

DAMIR RADOVIC

NO MORE ...

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Outside the walls: on the facade of same the building where Néon occupies part of the ground floor

A project that echoes *Entrefaites*, a solo exhibition by Damir Radovic at the Maison du Peuple, Espace d'Arts Plastiques in Vénissieux (12 r. Eugène-Peloux 69200 Vénissieux) from December 2nd, 2017 to January 27th, 2018.

BEGINS ON

DECEMBER 22ND

AND RUNNING FOR

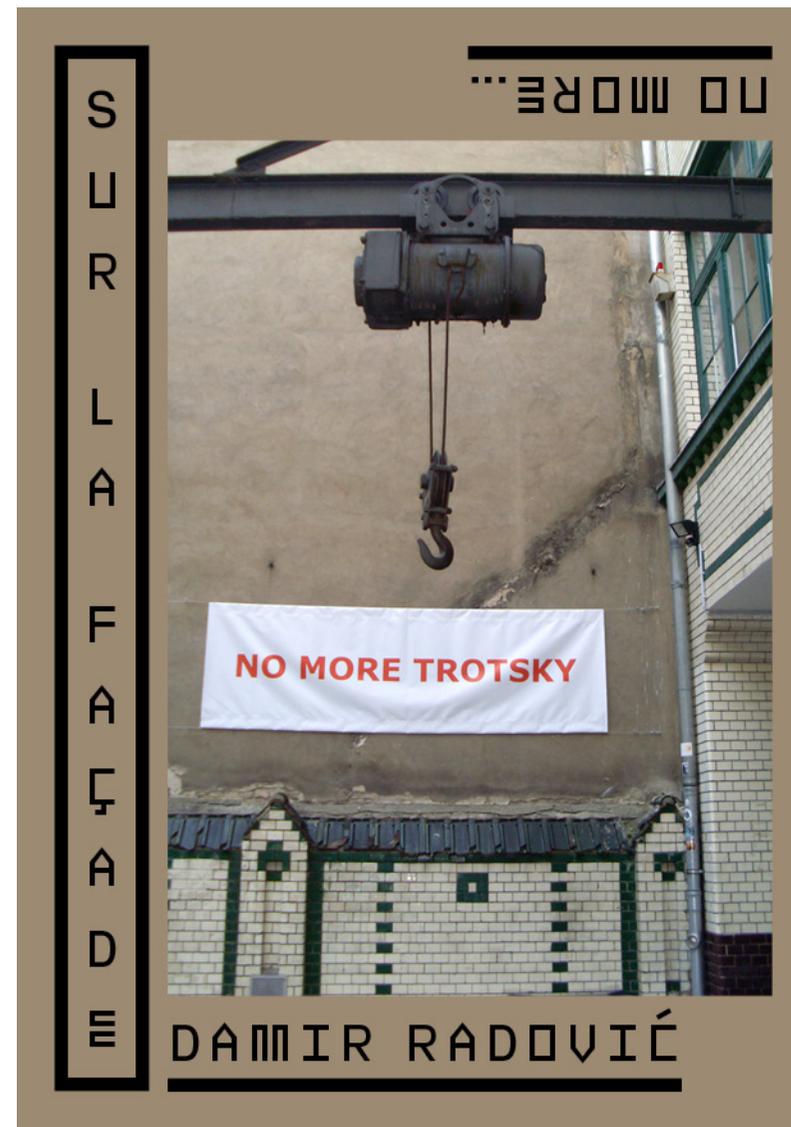
2 TO 3 MONTHS

An exhibition that has been created thanks to the support of **Champagne Façade**, **Cabinet Berne** and **Fertoret Coppier**, An exhibition taking place in Resonance with the **Biennial of Contemporary Art of Lyon, 2017**.



On the occasion of the renewal of the facade of the building where Néon is located, we are happy to present **No More ...** by **Damir Radović**, an exhibition on the scale of the building, thanks to the support and backing of the entrepreneurs in charge of the work: **Champagne Façade**, **Cabinet Berne** and **Fertoret-Coppier**, and the complicity of our neighbors, the inhabitants of 41 rue Burdeau 69001 Lyon.

No More ... is an artwork that has been created by artist **Damir Radović**. Born in Sarajevo in 1976, he was forced to migrate to France at the age of 17 during the war in Yugoslavia in the 90's, and he now lives in France on a part time basis. This artwork is a poem, a sort of elegy that unfolds in urban space, based on repetition. This repetition and the choice of words that follow, often seems absurd, sometimes uncomfortable, and despite the appearance of an unfinished slogan, none of these phrases are selling or stating anything, when taken together they simply question us about our surroundings and our collective and personal memory.



