

"Stalking with Stories: The Pioneers of the Immemorable"

APEXART

291 Church Street (between Walker and White)

September 19–November 3



Felix Gmelin, *Farbtest, Die Rote Fahne II* (Color Test, The Red Flag II), 2002, still from a two-channel silent color video, 12 minutes.

Interrogating the link between memory and history, Croatian curators Antonia Majaca and Ivana Bago present different narrative strategies that recover idealized or repressed versions of the past. Sanja Ivekovic's *Ponos* (Pride), 2004, is a re-creation of the red neon sign that once hung above a textile shop in socialist Yugoslavia and both signals and denies the original's desperation for monumentality. Perhaps to emphasize that such grandiose projections are necessarily subjective, certain artists use personal accounts to access collective histories. Katerina Sedá's film *It Doesn't Matter*, 2005, shows the artist's grandmother drawing from memory the objects once sold at her now-defunct home-supplies shop in Brno, likening memory to a kind of inventory. Also approaching politics through the experiences of his family, Felix Gmelin reenacts a video of his father running through the streets of West Berlin in 1968, waving a red flag to gather activists. Staged in Stockholm in 2002, Gmelin's reconstruction lacks the original's urgency, underscoring the status of the remake as a conceptual stunt. While much of the show is diagrammatic rather than aesthetic, occasional hints of color and singular voices emerge to counter the dense webs of texts and references. Artur Zmijewski humanizes the process by which memory is accrued through conflict in his haunting video portrait *Lisa*, 2003. Lisa is a German woman who moved to Israel and came to the simple, disturbing conclusion that she was a boy killed in the Holocaust. "I feel pain always," she says, as if physically embodying German postwar guilt. This piece, like the exhibition, claims that our attempts to describe or overcome the past are always inadequate, shifting fictions.

—Lori Cole