

# We deliberately choose to be political... or not



## It's a newspaper, it's an art publication... it's an exhibition!

This is a subversive (printed) body of art works that offers a democratic way to access art without or beyond the institutions of the gallery and the curator. (Ironically, this open and democratic format was inspired by a Soviet propaganda publication, thanks to the artist and contributor in this newspaper Nikola Mihov). We offer you a multifunctional printed object that can be easily transformed into an art exhibition at any place you want and in any form you like. In order to get there, you need to destroy the integrity

of this paper, tear its pages apart and choose the artworks that best reflect your curatorial intuition about art and politics. The exhibition consists of eight artistic projects, authored by our artists/contributors working in teams of 2, and sometimes of 1 :), that can be arranged in an almost infinite number of combinations.

■ A short description of the artworks and an exemplary curation offered by our editors Luchezar Boyadjiev and Stefka Tsaneva you will find on p. 11 and 14

## Words by the publisher

This first and last edition of the “Pleasure & Pressure” newspaper is brought to you by the Goethe-Institut Bulgaria and ifa – Institute of Foreign Affairs of Germany. Our publisher Marina Ludemann explains these two institutions’ motivation to publish the current artistic/political print agitation as well as how it is all connected to the German painter Otto Dix and his show in Sofia.

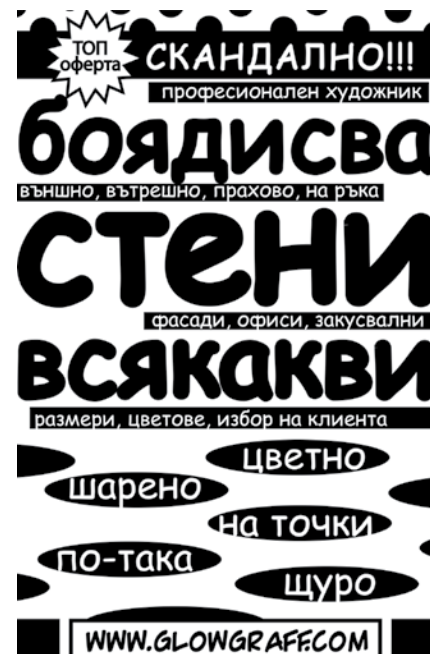
■ Read more on p. 10



## To whom it may concern

What you are holding in your hands is not just another newspaper. There are no news reports or comments on current politics, nor on culture, art, society, weather or TV. Instead, you will find a series of visual and social experiments of fourteen Bulgarian artists working in teams of two for each spread pages, who are investigating the border area (if there is any) between art and politics.

■ More on the topic of art & politics you can read in the feature by our Editor-in-Chief Luchezar Boyadjiev on p. 2





# Art & Politics Entry

LUCHEZAR BOYADJIEV

Once a son informed his father: “Dad, I want to go for a career in organized crime!”. “Private or public sector?”, asked the father. The joke comes to mind when reflecting on art and politics, or vice versa, in Bulgaria. It is said to be one of the most corrupt countries in the EU.

The heritage of ideologically motivated support for art and artists, which had nothing to do with real life but pretended to do so, resulted in pollution (if not corruption) – of terms and platforms, of approaches and media, of authors and exhibitions, of art criticism and theory, and most importantly – of the public attitudes to art and culture. In our art scene engaging with politically relevant issues in art has been a suspect ever since the collapse of totalitarianism in 1989 and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

On the other hand, 30 years’ worth of expectations that the art sphere will be rid of hypocritical attitudes to real life, which is where art’s engagement with political issues is implicated, have been betrayed. It seems that a system plagued by corruption cannot offer an honest enough context for politically minded art practices. Art practices that while engaging with real life issues and communities, their problems, environments and societal trends, moods, dramas, etc. might also develop autonomous existence in the sense of visual aesthetics, visual languages, vi-

sual culture and visual impact in the public space – urban or media alike. There is always a level of suspicion towards engaged art practices – as issues, or as critical statements; as research or as visual impact. Ironically, this might well be a similar kind of deeply intuitive suspicion which people in Bulgaria have towards politics and politicians – one always suspects that the politicians are out to get you, to lie to you, to trick



you into supporting them and their agenda. In a way, it’s the same with artists and art, especially when the generally low level of visual literacy and art education for all is taken into account – the artist is always suspected of “push-



ing” onto the audiences something that is not art really but some sort of elitist abracadabra.

Consider also this – both art and politics are professional fields, but they are also a vocation to be chosen– one must “feel the calling”, to put it simply. Both fields depend on PR and image making; both fields offer “products” to be marketed in an exchange context where there are neither fixed values nor fixed prices, especially in a post-socialist country with unstable democratic tradition. Both fields are for egomaniacs...

The parallels might go on. Or it would appear so until one realizes that while politics (not only here...) is a field often chosen to make money (for instance, by dealing political influence), as a professional field art is notoriously lacking the option of “getting rich”, especially in a country with no art market to speak of. The fact that public support for art and culture started to emerge recently (in 2020, after heated debates and controversies), is offset by the ever present danger of censorship in the public space and funding, especially in a populist societal context.

All of the above weighed upon our attempt to engage with the issue of “art and politics”, as this workshop is titled. Starting from the shared suspicion towards politics in art, we reached tentative agreements about the politics of art, or of any other sphere in the life of our society. The context where art and artists function concerning the politi-

cal, was chosen to be none-activist. The group took the position of informed citizens who by virtue of being professionals have a level of public visibility and voices that might make a difference. Furthermore, we decided to start from the personal and the individual; to first ask ourselves the questions that we hope to be then answered in a subsequent engagement with our audiences.

The preferred media of such a proposition to engage as citizens (and that means to be political for us) is the newspaper – a media flexible enough, cheap enough to produce and easy to publish in whatever language on- or off-line. In the current printed media context dominated by yellow press and sensationalistic coverage, fake news and bloated “stories”, we hope to make a temporary difference. Should you choose to split the pages of the publication – you might even get to build your own small exhibition from the various spreads; you can build your own narrative of engagement.■



**RAYNA TENEVA** is an art worker. She graduated in Photography at the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria and is currently finishing media art studies at the University of Art and Design in Karlsruhe, Germany. She works with found footage, personal and state-owned archives, and reenacted narratives speculating on themes such as identity building, memory and future predictions. Her work is process-oriented and often includes performative and socially inclusive practices.

**ANTONI RAYZHEKOV** is an interdisciplinary artist born in Bulgaria and living between Vienna and Sofia, working at the border between performing, sound and visual arts. He studied theater directing and performing at National Theater and Film Academy – Sofia, Jazz Music Improvisation at Vienna Konservatorium and informational technologies – as a vocational training at LearningTree, London. In 2008 he co-founded the Viennese New Media label THIS.PLAY, where he worked until 2013. His artworks have been presented at international exhibitions, festivals and forums, including: European Forum Alpbach (2019), EXPERIMENTA Biennale (2018) – Grenoble, KLANGMANIFESTE (2018) – Vienna, Akademie Schloss Solitude (2017) – Stuttgart, ACT Festival (2016) – Guangzhou, South Korea, ARS Electronica Center – Linz, Künstlerhaus Mousonturm – NODE (2015) – Frankfurt, Salzburg City Gallery (2013 and 2018), Schmiede Festival (2012-14) and others. Antoni is an Associate Professor of Experimental Media at the Department of Media and Digital Technologies at the University of Applied Sciences in St. Pölten (Austria) and a guest lecturer in Digital Arts at the National Academy of Arts – Sofia.

**INA VALENTINOVA** is a contemporary artist, working in various media, currently a Graduate Student in Methodology of Teaching Fine Arts in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria. She has BA in Fine Arts and Textile; and MA in Art Therapy and Teaching from art academies in Bulgaria, Romania, Poland and The Netherlands; as well as a post-graduate degree in Solution-focused brief psychotherapy. Her education in Sofia was supplemented by alternative courses with the Curatorial School of the Swimming Pool Project Space and the School4artists of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Sofia. She is also a Volunteering Art Therapist for the International Organization on Migration, Bulgaria and has been an art assistant at the Hip Hip Zine Library, Sofia. She works, teaches and leads workshops in the field of textile art, street art, painting and printmaking. In her artwork she is interested in the notions of animism, relations between people and nature, and spirituality.

**PAVEL NAYDENOV** – artist, social designer, researcher, musician. Shortly after he graduated as Choir Conductor (in the class of Vessela Geleva) and a Music Pedagogy with jazz singing in the Academy for Music, Fine arts and Dance, Plovdiv, he moved to study in Vienna – Universät für Angewandte Kunst – MA Social Design (in the class of Brigitte Felderer). Today Pavel Naydenov is a freelancer artist and part of different artistic collectives. Working with variety of medias as print, installations, performances, site-specific art, interventions in public spaces, he is playing with topics around queer politics, public space, marginalized social groups, public surveillance, nationalism and national identity. Some of his projects took place in exhibitions in Sofia/BG, Plovdiv/BG, Vienna/AU, Belgrade/SR, London/UK, Luxemburg/LUX, Venice/IT, Bratislava/SK, Krakow/PL. He is founder and artistic director of “Construction Choir Collective” – and artistic collective, performative choir dealing with city development practices, urbanism, gentrification, marginalization. Pavel Naydenov is taking part in the collective “Questionism – School of thought” – a platform for reflection and action that opens an interdisciplinary space for designers from various fields – to experiment with the potentials of crafting questions and translating them within various formats into action.