No More ... is a poem, at first glance it takes the form of an elegy that unfolds in urban space, based on repetition. This repetition and the choice of words that follow, often seem absurd, sometimes uncomfortable.

The series can effectively create a slight distortion with regard to the subjects and themes of society that it evokes. Especially as it seems to be playing both sides of the coin; an immediate reading allows one to recognize familiar words, and an idea forms, a second reading can nonetheless lead us towards a different, even contradictory interpretation.

For example, "No More Milk", can mean that milk (as it once was?) no longer exists, or even: "Let us stop producing and consuming milk!", or even perhaps: "Soon there will be no more milk",... etc.

This very simple phrase, could also generate some confusion with regard to time: it is not clear whether something has been lost, whether it is a current statement, or even a prediction; as if our world has been caught

up in a spiral, an endless circular movement, where past, present and future can no longer really be distinguished.

Furthermore, banners evoke different fields of reference (society, politics, ecology, history, technology, etc.), and the presence of a large number of them has the effect of creating a world, or at the very least a certain, quite diverse and exhaustive, reflection of the society in which we live.

This work seems then to operate like some kind of silent demonstration, while not really asking us to act. It could act like a memo, allowing us to avoid blunting our perceptions of current issues, keeping us in a state of wakefulness.

Despite the appearance of the slogan, none of these phrases are selling or stating anything, together they simply question us about our surroundings, our projections and our collective and personal memory.

We asked **Damir Radović** more precisely, why he leads us into this specific poetic experience of reading and questioning. Here is the interview that Néon did with the artist in November, 2017:

Néon (here Jongyeon Park and Julie Rodriguez-Malti): we were asking ourselves what the following answer that you gave to Cindy Tereba in 2012 meant: "As an artist I wish to express my opinions and unsuccessful attempts to change the society in which we live."?

Damir Radović: Well, personally I cannot change the course of things, but only provide people with a small dose of cynical humor when our paths cross. As a participant in this world that is boring to live in, I am attempting to relieve some of this chaos with my contribution.

Personally I cannot change the course of things, but only provide people with a small dose of cynical humor when our paths cross. As a participant in this world that is boring to live in, I am attempting to relieve some of this chaos with my contribution.

What is your relationship with this notion of cynicism? Are you closer to the casualness of Diogenes , or to the frustration and disillusion that the contemporary definition covers ?

I am closer to the way of thinking of Dada and the situationists and particularly the dada manifesto. In the sense that an impasse can open up the way for imagination, and allow me to reach the heart of a form, to create situations.

In light of the series No More... and the reading of Un nouveau barbare, 2002, by Dean Inkster , we were wondering what your conception of Time is? (Is it for you an endless circular movement, a perpetual starting over, or something else altogether?)

Yes, time is a spiral, an endless circular movement.

I often use this image in my work process. The loop, the cycle is fundamental for me, like the notion of history, as human beings have the annoying tendency to forget or erase a certain number of important moments. Joy and horror have been going round in circles for millennia, haven't they?

Incomplete, flawed amnesia has always been controlled by power. There are

historical, artistic and geopolitical events... that wrap us up in politically correct packets, and this suits a certain number of contemporary powers, but others not so much.

Strangely these facts become invisible, non-existent or of little importance and we begin to forget things despite our best efforts. In my opinion it is for this reason that the spiral or loop still exists as we are not able to break it and are subjected to this incomplete amnesia, recreating and repeating these same circumstances without thinking, and forever.

In 2011, Naomi Hening, in her text seems to name the series No more, on more, has the title of the series changed since then, or is this another piece?

Yes and no, it simply evolved. It has transformed and grown a little more to adapt to the present, to current conditions.

Naomi Hening also evokes the elegy, it is true that one can observe a poetic form in this piece, is this intentional?

Elegy in Greek means a song of death. No more death? The answer is here, contained within this question. The poetry in this piece

comes from the repetition of the phrases, with the absence of sense, non-sense, becoming important.

The poems that Hugo dedicated to his beloved daughter Léopoldine are a moving example.;

“Demain, dès l’aube” is a title that I gave to one of my exhibitions.

