



NEDKO SOLAKOV

A Cornered Solo Show #3
(with Charles Esche as my
artistic conscience)

belvedere

THE WORM OF DOUBT IS GNAWING AT ME—BUT IF I AM TRYING SO HARD TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO PLEASE THE AUDIENCE, MAYBE I WILL LOSE MY UNIQUE ARTISTIC APPROACH (the doubt-worm almost died on LAUBERGER when it heard the line about UNIQUENESS)

SEVEN POLITICIANS WITH THEIR PERSONAL BODYGUARDS AND SOME VOTERS



WHAT ABOUT POLITICS? SHALL I SHOW IN MY SOLO SHOW MY SOLO UNDERSTANDING ABOUT POLITICS, BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY?

Do Austrian politics. The neo-fascists are the biggest party in the poles again, even tourists be shocked by this.

OK

SHALL I USE SOME OF THE GORGEOUS ORNAMENTS FROM THE NEARBY ROOMS TO MAKE MY SOLO SHOW MORE BEAUTIFUL?

EDERE'S MAGNIFICENT BUILDING. IS SHOW WOULD BE? SHOULD I PREPARE MYSELF? FULLY CLEAR IDEA OF WHAT I NEED!"

CURATOR) CHARLES to be just starting WAS A BIT OF

/CHARLES, SPONTANEOUSLY STUDIO FOR A decade.

VS.

I FEEL LIKE THAT I AM NOT COVERED BY THAT ONE LINE BUT I WILL GO TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT IS, WHETHER VISUALLY OR NOT VISUALLY. DO YOU HAVE THE SAME FEELING?

At least two, probably more!

SHIT

NO MATTER HOW HARD I PUSH MY ASS, I WON'T BE ABLE TO RECREATE THE YELLOWS IN VAN GOGH'S PAINTINGS.

Do people really like castles anymore? I mean our (European) history is so different. I mean about positively, isn't better?

Shall I do pieces like these: Shall I do pieces like these: A VISUALIZATION OF MY DESIRE TO HAVE A CROWD PRESSING IN THIS APPROPRIATE BUILDING. OR OR OR

HMMM... Seeing the moon reminds me of a global heating and how



Shall I try not to hide MOST CORRUPT STATE IN THE ARTWORLD MIGHT FANCYING ME MORE

I FEAR YOU'VE LOST

Shall I show some of my special favorites, which are quite famous in the way, aren't they? NO COMMENT

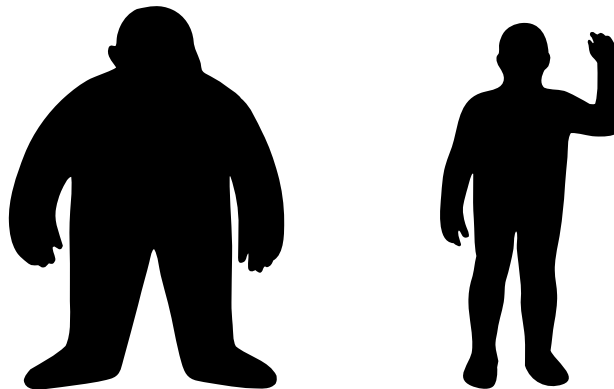
Einführung

Stella Rollig, Johanna Hofer

Für seine künstlerische Intervention *A Cornered Solo Show #3 (with Charles Esche as my artistic conscience)* wählt Nedko Solakov einen ungewöhnlichen Präsentationsort innerhalb des Museums: Nicht in den repräsentativen Ausstellungsräumen des Oberen Belvedere, sondern in einer Ecke der Museumsgarderobe zeigt der bulgarische Künstler seine aus Texten und Gemälden bestehende Installation.

Hier, an diesem funktionalen Zwischenort des Ankommens und Aufbrechens, werden die Besucher*innen unvermittelt mit den persönlichen Gedanken, Ideen und Zweifeln eines renommierten Künstlers konfrontiert, der über die große Chance einer Einzelausstellung im Belvedere nachdenkt. Neben (kunst-)historischen Bezügen bezieht Solakov stets auch den gesellschaftlichen und politischen Diskurs des Zeitgeschehens ein. Schonungslos ehrlich entspinnt er auf humorvolle und selbstkritische Art und Weise einen inneren Dialog mit seinem künstlerischen Gewissen in Person seines langjährigen Freundes und Wegbegleiters, des Kurators und Museumsdirektors Charles Esche.

A Cornered Solo Show ist die dritte Ausstellung in einer Serie, deren vorangegangene Projekte im MAXXI in Rom und im MUDAM Luxembourg zu sehen waren.



Introduction

Stella Rollig, Johanna Hofer

For his artistic intervention *A Cornered Solo Show #3 (with Charles Esche as my artistic conscience)*, Nedko Solakov opted for an unconventional venue within the museum: instead of presenting his installation of texts and paintings in the prestigious gallery spaces of the Upper Belvedere, the Bulgarian artist chose a corner of the museum's coatroom. Here, in this functional transitional space between arrival and departure, visitors are unexpectedly presented with the personal reflections, concepts, and doubts of a distinguished artist contemplating the momentous prospect of a solo exhibition at the Belvedere. Solakov not only draws on (art) historical references, but also consistently delves into the social and political discourse of our time. With a witty and introspective approach, he enters into a playful dialogue with his own artistic conscience, personified by his long-time friend and companion, curator and museum director Charles Esche.

A Cornered Solo Show is the third exhibition of a series, with previous projects shown at MAXXI in Rome and MUDAM in Luxembourg.



MAGNIFICENT BUILDING
I WOULD BE?
I PREPARE MYSELF?
EAR IDEA OF WHAT
CHARLES
SE STAKING
A BIT OF

CHARLES,
NTAINOUSLY
FOR A decade.



Getting there! But do more KLIMT More political!

IS THIS TO BE A CROWD-PLEASER, NEEDS? I KNOW YOU COULD HAVE EVERYONE LIKING YOUR BUILDING - YOU SHOULD TRY TO DO SOMETHING THAT YOU THINK PEOPLE WILL HATE? THERE
I SEE TO HATE... I SEE IN THE SHOWCASE A.L. WE SHOULD STRIVE TO GO TO C.I., WHICH WOULD BE THE BEST
THE CHOICE OF CHARLES - WHO HAVE BEEN HAPPY LATE?
CAUSED? YES. LINDENBERG? NOT TO MENTION, HOW ABOUT: GETTING OVER THE PASSION

