

adrian paci
the people are missing

opening march 29, 7 pm

kaufmann repetto is pleased to present *The People Are Missing*, Adrian Paci's seventh solo exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition brings together the results of the artist's most recent research: Paci's new video, *Interregnum*, two environmental installations, and a series of photographs.

Interregnum collects and assembles fragments extracted from videos documenting the funerals of communist dictators of different nationalities and eras, recovered from official state archives and national television broadcasts. The grainy images show endless rows of people moving in unison, seemingly without a purpose, their faces laden with expressions of grief. Shifting from close-ups to wider views of the masses, we become witnesses of a crescendo where the manipulation of these masses and the depersonalization of individual identity become increasingly evident.

The dissolution of the boundaries between private and public life, intrinsic to dictatorships, transforms individuals into members of a "political body", that thinks and acts in uniformity with the greater action imposed by the regime's ideology. The death of a dictator marks a deep crack in a system in which power coincides with the figure of the leader. At the same time, it determines a moment when pain, hitherto absent in the forcefully optimistic rhetoric of the regime, reappears in the public arena. Whether desperation and grief originate from a genuine feeling or a forced role, remains unanswered.

Interregnum investigates the nature of this political body, ranging from Asia to Europe and covering almost the entirety of the twentieth century: from Lenin's death to that of the Albanian dictator, Enver Hoxha. The figure of the dead leader is missing, leaving the people to march in a paradoxical and absurd procession, imbued with the rhetoric of the regime's language. Simultaneously, through meticulous editing, the representation of the people is redefined, and the individuality of each, the complexities of their unique emotions, is reaffirmed.

In the project room, an old, oil shower made of rusty iron is continuously running. In opposition to the political presence of the masses of people in *Interregnum*, the shower draws us towards an intimate dimension, that alludes to the vulnerability of a person's nude body. The iron pipe and the noise of the water's re-heating system are an almost threatening presence in contrast to that of the absent human form. At the same time, the work tells of a space where life, in its bare essence, persists in spite of anything.

The photographic series *Despite everything* presents us with stone walls carved with signs, symbols or letters. The photographs were taken inside the cells of a former communist prison in Albania, where the walls, transformed into diary-like pages, collected multiple layers of human traces with the passing of time. These images of small cubicles, dating to the second half of the twentieth century, bring to mind the painted caves where man has embedded signs and stories of its passages.

The people are missing is the title of the installation occupying one of the two largest rooms in the gallery. The double wooden staircase, reminiscent of the steps of a greek theater, is open to the public who can use it to rest, read or engage in conversation. Similarly to other works within the exhibition, the structure stands empty but alludes to the possibility of being inhabited. *The people are missing* aims therefore to be an invitation for the viewers - a much needed one in these particular, political times - to generate a physical and concrete space for dialogue.

Adrian Paci was born in 1969 in Shkoder, Albania. Throughout his career he held numerous solo shows in various international institutions such as: MAXXI - Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (2015); Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Norway (2014); Röda Sten Konsthall, Goteborg (2014); MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal (2014); Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea - PAC, Milan (2014); Jeu de Paume, Paris (2013); National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina (2012); Kunsthaus Zurich, Zurich (2010); Bloomberg Space, London (2010); The Center for Contemporary Art CCA, Tel Aviv (2009); Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund (2007); MoMA PS1, New York (2006) and Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2005). Amongst the various group shows, Adrian Paci's work has also been featured in the 14th International Architecture Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia (2014); in the 48th and the 51st edition of the International Art Exhibition - La Biennale di Venezia (respectively in 1999 and 2005); in the 15th Biennale of Sydney (2006); in the 15th Quadriennale di Roma, where he won first prize (2008); in the Biennale de Lyon (2009); and in the 4th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013). He has recently been awarded the Art for Peace Award (2016).