

ZHANNA KADYROVA

DATA EXTRACTION

Opening: Saturday 16 March 2013, Via Arco dei Becci 1, 6pm–12 midnight
Until 4 May 2013, Tuesday–Saturday, 2–7pm

Galleria Continua is pleased to host, in its Arco dei Becci exhibition space in San Gimignano, the first solo show in Italy by the Ukrainian artist Zhanna Kadyrova.

Zhanna Kadyrova started working as an artist at an early age, employing a wide range of media, with which she engages with the world and with history. Her practice has taken various forms, including video and performance, but it is her sculpture that brought her to the attention of critics and the viewing public. Regarded as a talent destined to establish herself on the international art scene, she will be exhibiting at the Ukraine Pavilion in the 55th Venice Biennale and at the next Moscow Biennale with a personal show entitled *Crowd*.

The artist's exhibition at Galleria Continua is entitled *DATA EXTRACTION*. Kadyrova's project is based principally on a body of works focusing on asphalt, produced by the artist in 2012, the year in which Ukraine hosted the European Football Championships. It was an event of considerable economic and political significance, especially in view of the fact that Ukraine is not, as yet, part of the EU. In the lead-up to the arrival of foreign visitors, Kiev was transformed into an open-air building site, with a wide range of modernization projects that included the resurfacing of some of the roads. The works shown by the artist in this exhibition stem from her observation of a city undergoing yet another rapid transformation, and her desire to preserve a few "strips of skin" by removing some parts of the old asphalt. The title of the show renders this concept exactly. *EXTRACTION* refers to the sample taken from the road, *DATA* the wish to preserve, but also to analyse, something that would otherwise have been destroyed.

It is curious to see how a simple material like asphalt, when elevated to the status of object, becomes a generator of innumerable mental associations, as it is at one and the same time a primary material and the final result of a process. What is commonly called asphalt consists in reality of a mixture of aggregate particles and bitumen. The latter, derived from the fractional distillation of crude oil, is used in quantities proportional to the importance of the road infrastructure, which bears witness to the development of trade in the country. Kadyrova exhibits this modern ruin, a eulogy and a vestige of the urban context, in a town that carefully protects its medieval past, creating in this way an overlapping of different historic dimensions: the streets of San Gimignano, a World Heritage Site, alongside the severe-looking asphalt of distant Ukraine. The artist's work also raises the question of which motorways this asphalt could have "travelled" on – probably on all those where there are always road-works, so very fragile due to their doubtful construction quality.

Irrespective of the social implications, the quality of Kadyrova's works emerges in the wealth of connotations they trigger. The allure of these broad expanses of asphalt lies in what, at first sight, is their strongly pictorial dimension, and in the complexity of the granular and earthy

structure. Cracks traverse this landscape like wrinkles, and there is no more real portrait for a city than the drawing which shows its venous grid.

Special thanks to Mimmo Costanzo, Tecnis S.p.A. and all the staff of Morano Calabro construction site for their valuable cooperation.

Zhanna Kadyrova was born in Brovary, Ukraine, in 1981. She lives and works in Kiev. The artist has a propensity for using humble materials (plaster, stucco, cement, etc.) and ones with powerful historic connotations (tiles, typical decorative items used in Soviet interiors, or glazed earthenware). With her great feel for plastic values, Kadyrova creates works with interesting forms that overturn the function of objects. Socially and politically engaged, she is a member of a collective called R.E.P. (Revolutionary Experimental Space), founded during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004. The artist has exhibited in many solo and group shows in Ukraine, Russia, the United States, the Czech Republic, Austria, Poland and France. She has also received a number of awards, including the PinchukArtCenter, which she won in 2011, and the Kazimir Malevich Artist Award, the Sergey Kuryokhin Modern Art Award and the Kiev Sculpture Project, Grand Prix, in 2012.

For further information about the exhibition and for photographs:

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