

## *Surrender, Surrender.*

NIKOLAI NEKH

Curated by  
João Silvério

04.12.2020 to 19.01.2021

**BALCONY**  
CONTEMPORARY  
ART GALLERY

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(...)

The clash between the economical, scientific and technological development and the widening social and environmental gap is no novelty in his artistic practice, centered in the “several ways capitalism uses to represent itself”. Examples of this are the *Postcards from the city Raduhznyy*, a finalist work for BES Revelação award in 2008, in which Nikolai tried to create an image of the oil city in Siberia by “photographing Lisbon as if it was that territory”; and *Achilles Heel*, 2018 exhibition at the Chiado Contemporary Art Museum (MNAC) in which he analyzed the relationship between the raw materials needed keep the industry in motion and the available energy resources.

(...)

According to the artist, gentrification is “perhaps the most recent expression of class struggle we are witnessing, [since] there are different classes claiming the same territory”. Albeit being a problem experienced in a very individual way by the residents of lesser economic power, that are forced to move out, we are all responsible for it, even if involuntarily, he emphasizes. “My goal is to generate greater awareness of the role we all play in this process.”

However, individual and collective participation in gentrification is not limited to economic and tourist agents, notes Nikolai Nekh. Aesthetics also contributes to this reality, which can be seen, for example, in exhibition photography. “There is a specific type of lights and framing that are used to register contemporary art exhibitions, and you can hardly deviate from it”, he warns, comparing it to the registry of apartments for rent or sale, “almost all photographed in the same way, because that is the type of image everyone wants to see”.

His work ends up being disruptive in that sense, since he seeks to go beyond the invariable formula for capturing and registering images. Besides favoring still life and landscape, his work is distinguished by its focus on the image production process and not only on its purpose. “I work a lot on the issue of image production and distribution narratives, which is the backdrop to what we ultimately see.”

(...)

.... the scaffolds, “more than platforms to paint, allude to the idea of social scale”, and the dais, which serve as a lander to “our unconscious”, accompanied by photography and installation.

In Time Out, 24/11/2020

By Mariana Monteiro

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[Brief note about the exhibition]

The work that composes this exhibition, because this is about a composition in space, leads us to reflect on the occupation of the gallery as a common space. A sort of shared condominium, fragmented and apparently connected by the symbolic value of the displayed objects: the photographs, the sculptures/scaffolds/bed frames, and a full-scale image, memoir of the experience and of a convulsing place, from a standpoint of the artist in a pool at a hotel rooftop over the city of Beirut. Nothing is left from the look over the city living a revolution, just an image of wellness, yet lonesome, printed on an outdoor vinyl that redefines the notion of presence, memory, and the way that communication can be a political and economic tool that decants for the observer a generic place that can be confused with any other. Just like the light of the images of the desirable apartments for rent that blur the gentrification of the place, its otherness, the social, ethnic, economic and identity differences that apparently attribute its wealth and cultural diversity. But that remains outside of the frame, without visual existence and thus without memory, regardless of the hierarchy of their distribution channels.

An isolated sculpture, composed of a model based on a styrofoam plinth and a photograph of a mold made of synthetic material, confronts us with an utopian model of a construction, which, like the sculptures/scaffoldings/bed frames, reveals in manual execution the labor dimension of work that constitutes a future memory of the project for a gentrification museum.

João Silvério

Nikolai Nekh was born in 1985, in Slavhansk-na-Kubani, Russia. He currently lives and works in Lisbon.

