



Halle 14 - 2nd Floor

Opening: 23. October Baumwollspinnerei Leipzig from 6 pm

EUROPA by CHTO EUTOPIA A POLITICAL EXHIBITION

24. October - 15. December

Fr. and Sa. from 1 till 7pm

Invitation

CHTO solo show

Opening 23rd October 2015, 6 pm

Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei, Halle 14, second Floor

October 24th – December 15th - 2015

On request : overnight stay in the exhibition space.

Dear Sirs and Madams,

we would like to cordially invite you to the opening of the exhibition

“Europa / Eutopia, a political exhibition by CHTO”, on the 23rd of October 2015 from 6pm.

Europa / Eutopia is a unique multimedia-based exhibition by the franco-jewish artist CHTO, in which he confronts the European reality with a utopia. The exhibition is currently caught by the sad actualities – the countless refugees – who on their way full of hopes towards an apparently safe Europe struggle every day for their lives and their future.

The gigantic installation “Europa / Eutopia” - a haunted forest of 1000 square meters - will come to the senses of every visitor by following a path covered in autumn leaves through a forest of birch trunks passing by a run-down capitalist civilisation and a wooden border, which has to be crossed. A rotating sound narration takes the visitor from one corner of this haunted landscape to another, and exposes him with idyllic bird sounds and the brutal noises of civilization. The videos, light boxes, and sculptures exhibited, give life to a potential story in which anger, fear, and a fragile sense of hope are struggling against one another. On the night of the vernissage - only on request - visitors will be allowed to stay overnight, bringing their sleeping bags in order to experience this political fiction in the whole and with all senses.

The origin of the exhibition is CHTO's views on the present Europe: Europe, now, at the beginning of the 21st century, has become a complete dystopia. It has reached a point where it can be seen

as a hegemonic technostructure, built to create a corporate paradise, with clear undemocratic procedures, and trying tragically to define its unity, its identity by a murderous policy against migrants. Europa / Eutopia, the exhibition, shows the dystopia that the European project has become and at the same time continues the work carried by CHTO to redesign, reshape and rethink the European space in terms of future rather than past. In this immersive art environment, CHTO shapes a new vision of Europe as a space of "in-betweenness", where multiplicities are embraced instead of being continuously and murderously annihilated by the restrictive borders of old ontological categories.

The exhibition "Europe / Eutopia" is part of the curatorial project Mittel-Europa (M-E). Focusing on the three pillars of the 21st century: translation, migration and hybridization, M-E is an ongoing curatorial platform which puts the concept of narration at the heart of the material creation. The Mittel-Europa project develops fragmented narratives and immersive forms of exhibitions, where theory connects with different languages mediums, from sculpture to sound environments, to photography, to installation and performance.

The artist

To CHTO's Oeuvre, Europe is a central topic, which he works on multidimensionally in his videos, photographs as well as in his literature and his philosophic writings. Among others he published *Vies pøentielles* (2010) and *L'Inversion de Hieronymus Bosch* (2007). He created the "European Society of Writers" (www.seua.org) and is the author of the video and Libretto of the first 3D opera *La Chute de Fukuyama*, presented in Paris in 2013. He has taken part in different collective exhibitions such as "Secession" – 2014, Berlin – along with such artists as Kader Attia and Anri Sala and *L'image pensèe* – 2013, Paris, curated by Donatien Grau along with Pierre Leguillon, Camille Henrot, Claude Lévêque or Carsten Höller. In 2015 he already had two exhibitions in Spinnerei Leipzig – "The Potentiel Exhibition" (March 2015) and "History Reloaded" (May 2015). The next exhibition after "Europa / Eutopia" will be "Capitalist Melancholia", curated by CHTO among others.

