

ISAK BERBIĆ
Lecturer

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Profile

Isak Berbic is an artist, writer and lecturer born in Bosnia and Herzegovina, then called Yugoslavia. As Yugoslavia dissolved and Bosnia became under attack in 1992, he and his family became refugees, migrating from Croatia to Denmark, to the United States. He first learned about art from his mother, father and brother. He studied photography, film and electronic media at the School of Art and Design, University of Illinois at Chicago. After art directing a political monthly journal, Zambak, he left his fourth home, Chicago, and moved to the Middle East; United Arab Emirates in 2007. There, he teaches at the College of Fine Arts, University of Sharjah.

Isak Berbic is Lecturer in Photography and Multimedia at the College of Fine Arts and Design, University of Sharjah. His research explores the relationship of happening events and their aesthetic representation within the narrative of history. In particular his work deals with the hegemonic canon of history in relation to the particular narratives of the periphery, such as that of the minorities in Europe, exile and immigrant life in the USA, so called “westernization” of the east, and the exoticization of the Balkans and the east in the west. His photography, text, performance and video works deal with the mediating of reality and its eventual transcendence into history and myth. His works drive to destabilize rhetoric by using subversive strategies such as humour, repetition, mythology and spectacle. Berbic's argument is that mythology and mystified interpretation universalizes the act of interpreting, lifting it above history and political context. His interest is involved in revealing the perversion of collective memory, analyzing folklore and criticizing concepts of identity. The use of indexical medium as a carefully constructed critique of its very limits suggests an intervention in the politics and semiotics of representation. By working with these complications, one may begin to contest the prevailing dichotomy between truth and fiction, by advocating that it is not a simple choice between truth or fiction anymore - rather a choice of formulating certain strategies of lies and fictions to reach relative truths.

Isak Berbic has exhibited internationally including: Normalization, in honor of Nikola Tesla, Galerija Nova, WHW Zagreb, Croatia; Odavde/Otuda, From, Here/From There, Hunt Gallery, Webster University, St. Louis, USA; the First International Photography Biennial of the Islamic World, Teheran, Iran; Jatiwangi Art Festival 2008, Jatiwangi, Indonesia; Singapore Biennale 2008; Dojima River Biennale 2009, Osaka, Japan. He participated in the International Symposium on Electronic Art, ISEA 2008 Singapore, the Chicago Festival of Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film, Take a Deep Breath: an interdisciplinary symposium, Tate Modern, London, UK. He is a contributor to numerous projects and publications on contemporary art.