

Fear of the Unknown

(press release)

The European refugee crisis we are facing at the moment is the most serious one since World War II. Dom umenia/Kunsthalle Bratislava is the first state cultural institution in Eastern Europe to prepare an exhibition on this topical theme. This international project, curated by Lenka Kukurová, presents established artists from abroad alongside prominent representatives of the Slovak scene. The launch of the exhibition will take place on Thursday March 17, 2016 from 18:00 to 20:00. The exhibition will continue until July 31, 2016.

Fear of the Unknown, an international exhibition project which has emerged as a response to the current state of the refugee crisis, attempts to surmount the barrier of non-communication. The exhibited works by artists from Slovakia and other lands address the topic of refugees and of our relationship to them. As the curator **Lenka Kukurová** says: "Art provides a platform on which it is possible to raise a fundamental social topic on a symbolic level without any black and white polarisation. The artists are not experts on the refugee issue, they express their personal feelings and opinions and confront them with those of the audience."

The works presented are concerned with issues of the current refugee crisis and also with other closely associated themes. A considerable majority of them were produced specifically for the occasion of the exhibition and address the topic in the context of Central and Eastern Europe. *Fear of the Unknown* presents works which take the form of art reportage, some of them produced in direct cooperation with refugees. Part of the exhibition seeks to provoke reflection, while other works voice a protest. A multimedia exhibition treats the topic also on a documentary level; certain projects provide historical parallels; and a number of those exhibiting have direct personal experience of migration.

Also included here is a view of the situation in Slovakia, focusing on the themes of paranoia towards other cultures, refugee quotas and Christian values. Visitors to the exhibition will accordingly see real stories of refugees, responses from the public, and alas, also a type of non-functional discussion. *“The exhibited artworks are not presented as documents and do not claim any absolute truth. Instead, they create space for pausing, reflection and banishing of fears. At the same time, they represent a humanistic appeal. The exhibition reminds us that the issue of the refugee crisis is not something which develops unconnected with us, rather we are part of it. We are also, however, part of its possible solution,”* says Lenka Kukurová.

Exhibition-related programmes:

Communication with the visitor is part of the mission of the Dom umenia/Kunsthalle Bratislava, which is conducted by the mediators present at the exhibition and which we also conduct through educational programmes for various target groups – families, schools, students, adults. In collaboration with non-profit organisations and foreign partners we are organising a rich exhibition-related programme, with discussions and participative projects prepared for the widest public and for refugees, with refugees and about refugees. Educational programmes linked with creative activities for children are focused on different forms of travel. With students, using the exhibited works we concentrate on thinking together about the historical and present-day reasons for migration. These programmes will be led by gallery teachers and also by young migrants who are working in Slovakia and will thus enable visitors to the exhibition to acquire knowledge about their own first-hand experiences of migration. For mothers with children for whom Slovakia has become a second home, we are conducting a community cycle of meetings *Mums to Mums* with the aim of making mutual acquaintance between different cultural settings. For the exhibition we have published an **exhibition guide** – exercise book for the child

visitor, which we are also offering to schools as educational material. Besides the activities mentioned, we organise training courses for teachers.

A conspectus of educational programmes may be found at:

www.kunsthallebratislava.sk.

Programmes may be ordered at: vzdelavanie@kunsthallebratislava.sk.

FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN

Artists exhibiting: Radovan Čerevka (SK), Pavlína Fichta Čierna (SK), Janka Duchoňová (SK), Alena Foustková (CZ), Mandy Gehrt (DE), Oto Hudec (SK), Lukáš Houdek (CZ), Mario Chromý (SK), Daniela Krajčová (SK), Kristián Németh (SK), Nová večnosť (CZ), Dan Perjovschi (RO), Tomáš Rafa (SK), Oliver Ressler (AT), Birgit Rüberg (DE), Kateřina Šedá (CZ), TOY_BOX (CZ), Ján Triaška a Olja Triaška Stefanović (SK), Eliška Vrbová (CZ), Anna Witt (AT), Tobias Zielony (DE), Artur Żmijewski (PL)

Curator: Lenka Kukurová

Exhibition launch: Thursday March 17, 18:00 to 20:00.

Duration of exhibition: March 18–July 31, 2016

Open:

Mon: 12:00 – 19:00.

Tue: closed

Wed: 12:00 – 20:00.

Thu - Sun: 12:00 – 19:00.

General partner KHB: Tatra banka, a.s.

Main partner of the exhibition: Goethe Institut

Partners of the exhibition: Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Austrian Cultural Forum, Czech Centre, Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil in Bratislava

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