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MARCIN DUDEK
Game Time Choices

7 October - 19 November 2023
Opening: Saturday 7 October 2 - 7pm



Image from artist archive, 2023. Courtesy of Marcin Dudek.

Marcin Dudek explores themes related to the politics of identity, social structures, and human experiences, often working from football fan cultures as a point of departure. In his multidisciplinary practice, he draws inspiration from his life in Poland, where he witnessed

the transformation of society as it transitioned from communism to capitalism. *Game Time Choices* is a reflection on labour, and on Dudek's longstanding interest in reconciliation. Informed by moments of collision—between past and present, old and new, the spectacle and the imperceptible, permanent and temporary—his works are a means to locate a sense of stability amid the vulnerability of emotion, memory, and fallibility. Yeo Workshop presents a new body of work by the artist, which extends his recent research into the narratives of the FIFA World Cup and the migrant workers underpinning this global spectacle.

Game Time Choices, the artist's second solo exhibition at the gallery, is shaped around a central installation, *Tent* (2022). This inverted tent-like structure alludes to football stadiums, and to the numerous hands that have built these architectural monuments, particularly those involved with the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar. It questions the national prestige surrounding this global affair, which is simultaneously celebrated and criticised for its idolatry and excessiveness. The second-hand uniforms used to construct the tent embody a multitude of meanings and connotations which range from the personal to the universal. The textiles are at once traces of history, affectations of their former wearer(s), victims of the disposability of the clothing industry, and stories of 'survival against the odds'. Dudek has transferred images onto the surface of the fabrics: strong, calloused hands; the skull-like figure of the 2022 trophy; distorted faces of industry leaders and decision-makers. The work emerges from a wooden box, which forms both the base of the sculpture and its transport vessel. Such a crate is reminiscent of a suitcase, the small capsule of existence a migrant worker holds onto as they drift from one construction site to another; the workers, like the clothes, struggle to exist within a world which uses them then casts them aside.

In tandem with *Tent*, a series of collages are also presented in the space. They incorporate the artist's idiosyncratic method of image transfer, a laborious process of rubbing emulsified archival photographs onto steel, medical tape, and other materials, which are cut into strips then rearranged. The result is intricate compositions of undulating terrains, which appear to map fictional territories while leaving vestiges of social histories for us to trace. Breaking free from regular lattices and the conventional modularity of painting, they mimic the somewhat haphazard scaffoldings at construction sites. Dudek questions the utilitarianism of this architectural construct, which often disorients a casual onlooker, then is easily forgotten after it is dismantled. He relates this temporality to the seasonal nature of migrant workers, whose presence is as delible as scaffoldings within fast developing cities. As he creates, Dudek reflects on his own relationship to the subject: from his humble beginnings in Kraków, to his time in the 90s at a school for troubled youth, where heavy manual labour was used as a corrective tool, to the wide-ranging odd jobs he held before becoming an established and respected artist. Dudek is highly empathetic of the working class and those on the periphery of society, a sentiment that resonates throughout his works. Though grounded in the narratives of football fan culture and the broader discourse around national, even global, spectacles, *Game Time Choices* gently nudges at matters close to home, reminding us of the migrant issues that are also prevalent in Singapore.

Echoing this notion of 'limbo' and transience, the artist has deliberately sanded down various parts of the gallery wall. This gesture is an attempt to uncover and reveal the layers of labour histories that usually are hidden from public view. In stripping bare these states of transition, Dudek points to media misrepresentations, information overload and visual oversaturation in our post-truth era, where things are never as they appear to be. His

inimitable artistic vernacular explores the complexities of fragmented memory, violence and trauma; in doing so, Dudek speaks to our cardinal desire to find a sense of belonging and place within a group, while resisting obscurity amid the masses.

Artist Biography

Marcin Dudek (b. 1979, Krakow) works within the areas of performance, installations, objects, and collages, creating situations based on the confrontation between the world of violence and the world of art. Using avant-garde means of expression, he favours referencing events that took place at football stadiums and personal histories of football fans and hooligans, which he deconstructs and reworks in his practice. The white cube gallery space becomes a place where the artist's personal experiences clash with universal questions of crowd (mob) psychology and theories regarding architecture and the society of spectacle.

Forthcoming institutional solo show at IKOB, Eupen, Belgium (2023). Recent solo exhibitions include Kunsthall Extra City, Antwerpen, Belgium (2023), *Ultrasraina*, Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Paris, France (2021); *The Crowd Man*, MWW Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Wrocław, Poland (2019); *The Lure of the Arena*, MNAC National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania (2019). Selected group exhibitions include *Art of the Terraces*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2022); *Collapsing*, TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain (2022); 8th Biennial of Painting, Museum Deinze and Museum Roger Ravel, Deinze, Belgium (2022); *FUCK YOU*, Kunstenhuis Haralbeke, Belgium (2021); DOPPELGÄNGER, Entreprenre & KANAL-Centre Pompidou, Brussels, Belgium (2021); *Psychic Wounds: On Art & Trauma*, The Warehouse, Dallas, USA (2020); *Giochi Senza Frontiere*, Palazzo Mazzarino, Manifesta12, Palermo, Italy (2018). Dudek's work is included in international collections including MWW Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Wrocław, Poland and National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania.

Dudek lives and works in Brussels. He is represented by Yeo Workshop (Singapore), Harlan Levey Projects (Brussels), Edel Assanti (London), LETO Gallery (Warsaw).

About the gallery

Yeo Workshop is a gallery committed to contemporary art in Singapore. In recent years, the gallery is focused on bringing greater prominence to local artists with several Singaporean artists joining the roster.

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