Remembering Times Past

Remembering Times Past springs from a very personal place. I was born and raised in Georgia, in the former USSR. The unity of Soviet life was an “ideological fiction.” In reality, everybody had their own perspective on things depending on their “special social situation.” In Georgia people of my generation never thought about the situation outside of their own social environment. The situation was all about style and ideology. The disappearing Soviet reality was the environment that we lived in. Two years ago when I visited the country for the first time in five years, I realized that it was not the Soviet symbols that were missing but the whole system of fake things that were created and been refined. Since then, while reviewing the artists’ work, I have been looking for the kind of work that addresses realities from the recent past. I selected a group of eight artists from various backgrounds and generations. Their work is not ideological, didactic, or judgmental. It offers us various perspectives on the abstraction of time and communist and the expression of that in the art....

Visiting local artists’ studios in Georgia, I came across a rare series of photographs called Definitions by Guram Tsibak. In these pictures the artist used old negatives and stencils, combined with wheat stalks, flowers, leaves, and personal letters to produce an atmosphere of contemplation and the expression of the meaning of life.

Remembering Times Past Curated by Irena Popashvili

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So, you think I am a spy, and the Warren Commission was a lie?...
Oliver Nituitch, also working in New York, was born in the former Yugoslavia and came to the United States in 1989 at the age of seventeen. Nituitch’s installation, Preserving, at the Hood Museum of the Dartmouth College was part of the "Shaping Scholars" exhibition at the Hood Gallery of the Museum of Fine Arts in the summer of 1996. The artist described the display of the work as a part of a New York installation: "It’s the space, the feeling of the work, the way it impacts me as a New York artist," the work suggests a nostalgia for the spirit of those days when street art was not yet scanned and broadcast into virtual pop-art patterns. It evokes a memory of a time and place still living in his heart. At the time, these gangsta trails and white trash dreams were the symbolic works of unbridled creativity and freedom. Nituitch compared the impact of these images to the popularity of American bluegrass in Eastern Europe before the fall of the Berlin Wall. He function as conduits of fantasy.

An example of a Uruguayan artist living in New York since 1983. Her thirteen portraits titled "Wet Raincoat," due to the topic of "dehumanization" (people mixing during Uruguay’s military era), pictures of anonymous people are placed under semi-transparent glass. The surface layer does not allow the viewer to focus sharply on the portraits, revealing the impossibility of seeing clearly, the impossibility of knowing real identities.

Highest (20 minutes, black & white), a video by the Armenian director, Sona Buzian, was presented as the Armenian section in the Galerie de l’Espace 19/20 exhibition. The artist’s work is based on a childhood recollection: a naked man disappearing into the dark cavity of gigantic clay wine baskets buried in the grounds of an ancient Armenian church. This manifestly repeated act refers to the tradition of cleaning wine baskets in the fall and visually references her heritage of Armenia.

Leandro Katz is represented by two pieces: the installation "Jovanka’s Clothes and El Oso Que Me Quieres (The Dog You’ll Love Me—10 minutes colored sound, 1997)" is a new real-time film investigating the trajectory of the body of Che Guevara, surrounded by his captors. Not a political documentary in a traditional sense, Katz’s film is a series of images of Che’s (as a man for whom the world had become intolerable) and his body as a place of hopelessness, to which we cannot stand on the currents of the present as if we were superior to the past.”

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