

Katerina Sidorova - Bottleneck

Exhibition: 22.07.2022 — 02.10.2022, Opening: 22.07.2022, 18:00 hrs.

Location: West Den Haag in the former American Embassy, Lange Voorhout 102, The Hague

The morning of the 24th of February 2022 changed the collective memory of many with the attack of Putin's Russia on Ukraine. The loss and harm caused by this war to this day is inexpressible for many on both sides and will remain a critical juncture in the global historic consciousness. But in order for this act of violence to happen, many steps have been taken by Putin and its regime in the past decade. Through a continuous tightening of the political freedom of its citizens, excessive use of force against the opposition, and controlling the press, the foundation for these actions was carried out.

The solo exhibition 'Bottleneck' by Katerina Sidorova is informed by a critical juncture in the country's contemporary history through the protest of May 6, 2012. The moment in which the largest protests of civil society for fair elections since the fall of the Soviet Union and the regime showed its true face — when a peaceful demonstration for fair elections was shut down violently by the authorities. A moment that should change the country's history and which enabled the spiral of violence and authoritarianism to unfold. 'Bottleneck' is based on the events of May 6, 2012, when a peaceful demonstration was planned on Bolotnaya Square in Moscow. The rally, the main requirements of which were fair elections and changes in the country, took place a day before the presidential inauguration of Vladimir Putin. 'Bottleneck' refers to the police tactic of creating blockages in a spot where large groups of protesters were trying to pass through a narrow part of the street. In the context of these events, the artistic practice of Sidorova is of high relevance as she moves seamlessly between visual arts and the political within her practice.

In 'Bottleneck' Sidorova enters a dialogue with the political in the physical space. She references the geometrical forms of Russian streets filled with the collective body of the protesting masses, giving shape to the unheard moments, the faceless warriors of justice by depicting motion in a standstill. Through the altering of found footage, Sidorova is documenting the moments that will define the country's future through looking back in time to a critical juncture in its development. Capturing the starry eyes of the protestors, hollow faces stoned in anger, seized in the tactility and materiality of the pieces on display. Her tracing and processing of the historical and contemporary Russian socio-political context through 'Bottleneck' allow the viewer to revisit and understand the actual events of the 2012 'color-revolution' in Russia ten years after and its impact on today's events. Aiming to connect the individual, local and global influence these events have on the collective memory, in and outside Russia.

Katerina Sidorova (1991, Yaroslavl, Russia) is an artist and a scholar living and working in The Hague, Netherlands. Her practice focuses on human understanding of the world through the acceptance of mortality. She is interested in societal hierarchies, mythologies, and performativity as a political strategy of society. Sidorova looks at the absurdity of mankind's existence through its relationships with death, non-human species, and the coping mechanisms of reasoning. As a response to the current situation in Russia, Sidorova's practice has taken a more historic-political stance, still having mortality at the core of it. Sidorova did have solo presentations at 16 Nicholson Street, Glasgow, UK, and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, NL.

Contextual Program:

18.08.2022 at 20:00 'The screening of Milo Rau's documentary 'The Moscow Trials' - that sheds light onto the political trials that were held against activists in the summer of 2012 followed by a conversation with the director.

04.09.2022 at OA Festival 'Performance by Katerina Sidorova. Followed by 'Beyond the Bottleneck - 10 years after' A panel discussion aimed to mediate between the borders of artistic, social and political understandings of protest and its consequences. With: Frits Dijcks (artist and editor Jegens & Tevens), Beatrice Campell (assistant professor at Leiden University) and Katerina, moderated by Yannik Guldner.

24.09.2022 at 18:00 'A Cooking Conversation' Together with artist Vlada Predelina, guests will cook pelmeni, a Russian national dish. Using them as a listening tool, we will open up discussions about unwritten histories, knowledges and their meaning in the current context.

The Game of Knives is the accompanying publication to the show, that connects the historic with the contemporary influence the events on Bolotnaya Square had to contemporary Russia. The project is curated by Yannik Guldner and made possible through the kind support of West Den Haag and Stroom Den Haag.

Journalists are welcome to meet the artist. For more information or to make an appointment, please contact Chloë van Diepen: chloe@westdenhaag.nl or call (0)70.3925359

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