Europa / Eutopia – a political exhibition by CHTO

24th of October till 15th of December 2015 - Opening hours: Fr and Sa from 1.00 till 7.00 pm

Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei, Halle 14, second floor, Spinnereistrasse 7, 01497 Leipzig,

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Five questions for the artist CHTO

(Interview – Berlin, June 2015)

Your solo show Europa/Eutopia will open in Leipzig on the 23rd of October 2015. You said, you will be trying to grasp a historical moment, “between utopia and dystopia”. You define it as a “political fiction”. Why did you decide to present an exhibition about Europe?

We all know that it is now a critical moment for Europe. I will only quote a few events: - migrants dying everyday on their way to Europe. - Democracy in Greece struggling against financial dogma. - The trade treaty under negotiation with the United States that is threatening to by-pass people’s control. - The growth of nationalistic and xenophobic parties and movements, gaining power in the European parliament. I’ve been working on the theme of Europe for a long time and this exhibition is definitely apprehending this critical moment. “Europa / Eutopia” is the continuation of the work I have done both as a curator and artist for the “Secession” exhibition in Berlin in 2014; I’m trying to show the dystopia that the European project has become while working, beyond criticism, on a new vision of Europe as a space of translation, migration, and hybridization for the 21st century.

In what sense would you say that Europe is now a dystopia?

Europe has reached a point where it can be purely seen as a hegemonic technostucture, build to create a corporate paradise, with clear undemocratic procedures, and trying to define its unity, its identity by a murderous policy against migrants. Europe yet stands for a system of constraint and disempowerment. It is in that sense that I consider the European idea as a complete dystopia.

How did this tension between the utopian and the dystopian trends affect the development of the European space?

This is where the idea of the exhibition "Europa / Eutopia" started. By working on this complex relation between utopia and dystopia. As I said, we are living a dystopian acme. It is the climax of sixty years of European construction. After WWI and WWII, the European project was presented as a "solution" to get rid of war on the continent, the only way out of the tragedy of the first half of the 20th century. At that stage, this was concerning only the western part of Europe since the Eastern part was under Russian domination. For 40 years, the idea and the objective was to build a confederation of states. What happened instead was firstly the consolidation of an administration in Bruxelles and secondly an obsessive focus on the free market economy. We are still living on this ambiguity. A generous rhetoric and at the same time, a drastic, fierce and obsessive liberal ideology.

Location Leipzig. Why have you chosen to show your political exhibition "Europa / Eutopia" here in Leipzig?

Leipzig is the city of the "turn" - in German, the "Wende" - where the Communist old hope was fully dismantled and where a Utopia was changed into a radical Dystopia. Also today Leipzig is a way-station for many refugees and emigrants. The city is at the same time in the center of an un-centered Europe, a center without its own center, a city in which many emigrating Jews in the past found their first stop a hundred years ago. I am a child of this double reminder of the failure of hope and repression of the "migrant reality" in which we live. These are the materials with which I work to create new hopes and mobile living spaces. Leipzig is for me, if you will, the venue of a struggle between two ways of inhabiting the world: Either one chooses Legida and their old European fixation of national states and identities or, we redefine the concept of Europe new by addressing our migration matters differently. After the 20th century and especially after all that has happened in the 20th century, concepts such as "Germany", "France" or "Italy" should no longer exist.

In your work "Haunted landscape", one walks on autumn leaves through trunks of Birch trees while accompanied by the songs of the birds. Would you say that for you nature is symbolic of new beginnings and of a positive Utopia? What is the symbolism of the "Birch Tree" in your multimedia installation?

I grew up surrounded by forests. My family moved to Paris when I was fifteen. The city was a shock for me. Forests are the kingdoms of my childhood. Our world is too old, too hectic and too imprisoned in its memories. Through my own "forest of Ghosts", I retain the childhood of the world and "The Childhood in the world". Birch trees are also part of the word "Birkenau" (In German, "Birke", birch, are always to be found in the history of extermination. Those trees witnessed and saw "what happened there" as Paul Celan would say. The trees have seen the warehouses in Poland, the gulags in Russia, the camps all over Europe. The trees remain witnesses for the people when all of them are gone. Europe for me is this ghost forest in which childhoods try escape these times of remembrances and design a new future and new form of being and coexistence. It is precisely this desire for coexistence - a migrant Europe - that is hampered and suppressed today.

