

Balticana

Dates: 7.4.2019 - 26.5.2019

Venue: Hessel Museum of Art, NY

Curator: Zane Onckule

Artists: Auseklis Baušķenieks, BRUD (Aditya Mandayam), Peter Fend, Vytautas Jurevičius, Tobias Kaspar, Ilya Lipkin, Ian Rosen and Collier Schorr.

While appearing during a resurgence of patriotism of various kinds – think of the naively pastiche treatment of the National throughout Centennial celebration programs in the Baltics-to far-right nationalism – think of the xenophobic phrases and far-right symbols haunting Poland and Germany-widespread across present day Europe and the world at large – this fabricated non-state – *Balticana* – is erected to posit a potential for a vitality and a generosity, a correspondence between the private and the (a)political that is not commissioned.

Society is comprised of people who seem to live in different universes. This is so because of the increasingly divided way in which we imagine the world and ourselves. Although *my Balticana* is *my Balticana* and likely, it is not your *Balticana*, this imagination is not solely individual, but it thrives on the social symbols and allegories that give meaning to what it means to be a part of something that has been framed as a “national imaginary.”

Balticana is a poetic exploration of obscure but illuminating connections between the historic, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts of the Baltic region, emphasizing a shared mood across art, society and behavior. Relying on artists, art works and ephemera, and departing from the particularly Baltic atmosphere of fog, the exhibition collects and weaves together metaphors — Portal, Mood, Faktura, Onion, Balts, and *Balcans* — central to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to produce *Balticana* as a new allegory and imaginary fourth state.

Right to say that *Balticana* would not happen not being distanced from its origins as well as not being expressed in an adopted language. There would be no *Balticana* if researched, curated and written in Latvian or Estonian or Lithuanian, or Russian, there would be no *Balticana* if someone along the way would not address Yugoslavia, there would be no *Balticana* if a Russian lift driver from Brighton beach didn't return a lost wallet.

The exhibition features painting, manuscripts, photography, and collage by artists such as Auseklis Baušķenieks, Peter Fend, Ilya Lipkin, and Collier Schorr, and a reflective panel by Tobias Kaspar, in addition to new commissions. The newly commissioned and site-specific works include an ephemeral light installation by BRUD (Aditya Mandayam), sound and performance by Vytautas Jurevičius, and an online intervention by Ian Rosen. The display of *Balticana* is conditioned by architectural elements, including one conceived as a portal into National, Philosophical, Historical, Contemporary, Absurdist, and Postcolonial dramas of the Baltic region.

Art works in the exhibition come from the Marieluise Hessel Collection, Zuzāns collection, and curators' own private collection. Exhibition is accompanied with the thesis-research paper entitled *Balticana*.

Exhibition is organized as part of the requirements for the Masters of Arts degree at the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College in collaboration with Kim? Contemporary Art

Centre. The curator would like to acknowledge all those involved in the process of claiming and establishing *Balticana*.

Hessel Museum of Art in Anannandale-on-Hudson, NY, was established in 2006 as a museum part of the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. Titled after its patron Marieluise Hessel, Museum's 17,000-square-foot exhibition space is dedicated to contemporary exhibitions. Museum also houses the Marieluise Hessel Collection of over 1,700 works of contemporary art, including art works by such artists as, Sol LeWitt, Robert Mapplethorpe, Bruce Nauman, Cindy Sherman, Christopher Wool, and others. Permanent installations include works by Martin Creed, Olafur Eliasson, Robert Gober, and Lawrence Weiner.