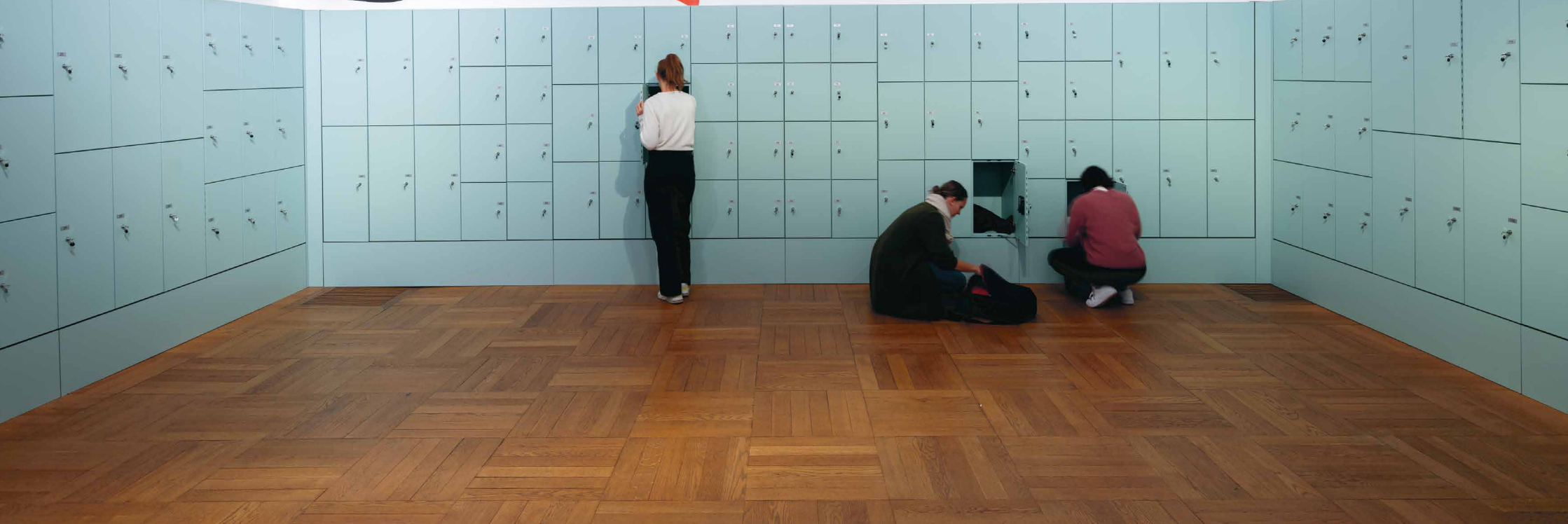
NY (Gangster's yellow rain coats)



THE WALL



to achieve it which needs the discerning eye was, that actually re-
a capital city note, the only possible thing in this t-



I would love to do a huge solo show in one of the gorgeous halls of the Belvedere's magnificent building. And in case this happens and I get invited someday, why not figure out in advance what this show would be? The audience of this extremely well-visited museum is hard to please. How should I prepare myself? "Go to that corner, you 65-year-old dreamer, and until you have a really clear idea of what this solo show of yours will look like, you must stay there, cornered!" said my artistic conscience in the shape of an old friend (and prominent curator) Charles Esche (there was another female possibility for my conscience to be embodied, but they happened to be just starting an almost-the-super-highest-level job at a top art institution and after they excused themselves, Charles was a bit of a last resort, being another old, white – if quite friendly – man). And then, so as to be very spontaneous and artsy-fartsy in front of my conscience/Charles, I decided to fix my thoughts and worries and questions and answers on these very spontaneously done cut-outs of primed canvas, which has stayed rolled up in the corner of my studio for a decade.

Here it is, sort of a dialog between me and my conscience. This is not the first time I've argued with it and, frankly, as a rule, it always wins. Let's see what will happen now.

Ich würde gerne eine riesige Einzelausstellung in einem der herrlichen Prachtsäle des Belvedere machen. Eines Tages könnte es ja wirklich dazu kommen, warum also soll ich mir nicht schon vorweg ausdenken, wie die Ausstellung aussehen soll? Das Publikum dieses extrem gut besuchten Museums ist anspruchsvoll. Wie mich vorbereiten? „Marsch in die Ecke, du 65-jähriger Träumer! Bevor du keine ganz klare Vorstellung hast, wie deine Ausstellung aussehen soll, bleibst du dort stehen!“ So sprach mein Künstlergewissen in Gestalt meines alten Freundes – und prominenten Kurators – Charles Esche (mein Gewissen hätte auch in Gestalt von Frauen auftreten können, aber diese begannen gerade ihre Beinahe-Top-Jobs in einer Top-Institution, und nachdem sie sich entschuldigen ließen, war Charles so etwas wie die Ultima Ratio, auch als alter weißer, aber immerhin sehr freundlicher Mann). So beschloss ich, um vor meinem Gewissen, also vor Charles, einen spontanen und kunstbeflissenen Eindruck zu machen, meine Gedanken und Einwände, meine Fragen und Antworten auf äußerst spontan gefertigten Cut-outs aus grundierter Leinwand, die seit zehn Jahren eingerollt in der Ecke bei mir im Atelier lehnt, festzuhalten.

Hier also so etwas wie ein Gespräch zwischen mir und meinem Gewissen. Es ist nicht das erste Mal, dass ich mit ihm debattiere, und, um ehrlich zu sein, es gewinnt immer. Schauen wir mal, ob diese Regel auch hier hält.

Don't miss my main story!

WOULD LOVE TO DO A HUGE SOLO SHOW IN ONE OF THE GORGEOUS
AND IN CASE THIS HAPPENS AND I GET INVITED SOMEDAY, WHY NOT FIGURE OUT
THE AUDIENCE OF THIS EXTREMELY WELL-VISITED MUSEUM IS HARD
"GO TO THAT CORNER, YOU 65-YEAR-OLD DREAMER, AND UNTIL
THIS SOLO SHOW OF YOURS WILL LOOK LIKE, YOU MUST STAY
SAID MY ARTISTIC CONSCIENCE IN THE SHAPE OF AN OLD FRIEND
ESCHE (there was another female possibility for my conscience to be embodied, but they happened to be just starting
an almost-the-super-highest-level job at a TOP ART INSTITUTION and after they excused themselves, CHARLES WAS A BIT OF
A LAST RESORT, BEING ANOTHER OLD, WHITE - IF QUITE FRIENDLY - MAN).

AND THEN, SO AS TO BE VERY SPONTANEOUS AND ARTSY-FARTSY IN FRONT OF MY CONSCIENCE/CHARLES,
I decided to fix my thoughts AND WORRIES AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON these VERY SPONTANEOUSLY
done cut-outs OF PRIMED CANVAS, which has stayed ROLLED UP IN THE CORNER OF MY SOFIA STUDIO FOR A DECADE.

Here it is, SORT OF A DIALOG BETWEEN ME AND MY CONSCIENCE (IN BLACK MARKER).
THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME I'VE ARGUED WITH IT AND, FRANKLY, AS A RULE, IT ALWAYS WINS.

LET'S SEE WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW.

THE WORK OF DOUBT IS GNAWING AT ME - BUT IF I AM TRYING SO HARD TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO PLEASE THE AUDIENCE
SEVEN POLICEWOMEN WITH THEIR PERSONAL BODYGUARDS AND SOME VOTERS



WHAT ABOUT POLITICS? SHALL I SHOW MY SOLO UNDERSTANDING
IN MY SOLO SHOW MY SOLO UNDERSTANDING
about politics, both locally and international
Do Austrian politics. The neo-fascists are
the biggest party in the poles again, and
tourists be shocked by this.

DO YOU HAVE THE SAME FEELING?

At least two, probably more!

SHIT



1

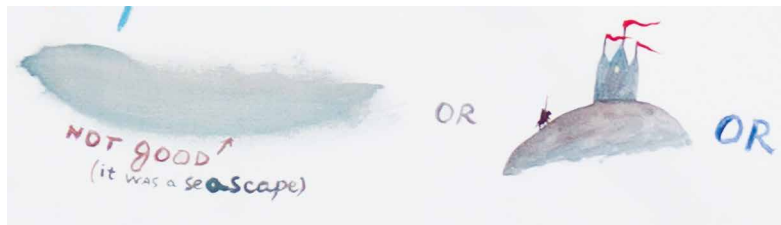


ME: A visualization of my desire to have a crowd-pleasing solo show in this magnificent building.

ICH: Ich stelle mir mein Vorhaben genauer vor, eine publikumswirksame Einzelausstellung in diesem Prachtbau zu machen.

Shall I do pieces like these:

Welche Werke soll ich zeigen:



all of Charles' lives will be handwritten in black on the corner's walls

CHARLES: Do people really like castles anymore? I mean our (European) history is so difficult to talk about positively, isn't it better to avoid it?

ME:

CHARLES: Gefallen Burgen den Leuten heute eigentlich noch? Ich meine, über unsere (europäische) Geschichte kann man so schwer etwas Positives sagen, sollte man es da nicht besser lassen?

