

Extraterritorial

exhibition text by Ana Victoria Bruno

Extraterritorial is a group exhibition which brings together works by Lucas Bury, Flaviu Cacoveanu and Vitalii Shupliak curated by Ana Victoria Bruno.

Extraterritorial will take place in the polish supermarket Mini Market, in Breidholt, Reykjavik. The three artists have experienced migration themselves and have personal histories of dwelling between cultures, these experiences are woven together in the exhibition to create a landscape of elements which reflect upon what it means to be an immigrant and on globalism, both in terms of movement of people and products.

We envision the ethnic supermarket as a sort of embassy for immigrants of certain cultures, where to find comfort and reiteration of customs and traditions of their motherland. Embassies are institutions which offer support to immigrants, in the same way ethnic supermarkets function as isles where immigrants can reconnect to their roots. The food they used to eat back in their homeland is to be found there, cashiers and employees often speak the language migrants grew up with, and music from their homeland is usually played. All of the senses are here involved in creating an experience which replicates that of specific countries.

Ethnic supermarkets offer an environment where to explore how globalism, mass production and capitalism intertwine with personal and cultural identities. *Extraterritorial* aims at exploring this space dwelling between the political picture and the personal experience of individuals.

Extraterritorial takes place in a Polish supermarket because we would like to acknowledge the Polish community in Iceland, which constitutes the biggest minority ethnic group in the country. Polish communities in Iceland often keep their culture very much alive, it is however a quite enclosed one, the interaction between Poles and Icelanders seldom happens and most Poles find themselves isolated. This is why important information from the government or other institutions such as banks are delivered in Icelandic, English and Polish, and this unveils a language barrier which is a symptom of an unsuccessful integration.

Lukas Bury will exhibit new paintings which bring together Icelandic and Polish products, creating a contemporary still life with aesthetic components from Polish tradition. Traditional still life compositions depict common objects, and often would pair fruits, vegetables or flowers which grow in different seasons, creating compositions which are abstract in the sense that those products could hardly be consumed together. Lukas Bury reflects on the nature of immigrants as consumers of two cultures, and his paintings suggest the existence of similarities between the complexity of the composition of still life and that of ethnic supermarkets.

Lukas Bury will present new works in collaboration with Verónika Balcerak, reflecting on their Polish origin they will recreate a *Makatka* (pol. for wall hanging), a traditional embroidered tea towel which often hangs in the kitchen of Polish houses. Those will be embroidered by Verónika, iterating a process which is usually done by women. In this work they will address the gender imbalance present in the country, exhibiting the work under the name of Lukas Bury. The work addresses also the appropriation and gentrification of traditional activities by the international market, a process through which the production of traditional objects shifts from handmade to industrial, and products are made affordable through eliminating the specificity of the historical process of production.

Flaviu Cacoveanu's practice investigates formal aspects of art and everyday life, for the exhibition *Extraterritorial* he will present some new works and pre-existent works which reflect on ephemerality in opposition to materiality. He will operate within the dynamics of the supermarket, taking into account its role of place where items are sold and its capitalist structure and questions these dynamics, but also its meaning for the Polish immigrant community. One of his works constitutes a small intervention, he will slightly alter the experience of customers by inserting sentences in the printed receipts printed by the cashier. The work will be gifted to the customers since it will be given to them following a purchase, however it might not be noticed by customers, and it will fade away with time. This strongly conceptual work operates in canceling the market value of the artwork and re-establishing new power structures between the artist, the work and the consumer of the piece.

Flaviu will also produce an edition work which will be sold at the supermarket and which revenue will be shared between the owner of the supermarket and the artist. The edition work will be a print of a snowball, in reference to the work of "Bliz-aard Ball Sale" by David Hammons, performed in New York in 1983, who set a street sale of snowballs of different sizes in the winter, a work which once again reflect on ephemerality, both in terms of the item sold and because the event took place outside of art infrastructures and we are left with just few photos testifying the event. Flaviu's work assumes a more concrete form since the snowball is replaced by a print of the original object, however the work enters the market system and provides the owner of the supermarket with a revenue.

During the opening day of the exhibition Flaviu will present a performance called "*Sculpture*". The performance involves 9 people wearing t-shirts each of which has printed on one of the letters of the word "sculpture". The performance reflects on language and on the sculptural aspect of grammar and words, the performers will interact with the public and with each other during the opening, so that these letters will move around the space disrupting the order required to constitute the original word and creating new combinations. This work refers to the experience of immigrants who dwell between languages whose native language gets often mixed with new languages creating new ones who are neither their native nor their acquired languages. This mirrors the nature of immigration which is made of mixed feelings of belonging, alienation, resistance and compromises which often alternate in the everyday life of immigrants.

Vitalii Shupliak will present new works based on recent thoughts on identity and virtuality, considering the way digitalisation is enacting a new way of construction of the identity where physical distance is mediated and reduced. Vitalii will present layered drawings in mixed techniques where elements from the digital are printed and other elements are added manually, the combination of techniques results in dynamic representations of the identities, which are growing more and more complex with the introduction of new technologies. The installation of the drawings will play a fundamental role in connecting the works with the location: Vitalii will use elements from the supermarket as supports for the drawings, these will be exhibited on boxes, attached to the boxes through the use of plastic films or printed in the form of stickers to be placed on the boxes, creating sculptural elements which reflect on materiality and immateriality, drawing from those elements which constitute our identities. The work is in dialogue with the delivery system of goods, reflecting on migration as an action of moving in the physical space from country to country. This work reverses the dichotomy of the outside and the inside where the valuable products are stored inside and the recipient, the box, constitutes just a mere protective layer, making the box itself the valuable item to which the artworks are attached while the inside becomes superfluous.

Vitalii will also exhibit a video of a crowd of ants moving on the ground. When the camera starts zooming out it is revealed to the viewer that some of the ants are actually in a video played on a phone placed on the ground, while other ants are real and are actually walking on the phone. This is another multilayered work in which the digital and the real life are mixed together and telling them apart is hard, and it opens up to themes such as community and social bonds which are strongly visible in ants.

Ana Victoria Bruno is an Argentinian-Italian curator and art writer based in Iceland, she has experienced migration since an early age and her practice focuses on exploring the complex dynamics involved in the experience of migrating, both on a personal and on a political level. She sees this exhibition as a territory where to engage in a deeper understanding of immigration through themes such as nostalgia, closeness and distance, but also the economical infrastructures which respond to the needs of immigrants.

Lukas Bury, Flaviu Cacoveanu and Vitalii Shupliak work with different media and take on diverse angles on the theme of migration and globalism, depicting the complexity of the themes and creating a dynamic journey for visitors and customers of the supermarket.