

In *Irena Lagator Pejovic: The Society of Unlimited Responsibility. Art as Social Strategy*. 2001-2011. Edited by Christa Steinle, Karin Buol-Wischenau, Neue Galerie Graz am Universalmuseum Joanneum. Published by Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Köln.

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Witness of Time – Now

In *Witness of Time – Now*, presented at the IV Biennial of Contemporary Art in Cetinje (2002), the characters are the absent owners of a palace whose construction was begun in 1989 and was completed in 2002, but was uninhabited until 2003. The apartments had been sold many times over, resulting in an infinite series of lawsuits that resulted in the abandonment of the palace.

Irena Lagator, on that occasion, located many owners who, after she had taken photos of them, temporarily found a place inhabiting the open shutters of the still-abandoned building. The owners virtually lean out the windows of the palace. However, they continue to be excluded from their houses, just images pasted up and portrayed as busy with their daily household routines, displaying a kind of potential reality which is yet denied to them.

Space, territory and the question of relations are the concepts that interested Irena Lagator's research from the very beginning of her career. The memory of places, the permanence of people and their ability to establish relations among themselves and with others are constantly present in the investigations of the artist. For the artist, this piece of work is a meaningful construction of an emotional and cognitive relationship between people. In it, the mechanisms of perception are stimulated by the construction of a work of art that enables a documentary, and at the same time empathic, reading of the contexts of which a visitor becomes part.

The sharing of a physical and sentimental space is the essential condition of these installations, in which the roles of actor and main character can be alternated and confused. The cognitive and emotional aspects of the individual are transformed into an exceptional daily routine displayed in a way that underlines creative and expressive aspects.

In *Witness of Time – Now*, individuals with their emotional baggage and personal stories are interpreted in terms of “collectivity”, “community” and “nation”. The subjectivity is related to other subjectivities, and the artist points out the potential of the narration in personal stories that meet each other, cross and form the memory and the identity of the places inhabited.

The dichotomy between the individual and collectivity inspired the artist's works such as *Witness of Time* (2001), *Witness of Time – Now* and *Are You Happy Now?*, as well as the videos *May I Help You?* (2004) and *Registrar*.