

ROEE ROSEN

THE BURIED ALIVE CYCLE : VIDEOS AND DRAWINGS

Opening: Saturday, 8 June 2019, 5–8 p.m.

Exhibition: 8 June – 15 August 2019



Roee Rosen, *The Dust Channel*, 2016, 23 min. Video still.

Roee Rosen's paintings, films, and writings have become known for their historical and political consciousness, novelistic imagination, and psychological ambition. His work addresses the representation of history, the political economy of memory, and the politics of identity, often exploring the tension between trauma, horror, humor, and truth. In untold variations, he typically links current Israeli and world politics with mythical and political references to European and Jewish history. Using a vast array of fictional characters and iconographic motifs and codes, Rosen frequently refers to the canon of the historical avant-garde and transgressive traditions from the Marquis de Sade to Georges Bataille, but also popular media, political propaganda, and classic children's fairy tales.

For the *Buried Alive Cycle*, Roee Rosen created the fictive story of an ex-Soviet Russian artist collective circled around the poet and artist Maxim Komar-Myshkin who supposedly emigrated to Tel Aviv in the early 2000s. Not being included by the local Israeli art scene, the fictive group who named themselves the *Buried Alive* stayed isolated and alienated. As their name suggests, the group considered themselves as "cultural zombies," still living in their Russian past. "The Buried Alive Group's ideology is avant-garde in reverse, looking backwards not forwards, and aspiring to isolation," as Roee Rosen puts it.

Besides the videos of the *Buried Alive Cycle*, Komar-Myshkin apparently left behind an illustrated album in the style of a children's tale, titled *Vladimir's Night*, evoking a fiction in which Vladimir Putin's avatar appears as the central figure of Komar-Myshkin's paranoid delirium about power and torture. The book ends with Vladimir

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being tortured and killed by animated objects. The album, published by Sternberg Press (2014) was recently shown at the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

The *Vladimir drawings*, 62 delicate preparatory drawings for this album, some of them with annotations for the final execution of the images, will be shown for the first time at Erna Hecey Gallery.

In the paintings from the series *Astrological Paranoia* which will also be part of the exhibition, paranoia shows in the form of star constellations, with satirical though poetic images and words showing up in the sky.

The exhibition closes with the newest video work, *The Dust Channel* (2016) which premiered at documenta 14. Set in the home of a bourgeois Israeli family, the Operetta (with Russian libretto supposedly written by Komar-Myshkin) follows its protagonists' life shaped by paranoia of dust, dirt, or any alien presence in their house which manifests in their obsession and devotion to all sorts of home-cleaning appliances. In subtle references, by combining footage of news and reports about *Holot*, which is the Hebrew word for sand, but also the name of a detention center set up by the Israeli State in the Negev desert where political refugees are held, with a sung glorification and objectification of the Dyson vacuum cleaner, a high end device produced in Britain – Rosen uses the Mysophobia of the protagonists as a symbol for xenophobia.

The exhibition at Erna Hecey Luxembourg will feature all six films of the *Buried Alive Cycle*, produced by the *Buried Alive* group between 2004–2010 as well as *The Dust Channel* and the video loop *Screensaver* (2016), in which six cleaning robots are trapped on a sky-like carpet, creating a situation where the logic of their programming paradoxically creates a movement akin to that of screen-savers algorithms.



Roe Rosen, *The Dust Channel*, 2016, 23 min. Video still.

ERNA HECEY LUXEMBOURG

20c, Boulevard Emmanuel Servais, L- 2535 Luxembourg
www.ernahecey.com / office@ernahecey.com

Roe Rosen, b. in 1963 in Rehovot, Israel, lives and works in B'nai Zion, Israel

Roe Rosen is an artist, filmmaker and writer. He teaches art and art history at Bezalel Academy of Art and at Beit Berl College.

In 1997 Rosen's controversial exhibition *Live and Die as Eva Braun* at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, was aggressively attacked by Israeli politicians. It won critical praise, however, for its new approach to the representation of the memory of the Holocaust. He recently had solo exhibitions at Project Arts Centre, Dublin, Ireland; Impakt, Utrecht, Netherlands; Kunsthal Charlottenborg, Copenhagen; and the Haifa Museum of Art (all 2019). Further solo exhibitions include Centre Pompidou, Paris in collaboration with Jeu de Paume, Paris (2018); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2016); Iniva Institute of International Visual Arts, London (2012); and the Center of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (2009). One-person screenings in public institutions include BOZAR, Brussels (2015); MUMOK, Vienna (2014); Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2013); and Tate Modern, London (2010).

Rosen took part at Athens Biennale, Athens (2018) Steirischer Herbst, Graz, with the performance *Kafka for Kids* (2018) and documenta 14 (2017).

His films were shown in film festivals worldwide such as Transmediale, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; FIDMarseille International Film Festival, Marseille; The International Short Film Festival Oberhausen; Viennale International Film Festival, Vienna; Rotterdam International Film Festival; DOK LEIPZIG, and Ficunam Film Festival, Mexico-City, to only name a few. Roe Rosen's films won numerous awards and special mentions, e.g. best medium-length film, The Venice Film Festival (*Out*, 2010). *The Buried Alive Videos* won a special mention at The Rome International Film Festival (2013) and the Best film award at Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival (2014).

Rosen has contributed writings to numerous publications and magazines and is the author of several books, such as *Live and Die as Eva Braun and Other Intimate Stories* (Berlin and New York, Sternberg Press, 2017); *The Blind Merchant 1989-1991*, (Berlin and New York, Sternberg Press, 2015)

Maxim Komar-Myshkin – Vladimir's Night, (Berlin and New York, Sternberg Press, 2014); *Sweet Sweat – Justine Frank*, English translation by the author (Berlin and New York, Sternberg Press, 2009); originally published in Hebrew (Tel Aviv, Babel Publishing House, 2001).