

## **Ascension - Petr Davydtchenko**

Petr Davydtchenko presents his third solo show at the gallery with two works.

### *Romantic of Terror*

*Fire, Electric Cables, Battery parts, 412cm x 232cm, 2017*

8 make-shift canvases total one large painting that repeats the phrase Romantic of Terror. Created through the technique and material of burning rubber, the physical act of protest references the revolutionary notion whereby terror becomes the desired tool used to maintain a new socio-political reality. The electricity is intentionally cut. Technological, political and personal anxieties drive the work through flames. The painting is accompanied by a mixed-media archival piece that confronts the viewer with evidence of events that occurred in the process of making "Romantic of Terror." It unveils the raw and unpleasant matter that embodies the realness of protesting as opposed to its various simulacrum. The skin of the artist, which was removed from his hands after a painful accident, stands for the actual flesh that is neglected in the neoliberal outlook on resistance as weekend fair activity (hello "Pepsi" ads and impotent acts of opposition that tend to only further enforce the structures they criticize). It is presented as a conscious choice to be unpleasant rather than spare an audience from the actuality of things. The work consists of photographs, video, used bandages, human skin and an accompanying text that embodies the artist's struggle to accept practical guidance through sentiments of impossibility and the identification of the hypocrisy bound to systemic criticism.

### *Ascension*

*6 source video Installation, 2016*

"Ascension" is a comprehensive 6-screen installation that amplifies focus on the ephemeral moment of desired escape from the depths of a darkening socio-political totality. It was presented at V Moscow Biennale for Young Art in 2016 and received overall critical acclaim as one of the best works in the exhibition. The main character's past, future and present intentions are unclear as time after time he pulls himself out of the boiling sewage in a ubiquitous ascension.

### *Text*

The introduction to the exhibition is provided by Davydtchenko. The text is generated from a one shot google search with a broad query whose first result was a video from 2010. Davydtchenko appropriates this 7 year old monologue (not quite accidentally) and uses it to paint further context to bleak political perceptions. It can be found in this document.

2010 - Mr. Federal Minister, I want to make a request – and knowing that this debate will be followed closely at the Turkish Embassy I will give it in the exact wording: The federal minister for European and International Affairs is requested to declare the Turkish Ambassador Kadri Acvet Tezcan, "persona non grata" and demand his immediate dismissal.

Gentlemen of the Turkish Embassy – I am not going to be as polite as my colleagues Van der Bellen falling on my knees speaking of your "excellency". No, "gentlemen" of the Turkish Embassy – there are no ladies here... "Gentlemen" of the Turkish Embassy, members of parliament, let me begin with a murder case:

On the 3rd of June 2010, not that long ago Mr. Federal Minister, in the city of Iskenderun, Archbishop Luigi Padovese was stabbed 8 times in the heart, by a 26 year old named Murat Altun, who was screaming "allahu akhbar". "Allah is the greatest!" The Archbishop ran from his garden onto the streets calling for help – in vain. Here the perpetrator cut off his head, leaving it to hang from the body on a piece of skin.

Many priests have been murdered since 2008.

What did you say? "What's with the drama?" I know that you do not care for this drama. These are your friends! You should be ashamed, that's why you don't like it! That's the reason! – I have been waiting for this...Your devotion to freedom of religion is nothing but pure hypocrisy! When a Catholic Archbishop's head is cut off, there is no reaction.

And now let me address the gentlemen of the Turkish Embassy. I can't even imagine the uproar if somebody touched a Muslim imam or some other religious esteemed Muslim. It does not make sense to call them "spiritual" leaders anyway – never has a representative of your religion been assaulted, but this happens every year in your country. Take note of that Ambassador. We did not ask you to send us all the illiterates of Anatolia Turkey here. Turkey sent them! We haven't asked you to send up your stone-age Islamists from Anatolia either. People who bury their 16 year old daughters alive for having "extramarital relationships" as happened 2 years ago. We did not ask you to do that.

Ms Muhltonnen do you have any compassion for this 16 year-old buried alive?" She wasn't Catholic so you are allowed to feel sorry for her. We did not ask you to send them up here. The Turks sent them up here. And then he (the Ambassador) complains that they are not integrated, telling them at the same time not to integrate. All the while Erbakan travels around European countries declaring that integration and assimilation is "a crime against Turkishness"!

Ladies and Gentlemen from the government coalition: With your romantic of tolerance and "devotion" to human rights: Do you know there is a law in Turkey – #301 in the Turkish law-book which means that if someone had said the things the Ambassador said, only directed towards Turkey, he would be convicted as a

criminal? #301 criminalizes "belittlement of the Turkish nation, state, republic, institutions" and leads to between 6 months and 2 years imprisonment.

This is the Turkey, now telling us what to do. Mr. Ambassador, enter the Orient Express and go back to Istanbul, your wonderland!

I am telling you...I am telling this country is not exclusively made up of never ending tolerance, there also people sick and tired of the one way-street tolerance babble which you feed on Mr. Ambassador. You are not exploiting it, no? And I have to tell you, a few people in politics will not accept this. And voters outside do not accept it at all, I can tell you that for sure.