**GALINA DIMITROVA-DIMOVA** (b. 1976) is a curator, art critic and organiser of art projects. MA in Art History and Theory Studies at the National Academy of Art, Sofia (1994-1999) and PhD in Visual arts from the same department in the NAA, Sofia (2016-2020). Professional fields of interest: art in public space, digital arts and socially engaged practices. Professional experience includes: Curator and Head of Artistic Projects at InterSpace Media Center in Sofia (1999-2008), Project Coordinator at the Credo Bonum Foundation (2011-2019) and curator of Credo Bonum gallery (2013-2015), Curator of the Public Art Festival in West Park, Sofia (2012-2014), Co-curator and organizer of the DA Fest International Digital Art Festival at the National Academy of Arts since 2009. She has done a large number of curatorial projects with Bulgarian and foreign artists, organized forums and conferences on various themes of contemporary art and culture, training for debut artists, co-author of documentary and experimental films, lecturer in the MA program for digital arts at the National Academy of Art in Sofia.

**HARITA ASUMANI** is a Bulgarian artist based in Sofia. She has studied at the National Academy of Arts, Sofia. Her works were shown in: ONE Gallery “Dualism”. Group exhibition, 2020/ Arosita Gallery „ (YOU)(BE) Like me “. Solo exhibition, Sofia, 2020 / The Past a User’s Manual – an exhibition of the finalists of the Young Artists Competition, Sofia, 2019 / PORT A „ HOMOSOC “. Documentary exhibition, Sofia, 2019/ AETHER „FORMS“. part of SOFIA PRIDE program, group exhibition, Sofia, 2019/ “Art Start” Goethe Institut & Credo Bonum, group exhibition, Sofia 2019/ REPUBLICA „Existence minimum“, solo exhibition, Sofia, 2018 / Cite Internationale Des Arts. “Open studio”, Paris, 2017 / “Via Pontica” International Youth Arts Festival, group exhibition, Balchik, 2014/ SOHO (Sofia Holistic Coworking Company), solo exhibition, Sofia, 2013

**ANTONIA DIMITROVA** is a Bulgarian-American interdisciplinary artist who explores what it means to live life to the fullest in the tension of being present to what is, while on the way to something unknown. She creates drawings, monotypes and monoprints that map her process of layering images, words, memories and movement to uncover new layers of meaning. Her work is part of the Wheaton College Permanent Collection as well as private collections in Bulgaria, Spain, Argentina and the United States. She holds a B.A. in Printmaking and Art History from Wheaton College in Massachusetts, a certificate in Intermodal Expressive Arts from the Expressive Arts Florida Institute in Florida and is completing an M.A. in Arts and Conflict Transformation at the European Graduate School in Switzerland. Antonia currently lives and works between Bulgaria and the USA.

**BOYANA DJIKOVA** (b. 1996 Sofia, Bulgaria) Her education is in law and art history. She has publications on the website of the Informational portal of nongovernmental organizations in Bulgaria regarding citizen rights, and has also been witing for Artnewscafe bulletin – a digital platform, dedicated to contemporary art. From the beginning of 2016 to 2019 she became part of the team of Gallery 2.0 in Sofia – an urban art and events space. Since 2020 she’s been working for +359 Gallery – a contemporary art gallery, based in an ex-water tower in the Lozenetz district of Sofia.



**RADOSTIN SEDEVCHEV** (b. 1988, Pernik, Bulgaria) holds a BA and MA degree in Mural Painting from the National Academy of Art Sofia, Bulgaria. In 2018 acquires a PhD in visual arts. He specialised in the university of Gwllndwr, Wales and in the HfBK Dresden. One of the main topics of his work is memory and the exploration of the past through found objects, photographs and documents and their new interpretation in the present. His most recent solo show’s include: “Neither eternal, nor transient” at Heerz Toooya Gallery in Veliko Tarnovo 2019, in 2018 “Present absence” in the ICA Sofia and in 2017 “Unforeseeable past” in Vaska Emanuilova Gallery Sofia. His installations where shown in the Sofia City Gallery, Credo Bonum Gallery, Goethe-Institut Bulgaria, Ningbo Public Library China, HfBK Gallery Dresden.

**KRASIMIRA BUTSEVA** is a visual artist, educator and writer based in London, UK. In her practice, Krasimira explores Eastern European history, trauma and memory through the use of photography, moving image and writing. She has exhibited her work both nationally and internationally, including Sofia History Museum, Bulgaria (2020), Credo Bonum Gallery, Bulgaria (2020), Seen Fifteen Gallery, UK (2020; 2019), District Six Museum, South Africa (2019), EEP Berlin, Germany (2019), Phoenix Brighton, BPE, UK (2018), Fine Art Gallery Lovech, Bulgaria (2018), Four Corners Gallery, UK (2017), Pingyao International Photography Festival, China (2016). Krasimira is also an associate lecturer on the BA Photography course at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. She is one of the co-founders of Revolv Collective – an organisation exploring alternative methods for teaching and creating photography through exhibitions, events and collaborations; and a co-editor of eep magazine – a photography magazine focusing on contemporary Eastern European photography.



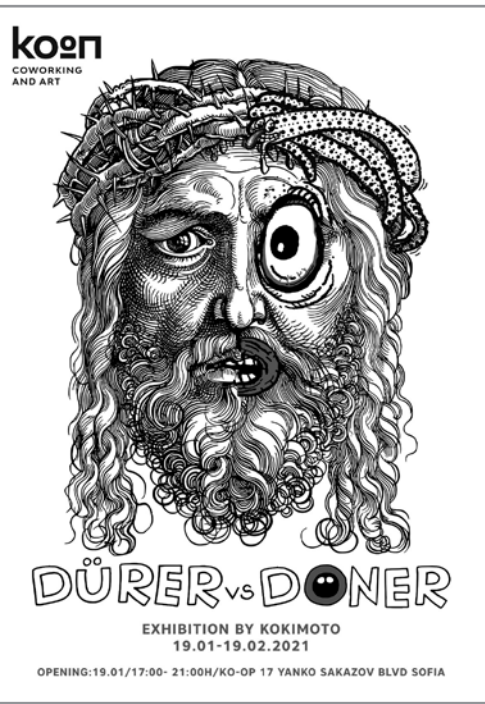
**NIKOLA MIHOV** was born in Sofia in 1982. His works have been shown in various international exhibitions and festivals, including: The Athens Photo Fest (2019), Thessaloniki Photo Biennale, Greece (2018), Les Rencontres d’Arles, France (2017) AND the Festival of Young European Photography Circulation(s), Paris. His first photobook Forget Your Past (2012) was listed among the best photobooks of the year by The British Journal of Photography, reviewed in FOAM magazine, and was nominated for the Deutsche Börse Photography prize. His second photobook Hello and Welcome to Paris was nominated for “The Dummy Award” at the Photobook Festival Kassel (2016). Nikola is also the co-founder of Bulgarian Photography Now, a platform for contemporary Bulgarian photography, PUK! photobook platform and the Archive of Bulgarian Socialist-era Graphic Design “Socmus”. Since 2019 he is part of the curatorial team of Synthesis Gallery, Sofia. He was a guest-curator for the first edition of Sofia Art Book Fair (2017).

**YANA LINEVA** is a student of Computer Animation at Bournemouth University, UK, currently in her final year. In her little experience, she has worked in the area of volumetric capture in Berlin and is living in her hometown of Sofia, Bulgaria, at present.

**SOPHIA GRANCHAROVA** (b. 1994) graduated with a BA in Fine Arts at ESAM (École Supérieure d’Arts et Médias) in Caen, France (2016). She participated in the educational program “Close Encounters – Visual Dialogues / School4artists” of the ICA-Sofia (2017) and in the experimental curatorial school at Swimming Pool in Sofia (2018). Among her participations in group exhibitions are: “Sofia Art Book Fair” (2017); “Close Encounters, School4artists”, ICA Sofia, (2017); “Art Start – Young Artists to Follow in 2018” at Credo Bonum Gallery; “BAZA award nominees exhibition”, Sofia City Art Gallery (2018); “Alter Me&Alter You” at Goethe-Institut Bulgaria, (2018); “Open Art Files: Notes and Footnotes”, Kapana Gallery, Plovdiv (2019). In 2018 she initiated her first curatorial project entitled “Space for Sparkling Water” in a hotel room at Dieter Hotel, Sofia, together with the artist Jordan Derrien. “Bad Relationships” is her first solo exhibition at Gallery 2.0, Sofia (2018), followed by “Eternal cocktail” at Vaska Emanuilova gallery, Sofia (2019). In 2021 she presents her third solo exhibition at Sofia City Art Gallery.



