

Press release, Berlin, April 10th, 2018

The group exhibition BAYWATCH presents artists whose origins and cultural and linguistic influences are in Eastern Europe.

The first exhibition of the newly established Kunstverein Ost - KVOST for short - thus announces the association's future programme; exhibitions, discussions and a residency programme that explore different aesthetic and political stances and reflect what Eastern Europe means today beyond the usual clichés and prejudices.

The works on display are the result of critical observations, examinations and evaluations of Eastern Europe; they record tendencies, hardships and dangers and show the multifaceted nature of the region.

The construction of national identity is firmly rooted in historical mythology, legends and objects. For Bulgaria, for example, these include a number of gold treasures from various centuries. Attributed to the Thracians, they bear witness to the region's thousands of years of civilisation and culture. Martina Vacheva (*1988 Bulgaria) uses one of these gold treasures as the starting point for a series of humorous ceramics on show in the exhibition.

The title of the exhibition BAYWATCH also comes from one of her early sketchbooks. It reflects the huge impact American television series had on the countries freed from the censorship of socialism at the beginning of the 1990s. These series conveyed the values, ideals, hopes and abysses of the Western way of life.

In his video work "Exercising Failure", Dragos Alexandrescu (*1974 Romania) combines three central ideologies that changed the course of European history; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' "The Communist Manifesto" from 1848, the Bible and Friedrich Hayek's "Capitalism and the Historians" from 1954, where the Nobel Prize winner in Economics demonstrates the advantages of capitalist economics. These three texts are interwoven in an empty factory building, symbolising the shift from a centrally planned socialist economy to a free market economy.

This social and historical shift is also central to the "Sexy History Calendar" series that Bogdan Armanu & Silvia Amancei (*1991 Romania) have worked on since 2014. In their calendars, the two artists document current changes and historical events from the socialist era with black and white photographs, combined in collages with images of scantily dressed young men and women. The artists will also produce a new calendar in Berlin for the exhibition at KVOST.

The artistic stances and intentions in this exhibition are more diverse, subjective and divergent than the shared history of the countries of Eastern Europe – all members of the Warsaw Pact and under communist and socialist party dictatorships until the 1990s – would lead us to believe. The comparable challenges of the present, such as regulating the consequences of capitalism gone wild, building a bourgeois democracy and dealing with the nationalist far right, should focus on the differences and diversity that characterise Eastern Europe today.

Exhibition Details KVOST

Artists: Dragos Alexandrescu, Silvia Amancei & Bogdan Armanu, Tamar Chaduneli, Levan Chelidze, EQUALS Collective (initiated and led by Andreja Kulunčić, the other members wish to remain anonymous), Daniil Galkin, Karol Radziszewski and Martina Vacheva.

Title: BAYWATCH

Curated by Nathalie Hoyos and Rainald Schumacher

Opening: Wednesday 25th April 2018 . 7 - 9 pm

Exhibition dates: 26th April - 29th July 2018

Venue: KVOST . Leipziger Str 47 / Jerusalemer Str . 10117 Berlin

Opening times: Wednesday – Saturday . 2 - 6 pm

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