

Ptuj, 20th June 2018

The 16th edition of Art Stays, the largest Slovenian festival of contemporary fine art, entitled *Fragile*, focuses on the fragility of art materials, fragmentation, processes of time or mere moments, destined to transform the quality of things, situations and sentiments. It addresses the fragility of relationships in modern society, the social, cultural and political history, as well as the question of human identity.

The festival will take place **between 6th and 13th of July 2018** (exhibitions till 9th September 2018) in Ptuj's town squares and historical buildings, showcasing artworks created with a wide range of media: sculpture, photography, installations, video, painting, performances, and music.

The program was devised by **Jernej Forbici and Marika Vicari, the directors of the festival**, in cooperation with artists and international galleries, museums, public and private institutions including the **Fondazione Berengo** from Venice, **Fondazione Modena Arti Visive, Arte Laguna Prize** – and a group of international curators: **Antonio Arévalo, Italo Bergantini, Riccardo Costantini, Dušan Fišer, Carlo Sala e Koen Vanmechelen.**

Exhibitions, the central part of the festival's program, will be hosted by all of Ptuj's exhibition venues, and also in the town's surroundings.

The first to be singled out is **GLASSTRESS PTUJ SLOVENIA (curator: Koen Vanmechelen)**, the main exhibition of the year which will be on display between **6th of July and 9th of September** in the **Ptuj City Gallery**. Glasstress is a long term project, designed by **Adriano Berengo** to further his vision of uniting contemporary art and glass. Artists from all disciplines, from sculptors to musicians, have been invited to collaborate with maestros in creating art in glass. Since 2009, these works have been exhibited in the historic Palazzo Franchetti on the Grand Canal, further supported and promoted by **Fondazione Berengo** since 2014. **Glasstress** represents the collaboration between craft and creativity, while forging a new trajectory for glass and drawing a new path for contemporary artists. Glasstress has so far been showcased in prominent museums and institutions worldwide, including the Millesgården Museum in Stockholm, the Museum of Arts and Design in New York, the London College of Fashion, and the Wallace Collection in London, and will now be presented in Slovenia in the context of the **16th Art Stays Festival**. The exhibition is curated by the renowned Belgian artist **Koen Vanmechelen**, who has been collaborating with Berengo Studio since the '90s. You will have the opportunity to admire works by the following artists: **Ai Weiwei, Monira Al Qadiri, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Leonardo Cimolin, Josepha Gasch-Muche, Shane Guffogg, Brigitte Kowanz, Vik Muniz, Lucy+Jorge Orta, Thomas Schütte, Gavin Turk, Koen Vanmechelen, Fred Wilson, Erwin Wurm.**

The **Mihelič gallery** in Ptuj will showcase the exhibition **FRAGILE MEMORY / CONFLICT / HUMAN**, curated by **Carlo Sala**, with personal interventions by three award-winning authors, who use the medium of photography to convey their thoughts on the topic of fragility: **Silvia Camporesi, Paolo Ciregia, and Mustafa Sabbagh**.

The **Dominican monastery** will be hosting the main thematic exhibition **FRAGILE**, led by the festival's directors **Jernej Forbici** and **Marika Vicari**; here, a selection of international artists who are dealing with this year's theme of the festival in their creations will be on display: **Ai Weiwei, Cennetoğlu, Polona Demšar, Federica Ferzoco, Maria Teresa Gonzalez Ramirez, LALOPA AnnaCrescenzi&RenataPetti, Masbedo, Mladen Miljanović, Andrea Morucchio, Boštjan Novak, Artsiom Parchynski, Giuseppe Piscopo, Patrizia Polese, Santiago Sierra, Rósa Sigrún, Andrea Tagliapietra, Alice Zanin** and meticulously planned setup of their artworks will be addressing and connecting themes regarding the fragility of art, substances, humans, their relationships, and our future.

