

# A.I.R.

For immediate release

## **PARADISO**

Željka Blakšić

October 30 - November 29, 2014

Opening Reception: Thursday, November 6, 6-9pm

Brooklyn, NY - October 2014

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to present 2014-15 Fellow Željka Blakšić's solo exhibition *PARADISO*. The exhibition will be on view from October 30 – November 29, 2014. Blakšić's 16 mm films, videos, performances, and installations reflect upon commemorative practices, identities and the cult of remembrance in Croatia which used to be part of former Yugoslavia.

The exhibition focuses on a group of works entitled *Paradiso*, that includes prints, sculptural work and a film. The film takes place in the historical military port in Pula, Croatia, in front of the Austro-Hungarian fortress Casoni Vecchi. Pula was occupied by multiple external forces until the end of WW2 in 1945 when it was integrated into the Socialist Republic of Croatia. Fifty years later, during the Yugoslav wars, Casoni Vecchi was appropriated by the youth culture, becoming a laboratory for new forms of being, informal economies, independent production, and explorations of alternative value systems.



Željka Blakšić, *PARADISO*, 2014, 16 mm film, 7 minutes, Film still

The film follows the activities of a young girl around the legendary fortress where the Monteparadiso Festival took residence from 1992 till 2001, becoming a place of resistance and revolt. Subsequently, the festival moved to another venue, and has become one of the longest running punk festivals, leading Pula into the center of the European sub-culture.

“Step by Step” is a print of the musical notation of Blakšić's earlier project “Whisper–Talk–Sing–Scream”. Using music to explore class and gender divisions within society, the artist collaborates with Croatian activists and independent journalists, composing protest songs that give voice to minority positions in society. The piece endorses various aspects of struggle—including disenfranchised workers, young people who have lost their right to education, and individuals who do not fit the heterosexual norm. The artist utilizes music as a tool to create new waves of mobilization, and expand boundaries of political struggles.

Born in Zagreb, Croatia, Željka Blakšić AKA Gita Blak currently lives and works in New York. Recent exhibitions include Active Space, NY; Urban Festival in Croatia; Art Gallery of SESI, Sao Paolo, Brazil; The Kitchen, NY; Harvestworks NY; The Czech Center, NY; and The Khyber Centre for the Arts in Canada, etc. She was also a recipient of The District Kunst Award in Berlin; New York Foundation for the Arts Residency, Paula Rhodes Award in New York City and many others.



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For all press inquiries, please contact: JoAnne McFarland, Co-Director

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