

# GEORG KARGL BOX

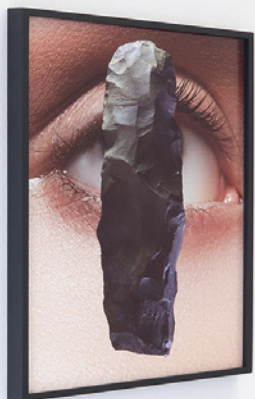
**AGNIESZKA POLSKA**

***Voices, Birds, Stone Tools.***

Mai 3 – June 15, 2019

Georg Kargl Fine Arts | Box  
Schleifmühlgasse 5  
A – 1040 Vienna  
T + 43-1-585 41 99

[office@georgkargl.com](mailto:office@georgkargl.com)  
[www.georgkargl.com](http://www.georgkargl.com)  
[www.instagram.com/georgkarglfinearts](http://www.instagram.com/georgkarglfinearts)

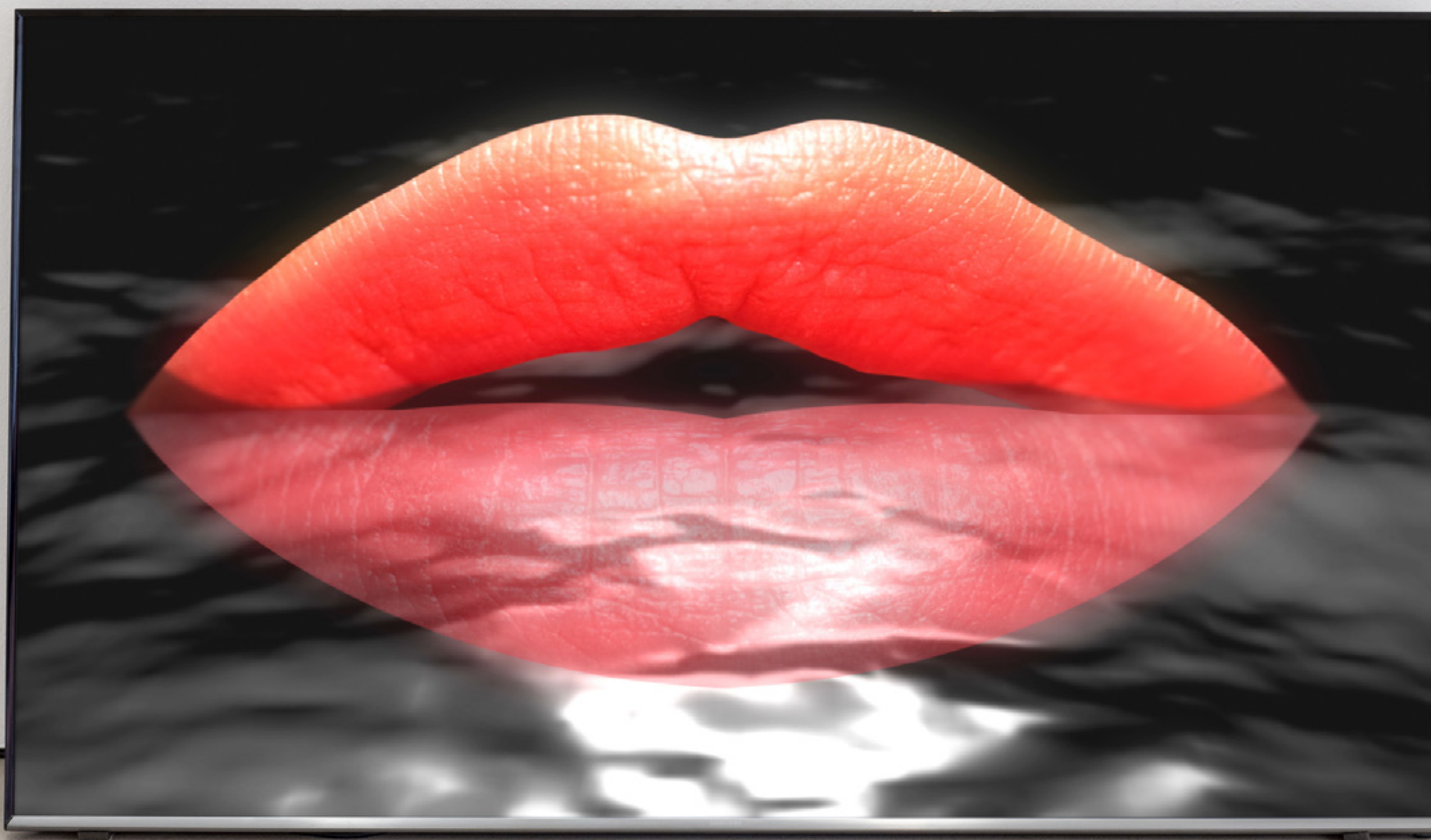
















# GEORG KARGL FINE ARTS

"In the dark times, will there also be singing?