It's NICE TO HAVE A CASTLE AND A KNIGHT-CRUSADER GOING BACK HOME TO HIS LADY WIFE WITH A CHASTITY BELT THAT EXPIRED A LONG TIME AGO.

ICH: Es ist aber nett, eine Burg zu haben und einen Kreuzritter, der zu seiner Dame mit Keuschheitsgürtel zurückkehrt, der schon lange nicht mehr schließt.

WORLD

OR



OR



CHARLES: And you've got the good guy vs. the bad guy. But I don't know who the good guy is! The old good guys turned out to be slave-owners, misogynists and general abusers! I'd stay clear.

CHARLES: Und da ist der Gute im Gegensatz zum Bösen. Ich weiß aber nicht, wer nun der Gute ist! Die Guten von früher haben sich als Sklaventreiber, Frauenhasser, ganz allgemein als Missbrauchstäter entpuppt! Da würde ich doch klar Stellung beziehen.



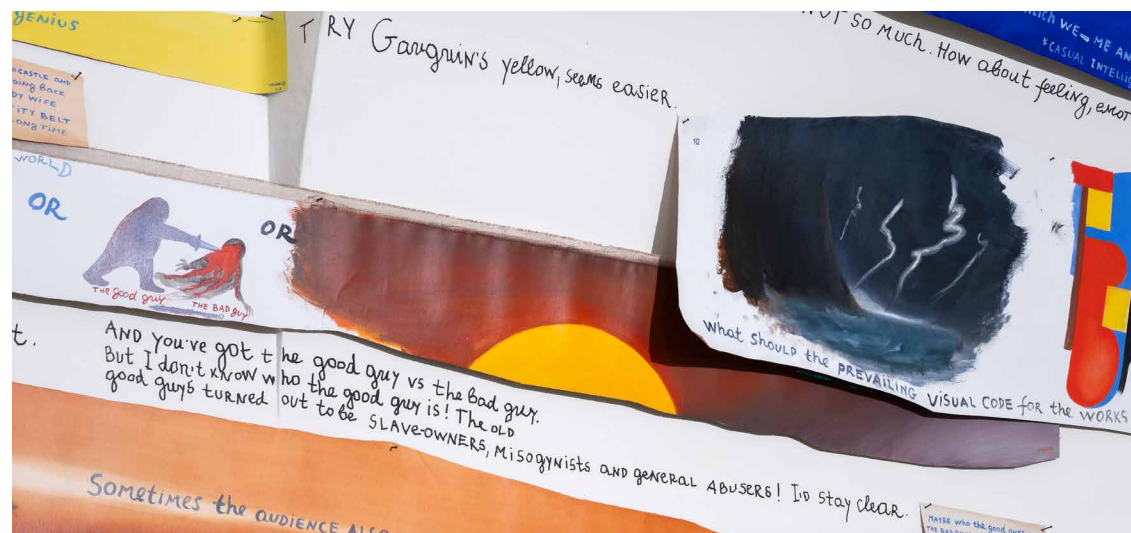
ME:

MAYBE WHO THE good guys AND THE BAD GUYS ARE SHOULD BE UPDATED WEEKLY OR EVEN EVERY MORNING EXCEPT SUNDAYS.

ICH: Vielleicht müsste man jede Woche ein Update machen, wer gerade die Guten und wer die Bösen sind. Oder sogar jeden Tag in der Früh – außer sonntags.

CHARLES: Hmm... seeing the moon reminds me of a global heating and how even the nights are hot.

CHARLES: Hmm ... Der Mond erinnert mich an die Erderwärmung und wie heiß selbst die Nächte sind.



Sometimes the audience also

AND you've got the good guy vs. the bad guy. But I don't know who the good guy is! The old good guys turned out to be SLAVE-OWNERS, MISOGYNISTS AND GENERAL ABUSERS! I'd stay clear.

PLEASE who the good guy is! THE BAD GUY



ME: Sometimes the audience also like stories about zombies or mythological creatures or legendary heroes, to name a few. Shall I do pieces with such stories?

ICH: Hin und wieder mag das Publikum auch Geschichten über Zombies, Mythenfiguren, legendäre Held*innen usw. Soll ich darüber etwas ausstellen?



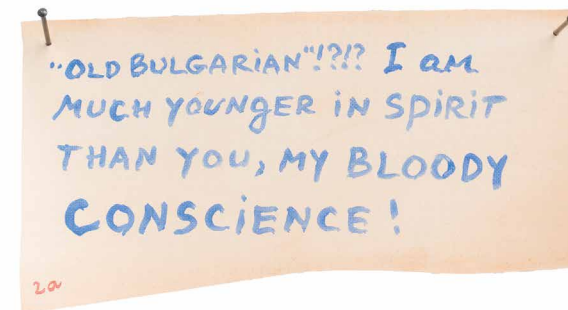
CHARLES: Now that's a good painting! The dark side of your (mine) personality – demons, darkness, zombies. I approve. It feels

CHARLES: Das ist mal ein gutes Gemälde! Die dunkle Seite deiner (meiner) Persönlichkeit – Dämonen, Dunkelheit, Zombies.

like the times we live in. But then maybe you're just encouraging us to think things are hopeless. No! You should make honest work – just tell them you're an old, white Bulgarian.

Da bin ich dafür. Das wirkt sehr aktuell. Andererseits verstärkst du damit vielleicht die Hoffnungslosigkeit. Aber nein! Du musst ehrlich bleiben in deiner Arbeit! Gib einfach zu, dass du ein alter weißer Bulgare bist.

ME:

