
Press Release: “Far away, so near...” by Anna Konik curated by Susanne Stich.

Void is pleased to present the first Northern Irish solo show by Polish artist Anna Konik. “*Faraway, So Near...*” features two video installations, *Transparency* (2004) and *In the same city, under the same sky* (2012 onwards). This will be the first time both works have been shown together. Konik’s work deals with people; their complexities, intricacies and ineffability. That which cannot be easily articulated with words manifests itself through a unique aesthetic language produced from Konik’s Video Art/ Installation practice.

Transparency (2004) marks the beginning of Konik’s work in the field of video. It explores old age isolation and loneliness, introducing two women and two men who are nearing the end of their life. Konik tells a moving story that creates a vehicle to experience nostalgia and passing beyond the detached guise of observation. Through an intimate exchange with her characters, she shifts between the position of artist and audience to create an environment to engage. As the individuals tell their life stories in monologues against the backdrop of their living spaces, a mirror image is employed. The mirror image, poignant yet fragmented, becomes poetic, almost surreal, symbolic of the constant repetitions of recalling their stories and confronting themselves.

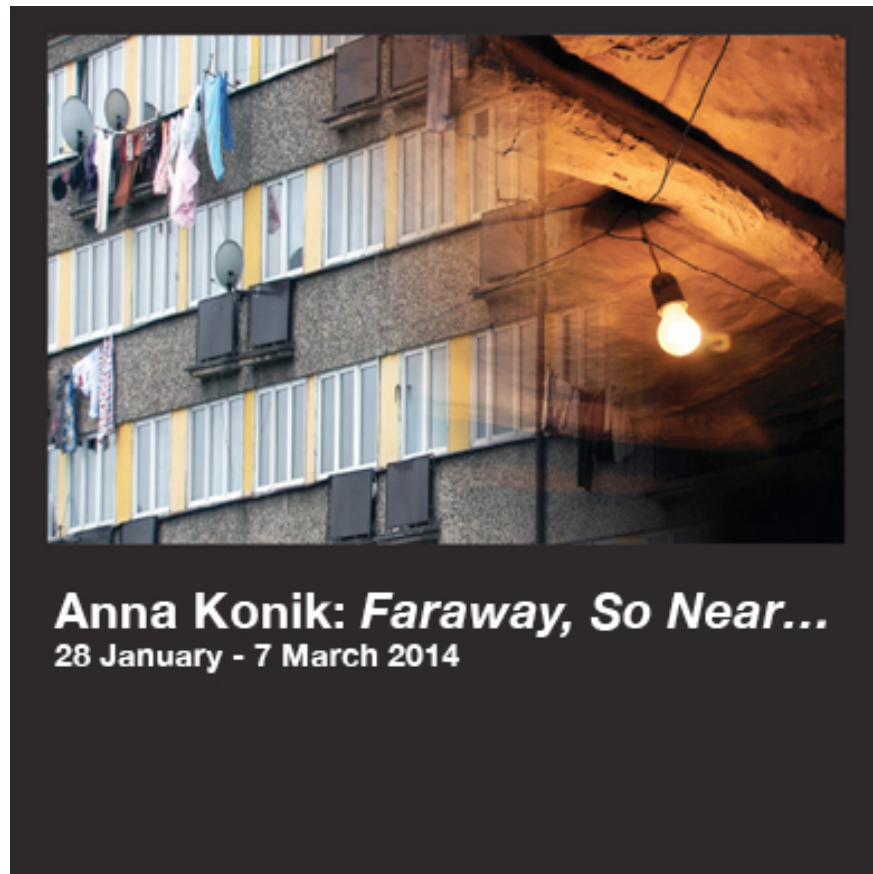
“*In the same city, under the same sky...*” (2012 onwards) brings together the harrowing experiences and stories of women immigrants/ political refugees from Chechnya, Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Iraq and various other places. Konik’s approach presents these stories as told by other women from other places, e.g. Sweden, Poland and Turkey, who happen to live in the same city as the immigrants but have no experience of war or social exclusion. Working in this way Konik highlights the complexities of how immigration experiences are shared, perceived and (mis-)understood in different geographical and social contexts. For the exhibition at Void Konik will be showing new works recorded in Istanbul.

Konik does not humiliate people nor does she manipulate. Provocation is replaced by connection, conversation eliminates distance, removing the invisible wall separating the protagonists from the world and reintroducing them to it. The work is accessible, but not simplistic, Konik offers an elaborate experience that encourages both empathy & detachment. The scenarios are presented not solely to evoke sympathy towards others, or illuminate a plight, but to utilise and sculpt emotion, transcending the personal towards the universal. Disseminating a voice from a scenario of involuntary censorship, Konik carves a passage to experience others via an interrogation of self. A subtle yet profound interaction is revealed in the encounters she facilitates. Beyond the gesture of social engagement with those that have been excluded, the striking visual composition of the work leaves an impact that will accompany viewers beyond the political issues that this body of work penetrates.

Artists Bio. Anna Konik initially graduated from the Department of Sculpture, Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw (2000). In 2012 she was awarded at Ph.D. in Fine Arts at the Department of Media Arts and Stage Design, Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw. She received study awards, residencies and grants from Nantes Institute for Advanced Study (2014/2015); New Europe College, Bucharest, Romania (2013/2014); IASPIS, Stockholm (2011/2012); Kulturkontakt Vienna (2006); National Sculpture Factory, Cork (2006); SPACES World Artists Program, Cleveland, USA (2005); Leube Artist in Residency (2004); Academy Schloss Solitude (2003/2004); DAAD, Kunsthochschule Berlin-Weissensee (2001–2002) and many others. Selected solo exhibitions include *In the same city, under the same sky...*, Arsenal Gallery, Bialystok (2013), Swedish Parliament (2012); *Fear and Entranced*, Atlas Sztuki, Lodz (2011); *Our Lady’s Forever*, Polish Institute Düsseldorf (2011), *Our Lady’s Forever*, Städtische Galerie

Wolfsburg (2009); 61st International Film Festival Locarno (2008). Selected group exhibitions include *Transition*, Yapi and Kredi Art Center's, Istanbul (2013); Crawford Art Gallery, Cork; *Divina Commedia*, del Museo di Arte Contemporanea del Sannio ARCOS, Benevento, Italia (2013); *Tür an Tür, Polen – Deutschland. 1000 Jahre Kunst und Geschichte*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2011). Konik's works are also in numerous private and corporate art collections. She has lectured at the Department of Linguistics and Literature, Bielefeld University, the Department of Fashion Design at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Warsaw and the International Summer Academy in Salzburg. Recently Konik was invited to become Rudolf Arnheim Associate Professor in the Art History Department, Humboldt University in Berlin.

Images :



Notes to Editor:

- Void is a non-profit organisation with core funding provided by The Arts Council of Northern Ireland with additional assistance from Derry City Council and other sources. Void is an artist-led space. It has a staff of 11 and circa 20 volunteers, which include the Curatorial Committee and Board. Void also regularly employs the skills of freelancers for specific projects.

For further information regarding this event or on any of the projects in Void's 2014 programme please contact: Emer Grant at Void: communications@derryvoid.com

