigran, 2022/2023



Siniša Ilić, *Filigran*, paper cut, 2022/2023 • COURTESY THE ARTIST

Siniša Ilić is a visual artist who combines works on paper with installation, video, and performance. His work revolves around exploring different social tensions, whether in relation to sustainability, cultural heritage, labor conditions, or migration, as well as finding ways to nurture friendship and solidarity. He frequently approaches these topics from a historical perspective, questioning the relationship between the Global South and North, especially through culminations in violence. Ex-Yugoslavia is often at the forefront of his works, both with regard to its historical significance as well as its connotations today. He is interested in how the past often finds ways to seep through the cracks and whether it can be reconciled with the present moment.

In his spatial installation titled *Filigran*, Ilić proposes a recontextualization of the city of Skopje. His work connects eight abstract sculptural objects from MoCA Skopje's collection with his own drawings, collages, and moving images, placing them on platforms of varying heights. In this scenography, the audience is granted an unusually close experience of the artworks, as the viewers are invited to engage with the space and seat themselves close by. The irregularity of the platforms echoes the layers of Skopje's landscape and the different vantage points from which we

can think about its history and its exceptional meandering between post-earthquake ruin and modernity. Ilić's contemporary works echo Skopje's wholly different present, showing choreographies of construction and demolition, as well as reuse of materials, but also contemporary conditions of labor.

Filigran—whose title refers to a technique of manipulating gold or silver wire into fine ornamental tracery—references the delicate ways in which threads connect history and the present moment, forming a carefully woven pattern of visible past trauma and its resonance today.

Siniša Ilić's installation comprises works by: Josip Demirović Devj • Michel Gérard • Olga Jančić • Olga Jevrić • Zoltán Kemény • Boško Kućanski • Vjenceslav Richter • Francesco Somaini • François Stahly • Dimo Todorovski

Iman Issa

Born in 1979, lives and works in Vienna and Berlin

I, the Artwork, 2023



Josip Diminić, *Touches*, 1973 •
PHOTO: ROBERT JANKULOSKI • COURTESY
MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SKOPJE

Iman Issa's practice is characterized by a sharp look at the power of display in relation to cultural and academic institutions. While she often approaches her work experimentally—inviting the viewer to bring their own experience and expectations to the project—her practice is also marked by a precise and clear visual language. Her interest in histories, museums, and collections translates into a method of destabilizing preconceived ideas in respect to knowledge and historical transparency or accuracy by recontextualizing and recombining object-text pairings that suggest other narratives and visions of what we think we know.

In a proposition titled *I, the Artwork*, Issa combines her own works with eight artworks from the collection of MoCA Skopje. The common thread linking these works—a combination of sculptures and prints—is that they all depict figures, many of their faces hidden from view. Her selection poses the question of whether the artist can take second place to their works and if an artwork can determine its own institutional and artistic context. Carefully selected and arranged, the sculptures, photographs, and video works interweave to create something akin to remakes, where original relations are removed and new ones produced. By severing these ties, the artworks can no longer be read only through the artists' biographies and instead inspire a variety of other, playful ways of understanding.

Iman Issa's installation *I, the Artwork* comprises works by: Bronisław Chromy • Josip Diminić • Olga Peczenko-Srzednicka • Ivan Sabolić • Gligor Stefanov • Beáta Széchy

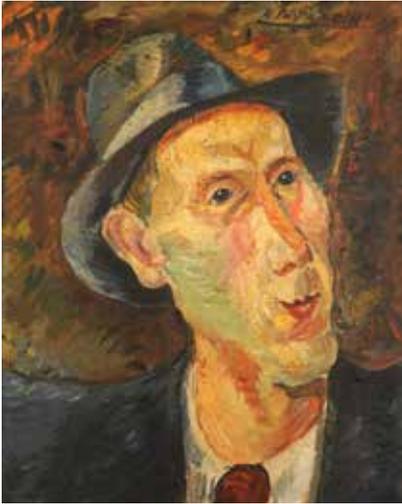
Gülsün Karamustafa

Born in 1946, lives and works in Istanbul and Berlin

The Crime Scene, 2022/2023

Gülsün Karamustafa is a visual artist and filmmaker known for interweaving personal and historical narratives with contemporary sociopolitical issues. One of the most relevant Turkish contemporary artists, her practice already spans more than five decades. Through painting, sculpture, and film, her work often reflects on the politically turbulent environment of her native Turkey. Her works frequently combine elements of historical fact and personal experience, merging childlike impressions with harsh political realities.

Under the title *The Crime Scene*, Karamustafa's painting *Window* (1980) and the sculptural installation *The Monument and the Child* (2010), consisting of ten stands bearing playful ceramic objects, are juxtaposed with a small collection of works from MoCA Skopje. These



Nikola Martinoski, *Portrait of Rastko Purić*, 1934 • PHOTO: MARIN DIMESKI • COURTESY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SKOPJE

Elfie Semotan

Born in 1941, lives and works in Vienna and Jennersdorf



Elfie Semotan, *Untitled (National Opera and Ballet)*, Skopje, 2022/2023 • COURTESY STUDIO SEMOTAN

two sculptures and nine paintings all entered the museum's collection as a private donation from the family of Radmila Ugrinova-Skalovska. Consisting mostly of Macedonian artists, the collection to some extent reflects the points of view and ambitions of the family who diligently collected the works. It therefore begs the question of how to include such a body of work in the wider context of the collection of MoCA Skopje.

