

Letting the days go by, water flowing underground

Iosif Király

Curator Cristina Stoenescu

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Anca Poterasu Gallery, Bucharest

Under the uncertain conditions of the lockdown, the end-of-March show has slowly transformed into the mid-June gallery reopening. Amidst the sudden quiet and eerie stillness of the city, Iosif Király's photographs have lingered with us in isolation, during caffeinated afternoons and plan Bs of plan Bs.

One of the rooms turned into an exhibition-studio where the artist is working on framing the photographs, installing, entangling metal wirings, while discussing the layout of the show. It's the room where the works from the series "Old men feel the weather in their bones" are exhibited. The lighting is different here, creating a more intimate space for personal memories.

Iosif Király delves head-on into the idea of time, the irreversible and the strangely repetitive ripple of events that shape out the entirety of our lives. There are different undercurrents that the exhibition sets out to explore: a time of the archive - with which the artist has been infinitely familiar with throughout his career, a time of observation and a time of reminiscence. A time of idleness and lazy sun-bathing on the steps of some art-museum on scorching heat. A historical time full of events that we share with others, and memories that perhaps will only be seen in old family photo-albums, or that will otherwise rest forgotten, locked away in the minds of just a few.

Today we changed our minds and we are setting the main hall differently, we are insisting on a more powerful presence for the photographic works on the walls. There is as of now a large installation at the entrance that is the nexus, the heart of the show before it feeds into the gallery rooms, into the process of it all and into the Danube images.

The artist reflects on the ineffable relation that photography has not with one specific time or another, but with its simultaneous runs that are brought together in an ever-shifting perception of the past. Political history, personal lives. Time and one's own time. In his restructured photographs, Iosif Király uses hundreds of camera-shots, capturing the various heartbeats of life, rhythms that vary from room to room. Right at the entrance, the harsh edges of concrete walls depicted on the Danube banks are so geometrically powerful, that the shapes seem to be making their way out of the photograph. A tipping of the sense of perspective, just enough to reconsider the layers of many places collapsing into one.

A walk through the gallery is building familiarity, where fragments of a photograph are carried into the next one – a slightly different angle, the artist's shadow in the background, same people, "same as it ever was" as the song goes.

The artist muses the idea of an image loop, an enclosed narrative space where an infinite number of connections is possible. Photography and video, media loops playing on repeat frozen moments, interwoven to the point of dispersion.

Just like the images from the series *Reconstructions_Danube* or *Reconstructions_Trains* the exhibition is constantly re-assembled, permuted. Some images of the works are made on film, as the time-stamps of the '90s and 2000s camera reveal, others are digitally scanned, made, remade. Reprinted, cropped and blended together in main themes that run parallel – the archive, the personal, the political. *Synapses* are Király's latest series, wherein thin metal strings contour the compositions like drawings of the main lines of a painting. Silhouettes and shapes become rectangles and triangles, tracing the trajectory of the gaze on the assemblage. It may be that in another time, the wires come apart and recompose other sight lines.

I can hear the tip-tap sound of the nails as the artist sets them into the prints – a mechanical editing of the image in the post-digital age. There is a strange effect on the eye through the layers of photo-images and metal strings, a force that appears to pass or travel through reality.

A hand stops in its place a distanced ferry on the green-blue Danube, another one rests on the edge of a floating boat, all pointing out to the strange details we forget and remember and remember and forget.

Iosif KIRÁLY (b. 1957) is a Romanian visual artist, architect, and educator. His work investigates the relationship between perception, time, synchronicity and memory through photography, installation-art, drawing and more recently, video. He has initiated, coordinated, and, together with architects, visual artists, and anthropologists, participated in research projects related to the changes having occurred in post-communist Romania: D-Platform, RO-Archive, Triaj, Tinseltown. During the 1980s, Iosif Király became active in the mail art network, an international underground movement established by Fluxus. After 1989, he exhibited both individually and within the subREAL* group.

Iosif Király's works are found in numerous private and public collections such as the following: The National Contemporary Art Museum in Bucharest, 2000+ Arteast Collection, Moderna galerija, Ljubljana*; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Light Work, Syracuse, NY; Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin; Neue Galerie Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum; Museum of Contemporary Art, Ars Aevi, Sarajevo*; Q Contemporary, Budapest*; The Benetton Collection; Emprise Bank, Wichita, KS; Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Modena; European Central Bank, Frankfurt; Hypo Bank, Frankfurt*.

He most recently exhibited at Musée des Beaux-Arts de Tournai (2019) and Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp (2019) in the framework of Europalia, as well as at the ICO Museum Madrid/Photo Espana (2019) and at the Espace Niemeyer in Paris (2019). In 2018, the National Contemporary Art Museum in Bucharest organizes a large solo-show retrospective of his work titled "Closed Doors, Open Envelopes, early works 1975-2000". He has exhibited all over the world, including Bozar Bruxelles (2019), Museum der Moderne Salzburg (2019), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2018), Australian Center for Photography, Sydney (2015), MART – Museo di Arte Moderna et Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto (2014), Museum of Photography Braunschweig (2013), Camera Austria, Graz (2012*, 2010), Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka (2013), Museum of Photography, Tessaloniki (2013), Württembergische Kunstverein (WKV), Stuttgart (2010), Reina Sofia, Madrid* (2010), Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (2005), Kunsthalle Wien (2004), VOX – Centre de l'image contemporaine, Montreal* (2001), Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam* (2000), Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris* (2000), Moderna Museet, Stockholm (1999), Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha / USA (1995 – 1997).

Iosif Király also exhibited in notable biennials among which we mention The 3rd Prague Biennale (2007), Venice Biennale (1999*, 1997, 1993*), Berlin Biennale Germany (1998), Manifesta 1, Kunsthal Rotterdam* (1996), São Paulo Biennale (1994), Istanbul Biennial* (1992), 2nd Internationale Foto-Triennale Esslingen (1992).