Yes, there will be singing.

About the dark times."

(Motto, Bertold Brecht)

In dark times, can there be poetry? In the late '30s, Bertolt Brecht wrote a short poem called 'Motto' in which he reflects on the possibility of writing poetry amid the deadly forces that swept Europe between the two world wars. In the few lines that compose the poem, Brecht works through his dilemma as lyric poet, showing us what the poet wants to write about, and then how these human and ordinary things are annihilated by fascism. In such situation, as Brecht himself comments, poetry becomes impossible. Yet, while acknowledging the impossibility of poetry, Brecht insists on its necessity, a need denied by the overwhelming terrors of the approaching World War. The poem is a maxim, a note to the self, and a reminder that silence is not an option. Brecht believed in the necessity of combining literary creativity with political commitment. When war, violence, and oppression threat to render everyone and everything mute, poetry that bears witness to its times becomes a form of resistance against death and destruction. And so, Brecht's poem answers the question by saying, "Yes, there will be singing."

The ethical dilemma the lyric poet works through in the lines of Motto feels all the more relevant today in these time of profound crisis – economic, social, ecological, environmental, existential, and political. What can art do? How do artists, poets, writers speak of and back to the present? Like Brecht's poem, Agnieszka Polska's work is an exploration of the relation between art and politics, between artistic agency and the larger socio-political context which influences the production of art. Her work asks questions about the possibility of poetic actions and social transformation through art and culture, in times of political turmoil and social unrest. However, unlike Brecht, her engagement with art and politics is not strictly speaking militant; and her work doesn't offer political truths or revolutionary solutions. The protagonists of her video-works are often stuck between a desire for action and its impossible fulfillment; between individualism and a love for others that can lead to significant transformations; between clarity and confusion, optimism and desperation. They exist in a state of existential vulnerability, exposed to the contradictions that animate our present. And they urge us to act.

In the video 'Dark Times' (2017), the central piece of the exhibition 'Voices, Birds, Stone Tools' at Georg Kargl BOX, floating in a dark liquid, a disembodied mouth repeats a slightly modified version of Brecht's poem which enacts a refusal of singing the dark times. The mouth exhorts us to "stop singing about the dark times and go." Like a mantra, the voice repeats the same line over and again. Stop singing and go. Stop and go. But where to it's hard to say, as we are stuck, suspended in a present without time facing a future unknown, while history seems to repeat itself, and nations raise and fall. It's hard thus not to feel a sense of frustration and impotence vis-à-vis a reality that continuously crashes our hopes, turning dreams into nightmares, making impossible to envision existence beyond the violence of a present in disarray. In this respect, Polska's video is a call to act that is also an investigation of precarious forms of life and of our collective psyche in these uncertain times.

A sense of stasis seems to reign in a world supposedly moving and transforming at high speed. Nothing seems to really change, not even the urge with which the voice urges us to do something. In the print Dream (2017), a sharpened black stone like those used as tools in the stone-age, blocks the vision, impeding the eye to look back to the viewer. Yet, the stone does not simply and only obstruct vision. What we see foregrounded is the stone, that appears as the central element of the image. The artist seems to ask us to focus our attention on the black stone which is here depicted like those tools and weapons, means of survival fashioned into knives, scrapers, spear blades, hand axes and used by humans for hunting, for gathering food and in the the production of clothing and shelters. The history of human kind is a history of violence and fierce resistance; of catastrophes, but also of survival. Despite the impossibility to imagine forms of life beyond capitalism, Polska reminds us that the possibility of action and transformation is always on the horizon. And like an omen, the enigmatic eyes of the black birds in the print Birds (2018), which shows the profiles of two black birds looking in opposite directions, seems to announce changes. We can only guess what these changes will bring. And yet, the impossibility to know should not prevent from embracing the openness of what we don't know, and experimenting with the possibilities of new forms of sociality immersed in refusal and subversive songs.

In the print We Don't (2017), juxtaposed to and in the middle of what looks like an exploded version of a constructivist landscape painting, is the sentence, "We don't share the same temporality." No. This is not the time in which Brecht wrote his poem, and although the political and social crisis investing Europe today bears some resemblances to that period, this is neither time for despair and resignation nor for the dream of messianic redemption. The multiplicity of temporalities that we inhabit has collapsed given concepts of time and space, opening a space for action, one in which art can be play a part in making the impossible become less so.