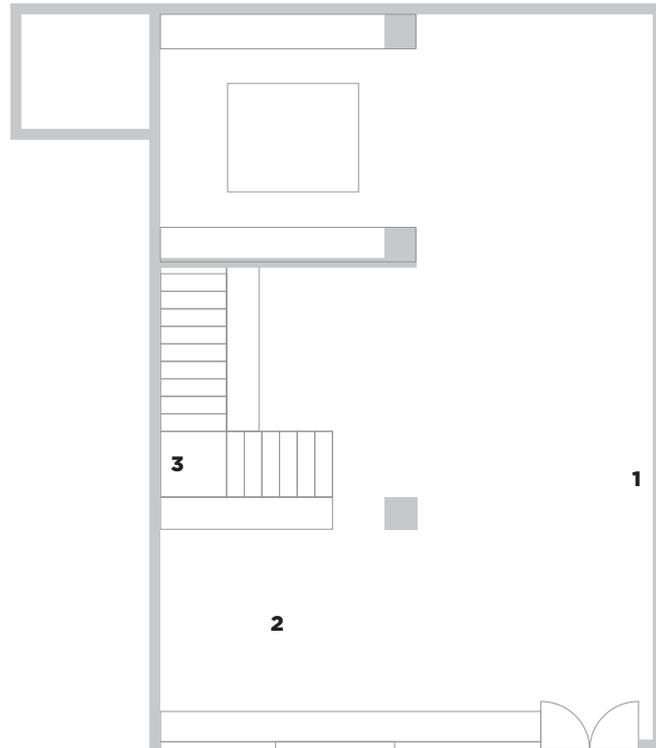
In 2009, he got a degree on Art and Multimedia at Faculdade de Belas Artes, Lisbon. The following year he took part in the Independent Studies Programme at Maumaus, Lisboa.

Nekh's artwork consists of the production and distribution of images that come from capitalism trajectories and their forms of representation.

His works have been presented in several film festivals and exhibition venues, such as: Três cartazes para o Museu da gentrificação. Maus Hábitos, Oporto (2020); Achilles' Heel. Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado, Lisbon, Portugal (2018); Magic and Rituals. Museum Villa-Rot, Burgrieden - Rot, Germany (2018); COSMO/POLÍTICA #1: A Sexta Parte do Mundo. Museu do Neo-Realismo, Vila Franca de Xira, Portugal (2017); Silent Spring. Syntax, Lisbon, Portugal (2016); Bes Photo Revelação 2008. Serralves Museum, Oporto, Portugal. (2008) 13th VIS. Vienna, Austria. (Half-cut) (2016) 32nd Kassel Dokfest. Kassel, Germany. (Metaphorical Container) (2015) 19th Jihlava IDFF. Jihlava, Czech Republic. (Tidal Restlessness) (2015) CPH:DOX. Copenhagen, Denmark. (White Wind) (2009). He was part of following residency programs: Ashkal Alwan (with Calouste Gulbenkian grant), Beirut, Lebanon (2019); With Criminal Energy - Art and Crime in the 21st Century. ACC Galerie, Weimar, Germany. (2013); What Happened to God? Halle14, Leipzig, Germany. (2011).

He was part of Bes Photo Revelação 2008 award.

**GROUND FLOOR**



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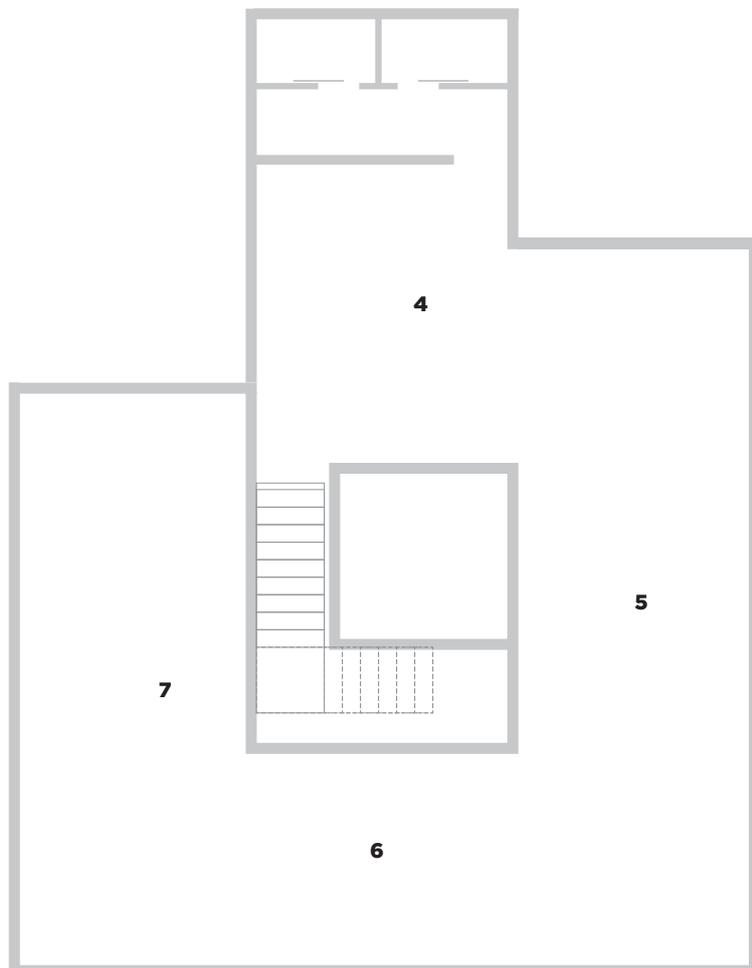
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**LOWER GROUND**



