



22nd Art Stays Contemporary Art Festival - THE SPACE

Programme 2024

4 July - 8 September 2024

The opening weekend of the **22nd edition of the Art Stays Festival** starts in Ptuj on Thursday, **4 July at 6 pm**. Since 2003, the Art Stays Festival has been bringing to Ptuj and its surroundings top-class productions by local and international artists, from the most promising young artists to the big names of contemporary art such as Ai Weiwei, Yoko Ono, Monira Al Qadiri, Gilbert & George, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Edward Burtynsky, Robin Meier, Ivan Navarro, Allora & Calzadilla, Koen Vanmechelen, Hannah Collins, Ilona Nemeth, Jordi Alcaraz, Perino & Vele, Fernando Prats, Roberto Pugliese, Michele Spanghero, Tiffany Chung, Gigi Scaria, Regina Jose Galindo, Grace Weir, and many others. Each year, a wide range of visual artists, curators, musicians and gallerists respond to the invitation to dialogue and journey through a wide range of topical issues. Today, Art Stays is one of the most important presentations of contemporary art, especially fine art, in Slovenia and in this part of Europe, and has become a reference event for many international galleries, museums, foundations and, of course, artists.

The 22nd edition of Art Stays, Slovenia's largest contemporary art festival, **The Space**, will once again artistically fuse the cultural heritage of the city with contemporary art production by artists from all over the world. **This year's edition asks what space is, what kind of space we are talking about and whether what is around us is really all there is.**

The festival opens with a multimedia projection **PRÉCIPITÉES** by French artist **Béatrice Lartigue** and a free, expressive exploration of movement by **GEA's** local dance community **on 4 July 2024 at 6pm in the Dominican monastery Hall**. This will be followed by the opening of the major international exhibition **ECOSOFISMI**, curated by Matteo Galbati. At 21:00, the opening concert of the well-known Argentinian band **La Fanfarria del Capitan** will take place on the festival stage in the Slovenian Square.

Until Sunday 7 July, a varied programme of the opening weekend will take place, with exhibition openings at ten exhibition venues, concerts, workshops, performances, talks and other events. An exceptional gathering in the beautiful ambiances of ancient Ptuj, in the company of selected wines from the Ptuj Cellar and local cuisine.

The programme was curated by the festival's artistic director **Jernej Forbici** and creative director **Marika Vicari**, together with guest curators.

The programme includes exhibitions, performances and projects by artists such as Christiane Löhr, Wilhelm Mundt, Shaun Gladwell, Hans Op de Beeck, Franco Marrocco, Giancarlo Dell'Antonia, Béatrice Lartigue, Asako Hishiki, Cesare Galluzzo, Mauro Staccioli,

Willy Verginer, Luigi Dellatorre, Gianfranco Gentile, Beppe Bonetti, Dušan Fišer, Vinko Tušek, Natalija R. Črnčec, Nina Šulin, JunesHelen, Navid Azimi Sajadi, Alessandra Calò, Davide Maria Coltro, Nicola Evangelisti, Armida Gandini, Carla Iacono, Saba Masoumian, Mona Lisa Tina, Srđan Mohorič, Gašper Capuder, Nina Čelhar, Tjaša Rener, Tjaša Rener, Renato Arnejčič...

In addition to the festival projects, the 22nd Art Stays festival includes a series of meetings: talks, workshops, concerts, debates and other events that will delve deeper into the theme of this year's edition.

The venues of the 22nd edition of the festival will be: the Ptuj City Gallery, the Dominican Monastery, the Mihelič Gallery, the Ptuj Castle, the East Tower of the Ptuj Castle, the Exhibition Centre of the Ivan Potrč Library Ptuj, the Magistrat Gallery, the Narrow Gallery, the FO.VI Gallery, the exhibition centre of the Breg Creative Centre, the stage on Slovenske trg and the squares and streets of the Old Town.

