

Hana Miletić

Mistik

23.01–27.02.21

EN

La Loge

Kluisstraat 86 – rue de l'Ermitage
B-1050 Brussels

La Loge presents *Mistik*, an intimate exhibition of a new work by Hana Miletić that is the result of a collaboration with the artist as part of First Sight, La Loge's support community and programme. The pandemic having interrupted First Sight's activities, the funds initially destined for the support group were used to commission a shared work based on the idea of community.

A photographer by training, Hana Miletić draws on repairs observed in the public space which she records and collects through images. The photographs of damaged or broken infrastructures, architectural elements or vehicles (windows, rear-view mirrors, etc.), summarily supported by cardboard, plastic bags and tape, evoke gestures of care and repair on precarious surfaces. Miletić uses her images as the cartoons of her woven pieces in the ongoing series of handmade works entitled *Materials* (2015–). The beige, transparent, orange and white strips, as well as the three smaller grey fragments and the yellow knot that make up *Materials – Mistik*, the work installed in the temple of La Loge, form the parts of the reproduction of a repair. Soberly assembled on the wall, this weave of elements recalls a community of which each part supports the other as well as the whole. Through a discreet gesture, Miletić facilitates the gathering of these material entities forming a necessary assemblage in support of an invisible structure (a broken window front and a support community). The title, *Mistik*, brings to mind the name of the Brussels establishment on whose window front

Miletić observed the repair. Deliberately evocative, it nevertheless negates the immaterial connotation of the term, inviting rather the sense-based, concrete and haptic experience of the materials and production technique in use. By weaving this piece on a traditional handloom, rather than using the current methods of the fast textile industries, Hana Miletić reflects on the economic and social conditions and consequences of work such as acceleration, standardization and transparency.

As you approach the artwork, the interlacing and the network of threads reveal an irregular grid that may recall that of the digital image (like Miletić's cartoon) as well as the entangled relations between crafts and other digital technologies like computing. The feminist story of technology as a container is at the heart of *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (1986), Ursula K. Le Guin's (1929–2018) essay, also presented in the exhibition, and to be read during a reading group session. In her essay, the prolific American novelist redefines technology and science at large as a cultural carrier bag rather than a weapon of domination. By placing 'a leaf a gourd shell a net a bag a sling a sack a bottle a pot a box a container. A holder. A recipient' at the beginnings of humankind, the short essay narrates less heroic considerations of storytelling, in which technology is a tool for supporting and gathering. This paradigm shift, both social and political, invites us to think about the need for 'one thing that contains another' and for stories and creative spaces supported by and for a community. The speculative fiction of Le Guin deploys a narrative close to weaving: starting out from a raw material as thread, reality enables the movement of making knots of knowledge and care, and stories and relationships.

In addition to the juxtaposition of Le Guin's essay and Miletić's work, the 1968 short film *The Best Husband (Najbolji muž)* about a women's weaving cooperative in the former Yugoslavia generates further reflections on the bonds between weaving and community. The documentary made by the Yugoslav-Serb director Vera Jocić, one of the few women filmmakers active at the time in the former Yugoslavia, focuses on the preparations for the election and award ceremony of the 'Best Husband' prize organized by the women's cooperative in the region of Dragačevo. Located in the heart of the mountains in the village of Donji Dubac (Serbia), the cooperative was founded by Rajka Borojević (1913–1973) and had almost 800 members in the 1960s. Besides the education, as well as the promotion, support and distribution of the handmade textiles created by the female villagers, the cooperative organized cultural gatherings ('Weavers' Assemblies'), moments of sociability, joy and cultural encounters to reward efforts at work. Amongst those, from 1966 onwards, the 'Best Husband' election took place every July. The film, set against the backdrop of this election, shows the work of the cooperative which enabled, through its actions, the emancipation of women's work and safeguarded their livelihoods and that of their fellow villagers, protecting them from poverty. The voice-over underlines the independence granted to members of the community whose 'life was better', enjoying social protection and the liberty to travel, contrary to some other socialist countries in the region.

Born in the former Yugoslavia at a time when the textile industry, largely supported by the state or through innovative public-private partnerships for the time, was popular and flourishing, Miletić grew up with childhood stories of her great-grandmother, who was involved in a similar rural community of weavers like the one shown in the documentary. Inspired by her family's weaving traditions, the artist invites us, through the intimate association of Le Guin's essay, the film and her woven work, to reflect on social modes of transmission and production whose stories suggest other ways of living in the present and of supporting the common. Next to the participatory dimension and social commitment beyond individualism, ideas of community and economy specific to the former Yugoslavia, which are most often told in the contexts of modernity and industrialization, the documentary shows the inventiveness of autonomous and emancipatory organization, and an entrepreneurial spirit in the countryside, in close connection to nature.

Acting together is also the practice of La Loge's support group whose gathering of members has enabled the production of this unique and jointly owned work, which only exists when the entire group gathers.