Federica Bueti



# GEORG KARGL FINE ARTS

Agnieszka Polska

geboren 1985 in Lubin/PL, lebt und arbeitet in Warsaw

born in 1985 in Lubin/PL, Lives and works in Warsaw

## Ausgewählte Einzelausstellungen/Selected Solo Exhibitions

- 2019 Agnieszka Polska at the Mobile Dome, *New Infinity*, Berliner Festspiele/Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, DE (upcoming)  
*Voices, Birds, Stone Tools.*, Georg Kargl BOX, Vienna, AT
- 2018 *The Demon's Brain*, Hamburger Bahnhof Museum, Berlin, DE  
*Softly Spoken*, Project Arts Center, Dublin, IR
- 2017 *Little Planet*, Overduin & c.o., Los Angeles, US  
*Couckoo*, Kasia Michalski Gallery, Warsaw, PL
- 2016 *Poetry Passage*, National Art Gallery, Prague, CZ  
*Screens series*: Agnieszka Polska, New Museum, New York, US
- 2015 *The Moving Finger: A Performative Lecture with Agnieszka Polska*, MoMa, New York  
*The Body of Words* – Gallery Weekend Berlin, Gallery ZAK, Berlin, DE  
*Future Days*, TRAFO, Budapest, HU  
*In the Search of the Talking Mountain*, Arsenal, Białystok, PL
- 2014 *I Am the Mouth*, Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham  
*The Body of Words*, Rijksakademie del beende kunsten, Amsterdam, NL
- 2013 *Pseudoword Hazards*, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg, AT  
*Nonsense Syllables*, Summerhall, Edinburgh, UK
- 2012 *How the Work is Done*, PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, UA  
*Aurorite*, CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, PL  
*Intervention*, Belvedere, Vienna, AT (curated by Martha Kirszenbaum)
- 2011 *Gardener's Responsibility*, Georg Kargl BOX, Vienna, AT  
*Duo*, Goldex Poldex, Kraków, PL (with Tomasz Kowalski)  
*The Garden*, BWA Gallery, Zielona Góra, PL
- 2010 *Decades*, Kunstmuseum Dieselkraftwerk, Cottbus  
*Three Videos with Narration*, Contemporary Art Gallery Bunkier Sztuki, Kraków, PL  
*Freisler*, TV Tower, Berlin (mit Antje Majewski)  
*Three Videos with Narration*, Zak | Branicka, Berlin, DE
- 2009 *Towards Oskar Hansen's Open Form*, Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych, Lublin  
*The Calendar*, art agenda nova, Krakau

## Ausgewählte Gruppenausstellungen/Selected Group Exhibitions

- 2019 Art Encounters Biennial of Contemporary Art, Timișoara, RO (upcoming)  
*Female Video Artists from Poland*, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, JA (upcoming)
- 2018 *Low Form*, MAXXI, Rome, IT  
*Zeitspuren – The Power of Now*, Centre d'art Pasquart, Biel, CH  
Athens Biennale, Athens, GR  
*The Surface of the Sun*, Contemporary Art Museum in Tallinn, EE  
*Anti-*, 6th Athens Biennale, GR