**MIRYANA TODOROVA** (b.1984 Sofia, Bulgaria) is a visual artist who lives and works between Sofia and New York. Her projects combine painting, performance, video, movable architecture and public interventions. Miryana holds a BFA and MFA Fine Arts degree from the School of Visual Arts, NY. She has participated in numerous exhibitions in Europe and the US among which: 'Palace Out of Sheds' at Structura Gallery, Sofia, 'Performative' at Baahng&Co Gallery, NY, 'Movables' at frosch&portmann gallery, NY, 'Being' at the Storefront for Art & Architecture, NY, 'Movement of the Whole' at INDA Gallery, Budapest, 'Disconsent' at the Center for Contemporary Art- the Ancient Bath, Plovdiv, and 'dissident desire' at District, Berlin. Miryana is the recipient of the Gaudenz B. Ruf Award for Young Artist (2011) and was a resident and fellow at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture (2012), ZK/U-Center for Art & Urbanistics (2013), District Berlin (2013), BRIC (2014), and Eileen S. Kaminsky Family Foundation (2016). She has been featured in publications such as Artforum, TimeOut NY, Blouin Artinfo, Le Monde Diplomatique, and Kultura. ■







**MIRYANA TODOROVA**  
The diagram shows my artist's family and my heroes, the people I met, the ones that introduced me to other ones, the people I climbed mountains to get to know better, the ones I love, admire, look up to, follow, feel crazy about they work, people I have worked for and created friendships with, people I support and truly believe in. It would be great to do a show with all of them or to see them all in one place today- united or against each other but forever fighting for what they desire, what painting is and can be and what makes things possible for all of us. ■

# FIVE BEAUTY TIPS FOR A BETTER SELFIE AT THE PROTESTS

- 1** You cannot say that your youth has passed in vain hopes and chanting in the squares if you stay young forever. Good hydration of the skin is the key to eternal youth. We recommend applying a cream with hyaluronic acid twice a day.
- 2** As a second step, we recommend a makeup base, which smoothes the pores, soothes the skin, and creates conditions for building makeup, just like judicial reform through constitutional changes is a fundamental and irreplaceable foundation for a fair democratic state.
- 3** In third place comes the concealer against dark circles from lack of sleep. We recommend carrying a mini concealer in your handbag, you don't know when you can be unfairly detained by the police, without any cause or charge. No one would want to look sleep-deprived and lacking brilliance at the police station.
- 4** For healthy and voluminous hair we recommend using a rubber brush for easy combing, facilitating the removal of the tear spray leftover from last night.
- 5** As a final touch, we recommend applying a discrete highlighter on your cheekbones, this will reflect the light that chases the darkness of indifference.



# Ask me!

In our duo we decided to do self-interviews in which we would answer questions nobody asked us but we would like to share our opinion about. In them we look at the connection between art and political processes from a different perspective. We asked ourselves what we're doing to create a more sustainable environment for the development of the significance of art? – We ask questions. We offer subjective answers because we think any objectivation is fleeing responsibility. We'd like for everyone to think about their own answers to these questions without trying to generalize. In doing this we're setting an example because policies require for people who care about art to create and improve their environment, rather than simply consume its resources. We believe the art environment is improving every day and this has a lot to do with the human desire to develop themselves and cultivate the possibility of accepting different points of view.

## GALINA'S ANSWERS:

### – What is political art to you?

Political art is art that was made with a critical perspective and position towards contemporary reality. Art where the artist has the courage to point out a certain problem or injustice in society. But also art done with care and empathy for people who find themselves in that situation. To me political art comes close to the activist understanding of it but I don't think its aesthetic qualities should be sacrificed in favour of a propagandistic way of conveying the message. On the contrary, the more beautiful, the more pleasant it is to the senses, the deeper it touches people.

I'd like to quote something our mentor Luchezar Boyadjev shared in a conversation with me during the workshop: “politics today is not the fight for power but the fight for the human, not even for human rights but for the quality of life”. I completely share that view and I think that's what contemporary political art should follow as its creed.

### – Please name a specific artwork that exemplifies this type of art.

A good example is Italian artist and documentarist Nicola Zambelli's project What Makes Us Weaker, Make Us Closer. He's a good friend of mine and I always liked his approach to art, close to people. His latest project is directly related to the pandemic and the lock-down and mostly how people reacted to this situation. His research aims to establish “what remains of the city when the city disappears”. Nicola shows how in his hometown of Brescia in Lombardy which was at the epicentre of the pandemic in Europe people mobilised to help the most affected groups – the homeless, migrants, families with children and others. Through his pho-

tographs and video, he tells the stories of the brave volunteers who showed solidarity with those affected by organising a network distributing food and medicine. All this was presented in a very beautiful and poetic way.

### – What is the role of art today?

I think art always had an important social function but today more than ever it has this mission of reflecting, commenting, raising questions, looking for answers, generally expressing the restless spirit and intransigence towards injustice, abuse and the other vices of contemporary society. but art should also inspire, show beauty, glorify the poetics of life, give hope, raise spirits. True art is born out of the combination of these two important tasks the artist has, the kind that touches the heart and leads people to fight for a better life.

### – Has art changed during the pandemic? If yes, how?

This question is probably hard to answer unequivocally. We're still too close in time to this tumultuous and controversial period. The crisis caused by the pandemic exacerbated lots of divisions and conflicts which had already gained momentum before it. Many commentators share the opinion that the challenges the pandemic put us up against have divided people even more. I also think the lock-down and social distancing have brought people further apart in a society that was already estranged. On the other hand, it was a period of unprecedented solidarity and empathy for others and that was shown in many art projects and performances. That's why I think things have changed and that will become more and more visible over the next months and years. I personally expect to see a kind of art that is closer to people, that speaks the

important issues of our times with empathy and concern.

### – What do you think will happen on the contemporary art scene, will there be anything that will change socially engaged practices as we know them?

I truly hope the socially engaged practices that have dominated the art scene over the last few decades become more humane. I hope artists who do this type of projects overcome their cynicism and distanced observation from their own point of view and come down to meet the real people and talk to them. They should make art that comes from the heart and outlines the future. Because it is artists who have the talent and the calling to look ahead, to outline the horizon, to lead people... Utopian thoughts in a dystopian present but now's the moment to be brave and open towards new things to come...

## HARITA'S ANSWERS:

### – Is art today estranged from the problems of society if it refuses to name or solve them?

Art and the environment mutually determine each other. It is no coincidence that any given style or movement is explained in the context of historical events. That makes their interpretation and understanding more full. Preferred topics, choice of objects, even drawing lines has a close connection to what's going on – war, economic growth, geographic position etc. The representatives of expressionism for example avoid the specifics of a reality they do not wish to live in. They break the forms; plots are often undistinguishable. The strokes of the brush are emotional, unrestrained, contrasting, large, aggressive, they show a certain attitude towards reality. The attempt to escape



Nicola Zambelli (Italy) – What Makes Us Weaker, Make Us Closer, 2020, photography and video

ideas, to uplift, satisfy aesthetic needs or all of the above. Each artist has different needs and makes their decision which ones they can and wish to satisfy with the art they make. This does not significantly influence the criteria by which I assess or connect to a giv-

en work. I can give an example with a work from the recent past – a banana with tape entitled “comedian” by Italian artist Maurizio Cattelan. The work was done in an edition of three, two of which sold for 120 thousand dollars. Not only did it sell, it also triggered an

important public debate. This creative act allowed a new understanding of art and its goals. Was this a commercial work and by what criteria?

### – What policies can the art scene adopt to attract a broader audience?

I think partnerships with interested companies, representatives of business or other organisations are good policies. Partnerships that do not go against the messages art conveys and the respective author's principles. This type of practice makes for advertising campaigns on a larger scale and this way you can reach more people. Another important factor is how you present information, not just about the end result but also about the process that led to it. It would engage the audience and make them more loyal if they understand and realise their importance. It's very important to know that art today exists and moves forward thanks to group efforts. These efforts are not limited to the activity of artists and galleries. To many people in the art world that goes without saying

but outside of it it's not quite clear what the role of audiences, curators, critics, organisations, companies, collectors, patrons, media and social networks and art schools is and how important it is. when the audience identifies with one of the other parts of this system, that could strengthen their influence in a positive way.

### – What will the artist of the future be like?

The artist of the future will be a hybrid who successfully makes use of two instincts which are characteristic of anyone living in a society, namely to belong and to set themselves apart. ■



Nicola Zambelli (Italy) – What Makes Us Weaker, Make Us Closer, 2020, photography and video



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[REDACTED]

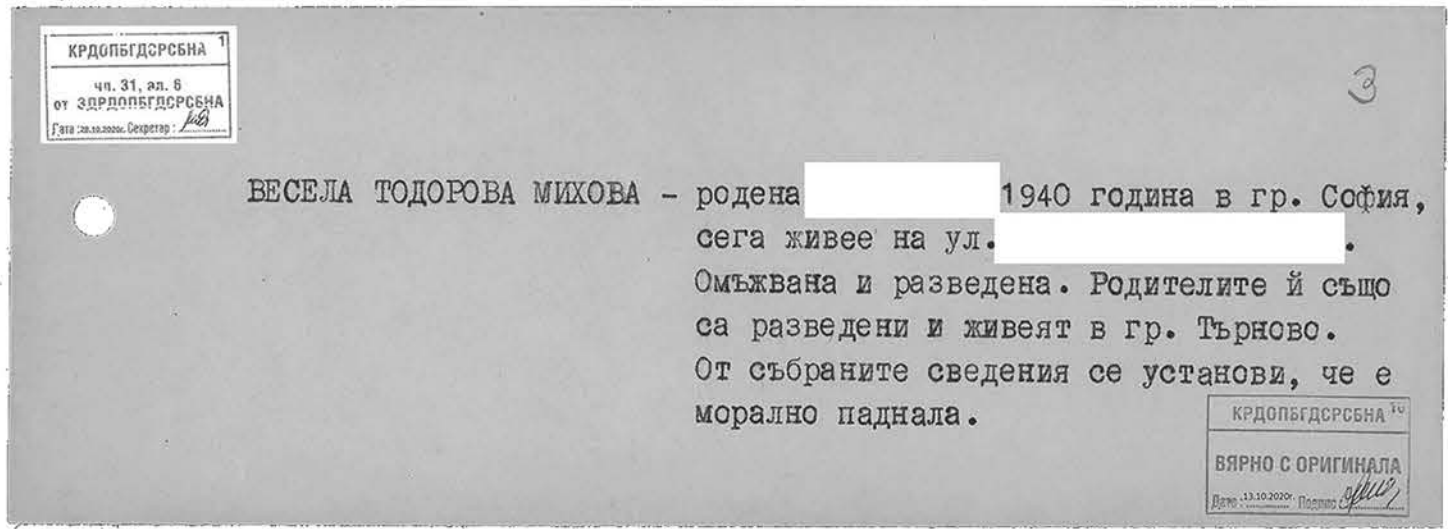
[REDACTED]

Photograph from the Bugarian State Security archives, part of a case against “the hooligans”. In 1958 a series of young people were arrested because of the Westernized way they looked and the Western music they listened to. They were seen as “immoral” and “anti-socialist”.