Your installation includes a climbing-frame for children; the same children that will shape the future. How would you explain this unique exhibition to children ?

In my installation, children can climb over the obstacles between two "lands", between the neon-writings of "Utopia" and "Dystopia". They can go from one to another, one land to another, and experience what all together befalls us: the incessant "passage" as Walter Benjamin would say, from Utopia of the hope and the striving for a better world to "Dystopia", the return of the demons of war and destruction. My works are always directed at children in such a way that they can use their bodies, their youth as and to be a part of the exhibition in order to enact new realities. In childhood, the distinction between dream and reality, between fictional stories and material constraints is not clearcut. I want to show, with "child eyes", how much reality varies in its fictionality in order to achieve perfect elasticity and plasticity of the worlds to change and revive the hopes that we can change what is sold to us as "reality".

*This interview is based on a interview with CHTO.
Berlin, May 2015.*

Images from the exhibition

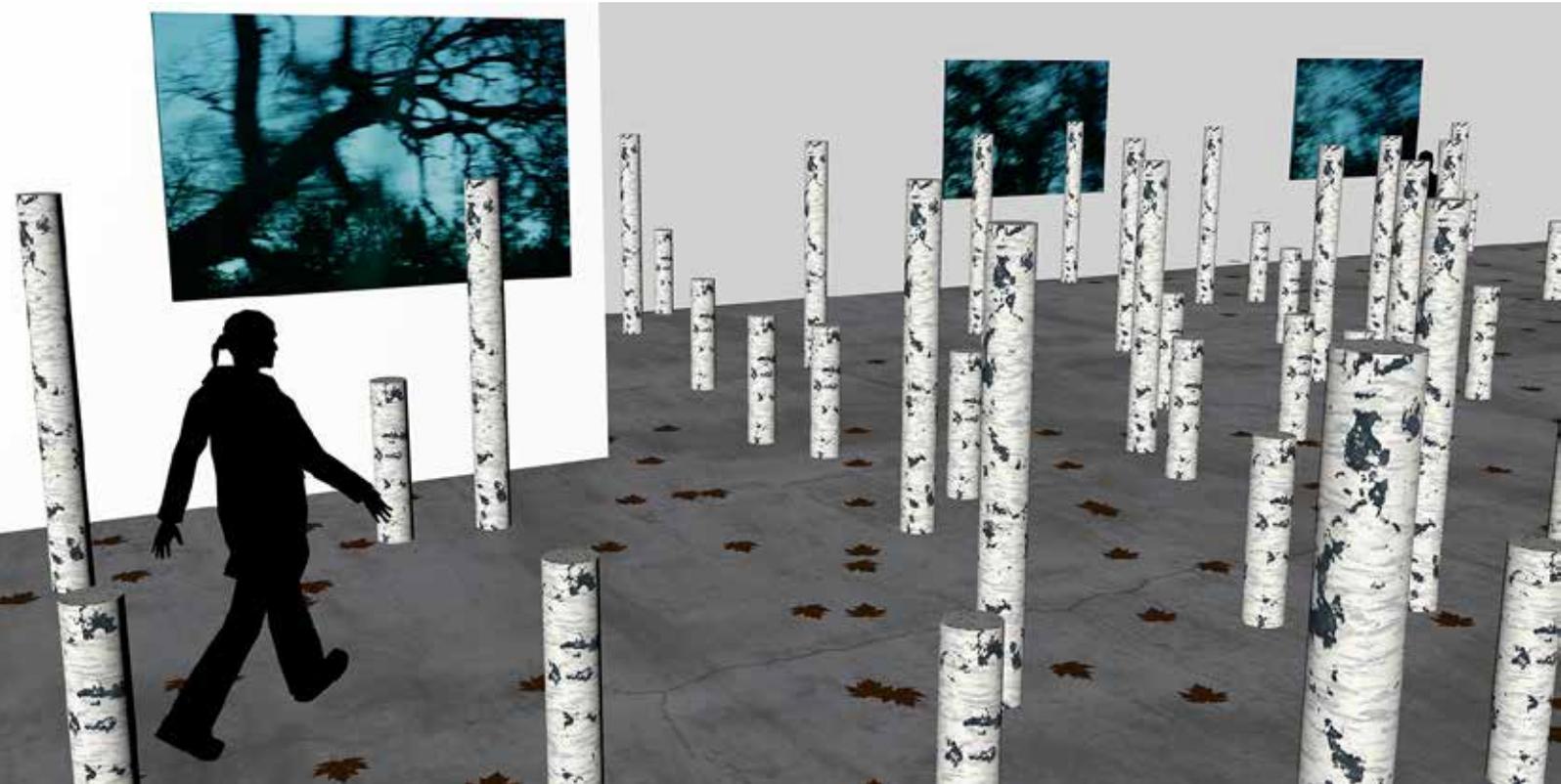


Image.1: 3D Sketch - Europa/Eutopia - CHTO 2015



Image.2: 3D Sketch - Extended Beings - Europa:Eutopia - CHTO 2015



Image.3: Making of – Europa:Eutopia – CHTO 2015



Image.4: Making of – Europa:Eutopia – CHTO 2015



Image.5: Towards Joy 1:6 - Europa:Eutopia – CHTO 2015



CV: CHTO / CAMILLE DE TOLEDO

1976 Born in Lyon - in a since destroyed maternity home. After three months, he moves with his family into the Forest.

1976 -1986 Childhood with the parents in a forest near Paris.

1986 On his way to school, he was insulted as a "Dirty Jew". This is how he understands, that his family is originally from Edirne, in actual Turkey.

1987 He moves to Paris. He discovers the city, sexuality, women, the consumer society, skateboarding.

