

A L B E R T O
P E O L A**Dubravka Vidović****EXIL**

curated by Gigliola Foschi

Opening: 7 p.m. Thursday 10 May 2012
Exhibition: Friday 11 May to Saturday 30 June 2012
Opening hours: Monday to Saturday 3.30 to 7.30 p.m. Mornings by appointment

Observe the fragile life of things, even the most humble and neglected, carefully because they contain the history of those who have lived with them, and because they too have eyes and a voice. By releasing a dream into life one's own artistic research itself comes to life from out of an utopian tension; thanks to empathy and a willingness to listen the past can be allowed to speak.

In her latest artistic research **EXIL**, Dubravka Vidović has focused her attention on the surface of walls and on the black doors of *shikumen* (traditional Shanghai houses that date back to the period of the foreign concessions). The architecture of these buildings combines Western styles and that of traditional architecture found nearer the mouth of the Yangtze. These houses are earmarked for demolition as a result of aggressive urban development strategies which will force their inhabitants out of their homes and into exile. In this series of work the artist has not limited herself to simply documenting what remains of the *shikumen*, home to 80% of the population during the thirties, nor has she sought to indulge in a nostalgic study of their remains. Before photographing their walls, built from crudely fired bricks, she wedged old books into the spaces between them; she also stuffed them with scraps of cloth: small delicate accessories whose colourful energy bring these old homes - currently being demolished – back to life, at the same time symbolising the need to preserve ancient wisdom.

After closely inspecting these buildings and making contact she interacted poetically with these humble abandoned homes, transforming each image into a gift, and a homage to the history and lives of the former inhabitants of these historic abodes. This homage extends to conjure up in our minds faint traces of memories the echo of uprooted lives. Vidović's work is capable of restoring a living presence and vital warmth to these places and histories where otherwise destined to oblivion. These works enable us to experience this loss, and invite us to reflect on the collective condition of those who have seen the bonds with their roots severed.

Alongside the series of photographs *The Shikumen's Walls Series* (2010-2011), the artist presents the video *Waterhouses* (2011) in which the outlines of old and new houses in Shanghai appear and then vanish, traced in felt tip dipped in water. These are a tribute to ancient Chinese ink drawings in which the pen strokes are decisive and are also a poetic reflection on the fragility of memory and the ephemeral nature of our artistic endeavour and of our very existence.

Dubravka Vidović

Born in 1970 in Zara (Croatia), she lives and works in Shanghai and Milan. After a classical training she moved to Milan, where she gained admission to the Brera Fine Art Academy in 1996, attending courses run by Luciano Fabro. In 1999, she was accepted on the Corso Superiore di Arti Visive at the Ratti Foundation, studying under the visiting professor Haim Steinbach. Later she was nominated for the Mercedes Benz art prize. In her work Vidović uses diverse expressive languages, including photography, installations, video and archives. Her exhibitions include: *Final project* with Haim Steinbach, ex-chiesa di San Francesco, curated by Angela Vettese and Giacinto Di Pietrantonio, Como (1999); *Tracce di un seminario 3*, Via Farini, curated by Angela Vettese and Giacinto Di Pietrantonio, Milan (2000); *Junge Kunst aus Italien*, Documental Halle, Kassel / Museum Ludwig, Aachen, curated by Ulrich Schneider, Germany (2001); *Note: nostalgia*, Via Farini, curated by Gabi Scardi, Milan (2002), *Video It*, ex-cimitero di San Pietro in Vincoli, curated by Mario Gorni and Elena Volpato, Turin (2002); *Insert*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb, curated by Tihomir Milovac, Branko Franceschi, Silva Kalčić and Antonia Majača, Zagreb (2005); *Honey Money*, Assab one, curated by Roberto Pinto and Gabi Scardi, Milan (2005); *Creative emergencies*, MAR Museo d'Arte della città di Ravenna, curated by Silvia Corelli, Ravenna (2009); *Incant – Al di là delle apparenze opache*, Fotografia Europea, Museo Frati Cappuccini, curated by Gigliola Foschi, Reggio Emilia (2010); *Memoria variabile*, Galleria Milano, curated by Carla Pellegrini and Gigliola Foschi, Milan (2011); *Hotspot Berlin 2011 + Auction Phillips de Pury & Company*, Georg-Kolbe Museum + Berlin Literature House, curated by Eugen Blume, Berlin (2011); *Summer Group Show*, Podbielski Contemporary, Berlin (2011).

In 2005, she won the first prize at the XI Young Artist's Exhibition at the Art Gallery of the National Museum in Zara. She also had her solo show *Formae Mentis* (2006/07), curated by Ljubica Srhoj Čerina. In Milan in October 2007, she had a solo show *Boxed Sea* in the Artopia Gallery, curated by Francesca Pasini. In 2011 she had her solo show *Exil* in the Podbielski Contemporary in Berlin, curated by Gigliola Foschi.

For further information please contact the gallery.

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