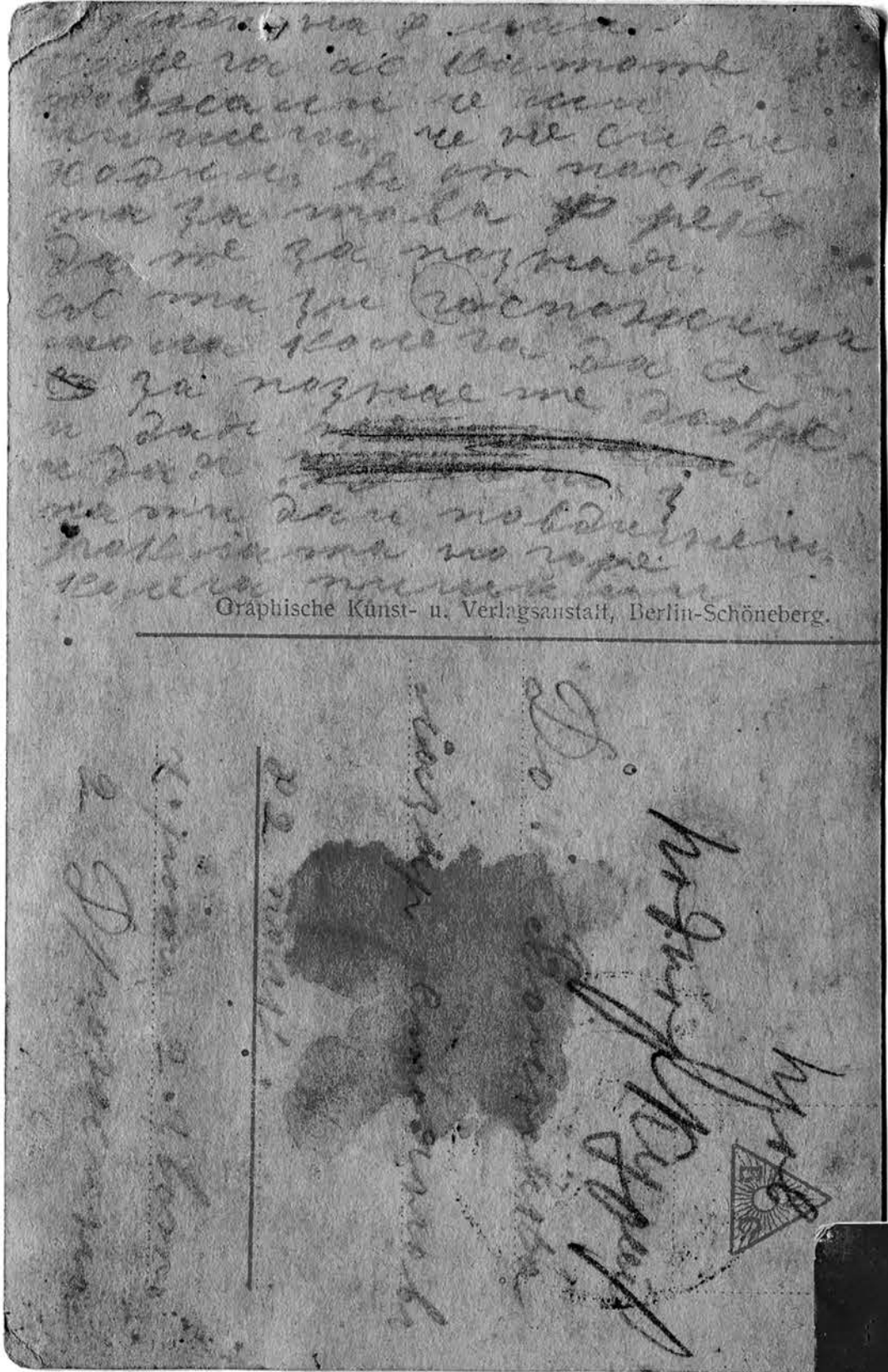
[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1918 8th of may

colleague I feel sorry for you when you write that you have not been on leave so I thought to introduce you to this lady with a skirt colleague to let you introduce well and to [REDACTED] you to lift her skirt up colleague write back to me

# censorship is losing and underlining

Who holds the agency over censorship and how is the “default” produced? I wonder how the gaze and understanding changes through different historical periods; when various men decide what to be scratched out and what to remain. [REDACTED] What are society’s “ethics and morals” and how do they come across in art and culture?

Censorship – could it be read as an artistic act? Isn’t it a duty of the artist, to put a focus on something, whilst dismissing something else in a narrative or concept? Of course the artistic act requires different intent.

Can the practice of a so-called “harmless” censorship grow into a systematic and life changing one?

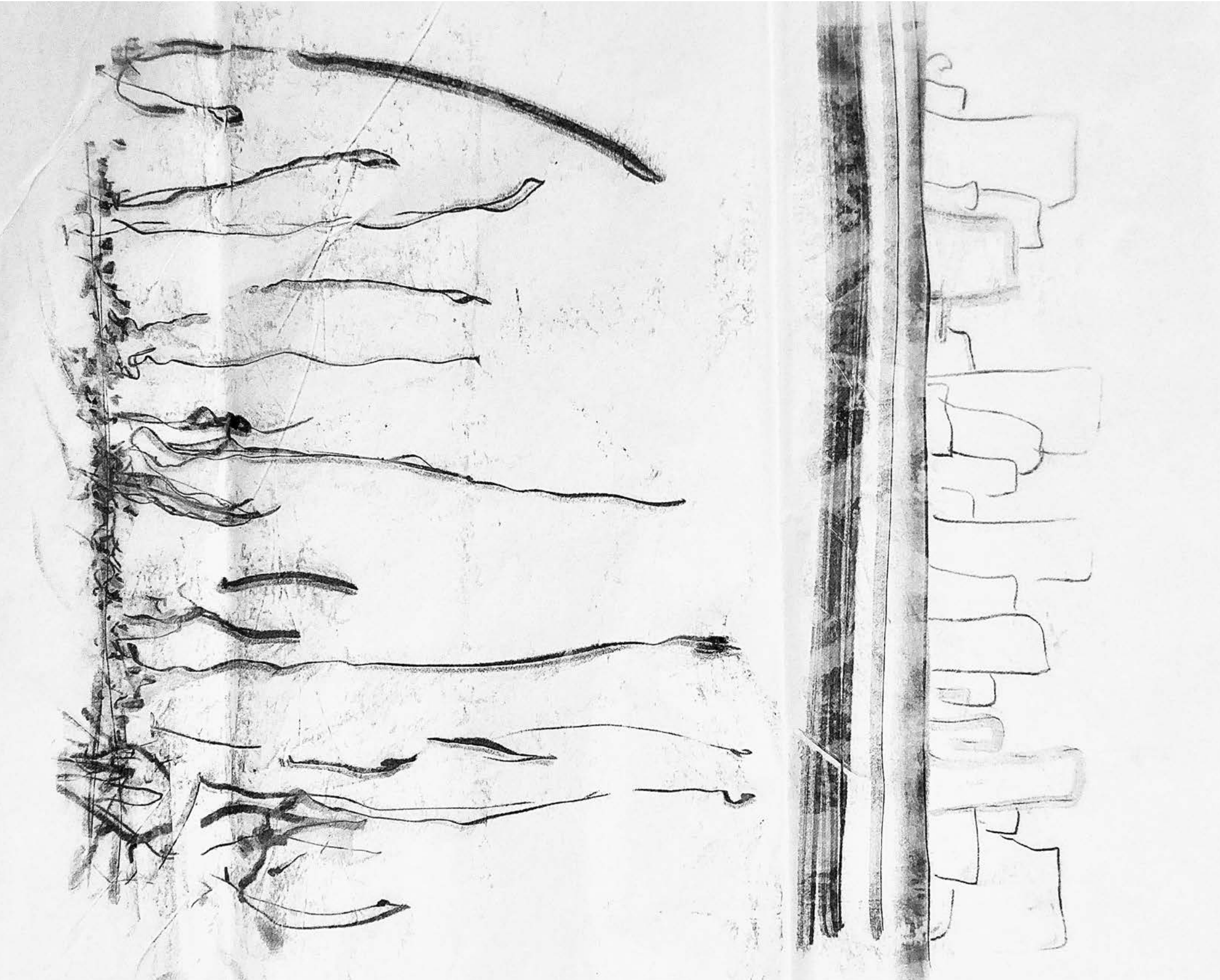
Ripping, crossing out and scratching faces, individuals and identities out of a letter, a photograph, a story, a memory and out of history. [REDACTED] The scalpels, pens and ink allow re-writing, remodelling and refurbishing the past, present and future.



censorship  
1a: the institution, system, or practice of censoring  
b: the actions or practices of censors especially  
2: the office, power, or term of a Roman censor  
3: exclusion from consciousness by the psychic censor

The act of removing raises a series of questions which activate the archive as a narrative.





