

Memory Practices

Artist: Zoya Laktionova

Opening: 16 March, 18:00

Artist talk: *Memory Practices*, 19:00

Anca Poterasu Gallery, 26 Popa Soare Street, Bucharest

The opening of the exhibition Memory Practices will feature a curated screening of films by the artist Zoya Laktionova, which will be followed by an interactive discussion with the audience.

Zoya Laktionova is an artist working with photography and video art around the concepts of memory, war and personal stories. During her *Artists for Artists Residency (AFAR)* in Bucharest she continued her exploration of local history, which transforms the ephemeral into the eternal, capturing fleeting moments that resonate deeply with viewers.

The artist's practice is influenced by her experiences of constant migration through various artist residencies, a journey catalyzed by the war in Ukraine. In her photographs and documentaries, she adeptly navigates the complexity of history and identity, drawing attention to the nuanced intersections of personal and collective narratives. Her exploration of memory and displacement serves as a poignant reflection of the contemporary human condition. The artist emphasizes the key elements of transformation, highlighting how history is imprinted on the walls of public buildings and monuments in the major cities of Central and Eastern Europe, as an everlasting imprint of the ever-evolving past.

The exhibition *Memory Practices* unveils a captivating series of photographs from Zoya's ongoing projects, providing spectators with a window into her profound exploration of public history and propaganda. The latest photographs captured in Bucharest and Constanta during the residency act as a gateway to the complex layers of remembrance and forgetfulness that shape our shared consciousness.

The visuals alternate between moments of personal and collective history and empty spaces captured either on the gallery walls or in the artist's photographs and documentaries, which reference the erasing and rewriting of history. In this way, history is manipulated while inviting viewers to question their own position on significant events. Zoya reenacts her family archives in a local setting, illustrated by the *Unheritage* series, which features photographs recovered before the outbreak of war. The artist uses damage as symbols representing memory and forgetting, making them central themes in her negatives.

Among her ongoing explorations, the artist's documentary, *Ashes Settling in Layers on the Surface*, is a reconstruction of Mariupol on screen between two destructions - World War II and the Russian-Ukrainian war. The exhibition features shots from this documentary, which were found and used during the development of a feature documentary about Mariupol.

In its exploration of manipulation, the exhibition *Memory Practices* delves into the delicate nature of memory and its vulnerability to distortion.

Zoya Laktionova was born in Mariupol, in a working class family in 1984. Zoya first appeared in the world of documentary cinema as a character in the film "Ma"(10') in 2017, and a year later made her first short documentary "Diorama" (12' <https://www.dok-leipzig.de/en/film/20182188/diorama>) about the mined sea at the Mariupol area. The film won an award in the MyStreetFilms category at the "86" festival (Ukraine) in 2018, has participated in numerous European film festivals (DOKLeipzig, Ji.Hlava, Cottbus etc), and was released in cinemas in Ukraine in 2019. In 2021, Zoya premiered her new short "Territory of Empty Windows" (10') at DocudaysUA International Human Rights DFF, and showed it in cinemas at Molodist IFF in Kyiv, received a special award from the Ji.Hlava festival at the Obiok 2021 festival and the main award at the documentary competition of the French-Ukrainian festival MIST 2021. International premiere was held at MakeDoxIFF, North Macedonia.

Before the start of a full-scale war of Russia against Ukraine (24/02/22), Zoya lived in Kyiv and worked as an independent artist and documentary filmmaker. She works with themes of war, memory and personal stories.

This talk is organized by ARAC and Goethe-Institut Bucharest in the framework of AFAR Network project.

Artists for Artists Residency Network (AFAR) is an EU funded project and residency program, aiming to improve the mobility of contemporary visual artists and curators in Romania, Germany, Croatia, and Austria. The project is led by the Romanian Association for Contemporary Art (ARAC) with its three consortium partners – Goethe Institute Network, Croatian Association of Fine Artists, and Künstlerhaus Vienna. www.afarnetwork.com