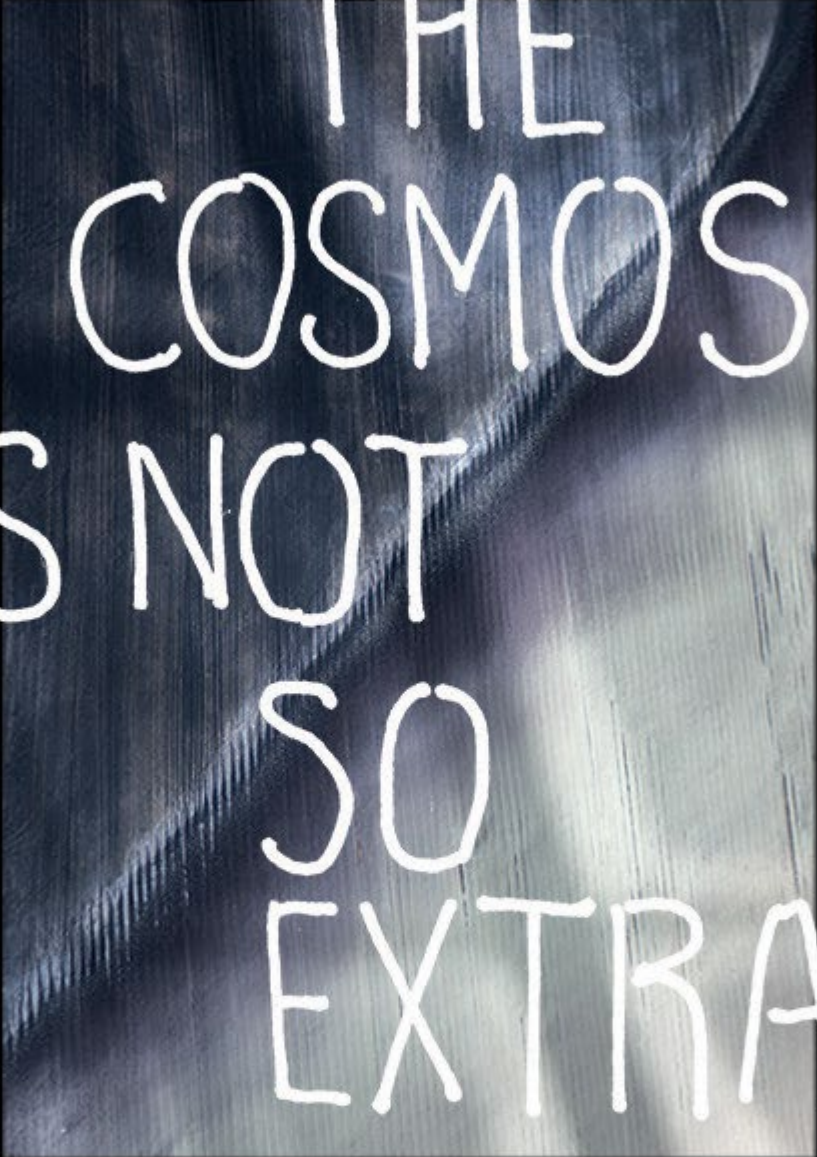


MAYBE
THE
COSMOS
IS NOT
SO
EXTRA
ORDINARY



DRIANT ZENELI

Albanian Pavilion 2019

58th International Art Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia



Albanian Pavilion 2019

Maybe the Cosmos is not so Extraordinary
Driant Zeneli

58th International Art Exhibition
La Biennale di Venezia

Curator
Alicia Knock

Commissioner
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Albania

Arsenale - Artiglierie, Venice



Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary (2019), is a sculptural video installation which expands upon a multidisciplinary project entitled *Beneath a surface there is just another surface* started in 2015 at Metallurgjik, a dystopian industrial complex, in the city of Elbasan, Albania. The project and its title derive from the pioneering science-fiction novel *On the way to Epsilon Eridani* (1983) by Albanian physicist and writer Arion Hysenbegas.