The artist places the works into an imagined family room, complete with pleasant wallpaper and an armchair. They begin to form a common narrative, but as each work soon proves to be part of a whole, it also needs to be recognized individually. Using a method of the sort commonly seen in old crime movies, Karamustafa traces the artworks with tape, reminiscent of white chalk, outlining their complex pasts while establishing their present relationships to one another. With this, the artist opens up the works and their complex relations with one another to investigation.

Gülsün Karamustafa's installation *The Crime Scene* comprises works by: Dimitar Avramovski Pandilov • Božidar Damjanovski • Slobodan Filovski • Bogoljub Ivković • Nikola Martinoski • Bogojka Popovski • Simon Shemov • Dimo Todorovski • Tomo Vladimirovski

Elfie Semotan, whose practice spans six decades and encompasses still lifes, landscapes, fashion editorials, and conceptual works, is perhaps best known for her commercial and fashion photography.

On the occasion of the exhibition *No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection*, Semotan captured the unique character of the complex and multilayered city of Skopje in a newly commissioned photographic series. The artist set out to look at the urban landscape, an idiosyncratic pastiche created through the city's numerous re- and deconstructions, a result of its violent man-made and natural disasters throughout history.

Her images portray Skopje's cultural diversity—from the Ottoman Old Bazaar, to the modernist rebuilding of the city after the 1963 earthquake, to the crude attempt to remake Skopje as a Classicist city it never was during the course of the *Skopje 2014* project. Special focus is given to a series of iconic modernist buildings, such as the National Opera and Ballet, the railway station by Kenzō Tange, the Museum of the Republic of Macedonia by Mimoza Nesterova-Tomić, the iconic Telecommunication Center's main Counter Hall (which burned down in a suspicious fire in 2013), and, of course, the Museum of Contemporary Art Skopje.

Semotan's sensitive documentation is an honest and authentic representation of a city with a particularly difficult and complex political and architectural past, yet also a testament to the beauty and richness that distinguish both the urban and cultural contexts of the city, as well as the extraordinary Solidarity Collection of MoCA Skopje. ●

Public program

Sunday tours

Sun 7/5 • 21/5 • 4/6 • 18/6 • 2/7 • 16/7 • 6/8 • 20/8 • 3/9 • 17/9 •
1/10 • 15/10 • 5/11 • 19/11 • 3/12 • 17/12 2023 and 7/1 • 21/1 • 28/1 2024 •
3 PM

WITH Carola Fuchs • Andrea Hubin • Michaela Schmidlechner •
Michael Simku

On every first and third Sunday of the month at 3 PM you can discover the exhibition *No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection* together with our art educators and discuss the context and background of the exhibited works.

The guided tours are free with an exhibition ticket and will be held in German.

Build Your Own Museum!

Tue 11/7 • Wed 12/7 • Thu 13/7 • Tue 18/7 • Wed 19/7 • Thu 20/7 •
Tue 25/7 • Wed 26/7 • Thu 27/7 2023 • 10 AM–12 PM and 1:30–3:30 PM

Sat 15/7 • Sat 22/7 • 10 AM–12 PM

Workshops as part of WIENXTRA Sommerferienspiel,
for children from 6–10 years

As part of the exhibition *No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection*, curators' tours, *My View* tours, conceptual tours under the motto *Learning from Vulnerability* and many other events are planned. Please see our website www.kunsthallewien.at for details and regular updates on the public program. ●

No Feeling Is Final. The Skopje Solidarity Collection

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• Iman Issa • Gülsün Karamustafa • Barbi Marković • Elfie Semotan

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Butrymowicz • Alexander Calder • Luis Camnitzer • Christo & Jeanne-
Claude • Bronisław Chyromy • Peter Clarke • Božidar Damjanovski •
Josip Demirović Devj • Josip Diminić • Slobodan Filovski • Michel Gérard
• Ion Grigorescu • Sheila Hicks • David Hockney • Alfred Hrdlicka •
Bogoljub Ivković • Olga Jančić • Olga Jevrić • Jasper Johns • Alex
Katz • Zoltán Kemény • Rudolf Krivoš • Boško Kućanski • Wifredo
Lam • Sol LeWitt • Oto Logo • Petar Lubarda • Nikola Martinoski •
Roberto Matta • Zoran Mušič • Meret Oppenheim • Olga Peczenko-
Srzednicka • Dushan Perchinkov • Pablo Picasso • Bogoja Popovski
• Joan Rabascall • Vjenceslav Richter • Bridget Riley • Ivan Sabolić •
Niki de Saint Phalle • Francesco Somaini • François Stahly • Henryk
Stażewski • Gligor Stefanov • Kumi Sugai • Aneta Svetieva • Beáta
Széchy • Dimo Todorovski • Victor Vasarely • Vladimir Veličković • Tomo
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