

# Young Art from CEE

## VIENNA INSURANCE GROUP SPECIAL INVITATION as part of the ESSL ART AWARD CEE

15 May until 6 June 2014

**Concept:**

Philippe Batka

**Official Opening:**

Wednesday, 14 May 2014, 6.30 pm (by invitation only)

**Exhibition venue:**

Exhibition Centre in the Ringturm  
1010 Vienna, Schottenring 30

**Opening hours:**

Monday to Friday: 9 am to 6 pm, free admission  
(closed on public holidays)

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*“The support for arts and cultural projects goes back a long way, and is an integral part of our company’s philosophy. We devote a special exhibition at the Group’s headquarters in Vienna to young artists from Central and Eastern Europe, with a view to presenting their work to a wide audience. The works on display at YOUNG ART FROM CEE contrast sharply with one another, giving visitors new perspectives on the relationships between the various pieces. The philosophy behind our support is clear: to provide an insight into art and culture in the region where our group operates. We aim to extend the joined-up thinking that has brought us so much commercial success and play our part in building cultural bridges.”*

**Günter Geyer,**  
**Chairman of the Managing Board, Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein**

The **VIG SPECIAL INVITATION** – an initiative of Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein, the Vienna Insurance Group’s main shareholder – is intended to support young art students from Central and Southeastern Europe. This year it will be presented for the third time as part of the Essl Art Award CEE. Established in 2007, this successful collaboration has gradually developed thanks to the efforts of both partners. The VIG SPECIAL INVITATION enables one winner of the Essl Art Award CEE from each participating country to put their work on display in an exhibition at Vienna’s Ringturm, the Group’s head office. YOUNG ART FROM CEE features pieces specially designed for the exhibition by the winners of the VIG SPECIAL INVITATION – part of the 2013 Essl Art Award CEE.

The artworks on display at **YOUNG ART FROM CEE** feature a wide range of approaches that have been individually adapted to reflect the artists’ cultural and personal backgrounds, creating a collection of various forms of expression. There is a clear trend towards the use of new media, in particular video and film. The sharply contrasting ways in which this medium is employed, in line with the different artistic concepts, quickly become evident. However, hardly any of the prize winners or their artistic approaches are defined by their chosen means of expression. The decisive factor is the subject of each piece, which prescribes the tools to be used in the artistic enquiry and its visualisation.

The thematic foundations, which often reflect extremely personal concerns and needs, not only define the language used in a particular work of art; they are also the driving force behind the artists’ output. The questions raised and the different focal points are highly divergent. Any subtexts that do emerge in the works of artists from different countries are mainly tied in with the question of how much freedom they have when it comes to social conventions.

The **Essl Art Award CEE** was inaugurated in 2005 with the aim of promoting young art students from Central and Eastern Europe. The prize is presented every two years to up-and-coming talents from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Art academy students from these countries submitted a total of over 1,000 works online, and ten artists from each country were nominated for the award. An international jury then selected two winners from each participating nation, who were invited to put their work on display at a joint exhibition at the Essl Museum in Klosterneuburg.

**Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein** is the main shareholder of the Vienna Insurance Group and provides support for the Group’s cultural and social activities, with a focus is on enhancing cross-border, intercultural exchange. The emphasis is also on creating an environment in which individual cultures can thrive. Partnerships and initiatives are geared towards supporting the activities of social organisations, especially in the Central and Eastern European countries in which the Vienna Insurance Group has a presence. As the main shareholder, Wiener Städtische Versicherungsverein is also concerned with key strategic matters within the Group.

## Winners of the VIG SPECIAL INVITATION:

Dan Adlešič (Slovenia), Zoran Georgiev (Bulgaria), Volkan Kızıltunç (Turkey), Kund Kopacz (Hungary), Jelena Lovrec (Croatia), Andra Nedelcu (Romania), Viktor Takáč (Czech Republic) and Zuzana Žabková (Slovakia)

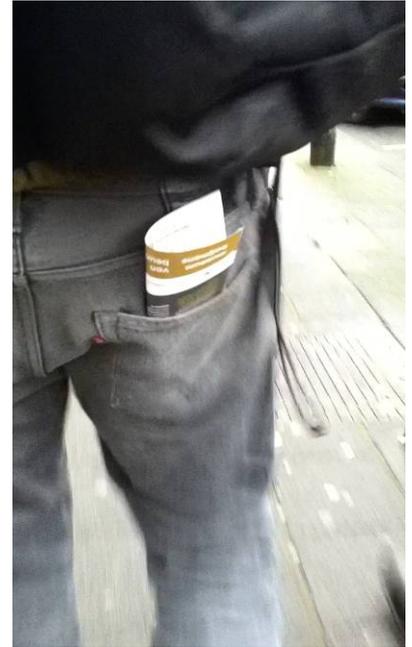
## Selected statements from the winners

### DAN ADLEŠIČ

b. 1990 in Ljubljana (SLO)

Dan Adlešič lives and works in Ljubljana. He is a student of Design Academy Eindhoven (NL) and previously attended the Academy of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Ljubljana and the HDK University of Gothenburg's School of Design and Crafts (S).