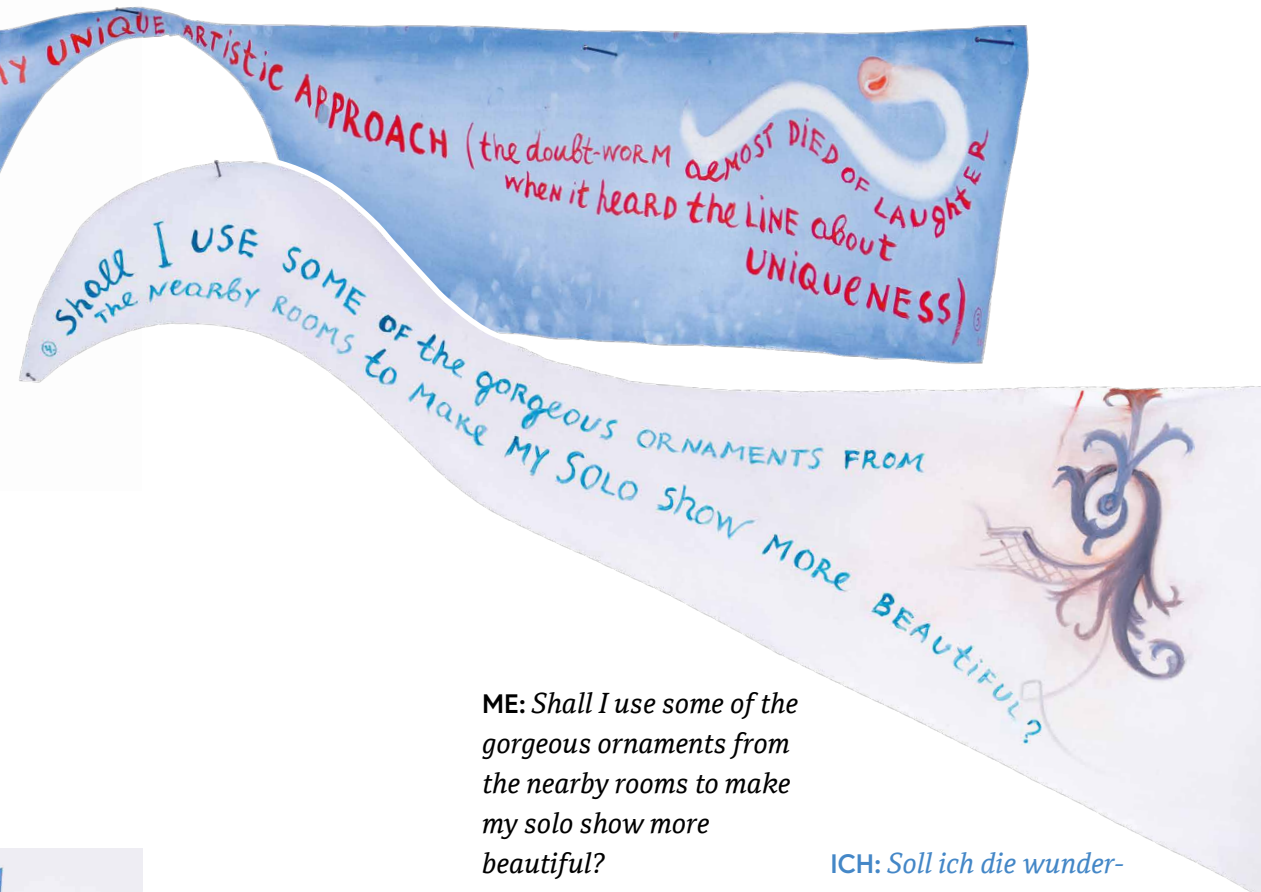


ICH: Ein alter Bulgare!?!? Im Geiste bin ich viel jünger als du, blödes Gewissen!



ME: The worm of doubt is gnawing at me – but if I am trying so hard to figure out how to please the audience, maybe I will lose my unique artistic approach (the doubt-worm almost died of laughter when it heard the line about uniqueness).

ICH: Der Wurm des Zweifels nagt an mir – vielleicht will ich das Publikum so unbedingt erfreuen, dass dabei mein authentischer Zugang zur Kunst verloren geht (der Zweifelswurm starb fast vor Lachen, als er „authentisch“ hörte).

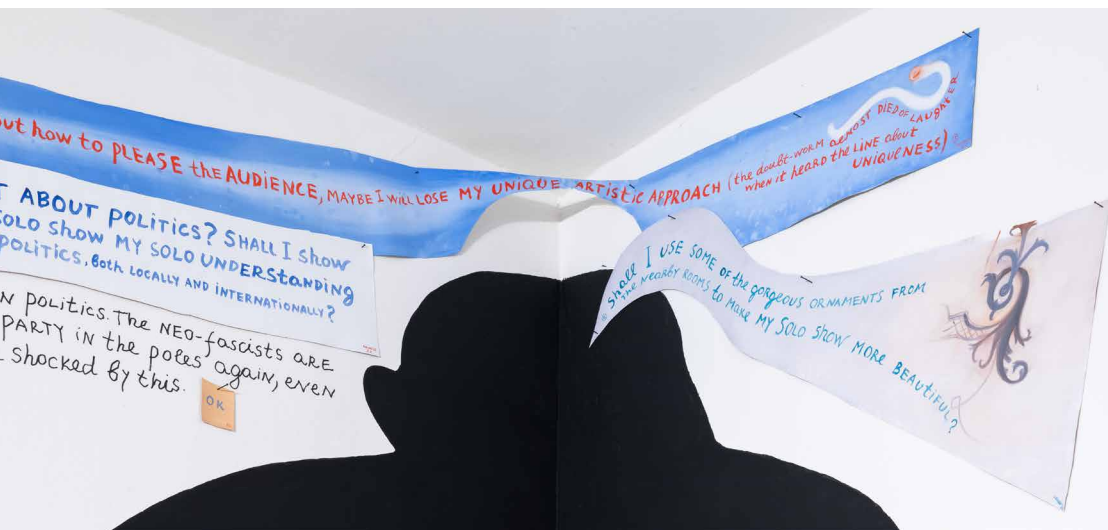


ME: Shall I use some of the gorgeous ornaments from the nearby rooms to make my solo show more beautiful?

CHARLES: Getting there! But do more Klimt. More passion.

ICH: Soll ich die wunderschönen Ornamente in den Nebenräumen motivisch aufnehmen, um meine Ausstellung schöner zu machen?

CHARLES: Schon besser! Aber mehr Klimt. Mehr Leidenschaft.



you should try to do something that you think people will hate? I think you should say no

you are the artist... I'm only the curator conscience...
you have to come up with something and I'll tell
you what I think but don't ask me
what to do... you are on your
OWN when it comes
to making artwork
MY FRIEND

WULD THERE BE MORE
CLASSICALLY RENDERED,
OR MORE ABSTRACT,
OR MORE KITSCHY?
PLEASE ADVISE!
OK

The dark side of your (mine) personality - Demons, darkness, zombies, I approve.
But then maybe you're just ENCOURAGING US to think things are hopeless.
BEST WORK - just tell them you're an OLD, white BULGARIAN.

you encouraged me to
push things to the point
THAT YOU MY BLOODY
CONSCIENCE!



Up the idea of MAKING a show to please people AND DO something like INTERESTS
OH SHUT UP!
MAY I KEEP TRYING FOR A WHILE?

THE WAR?

See what war?

A leftover 42, which marks the devastating NEW WAR,
a leftover ANY MORE, the ONLY POSITIVE

"Българско време ми се случи през 90-те. Измислихме го и го извършихме. Като всички други художници, дръвци на ГАУСТИНИ,
вълкът беше тежък ми през 90-те, ами го разбрахме по-късно, когато беше не бързо"
"OUR FUTURE ALREADY HAPPENED IN THE '90S. WE THOUGHT IT UP AND WORE IT OUT."
AS AN ARTIST, A FRIEND OF GAUSTINE'S, LIKED TO SAY, WE WERE ALL GENIUSES
IN THE '90S, BUT WE ONLY REALIZED IT LATER, WHEN WE NO LONGER WERE."

THE FUTURE STRIP LEFT I WA
DO NOT
C

THE FUTURE STRIP LEFT I WA
DO NOT
C

I bust my ass, I won't be able to recreate the yellows in Van Gogh's paintings, the ultimate crowd-pleaser/genius

ME: No matter how hard I bust my ass, I won't be able to recreate the yellows in Van Gogh's paintings, the ultimate crowd-pleaser/genius.

ICH: Ich kann mir den Arsch noch so aufreißen, das Gelb in den Gemälden von van Gogh, diesem ultimativen Publikums-liebling/Genie, werde ich nie hinkriegen.

CHARLES: Try Gauguin's yellow, seems easier.

CHARLES: Dann nimm halt Gauguins Gelb, scheint einfacher zu sein.

CHARLES: So, why do you want a crowd-pleaser Nedko? I mean you can't have everyone liking you all the time. Maybe you should try to do something that you think people will hate? I think you should give up the idea of making a show to please people and do something else instead.

CHARLES: Warum willst du überhaupt das Publikum erfreuen, Nedko? Ich meine, es können dich ja nicht immer alle mögen. Vielleicht solltest du lieber etwas probieren, von dem du glaubst, die Leute werden es scheußlich finden? Ich denke, du solltest die Idee von der publikums-wirksamen Ausstellung sein lassen und etwas anderes machen.

ME:

MAY I KEEP TRYING FOR A WHILE?

ICH: Darf ich nicht noch ein bisschen weiter-probieren?





