

GALERIE DIX9 Hélène Lacharmoise

Drawings and Animation by Nemanja Nikolić

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The current series of works by Nemanja Nikolić, presented at the exhibition at the Cultural Centre of Belgrade Art Gallery, is based on the cross-section of the author's previous interests in the media of drawing, animation and film. His fascination with the seventh art has turned Nemanja's initial studies of form and expressive potentials of drawing in more complex visual thinking and linking the language of visual art and film. Film is also the author's starting point in defining the motif space in his works and artistic approaches that are still focused on classical drawing, but conceptually expanded and rounded through the moving image properties. In animation, soon adopted as his new visual expression, Nemanja most often refers to Alfred Hitchcock's film work, finding in the poetics of the said director some conceptual preferences and directions for further development in themes, form and style in his art practice. The author retains the method of gradual (frame by frame) deconstruction and translation of the chosen scenes from Hitchcock's works into the medium of drawing as the initial process for what will be the essential outcome of restarting those scenes in animation: creating of completely new visual entities. Psychological tension and uncertainty, as the only narrative structure of the newly created scenes, are strongly accented by Nemanja's characteristic drawing expression which, in now exhibited work *Panic Book* and in the synthesis with the textual record, further strengthens their visual effect and dramaturgical framework. Namely, this time the artist makes a series of several hundred drawings on the pages of books and magazines in the field of social and political thought in socialist Yugoslavia, which become a kind of *mise-en-scène* of playing Hitchcock's cult scenes of escape, mass panic and fear. Connecting written materials on theoretical considerations, analyses of the political system of self-management, mechanisms of the organization and development of Yugoslav society with film classics – masters of suspense, Nemanja, in fact, makes deconstruction, parallel flow and confrontation of pictures of different social contexts of a time period the key events in his drawing works. Placed in series or animated, these sequences introduce the observer to discovering the many levels of meaning of their contents and to understanding, through the prism of ideology, the nature and dynamics of social relationships, mass psychology, individual-collective relations, dialectic tension between order and chaos. In further interpretations, the author's dealing with the heritage of Yugoslav socialism is a topical and thematic initiation of his latest art production in reviewing the not so distant dramatic developments and recent social and political circumstances in the territory of the former state. In this regard, the exhibition touches and raises many questions about post-conflict and transitional reality, from the tendencies of historical revisionism, to the position of an ordinary man and his everyday existence in the aggravating economic and other crises which we, as societies and communities, face.

Miroslav Karić