Adlešič's off-the-wall creations are reminiscent of the apparatus used in scientific experiments. The idea is not to collect scientific insights, but to design test set-ups with a humorous touch where neither success nor failure are recognisable.



### How many times?, 2014

Multimedia installation (detail)

*"I don't like to be defined as an artist, designer or crafter. I try to combine as many perspectives as I can as a creator. Sometimes I make works from similar perspectives, and sometimes I try to get a new one. Every object has a meaning; a settled function can be just one of those meanings. I like to work with human perception and experience, senses, feelings and emotions. The fact that 'here is always somewhere else' really has been intriguing me for the last few years. Whenever we watch television, we are behind the TV in our physical space, but at the same time we feel like we are in the place where the movie is located. Our personal space 'here' is always physical, and 'there' is always mental. So we can never be 'there' as we imagine, because we are always 'here'."*

### ZORAN GEORGIEV

b. 1985 in Gevgelia (MKD)

From 2010 to 2012 Zoran Georgiev studied painting at the National Art Academy in Sofia (BG), where he is currently working towards a master's degree. He lives and works in Sofia.

### In the name of...., 2013

PVC sheets, acrylic and text



*"My work takes a critical view of social, political and cultural topics. I attempt to show the delusions in which we believe, the generally accepted clichés, the everyday routine work we do, etc. Usually my interventions use existing objects, putting them in a different context - most often relating to social and political issues. The last few*

years many protests rise around the world. Last year big anti-government protests in Bulgaria appeared also. However nothing especially happens. The government remained the same and the protests quietly disappeared. To read or post a message with Cyrillic letters on internet, it needs to be in the right text encoding (most often UTF-8). When the text encoding of the web browser is not set properly, a strange signs appeared instead of Cyrillic letters. I translated the most popular slogans from the protests into this 'non-existent alphabet'. This work refers to the unsuccessful protests and unheard messages from the people.”

## **VOLKAN KIZILTUNÇ**

b. 1976 in Ankara (TR)

Volkan Kızıltunç studied photography at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Istanbul (TR) and the University of Applied Arts Vienna (AT). He lives and works in Istanbul.

Volkan Kızıltunç mainly produces video installations. His work often focuses on the relationship between motion pictures and static images (film and photography), and his installation The Pendulum is no exception – Kızıltunç compiled a moving “sculpture of memories” using film material recorded between the 1960s and 1980s by a wealthy Istanbul family.

### **The Pendulum, 2014**

Endless HD video loop

„In my photography and my video works I am generally interested in the ‘existence of being there’ of objects and places in the image world. By doing this I choose to stand far from the photographic moment and try to analyse in a wider perspective. In my video works, I try to move between photography and cinema, and mostly I use the still camera shots to question time and space. In order to make up for the lack of action, I use evacuated cinematic spaces in my videos.”



## **KUND KOPACZ**

b. 1991 in Csíkszereda (RO)

Kund Kopacz has been a student of the Department of Sculpture in the Faculty for Visual Arts at Eszterházy Károly College in Eger (HU) since 2010. He lives and works in the town.

Kopacz is a photographer in the classical sense, and questions rooted in photography itself are central to his work. He focuses strongly on people and their lifestyles in rural areas of Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

### **Winged sun, 2013**

C-print

*„Whenever I take a photograph I look for symbols. There’s always a main character in relationship with an object. But this object stands on its own as a symbol. In real life, this item is just a common tool with a specific function. No one would consider these objects to carry a certain meaning beyond their use. They’re trivial. But as soon as it becomes photographed and printed, the object loses its everyday function and is invested with a distinct status with its shape and colour.”*



### **JELENA LOVREC**

b. 1989 in Zagreb (HR)

Jelena Lovrec is based in Zagreb (HR) and has been studying at the city's Academy of Fine Arts since 2012. She purchases one square metre of land in various locations from different owners and declares each of them a “square metre of culture”.

### **One square meter of culture, 2014**

C-print

*“As a young artist living in Croatia, I witness culture's unviable position every day. Thinking about its position and rights it wasn't difficult to conclude that culture happens to be only a not that welcome fellow-tenant, rather than an inhabitant of Croatia. So I began to wonder - how much space does culture really need? As an answer to this question, I started this initiative. I have decided that one square meter in every county is just enough for culture to exist in Croatia.”*