ME: Shall I try not to hide my totally unfashionable status as a white, heterogeneous, male, relatively wealthy aging artist living in the poorest and most corrupt state in the nowhere that is Eastern Europe, but to underscore that status, hoping that in order to have some balance the decision makers in the Artworld might include me as a counterbalance in their list of various benefits – taking part

ICH: Soll ich meinen total aus der Mode gekommenen Status als weißer, heterogener, relativ wohlhabender älterer Künstler, der im ärmsten und korruptesten Staat irgendwo in Osteuropa lebt, lieber nicht zu vertuschen versuchen, sondern sogar betonen? Dann gäbe es Hoffnung, dass mich Entscheidungsträger*innen in der Kunstwelt auf ihrer Liste diverser Nutzen als

in important exhibitions (biennials, triennials, etc.), acquiring my works (more than usual), simply fancying me more?

By the way, you are in a similar position, my dear Charles/conscience.

CHARLES: I fear you've lost your exoticism for the art world Nedko. We are both old, white and expendable but it's good that we know it :)



Gegengewicht verbuchen, und ich würde zu wichtigen Ausstellungen eingeladen (Biennalen, Triennalen etc.), mehr als sonst verkaufen, einfach beliebter sein.

Übrigens, lieber Charles oder liebes Gewissen, du bist genau in derselben Lage.

CHARLES: Ich fürchte, du hast deinen Exotenbonus in der Kunstwelt verloren, Nedko. Wir sind beide alt, weiß und entbehrlich. Gut ist nur, dass wir das immerhin selbst wissen :)

OR
 ... Seeing the MOON REMINDS ME
 a global heating and how **EVEN** the Nights are hot.

AND you've got the good guy vs the bad guy.
 But I don't know who the good guy is! The old
 good guys turned out to be SLAVE-OWNERS, MISOGYNISTS AND GENERAL ABUSERS! I'd stay clear.

MAYBE WHO...
 THE BAD GUYS ARE SH...
 UPDATED WEEKLY OF...
 EVERY MORNING EXCEP...
 18



Sometimes the audience ALSO LIKES STORIES ABOUT ZOMBIES OR MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES OR LEGENDARY HEROES

SHALL I DO PIECES WITH SUCH STORIES

Shall I try not to hide my totally unfashionable status as a white, heterogeneous, male, relatively wealthy aging artist living in the poorest and most corrupt state in the nowhere that is Eastern Europe, but to under score that status, hoping that in order to have some balance the decision makers in the artworld might include me as a counterbalance in their list of various benefits-taking part in important, acquiring my works (more than usual), simply fancying me more?

BY THE WAY, YOU ARE IN A SIMILAR POSITION, MY DEAR CHARLES/CONFERENCE

exhibitions
 December
 2010



I FEAR you've lost your exoticism FOR the art world NEDKO. We are both old, white and expendable but it's good that we know it.

OK



WE ARE IN VIENNA, anything Freudian (not ^{Mistake} necessarily a slip)?

DID FREUD EVER HAVE SEX ON HIS FAMOUS COUCH?
 IF SO, WAS IT COMFORTABLE?



THE PATTERNS OF THE QASHQAI RUG ON THE COUCH COME FROM PER...
 does this CAUSE MORE PROBLEMS WHEN DEALING WITH THE PRESENT IRA...
 HAVING IN MIND THAT MANY WESTERN WORLD POLITICAL DECISIONS A...
 TO BE DONE AS IF THE DECISION MAKERS WERE MAKING THEM ALMOST SUBCON...



LYING ON THAT FAMOUS COUCH (THE MONEY/OIL RELATED DECISIONS WERE DONE RATHER CONSCIOUSLY)?

What about his NO-LES...
 where, according to his...
 he USED TO READ IN SUCH...
 HIS LEGS DRAPED OVER ONE...
 HIS NECK UNSUPPORTED AND...
 SO HE HAD TO LOOK UP TO RE...

great idea! The PAT is very 21st century...



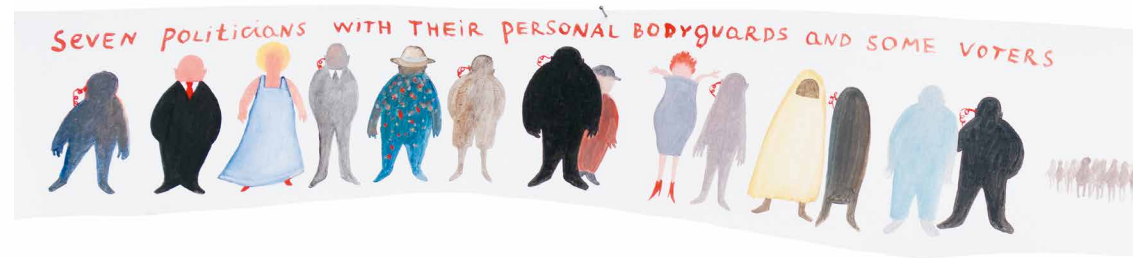


ME: *"The Kiss" certainly works perfectly as an adorable title and subject. Can I also use patting on the head instead of kissing on the lips for a title "The Pat"? Is there potential for it to become an adorable subject and title?*

CHARLES: Great idea! The Pat is very 21st century...

ICH: *„Der Kuss“ funktioniert natürlich perfekt, was den Titel und das Sujet anlangt. Könnte ich statt des Kusses auf die Lippen nicht auch ein Kopftätscheln und als Titel „Das Tätscheln“ nehmen? Hätten so ein Sujet und dieser Titel Potenzial?*

CHARLES: Tolle Idee! Das Tätscheln ist ganz 21. Jahrhundert...



ME: *Seven politicians with their personal bodyguards and some voters.*

ICH: *Sieben Politiker*innen mit ihren Bodyguards und ein paar ihrer Wähler*innen.*

WHAT ABOUT POLITICS? SHALL I SHOW IN MY SOLO SHOW MY SOLO UNDERSTANDING ABOUT POLITICS, BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY?

Wie wär's mit Politik? Soll ich in meiner Einzelausstellung mein persönliches Verständnis der lokalen und internationalen Politik zeigen?

CHARLES: Do Austrian politics. The neo-fascists are the biggest party in the polls again, even tourists should be shocked by this.

CHARLES: Nimm doch die österreichische Politik. Die Neofaschisten sind in den Umfragen erneut die stärkste Partei, da sollten sogar Tourist*innen schockiert sein.



9



ME: Shall I try to include some fancy stuff in my show, like A.I, or we should stick to good old C.I.*, of which we – me and my dear conscience in the shape of Charles – still have some supply left?

*casual intelligence

CHARLES: Casual? Yes. Intelligence? Not so much. How about feeling, emotion, passion...



ICH: Soll ich so neumodisches Zeug wie KI auch verwenden oder sollte man lieber bei der guten alten LI* bleiben? Davon haben wir – ich und mein liebes Gewissen in Gestalt von Charles – immerhin noch einen Vorrat übrig.

*lässige Intelligenz

CHARLES: Lässigkeit? Ja. Intelligenz? Eher weniger. Was ist mit Stimmung, Gefühl, Leidenschaft...

