



GALLERIA CONTINUA | 30 YEARS

SAN GIMIGNANO BEIJING LES MOULINS HABANA ROMA

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NEDKO SOLAKOV

Big & Small

Opening on Sunday October 18, 2020 as from noon

Exhibition until December 27, 2020

GALLERIA CONTINUA/Les Moulins is again pleased to welcome Nedko Solakov for a solo exhibition specifically conceived for the gallery space, *Big & Small*.

Big & Small is above all an adventure, an encounter, and a series of works made by correspondence. Eight large figures and a series of small 'doodles' (drawings and texts made with permanent marker directly on the wall or other surfaces) have come to occupy the old industrial building of Les Moulins.

Nedko Solakov, a multidisciplinary artist working in performance, video, painting, and of course in drawing, has made here for the first time a giant version of the black figures that have so often appeared in his practice on paper and in his doodles. The figures spread out across the immense spaces of the gallery, at times taking up entire walls, playing with the architectural components of the space and the works in it, one proudly standing over a work by Daniel Buren, for instance, while another makes for the exit.

There are seven black figures, some of them with morphological aspects resembling those of their creator, and one white figure, in the paradoxical shape of a clumsy little devil, his thumbs up for good luck, in an evocation of Solakov's superstitions.

These figures, which are never either entirely autobiographical or completely differentiated from the artist, accompany us in the space and guide us as we discover or rediscover the gallery.

Among the figures are some of his famous little doodles, which Solakov has placed in the midst of the architecture and the history of the gallery. In fact, you can still see the doodles he made for his 2018 exhibition at Les Moulins, *Paintings from Long Ago*, in the rooms on the first floor.

The little drawings are to be found in the imperfections, the preexisting traces, the concave and convex hiding places in the

walls. This year, they have been made with the invaluable help of Marine Bikard, who has worked with the artist who was in Sofia, Bulgaria, in order to make the doodles and choose with him where to place them. Solakov forces us to look at details that otherwise might have passed unnoticed, inviting us to take our time as we stroll through the rooms, observing the smallest detail. The veins in the wall become climbing ropes, the old dowels embedded in the structure have been turned into swings and a frantic game of tag is taking place between the characters on the walls and those on the pillars. Everything is used, nothing is forgotten. Each corner forms a piece of a world map to these little residents of Les Moulins.

The visitor walks like Gulliver through these spaces rich in visual or written narrative, which emphasizes Solakov's talents as a storyteller. Steeped in his irony, his disillusion, his manipulations of scale, these are profoundly human works, at once sharp and touching. Since they have become of a piece with the building, they could live forever on its walls, and yet they emit a certain fragility, a delicacy, an ephemerality, for a single coat of new paint would render them to the architectural past of the building. Nedko Solakov's work reflects all the poetry and the paradoxes of the human condition.

Since the early 1990s, Nedko Solakov (b. 1957, Tcherven Briag, Bulgaria; lives in Sofia) has exhibited extensively in Europe and the US. His work has been featured in Aperto'93 (Venice Biennale); the 48th, 49th, 50th and 52nd Venice Biennale; the 3rd, 4th and 9th Istanbul Biennial; São Paulo'94; Manifesta 1, Rotterdam; the 2nd and 4th Gwangju Biennial; the 5th Lyon Biennial, Sonsbeek 9, Arnhem, the 4th and 5th Cetinje Biennial, the 1st Lodz Biennial; the 7th Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates; the 3rd Tirana Biennial; the 2nd Seville Biennial; the 2nd Moscow Biennial; documenta 12; 16th Sydney Biennale; Prospect 1, New Orleans Biennial, Singapore Biennial 2011, dOCUMENTA (13), Kathmandu Triennale, 1st Riga

International Biennial for Contemporary Art and Lahore Biennale 2. He has had solo shows at Museu do Chiado, Lisbon; Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam; CCA Kitakyushu, Japan; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Centre d'Art Santa Monica, Barcelona; Kunsthaus Zurich; Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli; Sofia City Art Gallery; Galleria Borghese, Rome; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; BOZAR, Brussels; ICA Sofia and La Panacee, Montpellier. In 2003-2005 an extensive mid-career survey, "A 12 1/3 (and even more) Year Survey", was presented at Casino Luxembourg, Rooseum Malmoe, and O.K Centrum Linz, and in 2008-2009 his solo project "Emotions" was exhibited at Kunstmuseum Bonn, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, and Institut Mathildenhoehe, Darmstadt. In 2011-2012 his retrospective "All in Order, with Exceptions" was presented at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Fondazione Galleria Civica Trento ("All in (My) Order, with Exceptions"), S.M.A.K., Ghent and Fundação de Serralves, Porto. His works belong to more than fifty international museums and public collections, among them MoMA New York, Tate Modern, London and the Pompidou Center, Paris.

Nedko Solakov and GALLERIA CONTINUA wish to thank Marine Bikard, artist and sociologist, and recent graduate of the Beaux-Arts de Paris, who collaborated with the artist throughout the project to make the figures and doodles on display.