Inauguration of the “Souvenir” by Kristina Norman

Kristina Norman, Estonian artist, positions a sculpture of a Christmas tree outside the Winter Palace. The idea for her project came from the unfinished Christmas tree from Maidan Nezalezhnosti in Kiev. The placing of the tree in full summer might seem unusual, as is the current alarming political situation of the escalating conflict and war, growing distrust and aggression between Russia and Ukraine and the rest of the world. In such a context the tree, which is usually associated with family gatherings, friendship, and love is a symbol that calls up for ceasefire and peaceful negotiations, rather than nonsensical construction of one-sided truths.

The sculpture can be seen on Palace Square, St. Petersburg from 20 July – 3 August, 2014.
Pavel Braila ‘Golden Snow of Sochi’

On the same day, Moldovan artist Pavel Braila made a performance on Palace Square with the presentation of the snow, which he collected at the Winter Olympics in Sochi. The snow, artificially preserved for years was collected by Braila in Sochi and brought to Petersburg. Three limousines carried it into the Palace Square where it melted in 35°C heat, literally in people’s hands, just as the money behind the Olympic Spectacle which coincided with escalation of the situation on Maidan. Braila spoke to the Russian TVs about the expenses spent for Olympics and the very moment of time, when the situation in Maidan started to escalate. He also suggested that most probably the same taxpayer’s money goes for arming the separatists in the eastern Ukraine.

Pavel Braila stated:

Since the Sochi snow was accumulated in advance by artificial means, why - I wondered – should we not keep it forever? I went to Sochi, collected about 20 litres of natural snow, brought it home, put it in 98 cans of 200 ml (the number of sets of medals won at the Olympics) and put them in the refrigerator. When I received an invitation to participate in MANIFESTA 10 which is taking place this year in St. Petersburg, I could not resist the temptation to show this “golden snow” in the Palace.

The performance can be viewed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2Hj_o0lq9s

Photo courtesy of MANIFESTA 10
Hedwig Fijen, MANIFESTA 10 Director comments:
The MANIFESTA 10 Public Program is an integral part of the biennial programme of Chief Curator Kasper König currently taking place in the Hermitage Winter Palace and General Staff Building. The Public Program curated by Joanna Warsza, next to the education programme, aims to create an active engagement with a Russian audience in St. Petersburg, staging the necessary debates and permeating the public spaces of the city in response to the conflicts of our time. The Public Program challenges the questions of how to be relevant in a complex history and in this current political situation and how to engage with the complexities it wants to influence.

MANIFESTA 10 Public Discussion - General Staff Building
Kristina Norman “Souvenir” and “Iron Arch”

Debate with Kristina Norman, Alevtina Kakhidze, Ilya Orlov & Ilya Mateveev
Moderation: Joanna Warsza, Curator of MANIFESTA 10 Public Program

Kristina Norman’s research critically interrogates the notion of historical “truths.” In the wake of Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March 2014, ongoing political crises, and now war, and calls to boycott MANIFESTA 10 we have been confronted with a classic political dilemma: engagement or disengagement? We have asked ourselves whether or not to continue and, if so, under what circumstances, facing what consequences and with what purpose? The situation of this and other Biennales that find themselves in the midst of political turmoil – like in Istanbul, Kiev or at the 7. Berlin Biennale – raises the questions about the ways in which curating and art production cannot continue ‘undisturbed’. How does art challenge the oppressive political and aesthetic climates? And whether and how can it work performatively in today’s Russia, where plutocracy, social insensitivity and the eradication of civil society is a fact?

In their conversation Kristina Norman and invited guests reflected on the projects’ research in the unfolding political crises and show the film resulting from it. You can view the film here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7q59c1t5GVI

The discussion took place in Russian but will be documented and translated into English. Link to be published on the MANIFESTA 10 website.
Press
For media enquiries and images please contact the relevant press officer below:

General Media:
m10press@manifesta.org

Russian Media:
Marina Bachurova — marinabachurova@manifesta.org

International Media:
Rhiannon Pickles — rhiannonpickles@manifesta.org

German Speaking Media:
Kathrin Luz — kathrinluz@manifesta.org

For more information about MANIFESTA 10, St. Petersburg 28 June – 31 October 2014, please visit http://www.manifesta10.org/