

**Polygon Creative Empire presents its proposal for a (hitherto) fictive investment
“megaproject” – *Sissi Quartier***

Kunsthalle LAB opens the 2019 season with *Sissi Quartier*. This is an interdisciplinary project by the Hungarian grouping Polygon Creative Empire, which comprises the artists Orsolya Bajusz and Virág Bogyó, the anthropologist Ágnes Patakfalvi-Czirják and the curator Kinga Lendeczki. *Sissi Quartier* is a continuation of *Stopover – Ways of Temporary Exchange*, a project premiered in May 2017 in the frei_raum Q21 exhibition space in MuseumsQuartier, Vienna. It has developed from a curatorial concept by Judit Angel, Christiane Erharter, Dóra Hegyi, Michaela Geboltsberger and Heide Wihrhein. The opening in Kunsthalle LAB will be held on February 14 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and the exhibition will run until April 14, 2019.

The artists working under the name Polygon Creative Empire present their proposal for the (hitherto) fictive investment “megaproject” *Sissi Quartier*, positioned where visual art borders on research, in the spaces of Kunsthalle LAB. This exhibition project is named after one of the most famous sovereigns of the late 19th century. However, Sissi today has been changed from a historical character to a mere icon, a symbol of refinement and beauty, to be seen in a variety of memorial objects, souvenirs and tourist attractions. The artists have chosen this empress precisely on account of her contemporary transformation into a “pop-icon”. The word *quartier* in the project’s name refers us to the urban zone of MuseumsQuartier in Vienna, where there are public museums and galleries which have become a centre of investors’ interest.

For the realisation of their project Polygon Creative Empire have chosen an existing region, sprawled on the territory of three states between Vienna, Bratislava and Győr. Due to its favourable geographical position and potential for cross-border cooperation, this has also been referred to as

“the golden triangle”. What has resulted from the authors’ research is a proposal for the development of this region, which simultaneously criticises the practices of investors and hence, for example, the fact that the newly-emerged places are not primarily designed for local residents but rather for visitors who are merely passing through the territory, or using it for short-term stays. Such developments focus on buildings such as shopping centres and hotels, which in turn require modernisation of communications and parking facilities. In the new towns thus created, however, the investors forget an extremely important factor, which is the added cultural value.

Imitating this strategy, the project authors decided to highlight the problem by constructing towns of this kind, which offer opportunities for work, commerce and tourism. Hence, in this spirit they have created a spatial installation in Kunsthalle LAB, consisting of architectural models, maquettes, and advertising banners with catchy slogans. Using the ubiquitous icon of the empress Sissi, they have produced proposals for buildings and “institutions”, with the whole attractively designed as a pleasant destination offering visitors a variety of services. Part of their complex is, for example, a health centre, a relaxation zone, a horseracing track, a viewing tower, and hiking paths. The artists also do not forget that certain border zones are regarded as no-man’s-land, within which illegal activities are conducted, such as smuggling, money laundering, and the white slave trade.

In conceiving their project the artists proceeded logically according to the strategies of large corporations, who, on the basis of subjective decision and the demands of developing capitalism, attempt artificially to construct a new “region”. The purpose of such places is to create a space for further profits by the investor, taking no account of local traditions or the *genius loci* of the particular place. Polygon Creative Empire explores and reflects on the influence that capital, and the personal interests of investors, have on the construction of these territories, the requirements for their emergence, and the ubiquitous necessity to construct the brand, for which local historical sources serve only as showy decorations.



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POLYGON CREATIVE EMPIRE: Sissi Quartier

Curators: Judit Angel, Dóra Hegyi

Text for the exhibition: Barbora Komarová

Opening: February 14, 2019 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Duration: February 15 – April 14, 2019

Venue: Kunsthalle LAB

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