

SPRÜTH MAGERS BERLIN LONDON

Recalling Frames

David Maljkovic

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Monika Sprüth and Philomene Magers are delighted to present *Recalling Frames*, an exhibition of new work by David Maljkovic.

The title of David Maljkovic's solo exhibition can be understood in relation to his current body of work but also indicates a recurring theme in his artistic practice: recalling ideas from the past and analysing their impact on the present. He introduces places, their architectural structures and their underlying concepts in modified pictorial arrangements as a means of determining their current potential. Maljkovic creates these reconstructions by applying the technique of collage to the media of photography and film: by crossfading between different time levels, he also gives them a fictional dimension that transforms them into sites for an alternative future.

In the context of Maljkovic's exhibition, *Recalling Frames* specifically refers to the extraction of single frames from a film sequence and hence to the concentration upon particular captured moments in time. His latest series of photographs focuses on selected film stills from Orson Welles' movie *The Trial* (1962), an adaptation of Franz Kafka's unfinished novel of the same name (*Der Prozess*, 1925). Parts of the film were shot in Croatia, and many of the exteriors show Zagreb as it was in the early 1960s. Some filming was also done at Jadran Film Studios in Zagreb at that time regarded as the "Hollywood of Europe" where, among others, the *Winnetou* films and Volker Schlöndorff's *The Tin Drum* (*Die Blechtrommel*, 1979) were produced. For his new series of works, Maljkovic tracked down the various shooting locations of *The Trial* in Zagreb and photographed them from exactly the same camera positions. He then alternately placed the negatives of the modern-day views and the corresponding film stills on top of one another, or combined sections of both and exposed them simultaneously. The resulting images are a kind of time travel in the medium of photography: the coincidence of past and present in these pictures reveals how the specific locations within the city have changed and reflects the social transformation of Zagreb since the 1960s; one such location is Novi Zagreb, a district that was developed during the socialist era with the construction of modernist housing estates.

David Maljkovic is also presenting a film installation based upon one of the key scenes in Welles' movie, where the main character can be seen standing in front of an empty screen inside a factory building, illuminated by the bright light of a slide projector. The screen behind him reflects back towards the audience like a duplication of the actual cinematic image, while viewers are also directly addressed by the protagonist speaking straight into the camera. Maljkovic takes up this idea of a reflexive projection into the space of the viewer, using a

16mm projector to present a sequence of flickering white images in a manner reminiscent of structural film. The blank moving images are accompanied by a sound collage made up of excerpts from the soundtrack of *The Trial*. Adopting a deliberately low-tech approach, Maljkovic evokes the suggestive power of the cinema inside the exhibition space and thereby explores the possibilities of the medium of film itself.

In *Recalling Frames* David Maljkovic is less concerned with the narrative content of Welles' movie than with the conditions under which it was produced in Zagreb. Set against this background, the empty, abstract images in Maljkovic's film can also be viewed as a metaphor for the failure of the Croatian film industry, whose importance has steadily declined since the 1990s. In their heyday in the 1960s, the film studios in Zagreb were technically advanced and played a major part in the international film scene. Their success reflected a period of economic growth in the constituent republic of Croatia and the productive exchange that was taking place between East and West at that time. Today the film studios are implementing a range of marketing strategies in the attempt to prevent the country's film legacy from falling into oblivion.

Maljkovic's work goes in search of the unfulfilled promise of the past: situated somewhere between 'then' and 'now', his new photographs draw parallels between the 1960s and the current situation in his native country, where a renewed spirit of optimism and a desire for change are emerging under different political conditions.

David Maljkovic's film was co-produced by the Zagreb-based curatorial collective What, How & for Whom/WHW. The artist and WHW have collaborated on a large number of projects over the years and support each other's artistic activities in Croatia. In December 2010 Maljkovic's new film will be presented at Gallery Nova in Zagreb, an exhibition space whose programme has been directed by WHW since 2003.

David Maljkovic, born 1973 in Rijeka, Croatia, currently lives and works in Zagreb. He recently had solo exhibitions at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (2009); Kunstverein Nürnberg (2008); Kunstverein Hamburg (2007); P.S. 1, New York (2007) and Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (2007). Recent group exhibitions include *Les Promesses du passé*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2010); *Rehabilitation*, Wiels Contemporary Art Center, Brussels (2010) and the 11th Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul (2009). This September he won the International Contemporary art Prize Diputació de Castelló.

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Visitor Information

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Opening hours: Tuesday Saturday, 10am-6pm, and by appointment

Admission: Free

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