



WIENER STÄDTISCHE
VERSICHERUNGSVEREIN



VIG SPECIAL INVITATION

as part of the Essl Art Award CEE

From 11 May until 3 June 2016

Curator: Philippe Batka

Exhibition venue: Exhibition Centre in the Ringturm
1010 Vienna, Schottenring 30

Opening hours: Monday to Friday: 9 am to 6 pm, free admission
(closed on public holidays)

Press Preview: Tuesday, 10 May 2016, 11 am

Official Opening: Tuesday, 10 May 2016, 6.30 pm (by invitation only)

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<http://go.picturedesk.com/ElaVKAiP>

VIG SPECIAL INVITATION as part of the Essl Art Award CEE

From **11 May until 3 June 2016**, the VIG SPECIAL INVITATION exhibition will be shown for the fourth time at the Ringturm in Vienna, presenting the works of eight artists from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. The initiative launched by the Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, the main shareholder of the Vienna Insurance Group (VIG), is intended to support the creation of a network with the region of Central and Eastern Europe and offers insights into the work of the youngest generation of artists.

“As the main shareholder of the leading insurance group in Central and Eastern Europe, we want to present the complexity and diversity of the art and culture of these countries to a wider public. The VIG SPECIAL INVITATION is an expression of our philosophy of support in various respects – it is particularly important to us to bring young artists into the limelight and make them known also outside their home countries”, explains **Dr. Günter Geyer**, CEO of the Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein.

The works on display deal with multi-faceted issues, from a criticism of capitalism to existential questions relating to the subjectivation of the young generation. Some of the artists look for the individual's capacity to act within rigid social structures, while others examine the relation between art and reality. Instead of providing a general overview, the VIG SPECIAL INVITATION focuses on very specific issues which are delineated by juxtaposing analytical, critical and humoristic works of art.

The eight young artists may share similar concerns, but still use very different strategies to voice them. The artist **Bence Bálint** from Hungary uses sprayer strategies and graffiti codes to broach the question as to the realities which lie beyond a capitalism devouring resources and space. By professing his solidarity with this specific milieu, he clearly steps out of conventional social lines. The works by **Angel Chobanov** from Bulgaria and the Czech artist **Tomáš Kajánek** deal with the individual's capacity to act within rigid social structures. Chobanov's installations, frequently testifying to the artist's great sense of humour, often confront the audience with implicit or explicit instructions, while Kajánek's performances are intended to challenge social and linguistic rules and standards: the artist sometimes also uses his own body in his work (thereby using it as a projection surface for opposing opinions).

Sharp-witted analyses of political grievances form the basis of some works of art; **Mehmet Ögüt** from Turkey often dedicates his work to situating the fate of individuals within the wider field of collective history. His characters' personal stories and anecdotes illustrate the broader historical context. The poetic and, at the same time, subversive narratives in the works of the Romanian artist **Gloria Luca** (born in 1988) deal with existential questions relating to the subjectivation of her generation – a generation marked and traumatised by its collective experience of labour migration and precarious living conditions. **Petra Mrša** from Croatia dedicates her work to the smallest unit of society – the family and its increasing marginalisation in Western societies.

Small But Dangers (Slovenia) and **Petr Bařinka** (Slovakia) examine the relation between art and reality. Bařinka has discovered games as useful tools in this respect: he uses the visual and linguistic logic of computer games to find formulations of absolute and universal validity which could hardly be achieved using the means of realism. In their intimate and, at the same time, provocative works, the artist duo Small But Dangers investigates the ways in which our perception is manipulated.

Philippe Batka, the exhibition's curator, explains his approach: *“What I consider essential is to look at the different strategies the artists use, based on their respective political and social contexts, to position themselves within society. This exhibition is dedicated to their potential impact on social conditions.”*

The exhibition, which will be shown **from 11 May to 3 June** at the Ringturm in Vienna (free admission), will present approximately twelve works of these young artists who use different media such as sculpture, installation, photography and video. All pieces will be on display for the first time in Austria; some of them created others re-adapted specifically for this exhibition.

For **detailed information** on the individual works of art please go to:

<http://www.wst-versicherungsverein.at/en/vig-special-invitation/>

VIG SPECIAL INVITATION

The VIG SPECIAL INVITATION developed as part of the long-term partnership of the Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, the main shareholder of the VIENNA INSURANCE GROUP (VIG), and the Essl Art Award CEE and has become a central element of this top award for young art students from Central and Eastern Europe. The VIG SPECIAL INVITATION used to be extended to a winner of the Essl Art Award CEE, but in 2015 it was, for the first time, extended to one of the ten nominees per country - independently of the Essl Art Award CEE itself. The selection was made by **Barbara Grötschnig**, the head of our group's own art collection housed at the Ringturm building, together with **Philippe Batka**, the curator of the collection. Instead of providing the traditional representative overview, the presentation is informed by thematic and discursive considerations.

ESSL ART AWARD CEE

The Essl Art Award CEE was initiated in 2005 to support young art students from Central and Eastern Europe. Every two years it is awarded in Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Students from the art colleges of these countries can submit their works via the Internet; ten nominees per country are chosen from more than 1,000 submissions; exhibitions in selected institutions in the respective countries are dedicated to these artists and their works. From all nominees, an international jury chooses two artists per participating country who receive the Essl Art Award CEE.

In **2015**, the **international jury** nominating two award winners per participating country consisted of: Vanja Babić (Croatia), Philippe Batka (Austria), René Block (Germany), Gábor Ébli (Hungary), Lucia Gregorová Stach (Slovakia), Andreas Hoffer (Austria), Viktoria Calvo-Tomek (Austria), Romelo Pervolovici (Romania), Lora Sariaslan (Turkey), Igor Španjol (Slovenia), Jiří Švestka (Czech Republic), Maria Vassileva (Bulgaria) and Eva Wirlitsch-Essl (Austria).

Catalogue: "Diversity of Voices"

The catalogue "Diversity of Voices", which comprises approximately 180 pages, accompanies the Essl Art Award CEE. A limited number of catalogues is available for free for media representatives. Please send your requests to: presse@wst-versicherungsverein.at