



CAPTIONS

1. Luboš Kotlár: *Untitled* (from the series “nowlessness”), analogue photography, print on fabric, 2019.

Luboš Kotlár’s “nowlessness” is a long-term project, which started in 2017. The artist reflects on international wave of neo-conservatism, fascism and xenophobia, ecological catastrophe, possible upcoming diplomatic and military conflicts, pandemics, and even the rapid development of artificial intelligence – all concepts bringing possible catastrophic scenarios for the future of life itself. The term “nowlessness” refers to the absence of our knowledge of these upcoming events and their time anchor, and within the context of the photographic media, it even denies the act of taking pictures as a form of recording. Uncertainty has become a distinctive feature of modern times, whether on the basis of individual survival, or the overall progress of Western society. The theoretical core of the project is based on Jack Halberstam’s definition of queer time and space. The visual photographic language is deliberately chosen so as not to bind to a specific epoch in the history of art or photography. The versatility of this type of aesthetic aims to maintain the created photographs without the possibility of their future anchoring in time; as this photographic approach existed, exists and most likely will exist, the artist refers to the past, the present and the future simultaneously.

2. Rifet Bajramović: *Mother and Child / Rifet Bajramović / Warrior*, photography by Nino Nihad Pušija, 2006.

Rifet Bajramović’s coppersmiths connects the science about the antiseptic and sterilising qualities of copper, silver and gold with the traditional aesthetics of the community, often taking detours into abstract and contemporary sculpture. During the pandemic, public consciousness about the antiviral quality of copper has grown. Public buildings and railway stations to this day use copper railings, whose atomic structure is durable, and the anti-microbial effect does not weaken. Exhibited photos are by Nino Nihad Pušija.

3. Marina Rosselle: *In Winter*, glass (burned car windshield), table legs (burned and rebuilt), wood pallet, cardboard, plants, small LCD monitor, video, 61x49x80 cm, 2016.

Rosselle's artistic work is rooted in her family history, the lifestyle and the different spaces that the Roma community inhabit, and critically examines the condescending perception of this way of life. With her art, she aims to describe her lifestyle, especially the constant driving around, and the successive occupation of places. Inspired by scrap-metal dealers in her environment, she collects unusual objects and materials, reuses them in her art and appropriates them. Her work is inspired by these scrap materials and by using unusual objects, reusing them in her artistic practice.

4. Lajos Gabor and Joar Nango: *The European Everything* (2017—ongoing), photography, documentation of performance, photography by the artists and Tensta Konsthall (photos: Hanna Nordell, Paulina Sokolow, Didem Yildirim), 2019.

Lajos Gabor and Joar Nango's project: *The European Everything* (2017—ongoing) took place as an installation and performance in the park in Timisoara (RO), at the Art Encounters Biennale, in 2019. Also in 2019, they created jewellery during a performance outside Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm, made for the founding meeting of the world's first organisation for Sámi architects. Documentation of their performances at this exhibition is presented with the permission of the Tensta Konsthall (photos: Hanna Nordell, Paulina Sokolow, Didem Yildirim). Lajos Gabor also created entirely new objects for this exhibition: a pancake-maker, a coffeepot and bracelets.

5. José Manuel Fernández Cortés: *Lemon tree*, acrylic, pencil and marker on paper, 2021.

Cortés's delicate depiction of a lemon tree shows his continuous interest in nature. Natural world symbolizes spiritual strength and freedom, that the artist sees in parallel with the Roma culture.

6. Mil Duquelas by Estefanía Ruíz: *Puro Arte* (bracelet), ***Opre Roma*** (earrings), gold, 2021.

In the Calo language, spoken among Roma in Spain and Portugal, 'duquelas' means 'sufferings, preoccupations, worries'. The word, frequently used in flamenco lyrics, embodies the struggle, but also the resilience of the Roma people throughout history. The Spanish Roma fashion brand, Mil duquelas (a thousand sufferings), created by a young Romani designer and activist Estefania Ruiz, is born "with the idea of remembering, presenting and dressing up with pride the centuries-long struggle of the Roma people". Through contemporary designs inspired in individual and collective stories of Roma resistance, the brand honours the courage and strength of the Roma. Mil duquelas symbolises the history of Roma survival against all odds, and the victory of tolerance and love over hate. Mil duquelas invokes the power of Roma being masters of their own identity and fate, at the same advocating for exhibiting ethnic pride. In the eyes of its creator, being Roma is not only a private affair, but rather the Roma should wear their identity visibly: "dressing up with pride" becomes a powerful public and political act of self-declaration.

