

Works exhibited and screened during

**There is a Crack in the Museum of History. Is That How the Future Gets in?**

FORMER WEST public editorial meeting and tranzit.hu conference

FUGA Budapest Center of Architecture Marcel Breuer Hall

1052 Budapest, Petőfi Sándor u. 5.

On view 13-14<sup>th</sup>, May, 2015

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**Ferenc Gróf** (artist, Paris)

***A storyboard: Švejk in the Third World War***

42 black & white digital prints on paper, 84 x 59 cm each, 2015.

Typeface: Jean-Luc by Atelier Carvalho Bernau.

Repeated forms of patriotism lead always to a tragedy, even if for the first sight the repetition looks like a farce. Forced bitter laugh could be the appropriate response as looking at the new public monuments in Hungary. But the uninhibited proliferation of patriotic, ethnicist and irredentist sculptures foreshadows an irreversible depletion of critical forces, a complete desertification. The Hungarian (extreme-)right could finish more quickly with the spectre of '68 than its Western allies from the European People's Party as it was always just a vague hologram, transmitted from a remote and unknown universe. Nevertheless, ethnicist patriotism was always the best opiate for the masses around these countries, under the camouflage of international workers' solidarity, or today, under the boots of oligarchic capitalism. The anachronistic faith in a strong, centralized state with its heroes and its enemies could transform Hungary to its own puppet state only in a few years. Ferenc Gróf's ongoing graphic series examines the dynamics and the iconography of this new-old kind of patrimonialism. Using patterns and stereotypes of pater/patria/patriarchy, the main and only character of the graphics is Švejk, whose gorged face decorates hundreds of pubs and restaurants all around Central and Eastern Europe. As an echo to the general kitschification tendencies and as a probably unconscious critique of nationalism, one can find bronze statues dedicated to this literary figure on public squares from Saint-Petersburg to Prague. "The Good Soldier" of Jaroslav Hašek is a folkloric and commercial icon, his anecdotes and brave idiocy made him almost a timeless anti/super/hero.

The popularity of his figure was helped by the prolific illustrator, Josef Lada, who created several hundred caricatures for the book. Following the sudden death of Hašek, his friend and colleague Karel Vaněk continued the First World War adventures of Švejk, guiding him through Russian captivity and the revolution. Several sequels were created already from the 1920s, including the 1943 drama of Bertolt Brecht, written in his exile, in California, "Schweik in the Second World War". The textual part of the series evokes the spectres of 1968, using pastiches and citations mainly from two films of the epoch: the long-time censored "Agitators" by Dezső Magyar, which reenacts the events and debates of the 1919 Hungarian Republic of Councils, and "La chinoise" by Jean-Luc Godard.

**Hajnal Németh** (artist, Berlin)  
***False Testimony (a Version of the Version)***

performance video, German with English subtitles, 20', 2012

Composer: Reinhard Hoffmann

Assistant: Annette Wiegand

Performers: Tobias Müller-Kopp (baritone) as Kálmán Péczely, court clerk; Christian Miebach (tenor) as Móric Scharf, crown witness; The Jazzchor Berlin Vokal as the psyche  
Chorus-master: Michael Betzner-Brandt

The musical performance entitled *False Testimony*, which has been recorded on video, is based on an actual historical event and a dialogue of a film, *Version*, treating this event. The “Tiszaeszlár Affair,” which took place in Hungary between 1882 and 1883, gained infamy in Europe as an anti-Semitic blood libel and show trial. The subject of the case was the accusation of the Jews of Tiszaeszlár of ritually murdering a Christian girl. The trial was described in a book by Károly Eötvös, liberal member of parliament who, as the counsel for the defense, managed to get his clients acquitted.