In the definition of elegy, there is in effect this desire to to represent a range of emotions of grief. Was this your intention in this case?

Yes of course, and not only for this piece! For example, artist Sophie Calle may transform her grief into art, whereas in my case I always use my grief for a specific purpose, in order to go beyond it and draw a more positive emotion from it. The art of knowing how to say goodbye...

We completely agree with the idea that the phrases (with their appearance of unfinished slogans) can “cause us to swing between something that has been lost and the prophecy of a future event” and also with this other idea that the status of objects and messages creates real confusion when it comes to interpretation, for our greatest

intellectual joy or displeasure...

However, we find it somewhat difficult to understand the notion of “blind spot” that Naomi Hening continues to use. Could you be more specific about this idea?

This was the title of an exhibition in Berlin.

Blind spot or Weak spot?

Blind spot is the presence of the eye in this kind of “dead angle” that stops one from seeing an object within a very narrow angle of view if only one eye is used. This flaw disappears if both eyes are looking at the object, as each eye compensates for the other. Thus the need to look closely before dealing with a risky situation.

All of this means that I am pointing something at you that you should be careful to look at with both eyes wide open!

In the list that you sent us, containing around 100 phrases (with you asking us to choose ten of them to be presented in Néon, a sort of curatorial privilege!), you date the piece as being from 2017. Does that mean that this piece continues to be updated, When did you begin this series?

Yes, the list continues to grow. I began it in Hiroshima in 2007 – 2008.

We have chosen a number of themes: society, politics, ecology, technology, history, everyday life and feelings. Do you agree with these titles? There are also jokes and metaphors. How have you built this series over time?

To nourish one’s work the artist must be interested in different subjects, so, these themes that are quite dear to my work, have in effect built this series. I draw from my daily life, from my voyages...

Can you remind us of the origins of this piece?

In 2008 I participated in a residency in Hiroshima, organized by the Ecole des Beaux Arts of Lyon and artist Yukinoro Yanagi. For the closing exhibition I presented this piece, Blind Spots, along with a performance that had been filmed in the streets of the city.

The phrase “No more Hiroshima” appeared in Hiroshima mon amour, a film by Alain Renais. With the vague idea of preparing my trip, I watched the film, and in reality this is when things fell into place.

Concerning lack of clarity of interpretation, this impossibility of having a clear idea of the situation in which you place the reader-spectator of No More..., one can observe the metaphor of something that is common among men, in the sense that everyone can grasp your propositions in order to project their own vision of the world, is this your intention?

Yes, the reader-spectator should experience doubt. Is this a question? Or a statement? This is the reason that I never use punctuation at the end of these phrases; it is up to the spectator to make up their own mind.

One can see in this series the expression of unhappiness, of a struggle. We would like to understand the nature of the oppression that you are struggling against? What form of utopia do you seek?

The transmission of memory is very important. I use the collective memory of cinema, of literature, of history, of geography... this is the data of the real.

I am looking for an act of permanent demonstration, a way for me to engage in a daily struggle against incomplete amnesia, by inviting people to think.

In his book *La Banderole: Histoire d'un objet politique*, Philippe Artières explains how the banner became an object of power, order and disorder, and how it reifies, a memorial and scientific object.

1 Cynicism is an attitude to life that originated in a school of philosophy in ancient Greece, founded by Antisthenes, known mainly for the spectacular speech and action of its most famous disciple, Diogenes of Sinope (Sinope approx. 413 B.C. – Corinth, approx.327 B.C.). This school attempted to overthrow the dominant values of the time, teaching lightheartedness and humility to the great and powerful of ancient Greece. Radically materialist and anti-conformist, the Cynics, led by Diogenes, proposed a different practice of philosophy and of life in general, both subversive and exhilarating.

The large number of legendary anecdotes concerning Diogenes of Sinope shows that he had a profound impact on the Athenians. He lived outside, in poverty, dressed in a simple cloak, equipped with a stick, a satchel and a bowl. Criticizing the artificial nature of social conventions, he effectively advocated a simple life, closer to nature, and was happy enough to use a jar as a pillow. He mastered invective and biting speech. Apparently he openly criticized the great men and other philosophers of the time (including Plato). The most well known verses that are attributed to him are: "I am looking for a man" - a phrase that he would repeat while wandering the city with his lantern - and "stand a little out of my sun", a response that he gave to Alexander, the king of Macedonia, who came to ask him if he needed anything. (Source: Wikipedia)

2 In the contemporary sense of the word, cynicism is an attitude or state of mind that is characterized by having little or no confidence in the apparent motivations and justifications of others, or a lack of faith or hope in humanity. It is sometimes considered as a form of lassitude, but also as a realistic form of criticism or skepticism.