# PERSONALITY REVELATIONS FROM DREAM IMAGES

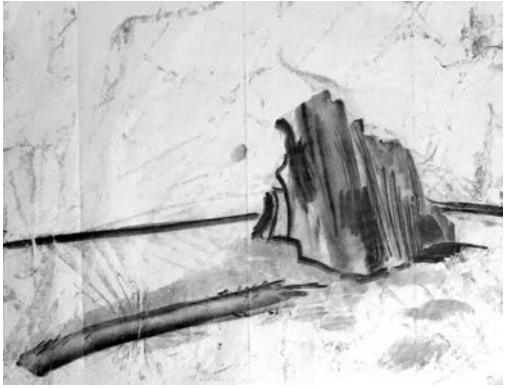
Dive into a test of self-exploration to tickle your personal and collective unconscious and to reveal the power of your imagination, through the history of time and spirituality. Discover what your dream images of a future utopia uncover about your personality and win the opportunity to thrive and prosper amid insecurities in a society of immersive inequality and pleasure. Find peace in yourself as you embrace the restless interpretations of the images below...



- A. Mexico border
- B. Broken but together
- C. In the process of stage 3
- D. Nothing like it
- E. Tree
- F. Mental illness
- G. Too short



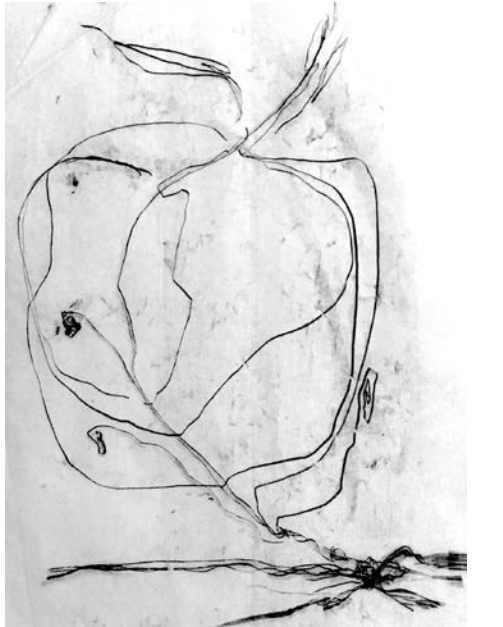
- A. On sex
- B. Smoke
- C. Brain drain
- D. Transgression
- E. On vacation
- F. Inner
- G. Prepared



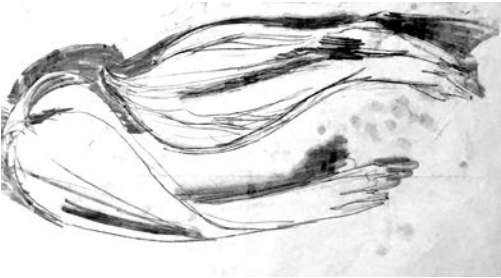
- A. The mountain and the sloth
- B. Almost heaven, not there yet
- C. Phase 1
- D. Utopia
- E. Unreachable
- F. Rock
- G. 7 deadly sins



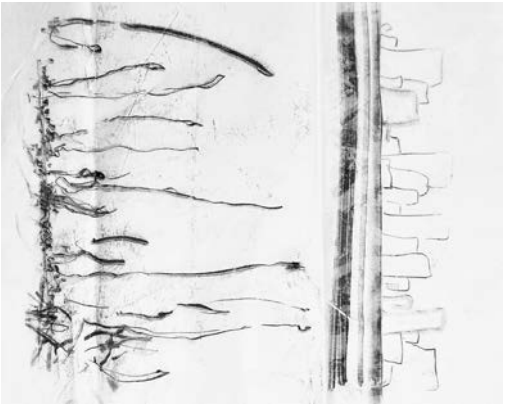
- A. Sovereign
- B. Not what it seems
- C. Female reproductive system
- D. The master puppeteer
- E. His power, your power, our power
- F. By all means
- G. Miniscule



- A. No turning back
- B. Eden
- C. Lifeblood
- D. Bone in flesh
- E. Western civilization
- F. Mother
- G. What's next?



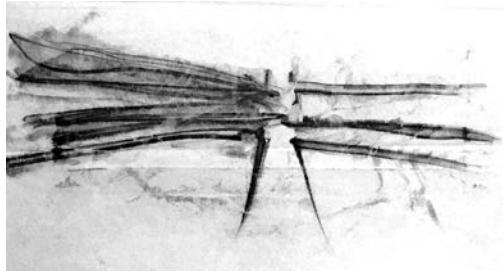
- A. Make it levitate
- B. Lovemaking making love
- C. Soft objects, lighter than air
- D. Hands no wings
- E. Other
- F. Longing for touch
- G. Dead birds



- A. Striving
- B. Uncover, discover
- C. Not here nor there
- D. Kingdom come
- E. Other
- F. Ephemeral
- G. The nightmare from last night



- A. Inheritance
- B. Children's children
- C. Matrilineal
- D. Subconsciousness
- E. Path
- F. Pathological
- G. House



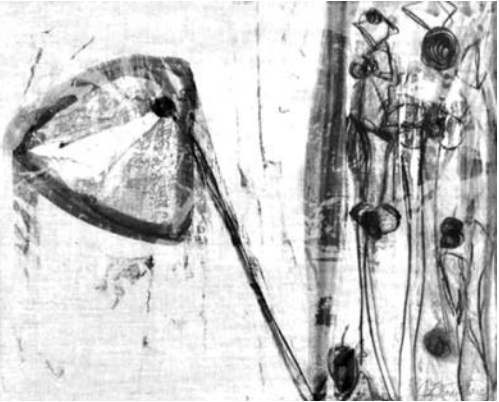
- A. Solving every case
- B. Life after death
- C. Problems of interpretation
- D. Other
- E. Lost in translation
- F. Emotional / rational
- G. Left wing / right wing



- A. Other
- B. In need of support
- C. On the market
- D. Legs up – open wide
- E. Some amount of fish
- F. Some amount of flesh
- G. Lots of things to do now

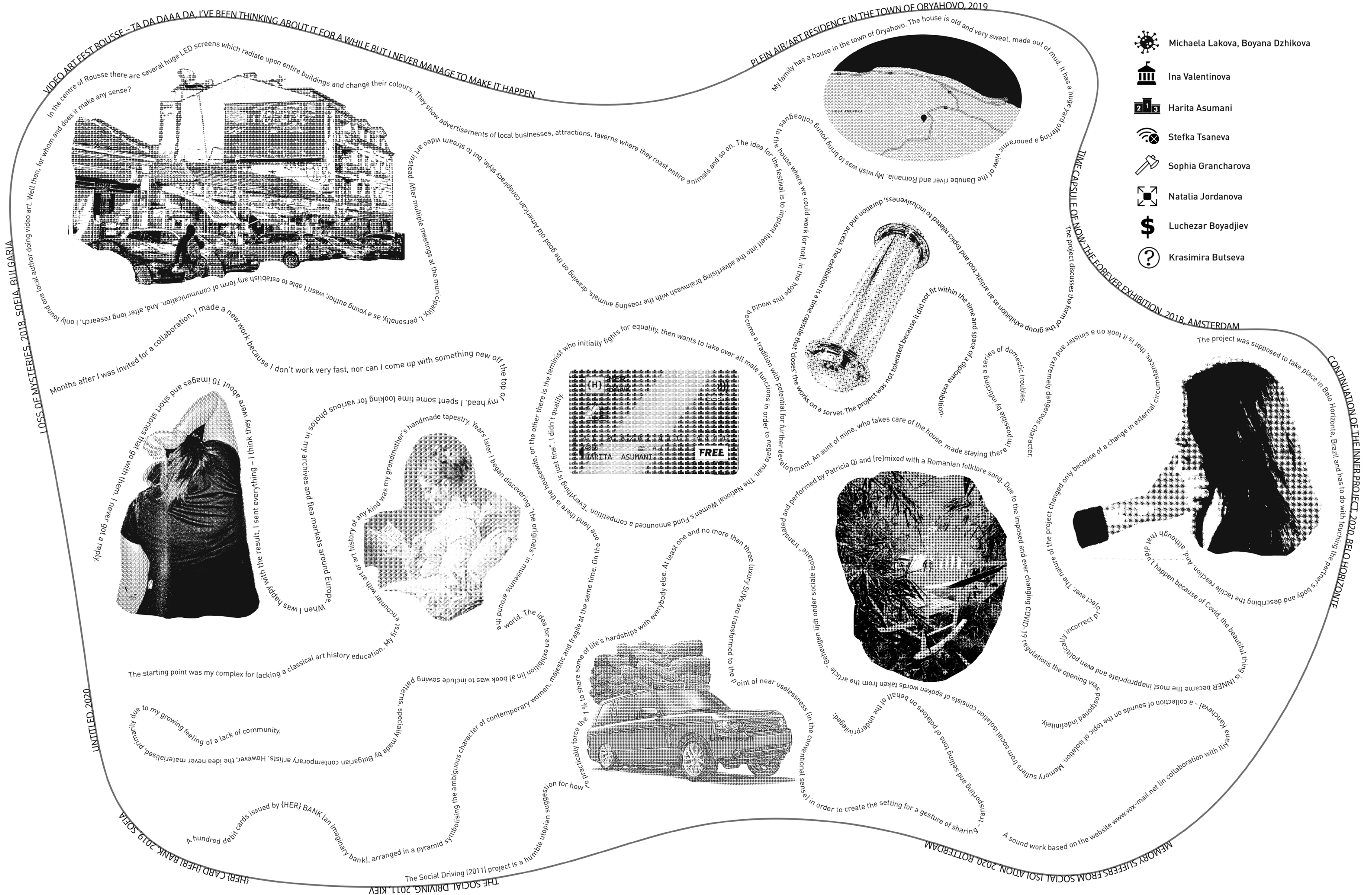


- A. Sharp
- B. God
- C. Plane
- D. Invisible beings
- E. Soar on wings
- F. Cut
- G. Walk, run, soar