Partner galleries and other partners of this year's festival programme: Hans Op de Beeck Studio, Studio La Linea Verticale Arte Contemporanea, Studio la Città, ArteA Gallery, LeoGalleries, Paraventi Giapponesi - Galleria Nobili, Romberg Arte Contemporanea, Tucci Russo Studio per l'Arte Contemporanea, Ravnikar Gallery Space, Galerija Equrna, ARTantide Gallery, Galerija Prešernovih nagrajencev...

The programme of the 22nd Art Stays - PROSTOR Contemporary Art Festival includes the following exhibition projects:

- **The central exhibition PROSTOR / THE SPACE** at the Ptuj City Gallery (curators. The invited international artists present themselves in an open environment where mobility (**Vinko Tušek**), meta-rationality (**Beppe Bonetti**), visual fiction (**Hans Op de Beeck**), dimensions (**Natalija R. Črnčec, Nina Šulin, JUNESHELEN**), processes of proliferation (**Béatrice Lartigue**) and equilibrium (**Shaun Gladwell**) offer reflections on the nature of space, change and human reflection. The exhibition is a journey in which the works redefine themselves in contact with each other. They gather, reflect or continually invite a new observation of space on the part of the viewer in their search and addition as a dynamic situation. For by dwelling and living with, from and in the neutral space of the Ptuj City Gallery, the works become part of it, marking time with the everyday and revealing new experiences of the possible.
- The exhibition **ECOFISMS** at the Dominican Monastery (guest curator: Matteo Galbiati) presents stories of natural reconciliation and brings together six artists of different generations (**Cesare Galluzzo, Asako Hishiki, Christiane Löhr, Wilhelm Mundt, Mauro Staccioli, Willy Verginer**) whose work has always been marked by the close connection between man and nature. If sophism as a philosophical term contemplates thinking that leads to mistaken reflections, the will to observe and reflect that is moved by the works of these authors aims instead to justify the moral value of a new "environmental" consciousness, where the anthropic component is not subjugated by superiority and is not in conflict with the work of nature. It is a question of proposing the right balance, which must be an equilibrium between man, nature and the space they share. While ecology and environmentalism have often

meant misleading or flag-waving extremism, the little discussed ecosophy tends towards a deeper reason for the coexistence of every living system. This is what it seeks to inspire us. In this sense, the works also enter the space of the cross corridor in a measured, almost invisible way: they are small signs to be sought out, understood and welcomed - and this is also true of some of the larger works - for their lightness, their lyricism, their effective and lasting resonance of value.

- The exhibition **TRANSIT SPACES FOR MOBILE IDENTITIES** at Ptuj Castle (guest curator: Livia Savorelli) seeks a dialogue with a space conceived as a crossroads of transitions (people, cultures, artefacts) and as a place of preservation of exceptional treasures, a space of transition that, in the richness of its collections and the objects it holds, restores the sedimented memory of those who inhabited it and made it a precious treasure chest that we can visit today. The many visual suggestions coming from its rich spaces are in many cases the occasion for a dialogue with the contemporary works of art by the eight artists (**Navid Azimi Sajadi, Alessandra Calò, Davide Maria Coltro, Nicola Evangelisti, Armida Gandini, Carla Iacono, Saba Masoumian, Mona Lisa Tina**) selected for the exhibition: A gallery of portraits of Central and Eastern European noblemen and noblewomen, turqueries, tapestries of scenes from the Odyssey, a collection of historical musical instruments. The dialogue with space cannot be separated from the reflection on identity, which is shaped by travel, the discovery of new territories, the encounter of different cultures and the body as a boundary.
- The exhibition **SILENT LIMIT** in the exhibition centre of the Ivan Potrč Library Ptuj (guest curator: Italo Bergantini, Romberg), sees space as an infinite growth of possible points. The possibility of existence of each point depends on there being so much space within the space that it loses the character of abstract generality. The exterior is made up of many points, each of which has its own inner vision, a silent and reflexive equilibrium between inner and outer space. The idea of space, interior space, interior exterior in a silent border where all perceptions are grafted together according to precepts, i.e. images and appearances that translate into figurative thinking. A reflection on the ambiguity of perception and the illusion of technocratic reality, with a close confrontation between the different attempts to perceive space, which is abstract in this way, and the concreteness of real space, the space that dwells around us and within us. The artists in the exhibition are **Franco Marrocco** and **Giancarlo Dell'Antonia**.
- at the exhibition **CAMOUFLAGE - RETHINKING THE SPACE** by the Slovenian artist **Duša Jesih** at the Mihelič Gallery, visitors will be able to immerse themselves in the fascinating world of the artist, where the boundaries between the real and the illusory are blurred. The exhibition "Camouflage" is not just a presentation of paintings, but a holistic experience that intertwines art with space and invites active participation. Jesihova's masterful use of geometric shapes, colours and textures blend into the gallery space, creating the illusion of movement and change. Her works are not static paintings on canvas, but active elements that confront and integrate with the space. This creates a unique symbiosis between art and the environment that awakens the viewer's curiosity and encourages exploration. The exhibition is not a retrospective of past work, but a look into the future of the artist's work. It presents her current focus

