

ALBANIAN TRILOGY A SERIES OF DEVIOLUS STRATAGEMS



A PROJECT BY
ARMANDO LULAJ
CURATED BY
MARCO SCOTINI

ALBANIAN REPUBLIC PAVILION
56th INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA
ARSENALE

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la Biennale di Venezia

56. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

What is the original skeleton of an eleven meter Mediterranean whale doing in an area dedicated to political history? Why is it on display here and not elsewhere?

The Albanian Republic's Department for Culture announces its participation in the 56th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia with *Albanian Trilogy: A Series of Devious Stratagems*, a project by Armando Lulaj, curated by Marco Scotini, hosted in the spaces of the Arsenale.

A reflection on Albanian social history, a single narrative corpus articulated over three distinct moments: *Albanian Trilogy* is a sort of museum machine of the past, with strange memorabilia and trophies which presents, contemporaneously, fiction and documentary material. Combining evocation and documentation, the project concentrates on a historic-political phase that was extremely important for the building of an identity that was not just Albanian but international. On display are three videos and archive material, as well as an enormous whale's skeleton which is both protagonist and silent witness.

For Armando Lulaj (Tirana, 1980) *Albanian Trilogy* represents the conclusion of many years of research into the period of the Cold War in Albania and, in particular, on the relative themes of collective memory and historic experience, brought together in a film trilogy.

The first work in this series is *It Wears as It Grows* (2011), the second piece of the trilogy is the well known project *NEVER* (2012), while the third video, *Recapitulation* (2015) was created specifically for the Art Biennale 2015. Lulaj's work plays, above all,

on the lapses in history: as the curator, Marco Scotini, states: "it reveals an unstable terrain where one expects to find potent and unmovable representations."

In *Albanian Trilogy*, Lulaj's artistic research into the specters of socialism and Scotini's curatorial research on the politics of memory arrive at an important common result.

The project was selected through an open call with an international jury chaired by Boris Groys and consisting of Kathrin Rhomberg, Adrian Paci, Alberto Heta and a representative of the Department of Culture. The jury, whose decision was unanimous, motivated its choice stating: "With *Albanian Trilogy*, Armando Lulaj follows an investigation into the available interpretations of Albanian history from the Cold War through to today, reintroducing images that were once highly representative, politically intense and narrations that are still rooted in the visual memory of the population, in a manner that goes well beyond a subjective discussion of national history, in order to push towards a general analysis of the ruins and failures of modernity".

The publication, in the form of a historical atlas, edited by Sternberg Press, was seen as an extension of the exhibition and includes, amongst others, contributions from Hou Hanru, Boris Groys and Marco Scotini.

THE ARTIST

Armando Lulaj (Tirana, 1980) lives and works in Tirana. He is a playwright, director and the author of texts and videos on areas of danger and images of conflict. Amongst his more important personal exhibitions are: *UNTITLED*, Galleria Cavour, Bologna (2014); *Fiend*, National Theatre, Tirana (2013); *Cold Wind 2*, Arte Fiera Bologna (2013), *Cold Wind*, Volta8, Basel (2012); *No More Feelings*, Paolo Maria Deanesi Gallery, Rovereto (2012); *No Mercy*, Artra Gallery, Milano (2011); *Silent Soziale Corruption*, Lothringer13 e Städtische Kunsthalle München (2010). He has participated in numerous international exhibitions, amongst which are: *Lost in Landscape*, MART, Rovereto (2014); *The Empty Pedestal*, Museo Civico Archeologico, Bologna (2014); *Utopian Days*, Total Museum of Contemporary Art, South Korea (2014); *63rd Berlinale Film Festival*, Berlin (2013); *6th Berlin Biennial* (2010); *8th Baltic Biennale of Contemporary Art*, Szczecin (2009); *4th Gothenburg Biennial* (2007); *Albanian Pavilion*, 52nd International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia (2007); *Tirana Biennial* (2005) and the *Prague Biennial* (2003 and 2007).

THE CURATOR

Marco Scotini, art critic and independent curator, is the Director of the department of Visual Arts and Curatorial Studies of NABA in Milan, of the magazine “No Order: Art in a Post-Fordist Society” published by Archive Books (Berlin), of the Gianni Colombo Archive (Milan) and the PAV, Turin. His articles have appeared in “Moscow Art Magazine”, “Springerin”, “Flash Art”, “Domus”, “Manifesta Journal”, “Kaleidoscope”, “Brumaria”, “Chto Delat?/What is to be done?”, “Open!”, “South as a State of Mind” and “Alfabeta”. Amongst the latest exhibitions he has curated are: *Da Capo: Deimantas Narkevicius*, MSU, Zagreb, (2015); *Too early Too late. Middle-East and Modernity*, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (2015); the project *in progress Disobedience Archive*: Berlin, Mexico DF, Eindhoven, Karlsruhe, Nottingham, Bucharest, Riga, Zagreb, Atlanta, Boston, Umea, Copenhagen, Turin, Madrid, Istanbul (2005–14); *Vegetation as a Political Agent*, PAV, Turin (2014); *The Empty Pedestal*, Civico Museo Archeologico, Bologna (2014); *A History of Irritated Material*, with Lars Bang Larsen, Raven Row, London (2010) and *Gianni Colombo*, with Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, Castello di Rivoli, Turin (2009). He has curated more than one hundred personal exhibitions of artists from Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. He has been collaborating with Armando Lulaj since 2001.

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56th INTERNATIONAL ART EXHIBITION – LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

ARMANDO LULAJ

ALBANIAN TRILOGY: A SERIES OF DEVIIOUS STRATAGEMS

CURATED BY MARCO SCOTINI

VENICE, ARSENALE

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