

Driton Selmani
Curated by Lora Sariaslan

26 September—19 October 2019
U10 Art Space, Belgrade

MORE AND
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ABOUT OTHER
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More And More Thoughts About Other Thoughts

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Opening hours:

Tuesday—Saturday: 12–20h

Sunday & Monday: closed

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The solo exhibition of the multivalent Kosovo-born and based artist Driton Selmani (b. 1987) focuses on the dominant role of humor, questioning its capacity as a tool to magnify the meaning of the (un) familiar. Elemental, human, and yet at times difficult to analyze, humor is an entry point into diverse cultures and a strategy to survive within it. We see how in Selmani's work humor works as a captivating mode of expression, transitional and (trans) national cultural product, and topic for discussion, despite its levity. In spite of its 'lightness' humor is indeed a complex topic, and this exhibition presents it as a means of identity negotiations and queries how humor shapes the artistic language and production of Selmani. What makes humor active is that it is not a one-sided action, but a dialogue not only initiated by (in this case) the artist but also relies on the viewer, resulting (in successful examples) in an active, immersive, and provocative dialogue and discourse. What Selmani does is to create an engaged and engaging dialogue.

Humor surprises and grabs our attention, and that is precisely why artists employ it... and what better place to start but the self. In "They say you can't hold two watermelons in one hand", Selmani challenges both himself and an old Albanian saying implying one's inability to be in two places at the same time as he creates a self-portrait.

The ordinary takes on a fresh meaning through the creative improvisation of the artist as the banal and environmentally hazardous plastic bags turn into a humble platform for genuine thought sharing. And delivery trucks do not deliver goods, but the distilled and minimalistic brainy quotes of Selmani.

In "Lorem ipsum", the placeholder text commonly used in the graphic, print, and publishing industries for visual mockups Selmani shuffles the purpose of the two words to turn them into the most vital message, a message in a bottle. Hence, the meaningless filler text morphs into a confessional or a lifesaver.

With biting irony and provocative critical attitude, Driton Selmani speaks in metaphors and allegories as he questions the certainty of existing conditions and situations, fabricated structures, and existing taboos. Conceived as a form of continuous cultural study, "More And More Thoughts About Other Thoughts" investigates the socially shifting landscape(s) both personal and public. Everyday objects and linguistic phenomena provide points of departure which end up in a diverse format ranging from personal sketches to installations, demonstrating social processes and historical links, often employing absurdity and humor. As he turns objects and situations into artistic poetry in the form of small and meaningful actions, the work subtly engages with something familiar yet alien, both here and there. Driton Selmani is a keen observer and storyteller of our times managing to put a smile on our face.