The installation develops from a two-channel film set in the mines of Bulqize, a city in the North-East of the country, where, since 1918, the chrome mineral has been extracted. Chrome represents a key resource for the industrial development of Albania and collides with economic and political conflicts in the Global South. The film stages a group of teenagers from Bulqize discovering a cosmic capsule which follows the journey of chrome, from its extraction and processing within the factory to its exportation and worldwide exploitation. This "geopolitical" space travel therefore turns this shady and dramatic industrial environment into an ambivalent space for collapse and takeoff. A drone escorts the characters throughout the space travel, whereas the crossed echo of the voices of Bujar and Flora, the two protagonists of the previous chapter of the trilogy, resonate from above. Quoting Hysenbegas' scientific and literary tale, they breathe a parallel rhythm into the filmic narrative.

Through binary storytelling, precise choreography of image and sound, the factory operates not only as an industrial space or geopolitical hub but as a visually performative force. The extraction of chrome is turned into a hypnotic sculptural image and the overall factory therefore translates into a big light and sound "parallel" installation, organically plugged into the walls of Arsenale. In this productive and immersive space, Driant Zeneli intends to create a tension between an oppressive underground reality and a utopian space of possibility and liberation.

Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary tries to physically reveal the ability of the ordinary, even in its darkest corners, to expand our existence.

Driant Zeneli (1983, Shkoder, Albania), lives and works between Tirana and Milan. In 2008 he won the Onufri International Contemporary Art Prize, Tirana, in 2009 the Young European Artist Award Trieste Contemporanea and in 2017 MOROSO Prize, Italy. He was the artistic director of *Mediterranea 18*, the Young Artists Biennale from Europe and Mediterranean, taking place for the first time in 2017 between Tirana and Durrës. He is co-founder of Harabel Contemporary Art Platform, Tirana. He has exhibited at: GAMEC, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Bergamo, (2019); Passerelle, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brest, (2018); Mostyn Gallery, Wales, UK (2017); MuCEM, Marseille, (2016); Academie de France à Roma, (2016); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2016); IV Bienal del Fin del Mundo, Chile (2015); GAM, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Turin (2013); White House Biennial, Athens (2013); KCCC, Klaipeda, Lithuania (2013); ZKM, Karlsruhe (2012); MUSAC, Castilla León, Spain, (2012); Prague Biennale 5, Prague (2011); Trongate 103, Glasgow (2011); National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtine (2010); Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genoa (2009); National Gallery of Tirana, (2008).

Catalogue, Alicia Knock (ed.), Driant Zeneli. *Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary*, Mousse publishing, 2019, in English. With more than thirty contributions by artists, scientists, writers and curators.



Driant Zeneli, *Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary*, 2019.
Two-channel video installation, FullHD, color, sound, 10 min 19 sec each. Video still



Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary (2019), è un'installazione che combina video e scultura, risultante da un progetto multidisciplinare intitolato *Beneath a surface there is just another surface*, iniziato nel 2015 al Metalurgjik, un complesso industriale distopico, ad Elbasan, Albania. L'opera, e il titolo, derivano dal racconto di fantascienza *Sulla via per l'Epsilon Eridani* (1983) dello scrittore e fisico albanese Arion Hysenbegas.