and offers a glimpse into the new directions that art is exploring in the context of space. The concept of camouflage, which is the name of the exhibition, is not only a metaphor for a hiding place, but also illustrates the way art interacts with its surroundings. The works adapt to the space, integrate into it and thus actively co-create it. The exhibition will present new installations designed specifically for the Mihelič Gallery that make use of architecture.

- The exhibition **INDUSTRIAL SPACES** by the recently deceased renowned Ptuj photographer **Srdan Mohorič** also marks the opening of a new gallery acquisition in the city. Probably the narrowest gallery in Slovenia will open its narrow passageway into the nameless alleyway behind the recently renovated Stara Staklarska, the Old Staklarska cultural centre. And since Stara Steklarska is dedicated to Ptuj's culture, we are opening the new open-air gallery with an exhibition by Srdan Mohorič, who, together with his colleagues, founded the DPD Svoboda Ptuj Photo Cinema Club in 1976, which he led as its president until 1990, the period when the club was at its most active. At that time, Ptuj was one of the most successful centres of Yugoslav photography. In 1974, he took up a job at the Aluminium and Clay Factory in Kidričevo, from where the series of photographs presented here, entitled Fabrika (Factory), originated.
- The exhibition **SPACE OF ETHICS** at Magistrat Gallery (guest curator: Paolo Mozzo, ARTantide Gallery) presents the work of two artists committed to the Ethical Art Movement **Gianfranco Gentile's** urban archaeology and **Luigi Dellatore's** mapping of the new world and space, using recycled materials, invite the viewer to reflect aesthetically on human invention and its passing.
- The site-specific project **ENTRANCE MODULE INTO THE SPACE OF LIGHT 0** in the eastern tower of the Ptuj Castle by artist **Dušan Fišer** reminds us that light determines and defines space. The direct experience of light on the surface and in the volume influences its appearance, revealing materials and their structures as it reflects off them or seeps through them. It is a perception of the space of light and its boundlessness that confronts the viewer with the impossibility of defining the space in which he finds himself.
- The exhibition **SEARCHING HOME** in the exhibition centre of the Creative Centre Breg in Majšperk (guest curator: Doroteja Kotnik), presents the work of three Slovenian visual artists - **Gašper Capuder**, **Nina Čelhar** and **Tjaša Renner** - whose artistic work explores the contemporary culture of living and presents different interpretations of the interiors or furnishings of living spaces. The culture of living of the millennial European relates to various consumer trends and fashion trends in interior design, which are intertwined with the diversity of the geographical area of our upbringing and later home. Nina's aesthetic minimalism of details from her home environment, Tjaša's colourful style with a touch of southern nostalgia and the traditions of African culture, and Gašper's interiors infused with toys and millennial pop art will take us on a search for our own home, which is all the more important for us millennials as the search for our own home is constantly moving into the realms of the unattainable.

- The exhibition **FAMILY SPACES** at the FO.VI Gallery in Strnišče near Kidričevo summarises the latest sculptural research of the young Slovenian artist **Renato Arnejčič**, grouped under the title Family Ties, where his work deals with the prolematics of family spaces that are hidden from the public eye. At the same time, he is critical of the traditional concept of the family, which is often an obstacle to the emancipation of the individual.
- **OPEN SPACE**, an open-air exhibition by various artists from previous editions of the festival, subscribes to the principle that if people cannot, do not want to or do not manage to get to art (in galleries), art must come to them. For a decade now, the festival has been living with the city and in the city of Ptuj, placing art projects not only in the city's galleries and closed exhibition spaces, but also in the city's squares, streets, courtyards and parks, and this year will be no different.

