

ADRIAN PACI

Of Lives and Tales

Curated by Edi Muka

Adrian Paci (born in 1969 in Albania) is one of today's most acclaimed artists internationally. His art practice arises in response to the historical, political and cultural transformation that emerged out of the upheavals experienced in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the 90's. His work is often inspired by stories and characters he encounters in his everyday life that he lets slide poetically towards fiction, engendering new realities. Videos, photographs, drawings, paintings and sculptures are all artistic devices through which Paci creates his suggestive narration full of social reflections.

Departing from his own experience and that of his family – having to escape violent riots in Albania in 1997 and migrate to Italy - he explores issues of political transformation, wait, loss, nostalgia and displacement, and above all, the energetic and forceful research of a cultural identity that transcends the physical movement of humans from one territory to another.

The exhibition at Roda Sten Konsthall is the first large retrospective of Paci in Sweden. It presents a diverse body of works (videos, installations, paintings, and photographs) and shows the numerous interconnections that operate between them. From a stylistic point of view, light and chiaroscuro permeate his videos and photographs, holding a symbolic role and reflecting Paci's earlier training as a painter.

In a Pasolini-inspired stance he is also attracted by portraiture, which he uses magnificently in the videos *Centro di Permanenza Temporanea* 2007, and *Electric Blue* 2010. The first video is a beautiful rendering of the eerie feeling of non-belonging that displaced people bear upon their features as an undeletable mark. A group of people pile up closer and closer to each other to climb an airplane-boarding staircase. But there's no airplane to board at the end of the staircase just the unavoidable gap into thin air.

Electric Blue instead, reflects on the individual's search for his identity in times of tumultuous change in society. Here, the importance of the image as a conveyor of changing social, cultural and political contexts comes to the fore through a human story - the story of a man who turns to selling tapes of porn films after his film-making dream is crashed by the harsh reality. The story is revealed to us through overlapping events where carnival, weddings, funerals, pornography and war coexist in a strange collage.

A central place in the show is dedicated to the newest film by Paci, *The Column* 2013, a piece for which Roda Sten Konsthall joined in as co-producer with a number of museums and institutions. The work shows the journey of a block of marble from its extraction from a quarry in China to its shipping, during which sculptors transform it into a Roman column. The block of marble is loaded on board a kind of factory-ship, a cargo whose open hold serves as a workshop for the sculptors. Capitalist logic perfectly carried out; in order to maximize shipping time, the work is completed during the journey. Shipping - once economically unproductive – has become a productive power. As the artist says "While mirroring a well-known condition of productive efficiency, *The Column* has its roots in a poetic intuition: an idea in search of form will only be able to develop at a distance from its origins, just like commercial goods are increasingly conceived in one place and manufactured in another through the elaborate and methodical exploitation of cheap labor used, in this case, onboard 'sweatshop ships'."

As if in an ancient saga transposed to our modern day, we follow this seemingly obstinate object transforming into the metaphor of a life journey, and in the process, revealing us many untold human-life stories, inextricably related to and shaped by it.

Of Lives and Tales takes us in a historical journey through Adrian Paci's rich body of work and thematic interests. Along with a selection of early works - *Albanian Stories*, 1997; *Back Home*, 2001; *Believe me I'm an artist*, 2000 - it presents a number of other pieces created during the last years including *Klodi* 2005, *The Last Gestures* 2009, *She* 2008, *Britma* 2009 and *La Caduta* 2013.

About the artist

Adrian Paci graduated in Painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Tirana in 1991. After representing Albania at the Venice Biennale in 1999 and exhibiting at the PS1 MoMa in New York in 2005, his work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions. In Sweden Paci's work has been shown at Bildmuseet Umeå, BAC Visby, Moderna Museet and Bonniers Konsthall in Stockholm. He has also had solo shows among others in Kunstverein Hanover, Tel Aviv contemporary art centre, Kunsthaus Zurich, Jeu de Paume Paris, and PAC Milan. Among numerous group shows, he has participated in Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana (2000), Venice Biennale (2005), Tate Modern, London (2008), Maxxi Rome, Tirana Bienial (2003 and 2009), and Lyon Biennial (2011).

***The Column* is produced by Röda Sten Konsthall in collaboration with:**

Jeu de Paume, Paris
Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Trondheim
PAC Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milano
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
NCTM e Arte, Milano
Unicredit Bank, Milano
TICA, Tirana
Vulcano, Venedig

Press preview

Thursday February 13, 1pm – 3pm

Press images

rodastenkonsthall.se/press

Opening

Lördag 15 februari, kl 12.00–17.00

Program

Artist talk, Saturday February 15 2.30pm
Three reflections, lecture evening, theme movement.

Contact

Linnea Thorén
Communications manager
lt@rodastenkonsthall.se
+46 (0)31-12 08 46

Mia Christersdotter Norman
Director
mcn@rodastenkonsthall.se
+46 (0)73-951 61 23