- Brace for Impact*, de Appel, Amsterdam, NL  
*Writing the Mountains*, 6th Biennale Gherdëina, IT  
*I am the Mouth* - Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb (MSU), Zagreb, HR  
*No Looking Back, Okay?*, UGM Maribor Art Gallery, SI  
Preis der Nationalgalerie 2017, Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin,  
DE VIVA ARTE VIVA!, 57th Venice Biennale, IT  
*Half-Truth*, Museum of Sculpture – Królikarnia Palace, Warsaw, PL  
*Everything Is Getting Better. Unknown Knowns Of Polish (Post)Colonialism* - SAVVY Contemporary Berlin, DE  
*PEACE*, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, DE  
*Suspended Animation*, Les Abattoirs, Toulouse, FR  
*Commercial Break*, Public Art Fund, New York, US  
*The Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, PL  
*The Beguiling Siren is Thy Crest*, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, PL  
*Watchlist*, Signal, New York City, US  
*Sequences VIII: Elastic Hours* - Sequences Performance Festival, Reykjavik, ISL  
2016 *The Eighth Climate (What does art do ?)*, 11th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju, KR  
*WINTER IS COMING (Homage to the Future)*, curated by Maria Arusoo, curated by \_vienna, Georg Kargl Fine Arts, Vienna, AT  
*Common Affairs*, KunstHalle by Deutsche Bank, Berlin, DE  
*Generationsübergreifend – Polish Art in Marl*, Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten, Marl, DE  
*De – Mo – Cra – Cy*, Galeria Labirynt, Lublin, PL  
*Shape of Time – Future of Nostalgia*, MNAC, Bukarest, RO  
*La Memoria Finalmente – Arte in Polonia 1989 – 2016*, Modena, IT  
*Canal Grande*, Kulturhalle Pfaffenhofen, DE  
*AMOR*, Oi Futuro Cultural Center, Rio de Janeiro, BR  
*#iwillmedievalfutureyou4*, Museum for Contemporary Art, Roskilde, DK  
Open Frame Award 2016, goEast Festival of Central and East European Film, Museum Wiesbaden, Wiesbaden, DE  
*Projections, Film & Video: Spring, 2016*, RISD Museum, Providence, US  
*Histories of a Vanishing Present: A Prologue*, The Mistake Room, Los Angeles, US  
*Lost in the Archive*, Riga Art Space, Riga, LVA  
*Suspended Animation*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, US  
*I LOVE YOU*, Foundation Art and Science Videoinsight, Turin, IT  
2015 RijksakademieOPEN, Amsterdam, NL.  
*Project 35: The Last Act*, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow, RU  
Copenhagen International Film Festival, Copenhagen, DK  
*Laughter and Forgetting* – Bucharest Art Week, Bucharest, RO  
*Time Lapse*, Kunsthalle Tallinn, EST  
Workshops of Culture, Lublin, PL  
*We rather look back to futures past*, Lajevardi Collection, Teheran, IRN  
*Untitled*, Turbinenhalle, Hennickendorf, DE  
*The Shadow of the Dome of Pleasure*, Artspace, Auckland, NZ  
*Double Feature*, Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, DE  
*NKVextra Agnieszka Polska / Future Days*, Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden, DE  
*Sport, Sport, Sport – A Screening Programme of Soviet-Era Cinema and Artist Moving Image*, Birkbeck University of London, GB  
High Line Channel 14, New York, USA  
*Procedures For The Head / Polish Art Today*, National Cultural Centre, Bratislava, SK

