

Exhibition guide

Heterotopias in the turbulent zone ARTLABYEREVAN

Heterotopias in the turbulent zone is an exhibition about the role of art as a tool for social justice in a world of uncertainty, conflict and turbulence.

The exhibition acts as a retrospective documentation of ArtLabYerevan's process and the importance of public participation and art activism in their work. Their method focuses on involving young people and giving them the opportunity to learn practical skills to use as means of expressing and encouraging activism.

By showcasing their process, we see the ways in which art activism can contribute to societal change and protest against systematic corruption while highlighting the importance of the educational aspects of art as an alternative mode of learning.

The collective's activities are unfolding inside classrooms and beyond their studios and exhibition spaces, taking place in urban areas across Armenia, creating heterotopias - new discursive worlds - where art acts as a road to resistance.

The exhibition includes three newly commissioned video documentations showcasing the collective's initiative and practice throughout the years. Works include interviews by its members, documentation of practical seminars, lectures and previous exhibitions which highlight the collective's holistic participatory practice.

**1. Interviews of members of the collective, video,
17:59 mins**

Each individual member of the group has their own individual practice. In their interviews, they describe how important it is to work collaboratively and creatively while fighting against violations of human rights, authoritarian political practices, injustices and corrupt systems. They discuss the political realities within Armenia and how they place these issues in the public space.. By expanding their work to other Armenian cities. they aim to raise awareness outside of Yerevan and to form a network of activists encouraging political change.

2. Archives, photo installation

In this collection of photos, we see activities throughout the years that the collective has done, protesting, creating graffiti, educating and taking part in the Armenian Velvet Revolution.

3. Collection of previous projects, video, 15:22 mins

Since the collective's inception as an NGO in 2015, they have been working towards communicating current issues in Armenian society. Their project 'Seasonal Matriarchy' was a research project examining the changes in gender roles caused by migration, in particular labour roles. The principal member of the family would control the female member by Skype or phone, and send money to their mothers-in-law. Women are controlled and are assigned responsibilities and hard work while being controlled and kept silent.

ArtLabYerevan also represented the Armenian Pavillion in the Venice Biennale in 2019 with their project 'Revolutionary Sensorium', an exhibition which reconstructed the 2018 Armenian Velvet Revolution. The collective spent a year collecting data, researching and documenting the revolution. The revolution itself - a historical event - with its

particular peaceful non-violent nature, highlighted the importance of civil activism and the power this action can hold.

4. Documentation of lectures and seminars, video, 34:35 mins

The core practice of the collective is participatory and socially engaged art. Since its inception they have hosted a series of lectures and practical seminars towards a better understanding of political art and activism while teaching practical skills in order to take the theory into action. The lectures include themes of women's rights, Armenian history, contemporary political issues and the perceptions of citizenship and nationalism in social movements.

Although based in Yerevan the seminars have taken place in other cities of Armenia, focusing and highlighting issues in the specific regions while providing legal information and support to encourage and empower the region's communities.

5. Kapan

The issues surrounding women's equality and freedom are connected with social practices and among them the most important is labour practice. During Soviet times, the overwhelming majority of women in Kapan were not housewives but workers, which was one of the reasons for their emancipation; for acquiring freedom and rights.

Today these jobs have been lost, and women are trying to create jobs on their own to become economically and socially independent and self-sufficient.

This video installation is about the women who have created a social enterprise – a sewing workshop with the help of “Kapan Women's Resource Centre” trying to reaffirm their social self-sufficiency.

The city of Kapan is located in the southeast of Armenia and is the regional centre of Syunik. Kapan is a major mining centre in Armenia and has serious environmental problems. In particular, tailings are caused by mining and the most dangerous of which is the Artsvanik tailings not far from the city of Kapan.

6. Interactive map

Moving beyond the Armenian reality, this map was commissioned specifically to visually show the current situation and most important events across the world. Taking its data from online sources while being constantly updated, it focuses specifically on on-going wars, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, frozen conflicts and natural disasters.

7. Who is your nanny?

This excerpt is taken from the work of the mediaeval Armenian fabulist Vardan Aygektsi. The artists suggest looking at modern media - which is in the hands of oligarchs - as a tool for spreading fake news.

8. “We want peace’, ‘apotheosis of war’, graffiti

Both graffiti works are touching upon the war that is happening in Ukraine, along with the effects of Russian colonialism across the East. Artists want to bring attention to the mass destruction and ongoing colonialism by the Russian federation and the always present threat of further aggression.



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