The typical (contemporary) cynic places no trust in publicly

stated ethics, nor in consensual moral values, especially when he has high expectations of society, institutions and authorities, which always disappoint.

This state of mind manifests itself as the result of frustration, disillusionment, and little or no confidence in organizations, authorities or other parts of society. (Source: Wikipedia)

3 Dada was an artistic movement formed at the beginning of the 20th century in Zurich as a reaction to the horrors and madness of the first World War. The art and poetry produced by the dada artists was often satirical and absurd in nature. They felt that the war had called into question all aspects of society, incapable of emerging or of being extended, including in the field of art. Their goal was to destroy traditional values and to create a new form of art that would replace the old one.

As artist Hans Arp would later write: "Revolted by the butchery of the 1914 World War, we in Zurich devoted ourselves to the arts. While guns rumbled in the distance, we sang, painted, made collages and wrote poems with all our might".

The founder of dada was a writer, Hugo Ball. In 1916, he created a satirical nightclub (which was also an artist residence and collective studio) in Zurich called the Cabaret Voltaire, and a publication that, wrote Ball, "would be called "Dada". Dada, Dada, Dada, Dada." This was the first of many dada publications. Dada went on to become an international movement and ultimately formed the basis for surrealism in Paris after the war. Hans Arp, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia and Kurt Schwitters were among the principal artists associated with the movement. (Source: Tate, UK)

4 In the 1960s and 1970s, revolts broke out all over the world in opposition to the growing influence of merchandise and the State in all areas of life. The situationists contributed to forging the critical tools of this widespread uprising, along with intellectuals and small groups that were influenced by Marxism and Anarchism. However, being different to the latter, they didn't come from the worker's movements but rather the artistic avant gardes of the 20th century: Dada, Surrealism and Lettrism. Artists at odds, half rebel, half thug, the situationists were brought together around a radical program: a refusal of the living conditions offered to modern man, both in advanced capitalist societies and in so-called communist regimes,

along with the desire to experiment with new forms of existence and community that break with established order. (Source: L'échappée éditions, à propos de Le Mouvement situationniste, Une histoire intellectuelle, Patrick Marcolini, 2013.)

5 *Un nouveau barbare* is a text written by Dean Inkster in 2002, that deals with the work of Damir Radović, and can be found here: http://www.dda-ra.org/fr/textes/RADOVIC_Damir or here: <http://damirradovic.com/category/texts/>

6 The text written by Naomi Hening in 2011 is called *The Blind Spot*, and can be found here: http://www.dda-ra.org/fr/textes/RADOVIC_Dami

7 Philippe Artières - *La Banderole : Histoire d'un objet politique*, Paris, Éditions Autrement, coll. Leçons de choses, 2013.

Leçons de choses, is the title of this new collection from the Autrement publishing house and they have certainly never deserved their name as much as they do with the publication of this first volume by Philippe Artières, who pays close attention to the secret dimension of certain objects, what Perec called "the infra-ordinary", revealing the uses and practices of the past, an indicator of social belonging which bears the traces of time, tastes and the attachments that form the fabric of existence. Here then, archeology starts with a political object, the banner, an object that belongs to the category of what epigraphist Armando Petrucci called "exhibited writings", along with the neon signs and urban writing that the historian had studied in a previous work. The banner, he tells us, from the Russian revolution of February 1905 to today, it is "an original insight into the social history of writing" that is carried, (...) "L'Essai et la revue du jour by Jacques Munier, France Culture, 15.04.2013.



Damir Radović

No More ..., 2011

Exhibition view : *Spaceship Yugoslavia-The Suspension of Time*, Curated by Naomi Hening, NGBK, Berlin, 2011.

Photo : Nihad Nino Pusija.

The exposure like a way of searching and browsing, Néon shows since March 2000 an eclectic program, supporting the multiplicity of the debates that are generated by artists projects for the majority is cutting-edge.



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Néon is supported by le Ministère de la culture – DRAC Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, la Région Auvergne Rhône-Alpes and la Ville de Lyon. Sponsors of the exhibitions : FIXART, ACRA et Paris-ART. Néon is a member of ADELE.