Among the projects accompanying the opening weekend programme, we would like to highlight:

- The concert of the Argentinian band **LA FANFARRIA DEL CAPITAN**, who started their 14th European tour in June, presenting their 6th album El Cantomanto (2022). Their tour will take them to Slovenia, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, with a total of more than 25 concerts. La Fanfarria del Capitán travels the world, sharing and expanding the boundaries of their own musical expression. The band plays a special blend of Latin, rock and Balkan rhythms and is known for its energetic live performances.
- The traditional **Small Summer Academy** for the youngest lovers of the beautiful, which will take place in the week preceding the festival and will give young imaginations the freedom to create their own space, according to their wishes and needs. Eight small galleries, dioramas, which will be filled with children and teenagers to show their Self through the use and design of space. The exhibition of the resulting artistic interventions will be on display at the Magistrat Gallery in Ptuj Town Hall until September.
- The workshop **SPACES OF MEMORY** by the renowned Italian performance artist **Mona Lisa Tina**, who will present a large-scale emotional experience through integrated art therapy techniques. With special attention to the importance of the term space in the distinction between public and private, between the external and the internal, the workshop intends to stimulate a possible reflection on what constitutes for each of us a physical (or virtual) space that can be shared by society, where everyone has the right to move or dialogue between what is different from the private space reserved for personal, intimate, family life. Accompanied by the artist in an empathic dimension, without judgement, everyone will be able to express themselves with images, words, colours and shapes, to open up to their emotions and get to know them more deeply.
- A concert by the jazz ensemble **RATKO DIVJAK TRIO** in the courtyard of Ptuj Castle, with **Ratko Divjak**, who ploughed the Yugoslavian rock scene with his iconic bands, behind the drums. For 40 years he was a drummer in the RTV Slovenia Big

Band, and his playing has been recorded on over 10,000 recordings. In recent years, as an established jazz musician, he has been active both on the domestic music scene and in neighbouring countries. His trio includes guitarist, composer and producer **Igor Bezget** and double bassist **Nikola Matošić**. For decades, these two renowned musicians have been enriching the national and international cultural space; their music can be found on more than 100 recordings. The trio's music is based on original and fresh interpretations of both the standard jazz repertoire and original compositions by the participants written especially for this ensemble.

- **CARILLON**, a performance by the Bolognese artist **Mona Lisa Tina**, which continues last year's festival theme of travel, migration in relation to the construction of identity, analysing the aspect of care and reception of strangers, those who are perceived as "different"; starting with **CARILLON**, a performance that welcomes poetic/aesthetic reflections related to the themes of caring and deep listening, which represent an intimate space of interaction and relationship with the Other. In the background of the action and throughout its duration, the amplified sounds of various popular ballads arranged as carillon sounds can be heard, along with the projection of short sections of three special films directed and performed by Charlie Chaplin: *The Emigrant* (2017), *Modern Times* (1936) and *City Lights* (1931). In a simple yet intimate act, I will be gently combing the hair of those present. The short segments of Chaplin's three films are composed in a discursive and linear way: 'telling' from the artist's perspective, also in the light of recent news related to the painful stories of migrants and all those who find themselves in a situation where they have to leave their country, the non-rhetorical tragic nature of human existence with a nostalgic and tender gaze.
- The round table **WHITE BOOK: Art Stays**, where festival guests and others will share their views on art and its impact in Ptuj. Art Stays is one of the leading cultural actors in the city and for 22 years has been responsible for the development and promotion of contemporary, especially visual art through activities and events in Ptuj and abroad.

The detailed programme of the opening weekend of the 22nd edition of Art Stays can be found on our website www.artstays.si. For more information and additional photos, please contact us at info@artstays.si or jernejforbici@gmail.com.

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