7. Loly by Zita Moldovan: *Costume Loly – Roma Outfit*, 2021.

Loly by Zita Moldovan is a manifesto for the freedom to be a woman in a society that tells us how not to dress, and the social role of our clothing. It is a collection created not only for women, but for all people who find themselves on the female spectrum or who explore femininity. The name of the collection – Loly – means red in the Romani language, and symbolises the strength, life and resilience of the Roma. Loly, developed contemporary way. Zita Moldovans reclaims Romani ornaments and designs – floral patterns and bright colours typically associated with the Roma – to develop modern designs that symbolise female strength and

ethnic pride. In her own words, Zita argues that, “the clothes you wear speak about you, about your power of knowledge, acceptance, tolerance and empathy. I feel strongly that through my creations, I celebrate the culture and the history of the Roma”.

8. Resistance card game: *Roma Heroes*, wood and cardboard, illustrations by Emanuel Barica, 2020.

Resistance card game, *Roma Heroes*, is an educational board game featuring real-life stories of 24 Roma heroes. Inspired by the classic children’s board game, *Guess Who?*, *Roma Heroes*, developed in the framework of the “Re-thinking Roma Resistance” project, is an educational game that allows the players to discover stories of real Heroes of Roma history while playing.

9. Mil Duquelas by Estefanía Ruíz: *Roma Lives Matter* (sweatshirt), fabric, 2021.

10. Selma Selman: *Untitled*, acrylic on metal, 27.5cm x 39.5cm. Courtesy of the artist and the agnès b. collection. 2014.

Selma Selman: *Mercedes Matrix*, video performance, 2020.

In her performance, Selma Selman, together with her family, performs “Mercedes Matrix”, where art becomes a tool for transforming the value of an act of labour and art. The work questions the labour market, and the difficulty to secure a source of income. Selma Selman’s powerful performance comments on work as a means of survival. The artist explains: “My family transforms metal waste into a valuable resource for survival. Their everyday survival is dependent on this exact same labour, where metal and motors are sold in recycling centres. When this labour is recycled back into the domain of art, it gains value as an artwork, and shows art’s potential to transmute value, just as my family transmuted the value of scrap metal as a method of commerce, proving the equal potential for transformative actions in any body”.

11. Luboš Kotlár: *Untitled* (from the series “nowlessness”), analogue photography, digital print, plexiglass, shelves, clamps, 160x200x30 cm, 2019.

12. Daniel Baker: *Survival Blanket*, crocheted from metallised polyethylene emergency blankets, 2013.

Daniel Baker’s *Survival Blanket* is crocheted from several emergency blankets, the type used for disaster relief, or to conserve the body temperature of accident victims. By utilising this material—usually intended for use in extreme circumstances—within the seemingly banal realm of hobby craft/domestic pastime, Baker intends to emphasise the precarious nature of safety and comfort that so many of us take for granted. This work also draws upon the shiny qualities that underpin the Roma aesthetic, to speak of the contingent nature of the Roma experience, where safety and stability are continually at risk.

13. Renata Roxana Mihaly: *Balance*, marker on paper, 29.7cm x 42.0cm, 2020.

Mihaly’s drawing represents the desire for tranquility and the search for freedom. The artist explains that: ‘Nature is the place where we find balance, where we find peace of mind, where every thought leads us to positive, creative and strong thoughts to move forward every day. The place where man can communicate directly with the universe, receives and transmits the most positive energy, which only nature gives.’

14. Norbert Oláh: *Anxiety of the Roma Artist*, installation in public space, photography by Zoltán Dragon / OFF-Biennale Archives, 2021.

Norbert Oláh has built a large brick wall in front of the former building of the Roma Parliament. The bricks have clearly legible words inscribed in them, representing concepts and perceptions that are ingrained and instilled into us. These comprise the wall of anxiety. The choice of venue is an open critique of power. The building was repossessed arbitrarily by the government, justifying this action with their promise of establishing the headquarters of a Roma cultural mega-institute in its place. The banner alongside the wall bears the artist's essay, entitled "Anxiety of the 'Roma Artist'", in which he makes every effort to put into words, in an objective and expressive manner, refraining from literary embellishments, the utter confusion felt by an artist, in this case, an artist of Roma roots. He struggles with a plethora of contradictions instilled in him by his own community, society, the media, life as an artist, the art scene, politics, his school, etc. The text is written in third person singular, indicating the artist's desire for keeping a distance and maintaining a broader perspective. The installation is the emotional manifestation of this anxiety. The wall is the isolation, the inner limitations, the boundaries one so desires to jump or break through, and the authority, the measures deciding over and confining the individual. As a meme, the brick wall is present in public discourse: to some, it means keeping out the danger, while to others, it means confinement or ruthlessness. The bricks are minuscule elements that are worth nothing in themselves, but sticking together they are strong. (Thanks to OFF-Biennale Budapest for permission to reprint an excerpt from their text.)