The film *Version* (1981) by Miklós Erdély focuses on a specific detail of the trial. It portrays, with great sensitivity, the moment when 14-year-old crown witness Móric Scharf is taught by the gendarme his false testimony. The lyrics for the songs in Németh’s music performance are based on rephrased fragments of the film’s dialogues. The structure of the performance follows the method of teaching and learning; the forced memorization of the lie, which is later articulated as the false testimony. The performance shows the stages of this process: the learning, acceptance and psychological attainment of the false testimony, its development into a conviction and ultimate, fatal proclamation.

**Neïl Beloufa** (artist, Paris)

***World Domination***

video, French with English subtitles, 27', 2012

Neil Beloufa's films are drifting between documentary and fiction, and they capture real people’s thoughts applied in a poetic or provoking manner. In the video *World Domination* he invites ordinary people to do world politics, as people often do sitting in pubs or in private circles. Non-professional actors were asked to play the roles of the President or the Military Leader of imaginary countries, who discuss realistic geopolitical problems and try to find possible solutions. In the made up conferences that the film shows, the groups represent different geopolitical interests relating to the problems of unemployment, overpopulation, economic and financial struggles, etc. Finally all groups end up with the solution of declaring war on their enemies, attacking a whole continent. Beloufa’s provocative film shows how power actually functions and confronts the viewers with the falsity of their expectation that people would find democratic solutions if they had the power to do so.

Screening on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> of May, 2015, 18:00

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**Dezső Magyar** (film director, Los Angeles)

***The Agitators***

BBS, Hungarian With English Subtitles, 78', 1969

Second Director: Gábor Bódy

Written By: Gábor Bódy, Dezső Magyar

Cinematography: Lajos Koltai

Editing: Vera Selmeczi

Cast: Gábor Bódy, László Bertalan, György Cserhalmi, László Földes, András Kozák, Tamás Szentjóbgy, Márk Zala

The film is about formation of the intellectual section of the Hungarian Communist Party that has just seized the power in 1919. Through continuous, heated debates members try to define their role as agitators and how to translate conceptual radicalism to what is to be done. Their program, the proletarian dictatorship appears as a very challenging concept that the actual proletariat – who they talk about in a paternalist tone - cannot comprehend. The film was made by Dezső Magyar in 1969, in Béla Balázs Studio, and is based on the novel, *Optimists* (1934), written by Ervin Sinkó, who himself also played an important political role in the Soviet Republic. Magyar also applied texts by György Lukács among others, participants of the underground art scene as actors, as well as historical footage from 1919 and overt allusions to the political and cultural scene of 1969 edited in a tense pastiche. The film was banned - though winning the competition to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hungarian Soviet Republic – was not screened in public till 1986 and its director left the country in 1971.

Screening on Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> of May, 2015, 19:00

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**Milo Rau** (director, journalist, Zurich / Berlin)

***The Moscow Trials***

documentary film about the homonymous theatre project, Russian with English subtitles, 86', 2014

Concept and Direction: Milo Rau, Camera: Markus Tomsche, Sound: Jens Baudisch, Stage: Anton Lukas, Assistant Director: Yanina Kochtova, Editing: Lena Rem, Production: Arne Birkenstock

In the summer of 2012, when the punk activists of Pussy Riot were sentenced to two years' imprisonment in a penal colony for their performance in the Moscow Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the world reacted with widespread protest rallies. Yet this was only the latest episode in a ten-year series of show trials of artists and dissidents, staged by Putin's system to prevent any form of democratic change. Rau thematises this issue by drawing on the techniques of political theatre: from March 1 to 3, 2013, a courtroom was set up at the Moscow Sakharov Center to provide a stage for a three-day show trial that pitted the different sides of the cultural war waged in Russia against each other. Yet the people on stage were no professional thespians but real-life actors: artists, politicians, church leaders, real lawyers and a real judge. A jury composed of seven Moscow citizens finally handed down their sentence – an acquittal, albeit by a narrow margin, for the artists. The 3-day-trial, stormed by the Russian authorities

and by units of the cosacks, led to an international scandal and a travel ban against the director Milo Rau. The film “The Moscow Trials” documents the project and illuminates the historical and political backgrounds.