- A. I've got this
- B. Source of life
- C. Inequality
- D. Below the surface
- E. It's turned sideways
- F. Barely holding on
- G. Focus on what's important





- Michaela Lakova, Boyana Dzhikova
- Ina Valentinova
- Harita Asumani
- Stefka Tsaneva
- Sophia Grancharova
- Natalia Jordanova
- Luchezar Boyadjiev
- Krasimira Butseva



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HALLO.BG IS A PROJECT BY YANA LINEVA AND NIKOLA MIHOV. GRAPHIC DESIGN: NIKOL DECHEVA.

Всички средства, събрани от продажбата на реклами и малки обяви в Hallo.bg, са дарени на Фреду Бенямин, собственик на ресторанта "Ашурбанипал" и жена му Линда Аванис, основателка на Съвета на жените бежанки в България. Техният дом изгоря до основи на 19 декември 2020 г.

All funds, collected from the sale of ads and announcements in Hallo.bg, were donated to Freddy Benjamin, owner of the Ashurbanipal restaurant in Sofia, and to his wife Linda Awanis, founder of the Female Refugee Council in Bulgaria. Their home burned down to the ground on December 19th, 2020.

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живеещо в Родопите, търси съмишленици и финансиране за създаването на резиденция за артисти и образователен център за деца. Резиденцията се намира в малко селце до Смолян, наречено Габрица.

A YOUNG FAMILY living in the Rhodopes is looking for like-minded people and funding to set up a residence for art-

ists and an educational center for children. The residence is located in a small village near Smolyan called Gabritsa.

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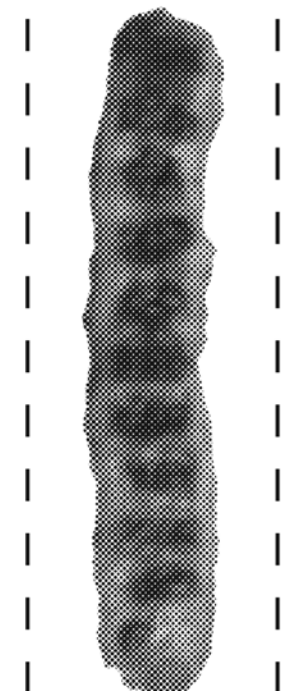
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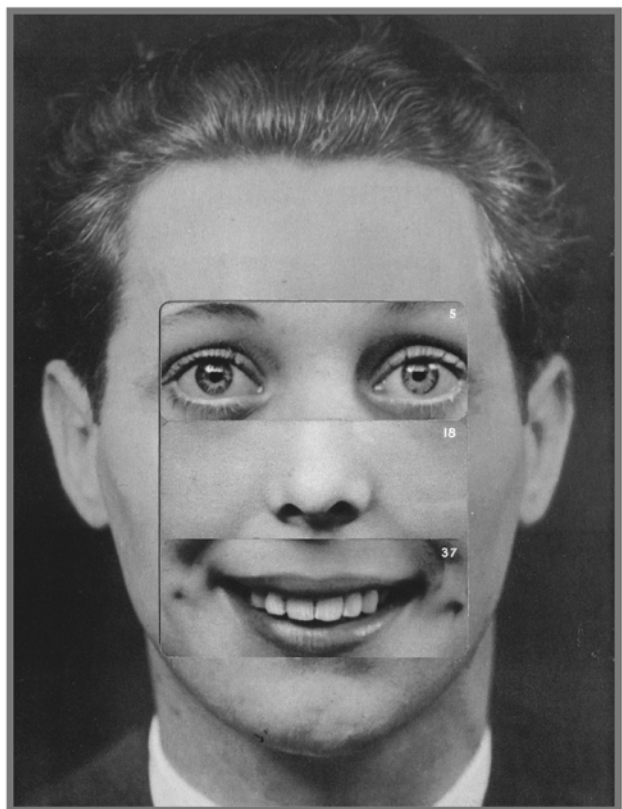
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**Стоматолог**

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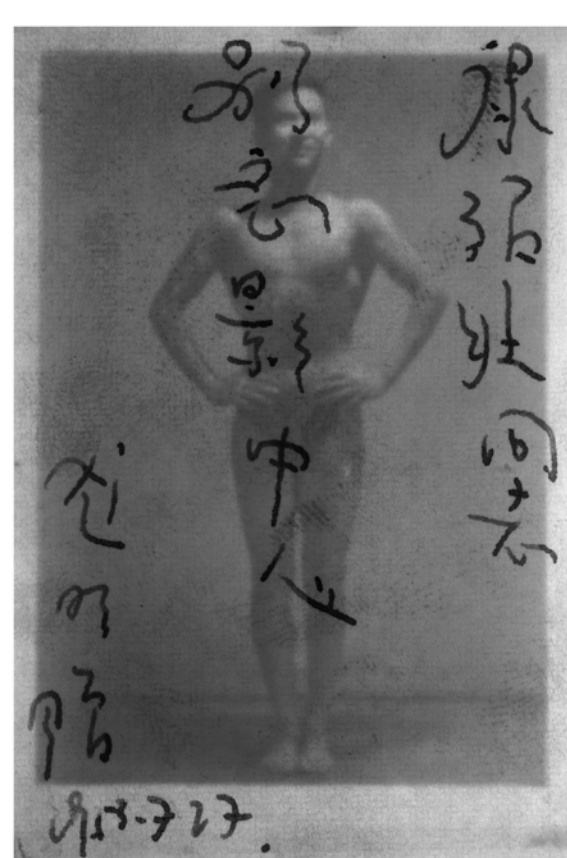
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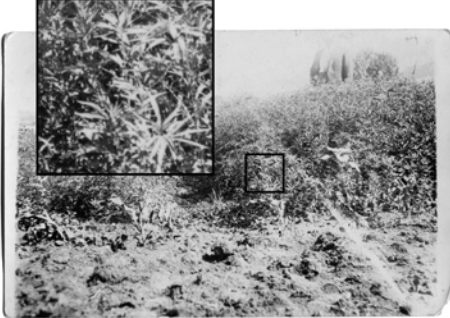


**СЪВРЕМЕНЕННА ХУДОЖНИЧКА** вика да се включите в творчески проект с личен разговор по Zoom, на тема "Какво се случи и какво предстои ..." Разговорите ще послужат като въдъхновение за създаването на серия от графики чрез техниката суха игла.

A CONTEMPORARY ARTIST invites you to join an art project through a personal conversation on Zoom on the topic of "What Happened and What Lies Before Us..." The conversations will serve as inspiration to create a series of drypoint drawings.

**МЛАД МЪЖ**, на 39, търси мърец за съвет в Щутгарт. Издирваният трябва да има семейство и време. Правилно отношение в съчетание с глас са за предпочитане. Моля, свържете се с Павел на [pj44@wp.pl](mailto:pj44@wp.pl).


A YOUNG MAN, 39, looks for a sage in Stuttgart to ask for advice. The looked-for person should have family and time. Attitude coupled with voice would be beneficial. Please email Pawel at [pj44@wp.pl](mailto:pj44@wp.pl)



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# Art & Politics

A project by the Goethe-Institut Bulgaria



Structura Gallery

## MARINA LUDEMANN

The corona pandemic has raised fundamental questions, that particularly affect the cultural sector. All of a sudden, discussions popped up everywhere about the “systemic relevance” of art and culture. In addition, in the second half of 2020, thousands of people in Bulgaria took to the streets every evening and called for a different policy. What role does art play in these turbulent times and what role will it play in the future?

When we first talked to Luchezar Boyadjev about a workshop on art and politics, neither the pandemic nor the demonstrations in Bulgaria were foreseeable. The occasion was an exhibition in the Structura Gallery, which Maria Vassileva planned with works from the collection of the Institute for Foreign Relations (ifa).

The exhibition “Art and Politics – Confrontations and Coexistence” looked back on the 1920s when Otto Dix created stirring pictures of the inferno of the First World War with his etching cycle “The War”. Maria Vassileva exhibited these graphics together with works by Hannah Höch, Günther Uecker, Joseph Beuys and Gerhard Richter as well, as a new work by the young Bulgarian artist Antoni Rayzhkov. In doing so, she spanned an arc of 100 years in which the model of the political artist has changed significantly. The artist who crossed the boundaries

of autonomy in favor of politics, who questioned the boundaries between art and life, seems strangely naive and anachronistic today. In the 21st century,



Pandemic Sound Map, 2020, interactive sound installation, Antoni Rayzhkov, Structura Gallery

ry, artists have a different relationship to politics and society. They are not interested in politics, but, as Luchezar Boyadjev says, in policies.