10



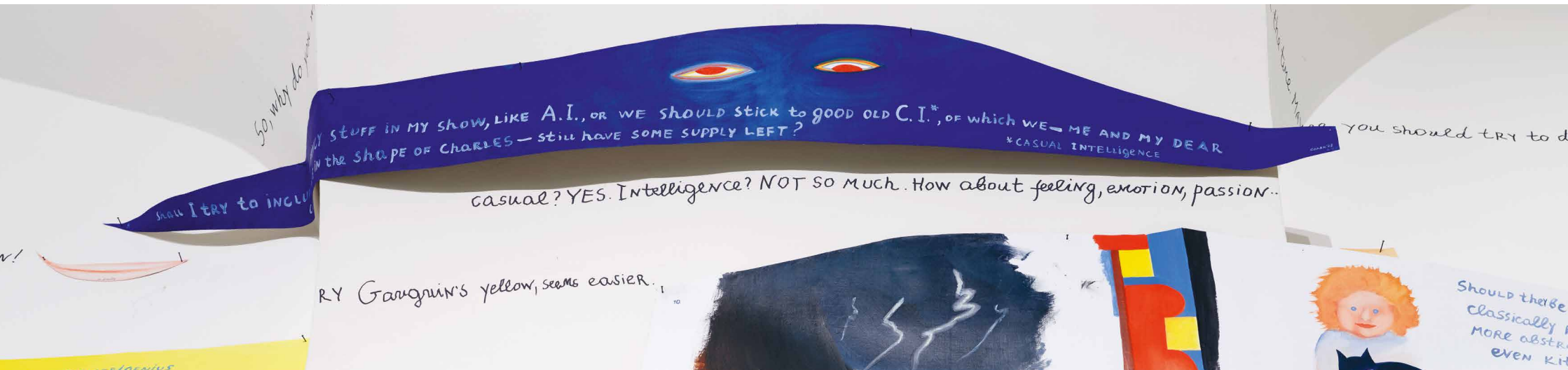
ME: What should the prevailing visual code for the works in this solo show be? Should they be more classically rendered, more abstract, even kitschy? Please advise!

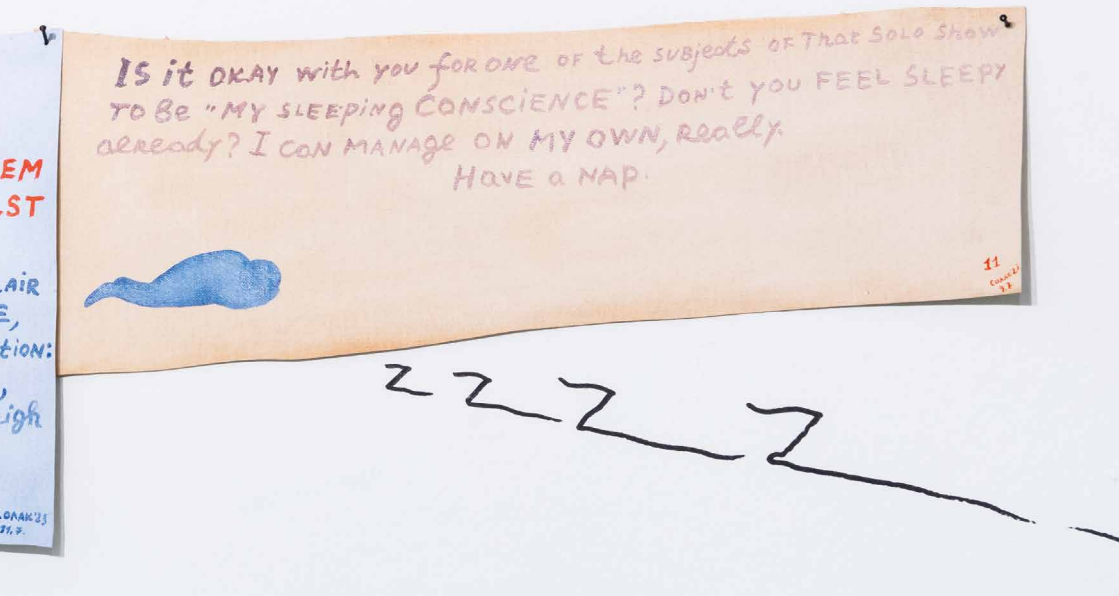
CHARLES: Kitsch always works – it tugs at the heartstrings.



ICH: Welchen visuellen Code sollten die ausgestellten Arbeiten in erster Linie transportieren? Sollen sie eher klassisch wirken, eher abstrakt oder gar kitschig? Ich bitte um deinen Rat!

CHARLES: Kitsch funktioniert immer – er rührt das Herz.

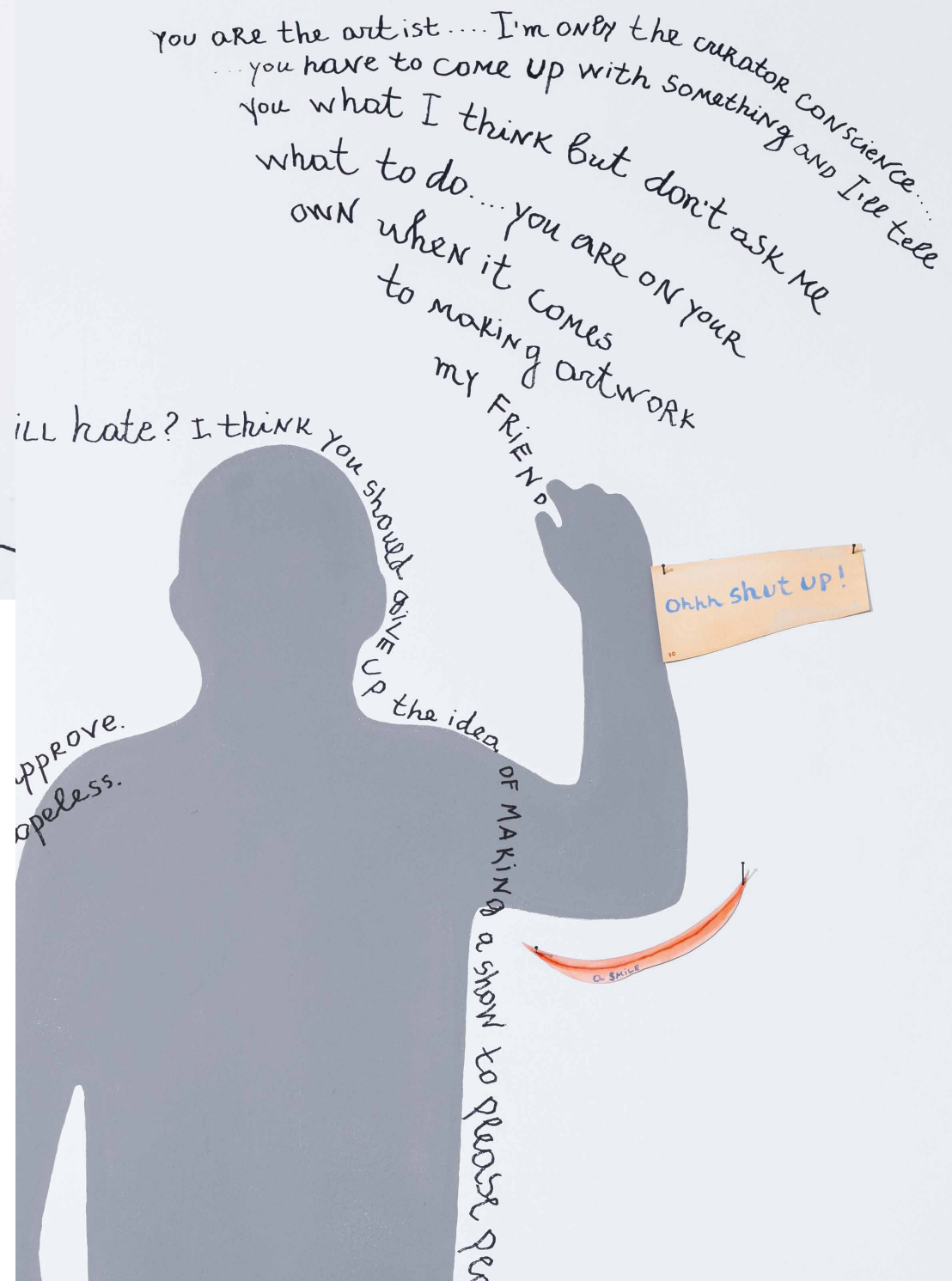


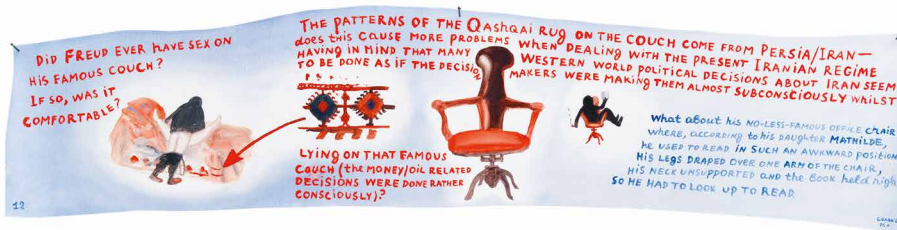


ICH: *Findest du auch okay, wenn eines der Themen meiner Schau „mein schlafendes Gewissen“ wäre? Bist du nicht schon müde? Ich schaffe das auch allein, wirklich. Mach ruhig ein Nickerchen.*