L'installazione presenta un film a due canali ambientato nelle miniere di Bulqize, una città a Nord-Est del paese, dove, dal 1918, viene estratto il minerale del cromo. Questo rappresenta una risorsa chiave per lo sviluppo industriale dell'Albania ed è alla radice di conflitti economici e politici nel Sud del mondo. Il film mette in scena la scoperta, da parte di un gruppo di adolescenti di Bulqize, di una capsula cosmica che segue il percorso del cromo: dall'estrazione e lavorazione all'interno della fabbrica fino alla sua esportazione e utilizzo a livello globale. Questo viaggio spaziale «geopolitico», tuttavia, trasforma questo luogo industriale ambiguo e drammatico in uno spazio ambivalente di collasso e decollo. Un drone accompagna i personaggi durante tutto il tragitto, mentre l'eco incrociata delle voci di Bujar e Flora, i due protagonisti del capitolo precedente della trilogia, risuonano dall'alto. Citando il racconto scientifico e letterario di Hysenbegas, instillano un ritmo parallelo nella narrazione filmica.

Tramite un duplice racconto, una coreografia precisa d'immagine e suono, la fabbrica non solo appare come un sito industriale o un centro geopolitico, ma anche come una forza visualmente performativa. L'estrazione del cromo diventa un'immagine scultorea ipnotica e l'intero stabilimento si traduce così in una luce intensa e un'installazione filmica sonora "parallela", inserita organicamente nelle pareti dell'Arsenale. In questo ambiente produttivo e immersivo, Driant Zeneli intende creare una tensione tra una realtà oppressiva nascosta e uno spazio utopico di possibilità e liberazione.

Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary prova a rivelare la possibilità dell'ordinario in maniera tangibile, anche nei suoi aspetti più bui, per ampliare la nostra esistenza.

Driant Zeneli (1983, Scutari, Albania), vive e lavora tra Tirana e Milano. Nel 2008 ha vinto l'Onufri International Contemporary Art Prize, Tirana; nel 2009 il Young European Artist Award Trieste Contemporanea. Nel 2017 il MOROSO Prize, Italia. È stato il direttore artistico della Biennale di Mediterraneo 18, la Biennale dei Giovani Artisti dell'Europa e del Mediterraneo che ha avuto luogo nel 2017 tra Tirana e Durres. È co-fondatore di Harabel Contemporary Art Platform, Tirana. Ha esposto a: GAMeC, Bergamo, (2019); Passerelle, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brest, (2018); Mostyn Gallery, Wales, UK (2017); MuCEM, Marsiglia, (2016); Academie de France, Villa Medici, Roma (2016); Centre Pompidou, Parigi (2016); MSFAU Tophane-i Aime, Istanbul, (2016); Prometeogallery di Ida Pisani, Milano (2018; 2015; 2010); IV Bienal del Fin del Mundo, Cile (2015); Viafarini, Milano (2014); GAM, Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Torino (2013); White House Biennial, Atene (2013); KCCC, Klaipeda, Lituania (2013); ZKM, Karlsruhe (2012); MUSAC, Castilla León, Spagna, (2012); TICA, Tirana (2012); Prague Biennale 5, Praga (2011); 98 weeks Project Space, Beirut (2011); Trongate 103, Glasgow (2011); Galleria Nazionale del Kosovo, Pristina (2010); Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Villa Croce, Genova (2009); Galleriea Nazionale di Tirana (2008).

Catalogo, Alicia Knock (ed.), Driant Zeneli. *Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary*, Mousse publishing, 2019, inglese. Con il contributo di più di trenta artisti, scienziati, scrittori e curatori.



Driant Zeneli, *Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary*, 2019.
Two-channel video installation, FullHD, color, sound, 10 min 19 sec each. Video stills



Driant Zeneli, *Maybe the cosmos is not so extraordinary*, 2019.
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Endri Pine

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Camera Director

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Set film photographer

Valentina Bonizzi

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Tu-Ti Atelier

Voice-over

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Flora Sulejmani

The characters of the film

Klevis Surocaj

Kjadi Gjura

Klea Gjura

Mario Lika

Egli Tanci

Ploti (Drone the Robot)



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Exhibition opening days:

11 May > 24 November 2019 from 10 am to 6 pm

Closed on Mondays (except 13 May, 2 September, 18 November)

on Fridays and Saturdays, until 5 October, open 10 am to 8 pm

Press information

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