The **Magistrat gallery** will provide space for two Venetian artists, who transmit their painting creations on and into glass. **GLASS PAINTING – FRAGMENT AND SATURATION PROCESS** exhibition will present works by **Stefano Bullo** and **Riccardo Costantini**, and is the result of cooperation with the glass factory **Vetriere Artistiche Murano di S. Bullo**.

During her artistic residency in Ptuj, **Maria Fernanda Guzmán** from Chile, the **winner of Art Stays award at Arte Laguna Prize** in Venice, will create a large installation of endless ridges, knots and bonds with various sculptural approaches. This exceptionally original work in its fragility will be created in loco and presented on the final day of the festival in the beautiful vaulted exhibition rooms of the **Ivan Potrč Public Library**.

There will be two extensive exhibitions in Ptuj's surroundings. In Strnišče near Kidričevo, the **FO.VI Gallery** will host **FRAGILE LEVITÀ** (curator: **Italo Bergantini**), where **Luca Piovaccari** will be showcasing his subtle photographic works and compositions, characterized by instability and immateriality – the two concepts that fearlessly pervade exhibited works.

Whereas in **Art Factory** in Majšperk, there will be a great exhibition of ceramic art, entitled **CRASH ME GENTLY** (curator: **Dušan Fišer**), bringing together works by Slovenian artists and ceramists who use clay – the most primary and universal material, which has been in constant use since the beginning of mankind, and due to its durability, strength and fragility at the same time offers limitless potential for use and exceptional creative possibilities – for their artworks. Participating artists are: **Dragica Čadež Lapajne, Mojca Smerdu, Jože Šubic, Ines Kovačič, Meta Kastelic, Nataša Sedej, Ljubica Zgonc Zorko, Miljanjka Simšič, Milojka Drobne, Tanja Boh Sokolov, and Marija Rudolf**.

The Festival days between 6th and 13th of July will be filled up with **numerous events**. Alongside previously mentioned exhibition openings (we will open a new exhibition every day), there will be various events taking place on the stage at Slovenski trg square and at other venues across the old town center. The opening concert of one of the greatest Slovenian musicians, **Drago Mislej Mef**, is one of them, followed by Italian duo **Movimento's** (**Federico**

de Benedictis and **Simona Pucci**) **Videomapping** on the building of the Ptuj City Theater; the closing concert of a Sound workshop by **Sara Korošec** and **Erika Vicari**, representing Ptuj's sound cartography; talks with participating artists and curators (**Carlo Sala**, **Rósa Sigrún**, **Koen Vanmechelen**, **Maria Fernanda Guzmán**, **Italo Bergantini**, **Luca Piovacari**); and let us not forget an ample program of **Art Stays festival's summer academy**, which includes various workshops, organized in collaboration with CID Ptuj and other artists, such as the Photo workshop under the mentorship of **Ljuban Cenčič**, and the aforementioned Sound workshop.

In addition, the town will be enriched by public interventions on squares and streets of the historical center; let us mention the great installation by Mexican artist **Maria Teresa Gonzales Ramirez** at Slovenski trg, and enormous statues by Czech artist **Marek Schovanek**. These will be joined by interventions produced by young European artists, as Art Stays festival takes part in the European project **REFRESH - Young art(ist)s refreshing heritage sites**, in the framework of which we will be hosting eight young artists from Spain, Italy, Romania, and Slovenia as artists-in-residence.

The festival will begin on Friday, July 6th, at 19.00, with the opening of the grand exhibition GLASSTRESS PTUJ SLOVENIA, at the premises of the Ptuj City Gallery. This will be followed by the opening of a public installation, created by Mexican artist Maria Teresa Gonzales, and by a concert of Drago Mislej Mef, with both events taking place on the central stage at Slovenski trg in Ptuj. The festival days will continue until Friday, July 13th, at different venues across Ptuj and its surroundings, while exhibitions will remain on display throughout summer, until 9th of September 2018.

You are kindly invited to joins us at over 30 events of this year's 16th Festival of contemporary art Art Stays, and spend a part of the summer with us!

INFO: KUD ART STAYS, Jadranska ulica 4, Ptuj, info@artstays.si, www.artstays.si