CHARLES: zzzzz

CHARLES: *Du bist der Künstler ... Ich bin ja nur das Kuratoren-gewissen ... Du sagst mir, was du vor hast, und ich gebe dazu meine Meinung ab. Aber frag mich ja nicht, was du tun sollst ... Wenn's ums Kunst-machen geht, bist du auf dich allein gestellt, mein Freund.*





CHARLES: We are in Vienna, anything Freudian (not necessarily a slip)?

ME: *Did Freud ever have sex on his famous couch? If so, was it comfortable? The patterns of the Qashgai rug on the couch come from Persia/Iran – does this cause more problems when dealing with the present Iranian regime having in mind that many Western world political decisions about Iran seem to be done as if the decision makers were making them almost subconsciously whilst lying on that famous couch (the money/oil related decisions were*

CHARLES: Wir sind in Wien, irgendwas mit Freud (muss ja keine Fehlleistung sein)?

ICH: *Hatte Freud auf seiner berühmten Couch jemals Sex? Und wenn ja, war es bequem? Die Muster des Gashgai-Teppichs auf der Couch stammen ja aus Persien/Iran. Macht das zusätzliche Probleme im Umgang mit dem derzeitigen iranischen Regime angesichts der Tatsache, dass viele politische Entscheidungen in der westlichen Welt hinsichtlich des Iran offenbar getroffen werden, als lägen die Entscheidungs-*

done rather consciously)? What about his no-less-famous office chair where, according to his daughter Mathilde, he used to read in such an awkward position: his legs draped over one arm of the chair, his neck unsupported and the book held high so he had to look up to read.

*träger*innen fast unbewusst auf Freuds legendärer Couch (während die Entscheidungen, was Geld/Öl anlangt, sehr wohl bewusst getroffen werden)? Was ist mit seinem ebenso berühmten Schreibtischsessel, auf dem er, wie seine Tochter Mathilde berichtete, in einer sehr merkwürdigen Stellung las? Seine Beine baumelten über die eine Lehne, sein Kopf war ungestützt, und er hielt das Buch so hoch, dass er hinaufschauen musste.*



ALSO LIKES STORIES ABOUT ZOMBIES OR MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES OR LEGENDARY HEROES, TO NAME A FEW.

SHALL I DO PIECES WITH SUCH STORIES?

Now
It

male, relatively WEALTHY aging ARTIST living in the POOREST AND
CORE THAT STATUS, Hoping that in ORDER TO HAVE SOME BALANCE the decision MAKERS
BENEFITS-TAKING PART IN IMPORTANT, ACQUIRING MY WORKS (MORE THAN USUAL), SIMPLY

exhibitions
biennales
triennales

OK

ite and expendable but it's good that we know it.

WE ARE IN VIENNA, anything FREUDIAN (not ^{Mistake} NECESSARILY a slip)?

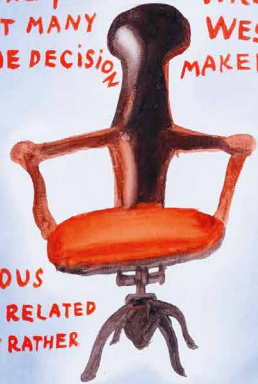
DID FREUD EVER HAVE SEX ON
HIS FAMOUS COUCH?
IF SO, WAS IT
COMFORTABLE?



THE PATTERNS OF THE QASHQAI RUG ON THE COUCH COME FROM PERSIA/IRAN—
does this CAUSE MORE PROBLEMS WHEN DEALING WITH THE PRESENT IRANIAN REGIME
HAVING IN MIND THAT MANY WESTERN WORLD POLITICAL DECISIONS ABOUT IRAN SEEM
TO BE DONE AS IF THE DECISION MAKERS WERE MAKING THEM ALMOST SUBCONSCIOUSLY WHILST



LYING ON THAT FAMOUS
COUCH (THE MONEY/OIL RELATED
DECISIONS WERE DONE RATHER
CONSCIOUSLY)?



What about his NO-LESS-FAMOUS OFFICE CHAIR
where, according to his DAUGHTER MATHILDE,
he USED TO READ IN SUCH AN AWKWARD position:
HIS LEGS DRAPED OVER ONE ARM OF THE CHAIR,
HIS NECK UNSUPPORTED AND THE BOOK HELD HIGH
SO HE HAD TO LOOK UP TO READ.

Is it OK
to be "MY
already? I



12

COAK 23
77.9

great idea! The PAT is very 21st century...



A LEFTOVER WITH NO STORY ON IT, LIGHTLY DISAPPOINTED #1

A LEFTOVER WITH NO COMMENT ON IT, EIGHTLY DISAPPOINTED #2



Painted on 14.9.2023

Maybe ... But Which war? 15.7.23



a leftover #3, which marks the devastating new WAR, thus actually making it not a leftover ANYMORE, the ONLY positive thing in this TRAGEDY.



ICH: Der Krieg?

CHARLES: Hm, vielleicht ... aber welcher?

ICH: Überbleibsel #3, das den verheerenden neuen Krieg markiert und ihn damit eigentlich nicht mehr zu einem Überbleibsel macht, ist das einzig Positive an dieser Tragödie.

A LEFTOVER WITH NO COMMENT ON IT, EIGHTLY DISAPPOINTED



Painted on 14.7.2023

Maybe ... But Which war? 15.7.23



A LEFTOVER WITH NO STORY ON IT, LIGHTLY DISAPPOINTED #1

A LEFTOVER WITH NO COMMENT ON IT, EIGHTLY DISAPPOINTED #2



Painted on 14.9.2023

Maybe ... But Which war? 15.7.23



a leftover #3, m

ME: Shall I share some of my sexual fantasies, which are quite normal, by the way, sort of?



I FEEL it that there is at least ONE MORE REALLY SUBSTANTIAL theme to be COVERED by that SOLO SHOW BUT I still CAN'T figure out WHAT it is, NEITHER VERBALLY, NOR VISUALLY.
DO YOU have the SAME FEELING?

At least two, probably more!

SHIT...

15

ICH: Soll ich sexuelle Fantasien von mir verraten, die übrigens recht normal, jedenfalls fast normal sind?

CHARLES:
Kein Kommentar.

ICH: Mir kommt vor, als gäbe es zumindest ein wirklich wichtiges Thema, das die Ausstellung behandeln sollte, aber mir fällt weder sprachlich noch bildlich ein, welches. Kommt es dir auch so vor?

CHARLES: Mindestens zwei Themen, wahrscheinlich mehr!

