Going Public starts in Klaipėda 2012-06-12

In Klaipėda, art in public spaces is strongly tied to traditional monumental forms and performs a merely decorative function, failing to produce a surprise effect and to provoke the public's reaction. Manifestations of "alternative" art are quite fragmentary here so far. Mostly young artists' groups (MeKuSa, TEMA) engage in such projects. One can also spot some individual initiatives, instances of street art, or short-term installations and performances during big city festivals. What can art in public space look like in Klaipėda's everyday life?
The first participants of the Going Public project – Mikhail Gulin and Antonina Slobodchikova – have arrived to the Klaipėda Culture Communication Centre's residency in early June. The Minsk-based artists intend to organize small-scale art actions and present spatial installations in selected locations in the city in an attempt to rehabilitate the collective memory by drawing attention to "forgotten" or unreasonably abandoned urban objects, or to simply publicly articulate the relevant political situations in their country. Antonina Slobodchikova often addresses existential, psychological themes and focuses on the existing artefacts in the surrounding environment in her work. Object-based installations are her preferred form of expression. Mikhail Gulin chooses performative forms and relevant social issues in his public art activity. The artists plan to present their Klaipėda context-specific ideas on June 15-16.

Antonina Slobodchikova and Mikhail Gulin's projects in Klaipėda 2012-06-15

Antonina Slobodchikova has decided to dedicate her artistic ideas to the currently defunct public fountains in the Southern part of Klaipėda. In this way, she seeks to restore the initial function of these spots of leisure and recreation and to employ the language of art to find alternative ways of fountain regeneration. The artist has presented a temporary object-based installation in the fountain located near the Aitvaras shopping complex, which will be exhibited here throughout the summer of 2012. The artist dedicates this installation to the city's collective memory and re-approaches an urban object that has lost its functions, focusing on the atmosphere of the seaside city and the themes of water and time. With her work, the artist seeks to draw public attention to an unjustly forgotten element of the city and expects active reaction of the public. In the sculptural fountain located in the Debreceno district near the Children's World store, Antonina Slobodchikova held a one-day artistic/social action involving the traders working nearby on June 15. This was an attempt to turn back to the fairly recent urban artefacts and to reactualize the idea of a fountain for at least several hours by creating a source of interaction and exchange around it.

Artist Mikhail Gulin presented a parade of ship models he had made himself on June 16. The parade started in the Arts Yard and culminated in ceremonial launching of ships after taking the old ferry to Smiltynė, located on the Curonian Spit. The artist had created the model fleet during the two weeks of his residence in Klaipėda from cardboard and other materials. The action was dedicated to the unimplemented grandiose projects of the various states.
Antonina Slobodchikova and Mikhail Gulin's projects were realized in Klaipėda in collaboration with the project's partner – Klaipėda Culture Communication Centre.

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