Art is so important and indispensable for a society because it is the place where we can reflect on ourselves free of any compulsory exploitation, and where we can even think about social alternatives. Creativity, imagination, dynamics and the production of subjectivity, once signs of artistic production, have migrated to the “creative industries”. Utopias and revolutionary future concepts

have disappeared from art. What does this mean for society? In which society do we want to live? And what role does art play in this context?

These questions were the focus of a series of contributions within the framework of the “Art & Politics” project, which the Goethe-Institut Bulgaria 2020 organized. We thank Wiebke Trunk, Voin de Voin, Bojana Kunst, Boyan Manchev and Catherine Nichols for their contributions. We would particularly like to thank the artists and curators, who dealt with these questions in a two-month workshop led by Luchezar Boyadjev, namely Antonia Dimitrova, Harita Asumani, Radostin Sedevchev, Nikola Mihov, Ina Valentinova, Yana

Lineva, Sophia Grancharova, Miryana Todorova, Galina Dimitrova-Dimova, Boyana Dzhikova, Antoni Rayzhkov, Pavel Naydenov and Krasimira Butseva. This newspaper is a result of this engagement, but not a definitive answer to the questions. They will continue to be our concern.■

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# PERSONALITY REVELATIONS FROM DREAM IMAGES

## What can the aura of your dream images reveal about you?

### 1/ GULIANI:

Gulianis are known for being diligent and industrious. They are idealists who view the world in terms of what it could be and therefore work tirelessly to perfect their environment. They are motivated by a need to be good, right and perfect and are driven by integrity, morality and ethics. Gulianis are in the Gut or Anger triad but they suppress their anger because they don't believe it's appropriate to express it.

### Self care ideas ✨

Journaling • maintaining a routine and making daily to-do lists / political campaigning

A **political campaign** is an organized effort which seeks to influence the decision making progress within a specific group. In **democracies**, political campaigns often refer to **electoral** campaigns, by which representatives are chosen or **referendums** are decided. In modern politics, the most high-profile political campaigns are focused on **general elections** and candidates for **head of state** or **head of government**, often a **president** or **prime minister**.

### 2/ TERESA:

Terasas are known for being warm and relational. They are motivated by a want to be needed and they believe they are loved for being lovable and helpful to others. They seek the admiration of others and in doing so forget their own needs.

### Self care ideas ✨

sticking to my skincare routine

• quiet time with candles, gentle music and a good book / hunger strike

A **hunger strike** is a method of **non-violent resistance** or pressure in which participants **fast** as an act of political **protest**, or to provoke the feelings of **guilt** in others, usually with the objective to achieve a specific goal, such as a policy change. Most hunger strikers will take liquids but not solid food.

### 3/ CLINTON:

Clintons are known for being adaptable and achievement-oriented. They are motivated by a need to find their worth in their productivity. They are not just concerned with success (though that often matters) they are also concerned with image or appearance: they have an ability to shift and adapt to every environment. Clintons can relate to everyone they encounter but they often have a harder time understanding their own identity.

### Self care ideas ✨

Enjoying morning coffee on the front porch • living in the moment / lobbying

In **politics**, **lobbying**, **persuasion**, or **interest representation** is the act of lawfully attempting to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of **government** officials, most often **legislators** or members of **regulatory agencies**. Lobbying, which usually involves direct, face-to-face contact, is done by many types of people, associations and organized groups, including individuals in the **private**

**sector**, **corporations**, fellow legislators or government officials, or **advocacy groups** (interest groups).

### 4/ DYLAN:

Dylans are known for being deep and complex. They are motivated by a need to find their true heart, and they are on a lifelong quest for understanding and identity. Dylans are incredibly imaginative and they are accustomed to plumb the depths of their psyche and emotional realm. They mourn that the world falls short of the extravagance and riches that are possible.

### Self care ideas ✨

walks at sunrise • engaging in the physical world / protest songs

A **protest song** is a song that is associated with a movement for **social change** and hence part of the broader category of **topical** songs (or songs connected to current events). It may be folk, classical, or commercial in genre.

### 5/ GATES:

Gates are known for being observant and cerebral. They are motivated by a need to be competent and self-reliant, sometimes at the cost of decreasing their needs and desires. Gates use the endless pursuit of knowledge as a shield against fear or anxiety. Gates begin each day with a measured amount of energy, and they conserve their limited resources in

order to avoid being depleted.

### Self care ideas ✨

spending time doing puzzles • cleaning and organizing space / propaganda

**Propaganda** is **communication** that is primarily used to **influence** an audience and further an **agenda**, which may not be **objective** and may be selectively presenting facts in order to encourage a particular synthesis or perception, or using **loaded language** in order to produce an emotional rather than a rational response to the information that is being presented.<sup>[1]</sup> Propaganda is often associated with material which is prepared by go

### 6/ DIANA:

Dianas are known for being responsible and community-oriented. They are motivated by a need to find safety and security in the world. They are deeply committed to their loved ones and they are very loyal. Dianas get the reputation for being anxious as they voice their concerns – sometimes it comes off as pessimism, but they view it as realism.

### Self care ideas ✨

deep breaths • meditation and prayer • watching the sunset / starting a grassroots movement:

A **grassroots** movement is one which uses the people in a given district, region, or community as the basis for a political or economic movement.<sup>[1]</sup> Grassroots movements and organizations use collective action from the

## ANSWER KEY

To uncover your personality revelations, add up how many times you chose each letter; the letter that you chose most often reflects your primary personality type. The letter that you chose second-most is your supporting type.

- A. Kamala
- B. Diana
- C. Gates
- D. Dylan
- E. Clinton
- F. Teresa
- G. Guliani

local level to effect change at the local, regional, national, or international level. Grassroots movements are associated with bottom-up, rather than top-down decision making, and are sometimes considered more natural or spontaneous than more traditional power structures.<sup>[2]</sup>

### 7/ KAMALA

Kamalas are known for being powerful and dynamic. They are motivated by a need to protect themselves and to avoid vulnerability. Kamalas have kept understanding of their own intuition and they tend to trust their gut to lead them through life. They are truth-tellers and highly justice-oriented: they will always stick up for the underdog. Their assertiveness and volume often cause them to be misunderstood as tough or angry, but they are actually kind and tender once you get to know them.

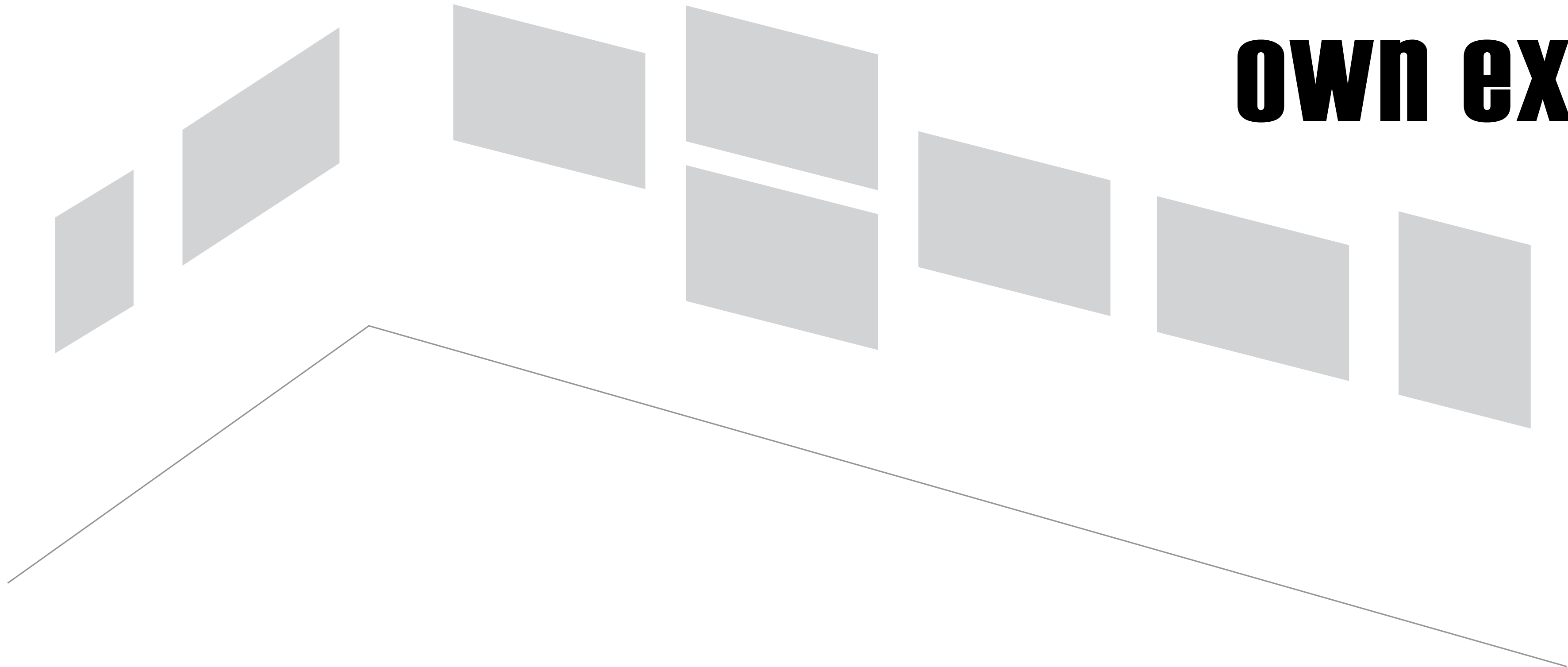
### Self-care ideas ✨

epsom salt baths • staying attentive to what can be controlled, letting go of the rest / direct action

**Direct action** originated as a political **activist** term for economic and political acts in which the actors use their power (e.g. **economic** or physical) to directly reach certain goals of interest; in contrast to those actions that appeal to others (e.g. authorities); by, for example, revealing an existing problem, using physical violence, highlighting an alternative, or **demonstrating** a possible solution.