MY SWEET ARTISTIC CONSCIENCE, DEAREST CHARLES, YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT JUST HAPPENED! DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU WROTE ME ABOUT GEORGI GOSPODINOV'S "TIME SHELTER" WHICH YOU WERE REAL HOMAGE TO GG AND SUGGEST THE BEST EXHIBITION WOULD BE ONE THAT IGNORED THE 21ST CENTURY—WHICH HAS BEEN PRETTY SHIFTY— SO, GEORGI AND HIS FAMILY JUST VISITED MY STUDIO AND WHILE TALKING ABOUT THE CORNERED SOLO SHOW, I MENTIONED WHAT YOU WROTE TO LATER ON THEY WERE LEFT OUT OF THE BOOK (WHICH HAS BEEN A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS, WINNING THE INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE AS SHE HAS DONE WITH ALL OF MY SILLY STORIES SINCE 2016), WHICH IS, AS THE JURY PUT IT "A BRILLIANT NOVEL, FULL OF IRONY AND M QUESTIONS THE WAY IN WHICH OUR MEMORY IS THE CEMENT OF OUR IDENTITY AND OUR INTIMATE NARRATIVE WHERE THE PAST IS REINVENTED, AND NOSTALGIA IS A POISON." AND THEN GEORGI OPENED ONE OF HIS FAMOUS NOTEBOOKS FROM HIS SIMILARLY FAMOUS BACKPACK AND FOUND THE L

ME: My sweet artistic conscience, dearest Charles, you won't believe what just happened!

Do you remember what you wrote me about Georgi Gospodinov's "Time Shelter", which you were reading, how "If there's one (canvas) strip left I was thinking maybe we could do a homage to GG and suggest the best exhibition would be one that ignored the 21st century – which has been pretty shifty – and take us back to the 1990s, when we met and when the future still seemed possible/all options were open."

ICH: Mein liebes Künstlergewissen, liebster Charles, du wirst nicht glauben, was gerade passiert ist!

Erinnerst du dich, was du mir zu Georgi Gospodinovs Roman „Zeitzuflucht“ geschrieben hast, als du ihn gerade gelesen hast? „Wenn noch ein kleiner Streifen (auf der Leinwand) frei ist, müsste man wohlwollend auf GG verweisen und andeuten, dass die beste Ausstellung das so durchtriebene 21. Jahrhundert ignorieren und uns zurück in die 1990er-Jahre führen müsste, als wir beide uns kennenlernten und uns



So, Georgi and his family just visited my studio and while talking about the cornered solo show, I mentioned what you wrote to me. And to my astonishment Georgi said that actually there had been these lines about artists from the '90s, but later on they were left out of the book (which has been a tremendous success, winning the International Booker Prize for 2023 – shared with its translator Angela Rodel, who, by the way, edited all of the texts in front of you, as she has done with all of my silly stories since 2016), which is, as the jury put it “a brilliant novel, full of irony and melancholy... In scenes that are burlesque as well as heartbreaking, Gospodinov questions the way in which our memory is the cement of our identity and our intimate narrative. But it is also a great novel about Europe, a continent in need of a

alle Zukunftsmöglichkeiten offen schienen.“

Also: Georgi und seine Familie haben mich gerade im Atelier besucht. Als wir auf meine „Cornered Solo Show“ zu sprechen kamen, erzählte ich ihm, was du mir damals geschrieben hast. Und zu meinem großen Erstaunen meinte Georgi, dass ursprünglich tatsächlich etwas über Künstler*innen aus den 1990er-Jahren im Romanmanuskript stand, was dann aber später aus dem Buch redigiert wurde (das ein Riesenerfolg wurde und für das er 2023 den International Booker Prize gewann – zusammen mit seiner Übersetzerin Angela Rodel, die im Übrigen auch alle Texte, die du vor dir liegen hast, redigiert hat, ebenso wie alle dummen Stories von mir seit 2016). Das Buch sei, schrieb die Jury, „ein brillanter Roman voller Ironie und Melancholie [...]“

future, where the past is reinvented, and nostalgia is a poison.”

And then Georgi opened one of his famous notebooks from his similarly famous backpack and found the lines which go like this: “Our future already happened in the '90s. We thought it up and wore it out. As an artist, a friend of Gaustine's*, liked to

In so burlesken wie rührenden Szenen zieht Gospodinov in Zweifel, dass die Erinnerung der Zement unserer Identität und unserer Lebensgeschichte sei. Doch ist es auch ein großer Roman über Europa, einen Kontinent auf der Suche nach einer Zukunft, in der die Vergangenheit neu erfunden wird und Nostalgie Gift ist.“

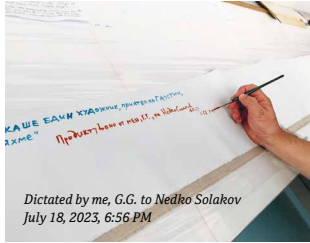


Und dann fischte Georgi eines seiner legendären Notizbücher aus seinem ebenso legendären Rucksack, klappte es auf und fand schließlich die Eintragung: „Unsere Zukunft fand bereits in den 1990er-Jahren statt. Wir haben sie fertiggedacht und aufgebraucht. Ein Künstler und Freund Gaustins* sagte immer, wir seien alle Genies

*a recurring character in Gospodinov's books

*eine wiederkehrende Figur in Gospodinovs Büchern

say, we were all geniuses in the '90s, but we only realized it later, when we no longer were."



Dictated by me, G.G. to Nedko Solakov
July 18, 2023, 6:56 PM

He dictated these lines to me and confirmed, as you can see, that they come from him.

Isn't this great!, and slightly spooky too?

CHARLES: Amazing ... and GG gets it right again.

gewesen damals in den Neunzigerjahren, hätten es aber erst bemerkt, als wir es schon nicht mehr waren."

Diktat von mir, G.G., für Nedko Solakov
18. Juli 2023, 18:56

Er diktierte mir diese Zeilen und bestätigte, wie du siehst, dass sie von ihm stammen.

Ist das nicht großartig? Und auch ein wenig unheimlich?

CHARLES: Erstaunlich... und wieder mal hat G.G. recht.



Nedko Solakov
Biography

Since the early 1990s, Nedko Solakov (b. 1957, Cherven Bryag, Bulgaria; lives in Sofia) has exhibited extensively in Europe and the US. His work was featured in Aperto'93 (Venice Biennial); the 48th, 49th, 50th and 52nd Venice Biennial; the 3rd, 4th and 9th Istanbul Biennial; São Paulo'94; Manifesta 1, Rotterdam; the 2nd and 4th Gwangju Biennial; the 5th Lyon Biennial; Sonsbeek 9, Arnhem; the 4th and 5th Cetinje Biennial; the 1st Lodz Biennial; the 7th Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates; the 3rd Tirana Biennial; the 2nd Seville Biennial; the 2nd Moscow Biennial; documenta 12; 16th Sydney Biennial; Prospect 1, New Orleans Biennial; Singapore Biennial 2011; dOCUMENTA (13); Kathmandu Triennale; 1st Riga International Biennial for Contemporary Art; and Lahore Biennale 2. He had solo shows at Museu do Chiado, Lisbon; Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam; CCA Kitakyushu, Japan; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Centre d'Art Santa Monica, Barcelona; Kunsthaus Zürich; Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli; Sofia City Art Gallery; Galleria Borghese, Rome; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; BOZAR, Brussels; ICA-Sofia; La Panacée, Montpellier; MUDAM Luxembourg; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean; and MAXXI – Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome. In 2003–05 an extensive mid-career *A 12 1/3 (and even more) Year Survey* was presented at Casino Luxembourg, Rooseum Malmoe and OK Centrum Linz, and in 2008–09 the *Emotions* solo project was exhibited at Kunstmuseum Bonn,

Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, and Institut Mathildenhoehe, Darmstadt. In 2011–12 his retrospective *All in Order, with Exceptions* was presented at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Fondazione Galleria Civica Trento (*All in [My] Order, with Exceptions*), S.M.A.K., Ghent; and Fundação de Serralves, Porto. His works belong to more than fifty international museums and public collections, among them MoMA New York, Tate Modern, London, and Centre Pompidou, Paris.



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24.11.2023 — 19.6.2024