

Mihai Olos

Olospolis

Opening: Friday, June 24, 18 - 22 h

June 24 – July 30, 2016

Tuesday – Saturday, 12 - 18 h

Potsdamer Strasse 77 - 87, 10785 Berlin

Galeria Plan B is pleased to announce the solo exhibition of Mihai Olos, to open on Friday, the 24th of June 2016.

Mihai Olos (1940 – 2015, lived and worked in Romania and Germany) was one of the most prominent Romanian artists from the 1970s generation, known for his distinctive approach of the visual language through the fundamental principles defining his native county of Maramures, such as tradition, nature and folk culture. Being interested in various media – painting, sculpture, happening, land art and even literature – he developed a coherent conceptual system of modular morphologic structures driving him to the utopian project of the Universal City – *Olospolis* – that would "translate" the structure of traditional symbolic objects into models for an expanded urban construction for the future. The influences of constructivism, abstractionism and social involvement placed him early in his career among the most experimental artists from Romania.

His performative actions included some that quickly became legendary among the oral history of the Romanian arts, such as the action, which took place in the Herja mine close to Baia-Mare in 1972, where Olos placed golden bars on a table inside the mine, so that the miners would see the result of their work. Or the one called *A sculpture travelling all over Europe*, "meeting" different historical places like The Meteora, The Acropolis of Athens, Sagrada Familia or Mount Vesuvius in a physical, as well as fictional parcours of knowledge. The artist's participation at Documenta 6 in 1977, in Joseph Beuys' Free International University, laid the foundation for a long friendship with Beuys, an admirer of his actions and sculptures.

The knot – a structure based on the intertwining of six elements that Mihai Olos borrowed from folk art – represents a recurrent motif in both his sculptures and paintings. Described by fellow artist Athena Tacha as "the essence of threedimensionality" and a symbol of unity, the knot allows for thousands of combinations resulting into an infinite, almost cosmical network of shapes that Olos developed throughout his oeuvre. Ranging from the 1970s to mid 1990s, the large-scale paintings exhibited reconsider the knot, as well as other architectural or sculptural elements, from a two-dimensional perspective. Using a visual vocabulary that might formally remind of Op Art, his paintings employ the universal language of abstraction to be also found in his sculptures and objects.

The sculptures of Mihai Olos bring together the experience of traditional wood carving with new principles of assemblage creating an abstract geometrical structure that would enhance the intrinsic qualities of the material used and the potential of each element to support the other one. The works emerging, especially the small indestructible pieces are simple proofs of a structure that could expand infinitely by following the principles of joint modules forming an independent object. This independence resides in the self-supporting system of each module and the object's potentiality to become a kinetic structure, rotating and changing its position, but never its appearance.

"Olos has found his puritanistic visual language by a keen sensitivity: he has discovered structures elaborated by Medieval carving techniques, the unity of the 'poetic', at times even mystic Constructivism of the 1910s and 1920s which is a special stage as well. The spirit of the basis of his art, which may otherwise be interpreted as a source, that is, the techniques as a tradition and the innovating power of the subjective, might ensure the placement of the pieces in cultural and art history, but it may never mean that the gravity of tradition subjugates individual creativity and its living contemporaneity. The specificity of his practice is given by the semantic field of the traditionally based, rustic, roughly carved elements/modules, which is expanded towards a new meaning, to a conceptual context in which we discover the words: system-harmony-evolution and mutation. The first concepts they recall are crystallization, growth purification, reminding of notions such as adherence/bonds, inner force, system, and as their implication, 'infinity'." (Excerpt from the text "Turning Structures into Myth – On the Sculptures of Mihai Olos" by József Bárdosi, written on the occasion of the artist's solo exhibition at Tragor Ignác Múzeum, Görög Templom, Vác, 1993)

Mihai Olos (1940 – 2015) born in Arinis, Maramures, Romania, lived and worked in Romania and Germany.

Selected exhibitions include: National Museum Bruckental Sibiu, Romania (2010); Museum of Art, Baia Mare, Romania (2009); 2001 International Triennial of Small Sculpture, Murska Sobota, Slovenia (2001); City Art Gallery, Baia Mare, Romania (2000); Künstlerhaus Schloß Wiepersdorf, Germany (1993); Golden Tripod, Schaubühne, Berlin (1993); The 39th Venice Biennale, 'Space Capital 1970-1977' by Joseph Beuys (1980); Documenta 6, Kassel, in the framework of the Free International University of Joseph Beuys (1977); Mihai Olos, Maramures Museum, Sighet, Romania (1976); Art and the City, New Gallery, Bucharest (1974); Milan Triennial (1968).

For more information, please contact the gallery at contact@plan-b.ro and +49.30.39805236.