\*Personality types and advice provided by powerful and insightful online platforms where the successful profiling of more than 50 historic figures from the international political scene has been executed. Titles of profiles here have been taken from the above mentioned lists of people, classified into these exact categories. Definitions of activism types taken from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.





POSTER 3 (left)

**Mirvana Todorova, *Family Tree*, 2021, marker on paper, 42x29.7cm**

What makes an artist? Is it the inexplicable artistic genius, is it the family, the environment, the education; society, class or pure luck? In her work “Family Tree” Todorova explores who were the women who defined her as an artist. The result is an intimate reflection, that becomes a critical statement of a Bulgarian immigrant artist on the current state of contemporary art here. Why are all (but one) names on the map of non-Bulgarian influencers, teachers, colleagues and friends? And where is an artist’s home – where s/he connects as a person or as an artist?

POSTER 3 (right)

**Sophia Grancharova, *Five Beauty Tips for a Better Selfie at the Protests*, 2021**

2020 was not only the year of COVID-19 in Bulgaria, but also of the largest anti-government protests in the new decade. Thousands of people, many of them young immigrants coming home to shelter, were protesting against corruption. Pro-government media and internet trolls were neglecting and ridiculing the protests for being only by the “beautiful and smart”, but not for the masses. Referring to this new notion of physical beauty as a main marker of democracy, protest frontliner and beauty expert Sophia Grancharova offers her beauty tips for exhausted young people who are taking on the power in the poorest and most corrupt EU country.

POSTER 4

**Galina Dimitrova-Dimova and Harita Asumani, *Ask me!*, auto interview, 2021**

Nowadays, we can all express our wildest opinions on social media without anyone urging us to do so. Precisely asking and taking into account what the others are interested in, constitutes the very notion of conversation. Curator Galina Dimitrova-Dimova and artist Harita Asumani are re-discovering the art of conversation by making an auto interview in which they discuss the topic of art and politics.

POSTER 5

**Krasimira Butseva and Radostin Sedevchev, *Censorship is Losing and Underlining*, 2021**

This is a conversation between Krasimira Butseva and Radostin Sedevchev, both of whom are rare artists-explorers of memory and forgotten stories. It spans between 1918 and 1958 and: a/ a censored postcard sent by a soldier to another fellow soldier at the end of WW1; and b/ the operation “Thunder” of the Bulgarian State Security for arresting young people because of the style of their clothing. From the military censoring a cynical joke between friends to the State Security arresting and sending to prison young people because of a trendy coat – this is an interchange across decades and social systems about the absurdities of power and censorship; but also about past politics that lay the very foundation of today’s political life. Remember what Orwell said about controlling the past?

POSTER 6

**Antonia Dimitrova and Boyana Dzhikova, *Personality Revelation from Dream Images*, 2021**

Emotional manipulation is one of the greatest in the toolbox for political propaganda. It is cheap, safe and has zero carbon footprint. Artist Antonia Dimitrova and curator Boyana Dzhikova combine psychoanalytic approaches, from Jung’s notion of the unconscious to Rorschach’s infamous test, to take on contemporary politics. Readers can explore their un/conscious political beliefs and deepest desires through a simple test. The key to the test can be found on p. 15.

POSTER 7

**Antoni Rayzhekov and Rayna Teneva, *A Map of Dud Art*, 2021**

Art can be political even when it actually does not exist. Artists Antoni Rayzhekov and Rayna Teneva deal with “dud art” – a new term they came up with, which describes art that has not happened (yet) or has failed to happen. Their “Map of Dud Art” represents the results of a survey they did among the contributors to this newspaper investigating the reasons why a particular idea for an art project comes to a dead end. By reflecting on the wide range of reasons – from inadequate cultural policies to the lack of time, energy or resources, Rayzhekov and Teneva open up the discussion about the conditions of art-labor and what is necessary for art to happen.

POSTER 8

**Nikola Mihov and Yana Lineva, *Hallo.bg*, 2021**

Artists Nikola Mihov and Yana Lineva appropriate classified advertising principles (and the layout of a well-known Bulgarian newspaper) to collect donations for Freddy Benjamin, owner of the Ashurbanipal restaurant in Sofia, and Linda Auanis, founder of the Female Refugee Council in Bulgaria, whose home was burned down in December 2020. They collected over 2000 BG leva from over 20 advertisers. But the Hallo.bg is much more than that. It not only challenges the notions of community, art and advertising, but also the very format of this newspaper by “selling” its space and opening it to a much broader group of participants. All advertisers developed their own (true or fake) message and image, which makes Hallo.bg a fine example for participatory art.

POSTER 9

**Ina Valentinova and Pavel Naydenov, *Easy Slipper Pattern + DIY National Anthem*, 2021**

Ina Valentinova and Pavel Naydenov’s work consist of a slipper pattern’s silhouette, an idea brought to the artists’ attention by R. and N. from refugee camps in Sofia and Harmanli who helped research the importance of Afghan women’s magazines, which is cut out of DIY musical notations of a new fictional national anthem, part of an audio piece, based on the old Bulgarian national anthem “Shumi Maritza”. The project creates an audio-visual participatory environment to reflect on the notion of identity and how it is constructed, manipulated, violated and controlled by political power. Please, scan the QR code on the poster or visit [ipdiypolitics.wordpress.com](https://ipdiypolitics.wordpress.com) to find the instructions, more information about the project and to play the audio piece!

## Instructions

This newspaper consists of 24 pages, which when unfolded make 12 double-sided posters that you can use to curate in an exhibition of your choice. For optimal experience we recommend you to acquire two copies of the newspaper!



# ART & POLITICS

# MANIFESTO

1. Everything is politics, as long as you want it to be, and vice versa.
2. We deliberately choose to be political or not.
3. “Political” here means: to be political in art is to be aware of what is one’s position, actively acted out or implicitly present in one’s practice, as a self-defined agency concerning the structures of power.
4. Politically aware art is a platform on which to navigate and negotiate the public sphere for artists and audiences alike.
5. Artists ask a whole range of questions regarding society and history, living and working conditions, the urban and natural environment, the constitutional laws and human rights and much, much more – aesthetics, ethics, space, sound, the visual domain, ecology and all that is political.
6. Entangling art and politics is a process of questioning that goes to the limits of what either the law says, and/or the “etiquette” of political correctness of the day presumes, while constantly pushing to widen the terms of “that, which is not forbidden”.
7. Being free from the imperative to ‘be political’ in our art practice, is the biggest political gesture for artists based in Eastern Europe, regardless of the generational divide(s).
8. Being political is to be critical towards power, control and authorities, to be sensitive towards injustice. Because: Political art is not fighting for power; it is fighting for the people, and even not that much for people rights, but for their quality of life. Usually these issues are neglected and need to be upgraded, updated, and re-negotiated!
9. A political art practice can employ strategies and means to suggest a speculative reality where specific ethical issues can be discussed, while the aesthetical aspect of the artwork is mainly concerned with communication with the audience.
10. Political work is not only focused on eventfulness, but consists of daily life struggles and/or joys as the building blocks of the contemporary.



## TO DO LIST

- INITIATE
- ACT
- CONSTRUCT
- PROVOKE
- SEEK THE SUDDEN
- CREATE NEW SYSTEMS
- TRANSFORM BODIES
- REACT UPON SITUATIONS
- DISPERSE THINGS
- DISSECT FORMULAS
- SEEK LIMITS TO EXPAND
- COMPLETE THE TRANSITION
- WORK BETWEEN CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT
- CREATE SITUATIONS THAT OTHERS CAN GET IN
- SLOW DOWN TIME
- SPEED UP SPACE
- EXPLORE THE OVERLAP
- THINK OF MOBILITY
- THINK OF WHAT CAN BE THE EXTENSION OR THE COLLABORATION
- ACTIVATE PUBLIC SPACE
- ESTABLISH CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BODIES AND STRUCTURES
- EXPAND AND COLLAPSE FORMS
- PROVIDE MORE SPACE FOR FAILURE
- CREATE MOVABLE ARCHITECTURE
- STILL THINGS

## # KEYWORDS

CONFLICT  
CLUSTER  
HYBRID  
RUIN  
INTERSECTION  
GATHERING  
VULNERABILITY  
NOISE  
ANXIETY  
DISTORTION  
COLLAPSE  
STRUGGLE  
MOVEMENT  
TIME  
TRANSITION  
TEMPORARY  
DOUBT  
DISPLACEMENT  
FAILURE  
MOBILE  
MORE MOBILE  
EDGE  
INSTABILITY  
ENCOUNTER  
EXPANSION  
PARTICLE

#todolist #keywords, 2021, marker on paper, 49x29.7cm

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