

PoARTa Maratonului Internațional de la Sibiu, 25.5.2024

I don't want to be happy alone*

Artists: Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić

Curator: Iris Ordean

The MIS gate, suggestively called *poARTa* (in Romanian a name play between *poarta* = gate, and art) has occupied over the years a central role in this event, being in turn a start / finish point, a place where not only the participants, but also families, friends or colleagues can gather and support their chosen runner. It is a place of immense joy, encouragement and excitement, and let's not forget activism and charity, as MIS creates a context for philanthropy and goodwill, materialized in financial support of various local causes. A symbolic place of passage, experience and transformation, the gate becomes each year a blank canvas of sorts: a medium for creation, artistic expression and communal sharing.

This year, the project's curator Iris Ordean has invited the artist duo Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić to transform the gate into a visual narrative, produced as a result from a residency the artists undertook in Sibiu and its surrounding areas. During a series of conversations with socially engaged people from Sibiu, the artists collected topics and concerns which impact the social life of the region as well as having multiple perspectives on Sibiu and the marathon explained to them.

The motifs of the resulting work refer to observations that Rena and Vladan made during their research stay in Sibiu. With the design of the gate, they present an artistic interpretation of the marathon; the motifs are a transposition of the discourse on the event, urban society and its contradictions. The composition itself is supported by imaginary plant motifs, which, equipped with legs and sneakers, join the marathon as fellow runners.

Statement by Rena & Vladan:

"We discovered the saffron flower on our ascent to Cabana Bărcaciu. We learned that one section of the marathon runs through the forest and that the connection to nature is important. Motifs such as the Angus cattle, the stork or the bear refer to specific projects to preserve nature in the area around Sibiu, which is threatened by deforestation or the expansion of fenced pastures for meat production, for example. Other motifs revolve around the marathon itself, the feeling of happiness when donating to a good cause, doing sport or taking part in joint activities. The clouds dreaming with their eyes closed allude to the desire but also the illusion of living in a 'perfect' city."

The artists and the curator would like to thank everyone for the detailed discussions they had with us and without whose ideas and observations this work would not have been possible:

Mihai Rusu (ULBS), Dan Perjovschi, Gabriela & Joachim Cotaru (Hosman Durabil Association), Alexandru Haraga (The Architects' Order Sibiu), Ana-Maria Daneş (Executive director, The German Cultural Centre Sibiu), Miruna Gritu (Association Friends of Storks), Daniel Troancă (Community Sports Club Sibiu), Daniela James (independent fundraiser), Radu Tompa (Cu Verdele-n Sus! Association), the German Cultural Centre Sibiu for making the research stay possible and the Community Foundation Sibiu for the trust placed in us and the production of the work.

**This sentence comes from a fundraiser's campaign for the marathon*

Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić are artists whose research-oriented work comprises installations and artistic interventions in public space. In their collaborative practice, Rena & Vladan explore the relation between art and politics, unveiling the contradictions of today's societies. They use techniques that are easy to reproduce and distribute such as drawing and prints, and simple materials such as textile, cardboard and wood, and they insist on their artistic production's use value, social and ecological awareness. They develop the transformative potentials of art in the context of social struggles and in collaboration with social movements.