Hana Miletić (*1982 in Zagreb, Croatia) lives and works between Brussels and Zagreb. She holds a degree in Art History and Archeology, and studied Photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp and at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. She was a resident at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht (2014–15) and at Thread – Josef and Anni Albers Foundation in Sinthian (2019). Since 2015, Miletić's background in documentary photography supports the making of textile works in her studio, as well as the facilitating of collaborative programmes in community workshops. Her collaborative projects have been presented in institutions such as Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2020); M Museum, Leuven (2019); De Appel, Amsterdam (2019); WIELS, Brussels (2018). Recent solo exhibitions include *Incompatibilities*, The approach, London (2019); *Retour au travail*, LA MAISON DE RENDEZ-VOUS, Brussels (2019); *Materiale*, LambdaLambdaLambda, Pristina (2019). This year her work will be featured in different group shows at Kunstverein Hannover and Muzeum Sztuki (Łódź), among others. Her works are in the collections of the Flemish Community – M Museum (Leuven), Flemish Parliament, Fotomuseum Winterthur, FRAC Grand Large (Dunkirk), IAC (Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes), Kadist and Mu.ZEE (Ostend).

Works

Materials – Mistik, Hana Miletić, 2020

Handwoven textile (carrot and dahlia-coloured eri silk, copper metal yarn, dark apricot organic cotton cord, gold metal yarn, old gold metal yarn, organic hemp, pale gold upcycled polyamide, pale grey organic silk, pale yellow organic cotton, pale yellow organic wool, recycled nylon, silver metal yarn, tangerine orange organic cotton, vanilla organic silk noil, variegated gold organic cotton cord, variegated orange silk noil, white eri silk, white organic gauze thread and white silk raffia).

ca 125 x 250 x 5 cm

The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction, Ursula K. Le Guin, 1986

Publisher: Ignota, 2019

First publication: 1988 in *Women of Vision: Essays by Women Writing Science Fiction*, edited by Denise Du Pont, New York, St. Martin's Press

Translation NL: Wim Waelput

Translation FR: Jérémie Bonheure

Editing and proofreading FR: Lola Bearzatto, Nicolas Casaux

Source FR: www.partage-le.com/2018/01/29/8645/

The Best Husband, Vera Jocić, 1968, 35 mm, 15'10

Original title: *Najbolji muž*

Production: Dunav Film, Belgrade

Image: Milivoje Milivojević

Editing: Neva Habi

Assistant: Mica Urosević

Expert consultant: Rajka Borojević

Digitization: Ana Džokić, STEALTH.unlimited, Spaport Biennial 2010

Translation and subtitles: Srđan Kovačević, Miodrag Matavulj

Public programme

Online reading group with Hana Miletić

of Ursula K. Le Guin's essay *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, 1986

Saturday 6 February

14:00–16:00

English

Participation is free of charge, but places are limited. Please reserve your participation via our website. La Loge will send you all the practical information and a PDF by email.

Ursula Kroeber Le Guin (1929–2018) is the author of numerous novels, essays, poetry collections and children's books. She is best known for tales of speculative fiction and fantasy. Notable works include *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), *The Dispossessed* (1974), and *the Earthsea series*. In 2014 Le Guin was awarded the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters.

Thank you

Mistik would not have been possible without the engaged collaboration with Hana Miletić and the support of the First Sight members, La Loge's community of engaged individuals and organizations: Almine Rech Gallery, Dvir Gallery, Galerie Greta Meert, Rodolphe Janssen, Zeno X Gallery, Siska Bulkens, Ann Cesteleyn, Louis Cesteleyn, Laure Decock & Pieter De Walsche, Catherine De Dijcker & Luc Cesteleyn, Charlotte Friling, Frederick Gordts, Pierre Iserbyt & Michèle Didier, Dimitri Jeurissen & Jeanna Criscitiello, Lien Lannoo, Anne Pètre & Christophe Steyaert, Isabella Ritter & Hampus Lindwall, Louis-Philippe Van Eeck-houtte, Wendy Verreydt, Marc Vandecandelaere (Wilgelover), Bert Van Welden.

The production of this exhibition was made possible thanks to the professional and devoted work of Benjamin Jaubert, Arthur Jules and Leonor Gomez. We are also grateful to Ludo Engels for his support and technical assistance during the installation of this project.

Thank you to Ana Džokić, the granddaughter of Rajka Borojević (initiator of the Dragačevo Women's Cooperative) for her kind permission to include the film in the exhibition, and to her mother, Branka Borojević Džokić (designer of the cooperative's weavings), who owns the original copy.

The artist would like to thank the team of La Loge and Jesse Van Bauwel. She dedicates the exhibition to the memory of her maternal great-grandmother, Ivka Starčević.

The team of La Loge

Director and curator: Wim Waelput

Communication and curator of public programmes: Antoinette Jattiot

Intern: Jelrik Hupkes

Visual identity: Antoine Begon, Boy Verrecken

Production: Benjamin Jaubert, Arthur Jules

Audio & vidéo: Ludo Engels

Photography: Lola Pertsowsky

Translations: Patrick Lennon, Marianne Thys

Volunteers: Bas Blaasse, Antoine Guitou, Nele Mölle

Opening hours

Thursday to Saturday

12:00 to 18:00

Free entrance on reservation. You can book your time slot via our website. Information about La Loge's safety measures against Covid-19 is on our website.

Visit our website for more details about our programme and events.

La Loge is a privately initiated non-profit association founded by architect Philippe Rotthier. La Loge is supported by Philippe Rotthier Foundation, the Flemish Government, the Flemish Community Commission (Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie - VGC) and First Sight, La Loge's community of engaged individuals and organizations. La Loge receives additional support from the Municipality of Ixelles..

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