### **ANDRA NEDELICU**

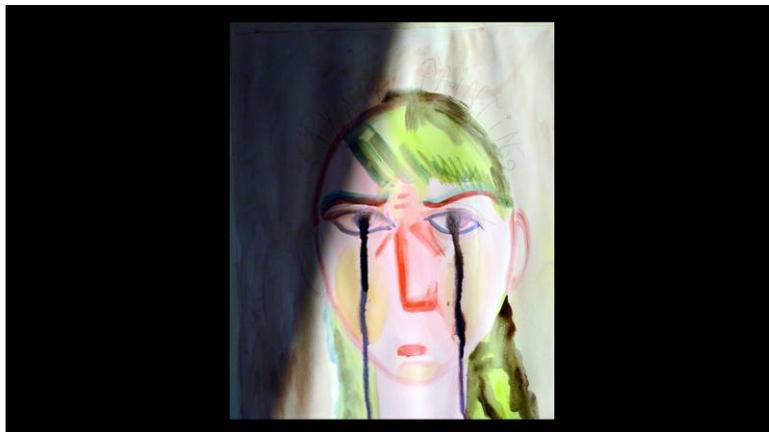
b. 1988 in Bucharest (RO)

Andra Nedelcu has a degree in conservation and restoration from the Faculty of Art History and Theory at Bucharest National University of Arts (RO). From 2009 to 2010 she studied pedagogy at Hyperion University of Bucharest before going on to study at the Dynamic Image and Photography Department of Bucharest National University of Art between 2010 and 2012.

## **Crying painting, 2014**

Endless HD video loop

*“Among the visual means I frequently use for expressing my ideas are the video, video installation, photography and drawing. Nevertheless, I am open to experimenting with all sorts of creation tools and I always try not to be the prisoner of an arid limitative concept; my purpose is to let my spirit be free so I can insert in my works the luck and opportunity of an expressive moment I might stumble upon in my daily routine. In my opinion everything I do can be considered a means of discovering myself and the others, of understanding our relationship with the others and how we interact with each other; the way we communicate is our motor in life, is the motor of my artistic practice and artistic research. It is also a means of accepting myself in the middle of the others.”*



## **VIKTOR TAKÁČ**

b. 1982 in Přerov (CZ)

Viktor Takáč has a degree in illustration for the media and multimedia design from the Institute of Art and Design in Pilsen (CZ), and completed the master's programme in intermedia studies and new media at AVU Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (CZ) between 2007 and 2012. He lives and works in the Czech capital.

## **Black is Then, 2013**

Video installation

Viktor Takáč's primary medium is the video installation. His installation "Black is Then" deals with the space created by light or the absence of it. The red curtain covering the entrance to the room instantly sends the message that the setting is a stage. The video itself uses circus-related quotes as references to the reality of stage performances.



*“The circus reality is truly fascinating for me, whether for the specificity of its architecture in the urban setting, or for the nostalgic emotions we have with this space since childhood. Both the circus tent with the premises and the events taking place inside are aesthetically overloaded, bloated and highly expressive. Whether it is the multiple colours of the tent built in the middle of the grey multi-storeyed housing development, or the smile of a clown with one half of the face painted smiling and the other weeping, or the breathtaking acrobatic acts, all these leave overexposed impressions sticking out among the everyday experiences. The film reality which I gradually create is a deconstruction of such experience. The individual elements, shot by shot, emerge from the darkness and group into larger units to expose gradually the three unities of time, place and action. Their message is not to act as figures building up film reality, but to frame and explore more closely the space, that is, blackness, where they come from.”*

**ZUZANA ŽABKOVÁ**  
b. 1987 in Košice (SK)

Between 2006 and 2012 Zuzana Žabková studied at the Department of Intermedia and Multimedia at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design (AFAD), and at Ilona Németh's Studio IN, both in Bratislava (SK). She spent a year at the University of Porto's Faculty of Fine Arts while also working towards her degree in dance choreography at the Faculty of Music and Dance, part of the University of Performing Arts in the Slovakian capital. Zuzana Žabková lives and works in Košice (SK).

**Lead and Follow, 2014**  
Short film

Zuzana Žabková reveals the extent to which the borders of the fine arts blur into other genres. One of her choreographies was the basis for a film entitled Lead and Follow.

*"The topic of the project was inspired by the quotation from the movie 'Fight Club', maybe many times discussed, but still actual in statement – 'Fuck following, Start leading' – which in certain way describe our current situation. We are often surrounded by a competitive environment, where preferable is to be a winner – becoming a leader. I want to reflect this theme throughout the metaphor using it in another context – dance field. In this project, I'm interested in what is more comfortable, difficult or important: leading or following? What is the difference and importance of each of those activities? Why the rules designed by someone, separate us to leaders and followers, who are usually considerable less then leaders? Lead, follow, or get out of the way. (Thomas Paine) On the stage (which is defined as neutral zone) the leading and following can become equivalent or even parallel strategies. Changing the role from follower to leader and opposite became a necessity. In this project I want to develop a series of little choreographic etudes through the different task forms dealing with this concept. The final output will be the video installation which will underline the work with different objects in the video."*



This exhibition covers various forms of artistic expression, ranging from paintings and sketches to interactive and multimedia exhibits. YOUNG ART FROM CEE is open to the public from 15 May to 6 June 2014, and admission is free.

A 180-page catalogue has been published to accompany the Essl Art Award CEE. A limited number of free copies are available for media. If you have any enquiries, please contact us by e-mail at [presse@wst-versicherungsverein.at](mailto:presse@wst-versicherungsverein.at).