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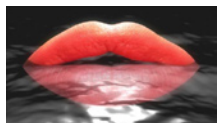
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| <p>2014</p> <p><i>Crime in Art</i>, MOCAK, Krakow, PL</p> <p><i>Fragile Sense of Hope – Art Collection Telekom</i>, me Collectors Room / Olbricht Foundation, Berlin, DE</p> <p><i>Apple. Introduction</i>, Museum of Modern Art, Lodz, PL</p> <p><i>Future does not wait</i>, La Capella, Barcelona, ES</p> <p><i>The Sky is Blue in Some Other Way: A Diagram of a Possible Misreading</i>, Galeria Elba Benitez, ES</p> <p><i>The Night of the Great Season</i>, La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, Mulhouse, FR</p> <p><i>As You Can See: Polish Art. Today</i>, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, PL</p> <p><i>Everybody is Nobody for Somebody</i>, Santander Foundation, Madrid, ES</p> <p><i>Imagine What You Desire</i>, 19th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, AU</p> <p><i>Still bewegt. Videokunst und alte Meister</i>, Altana Kultur Stiftung, Bad Homburg, DE</p> <p><i>Collection. Fragment.</i>, The Centre for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, PL</p> <p>2013</p> <p><i>All About These...Ladies and Gentlemen</i>, Viafarini DOCVA, Milan, IT</p> <p><i>Microutopias of the everyday</i>, Centre of Contemporary Art, Torun, PL</p> <p><i>30th Biennial of Graphic Arts</i>, International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, SLO</p> <p><i>BRITISH BRITISH POLISH POLISH</i>, Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw, PL</p> <p><i>The Black Moon</i>, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, FR</p> <p><i>Photo-Collections. Real-illusory</i>, Gestures, Images, BWA Lublin, PL</p> <p>The Future Generation Art Prize @ Venice 2013, PinchukArtCenter &amp; Victor Pinchuk Fountion, Venedig, A</p> <p>Collateral Event of the 55th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia, IT</p> <p><i>Six Memo's for the Next...</i>, Bregenzer Kunstverein, Bregenz, AT</p> <p><i>Focus Poland 3: Take 5</i>, Centre of Contemporary Art, Toruń, PL</p> <p><i>Leisure, Discipline and Punishment</i>, Contour-Biennial of Moving Image, Mechelen, BE</p> <p><i>Views 2013: The Deutsche Bank Foundation Award</i>, Zacheta, Warsaw, PL</p> <p><i>INTERRUPTION</i>, 30th Biennial of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana, SLO</p> <p>2012</p> <p><i>Sport in Art</i>, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAK), Cracow, PL</p> <p><i>Misplaced, Displaced, Replaced</i>, Rotwand Gallery, Zürich, CH</p> <p><i>In PRL only Military Academies, Militia Academies and PWSSP aren't on strike</i>, Pies Gallery, Poznań, PL</p> <p>21 Artists Shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize, PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, UA</p> <p><i>The Call for Fashion</i>, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, PL</p> <p><i>Project 35 – Volume 2</i>, Independent Curators International, Various venues. Soundworks, ICA –The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK</p> <p><i>Grey Peak of the Wave</i>, Harris Lieberman Gallery, New York, US</p> <p><i>Objects and Disintegrations</i>, Gdańsk City Gallery, Gdańsk, PL</p> <p><i>Air de Pologne</i>, De Garage, Mechelen, BE</p> <p><i>The Poster Show</i>, Carlier   Gebauer, Berlin, DE</p> <p><i>The Forgetting of Proper Names</i>, Calvert 22 Gallery, London, UK</p> <p>2011</p> <p><i>Sport in Art</i>, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCAK), Cracow, PL</p> <p><i>Misplaced, Displaced, Replaced</i>, Rotwand Gallery, Zürich, CH</p> <p><i>In PRL only Military Academies, Militia Academies and PWSSP aren't on strike</i>, Pies Gallery, Poznań, PL</p> <p>21 Artists Shortlisted for the Future Generation Art Prize, PinchukArtCentre, Kiev, UA</p> <p><i>The Call for Fashion</i>, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, PL</p> <p><i>Project 35 – Volume 2</i>, Independent Curators International, Various venues. 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Biennial of Moving Image, Mechelen, BE</p> <p><i>Time To Recollect: Civil Virtue/ Sil Krol</i>, Stadthausgalerie Kunsthalle Münster, Munster, DE</p> <p><i>goEast – 13th Festival of Central and Eastern European Film</i>, Wiesbaden, DE</p> |
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2012 *Hair*, 13th Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, TR  
 20th International Festival of Animated Film, Stuttgart, DE  
 Kino der Kunst, Munich, DE  
*How the Work is Done*, 29th Kasseler Dokumentarfilm- und Videofest, Kassel, DE  
 Film in Contemporary Art, Stockholm, SE  
*Fetisch & Figure*, Institute of Contemporary Arts / Lux Biennial of Moving Image, London, UK  
*Memoirs of an Amnesiac*, Images Festival, Toronto, CA  
*Between us*, Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund, DE  
*Art and Film: Tate Modern – Agnieszka Polska/Alina Szapocznikow*, Tate Modern, London, UK  
*The Themersons: 1 Day Before Yesterday – 1 Day After Tomorrow*, ICA – The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, UK  
*12x12. The IBB Video Lounge*, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, DE

#### Awards:

2018 Preis der Nationalgalerie, Berlin, DE  
 2017 Winner of the Preis der Nationalgalerie  
 2015 Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten, Amsterdam, NL  
 2013 Film Award 2013, MOMA Warsaw & Polish Film Institute, PL  
 The Site Residency, Baltic Art Center, Visby, Gotland, SE  
 Nominated for The Future of Europe Art Award, Stiftung Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig,  
 2011 Grand Prix in the Geppert Award 2011, BWA Wrocław, PL  
 Shortlisted for Preis für junge Filmkunst, Deutsche Filmakademie, Berlin, DE

1



**Agnieszka POLSKA**

*Dark Times*, 2017  
HD Video  
0:23 min  
ed. 1/5 + 1AP

2



**Agnieszka POLSKA**

*Birds*, 2018  
ink print on archival paper, mounted on PVC board  
65 x 40 cm (unframed), 66,5 x 41,5 cm (framed), ed. 2/5  
ed. 2/5 + 1AP

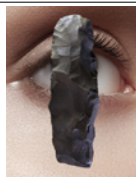
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**Agnieszka POLSKA**

*Stine Knife*, 2016  
ink print on archival paper, mounted on PVC board  
40 x 30 cm (unframed), 41,5 x 31,5 cm (framed), ed. 2/5  
Ed. 2/5 + 1AP

4



**Agnieszka POLSKA**

*Dream*, 2017  
ink print on archival paper, mounted on PVC board  
60 x 45 cm (unframed), 61,5 x 41,5 cm (framed), ed. 2/5  
Ed. 2/5 +1 AP