

Into the dark

Darkness appears to be empty, and yet within it something may be concealed. The gloom hides something, but we can only guess what it might be.

Can a step into the darkness be considered a voluntary choice? A personal, political and civic choice?

Obligingly, darkness opens doors before you. It is ready to embrace you and it seems here there is no need to press tightly together, because there is room for all. And only by a sense of touch are the borders determined. But they may turn out to be imaginary.

If that step is already taken, then it's too late for regret, because darkness offers no lit path leading back or out. And since the person who has consciously taken that step can no longer be seen, it must mean they are ready to be taken for a criminal, lurking. And thus to remain long in the dark always throws a shadow on those who, freely or otherwise, stay within it. Here, it is not only outlines which are, at best, blurred; clarity and meaning are also only able to exist as traces or signs.

This exhibition brings together a number of gestures, acts and actions which negate or dispel their messages. Many of them were performed in complete seclusion. But this is not to prevent us sharing responsibility for their expression. It is, rather, an attempt at just the opposite. The solitary gestures presented here are ready to turn into participants all those who purport to be uninvolved.

The political content of these acts has been permitted to migrate in unpredictable ways from its usual social space to an alien environment. It takes an unnecessary, absurd journey, and falls away from view or, as in Piotr Armyanovski's work *"How Much Can One Shout"*, it wastes away.

Armyanovski cries out even as his own voice gradually detaches itself. It seems the shout is coming from the Ukrainian protest movement, but in fact Piotr smothers it because desire is not a word, a demand or a thought. In its purest form, desire exists in such a way as to make it impossible to integrate, let alone persuade or win over.

Politics seems to be a lost object (of love?) which cannot be found. We come up against it by chance, without forethought. It seems we might not even recognise it. Politics moves unpredictably through the social body, in an impenetrable darkness, like the soul as it was imagined in the 18th century. In Diderot's time there existed the idea of movement of the soul within the body, where the soul's existence was tracked through observing the hands, the feet or other organs. In this materialist interpretation it was doomed to death together with the body, without ever having expressed the body's will in its entirety.



In nearly all the works presented here, protest disintegrates and from it are surgically extracted the meanings which are essential to life. The challenge consists not in tolerating the absence of meaning. Instead, the test is to allow yourself to continue moving forward, even when meaning seems lost or doomed to remain invisible. The work of Lada Nakonechna and the works of Tetyanych seem to test their own sense of loss, where senselessness is an attempt, doomed to fail even before it has begun, to re-establish a connection with society.

Madness, stupidity, naivety and all other conditions and characteristics associated with darkness, including the feeling of loss, force us to renew and re-integrate *something*, with no promise of any future completeness.

The movement from dark to light takes the sharpness and clarity of the image to its most optimal, visible and objective level. To go backwards is nothing less than a revolt against common sense. We study our own darkness, to the extent that it can be studied at all.

And surely there is no better use of our curiosity than to deploy it in an examination of our own

disappearance.

Translated by Rahim Rahemtulla





