

“Sleeping with Vengeance, Dreaming of Life”

Dear Gülsün,

I would like to invite you to participate in an exhibition series I have been curating, on the subject of “Sleeping with a Vengeance, Dreaming of a life”. It started out with a little painting by Pissaro, which shows a farm worker asleep on the grass. Actually, she is not just asleep, but on strike. There is a continuous history of people showing subversive behaviour by sleeping, and I got to thinking that unless you sleep, you cannot dream up new (political) ideas. Of course, not all sleeping, not all dreaming is subversive, or even political. But as Egyptian author Haytham El. Wardany writes in his "Book of Sleep": *'Sleep does not deny the possibility of revolution, but is one of its necessary conditions, for within itself it carries the potential for awakening, for being reborn, for starting anew.'*

The Pissarro hangs in a museum. Mladen Stilinovic's "Artist at Work" is equally at the core of my thinking, together with your painting of the women prisoners sleeping under one blanket. These works serve as a kind of spirit animals to me - I would like to have them in an exhibition, but at this point, the material context is not there to support showing them.

I've been wanting to do this exhibition for the past ten years, but was unable to convince an institution to do it with me or secure funding for it. So I started to teach the subject to my students at the Ducth Art Institute and we finally made the first of my series of “**Exhibition sketches**”, which are exhibitions to help continuing to evolve the arguments around the subject and to think WITH works of art, rather than just discursively. The idea is to continue becoming more solid and to do a larger exhibition on the topic in the future.

The first exhibition, in an off off space Athens, had a bit of a budget and involved 21 artists. See below for some images.

The second one, in a much smaller, indeed tiny space, will open on August 30th in Prague with 0 budget. The third one will open October 8 in Beijing, again with 0 budget. Everything is made by myself, transported by two or three people who come for installation and/or send work by post. There is no production fee, no transport money, no honorarium, no insurance for the work. People are doing sketches, or sending unfinished work, using the exhibition as a platform for feedback. The spirit is indeed a bit anti-professional.

I am not sure whether you are interested or even capable to work in this context. The work needs to be modest, small.

Amongst the artists participating in the next iterations are: Sanja Ivekovic, Danica Dakic, Matthjis de Brujine, Ines Doujak, Ibon Aranberri, Luis Jacob, Zbynek Baladran, Simon Wachsmuth - all in all, there will be 31 or 32. As the space is really tiny, I need small work, a3, or a video to play on a TV...

In case you are interested, if there is an funding source which might be able to support you, I am very glad to help with an application.

It is awkward to extend an invitation when one has so little institutional support to offer; I also believe that artists should receive a fee and can only legitimate not paying one by the argument that I am also not receiving a fee, indeed, putting my own money and energy into this because I want to do this exhibition.

I'd be happy to talk some more, in case this is of interest to you,