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**1. Outdoor**, 2020, Photo: João Laia. The Smallville Hotel, Beirut, Lebanon. 18/10/2019, 17:3, Inject print on vinyl, 600 x 250 cm

**2. Museum of Gentrification**, Birch, oak, demountable structure, 48 x 73 x 33 cm

Client: Museum of Gentrification  
Architecture: SOLI (Beirut) - winner of international competition  
Model: SOLI (Beirut)

**3. Concept for the Museum of Gentrification**, 2019, Photography of polyurethane foam for plasma screens packaging, Inject print on semi-gloss paper, passe-partout, glass, wengé wood frame, 70 x 56 cm

**4. Museum of Gentrification - Display B**, 2020

Black and white scaffold (2020), Demountable scaffold, glued beech dowels Ø 1,5 cm / 2,8 cm, stainless steel tubes Ø 1,5 cm fit, gloss acrylic enamel, stainless steel perforated sheet 1,5 mm R8 T11, 134,5 x 102,5 x 39 cm

Photographed object #4 (2018), Inject print on semi-gloss paper, bonded on 5mm PVC, white lacquered wood frame, 160 x 100 cm

**5. Museum of Gentrification - Display #1**, 2020

Bed frame #1 (2020), 3 glued layers of birch plywood, CNC cut, gloss acrylic enamel (NCS S 6502-B), varnish, 120 x 185 x 4 cm

Orange and blue scaffold (2020), Demountable scaffold, glued beech dowels Ø 1,5 cm / 2,8 cm, stainless steel tubes Ø 1,5 cm fit, gloss acrylic enamel (RAL B40 / NSC S 3060-R80B), stainless steel perforated sheet 1,5 mm R8 T11, 199 x 53 x 53 cm

Photographed object #8 (2019), Inject print on semi-gloss paper, bonded on 5mm PVC, white lacquered wood frame, 30 x 42 cm

Photographed object #9 (2019), Inject print on semi-gloss paper, bonded on 5mm PVC, white lacquered wood frame, 30 x 42 cm

**6. Museum of Gentrification - Display #2**, 2020

Bed frame #2 (2020), 3 glued layers of birch plywood, CNC cut, gloss acrylic enamel (NCS S 6502-B), varnish, 21 x 164 x 4 cm

Yellow scaffold (2020)

Demountable scaffold, glued beech dowels Ø 1,5 cm / 2,8 cm, stainless steel tubes Ø 1,5 cm fit, gloss acrylic enamel (NCS S 0580-Y), stainless steel perforated sheet 1,5 mm R8 T11, 122,5 x 97 x 47 cm

Photographed object #6 (2018), Inject print on semi-gloss paper, bonded on 5mm PVC, white lacquered wood frame, 70 x 70 cm

**7. Museum of Gentrification - Display B**, 2020

Black and white scaffold (2020), Demountable scaffold, glued beech dowels Ø 1,5 cm / 2,8 cm, stainless steel tubes Ø 1,5 cm fit, gloss acrylic enamel, stainless steel perforated sheet 1,5 mm R8 T11, 134,5 x 102,5 x 39 cm

Photographed object #4 (2018), Inject print on semi-gloss paper, bonded on 5mm PVC, white lacquered wood frame, 160 x 100 cm