1989 On TV, he sees the fall of the Berlin Wall as well as his mother – she was at the time in Berlin – standing side by side with the Cellist Rostropowitsch.

1991 He reads Dostojewski's "The Brothers Karamasov". His uncle gives him a Nikon Camera. He builds in his room a fotostudio.

1994 Studies in London, where he meets the young "wolves" from the Gallery of Saatchi & Saatchi. After that he moves to New York and becomes friends with the saxofonplayer John Lurie and Hal Hartley.

1996-1997 After his return to Paris at the age of twenty one he creates his own newspaper "Don Quichotte". For his first reportage, he portrays refugees from Albania. on the italian coast.

2002 His first short film "Tango de Olvido" is shown at the Film festival of Cannes. He meets Martin Scorsese and discusses Wim Wenders "Alice dans les villes".

2002-2004 His first book is translated in eight different languages. The philosopher Peter Sloterdijk tells him that he is talented, but "has to work harder". P. Sloterdijk quotes besides other things his concept of "masse dandyism"

2004 Scholarship holder of the Villa Medici (Rome) in the section of Literature and Video.

June 2004 He meets Bob Dylan on his "Never Ending Tour". They discuss the "Never Ending Story" of Michael Ende.

2005-2006 Suicide of his Brother. Death of his Mother. He picks the artist name Camille de Toledo (for his literary creations) and CHTO (for his artistic work).

2008 Founding of the "European Society of Authors" to promote Europe as a place of translation and migration. Works on a video series: "speculative Cinema". He meets Claudio Magris, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Imre Kertész.

2009-2010 He meets Antonio Tabucchi, Amos Oz. He writes *Le Hêtre et le Bouleau, an essay on European Sadness* (Seuil 2009). His films are shown at the film school La Fémis (Paris).

2010 Death of his father. Performance and installations in the context of "Hantologie-s" at the Ménagerie de Verre (Paris) and at Here is elsewhere (Los Angeles). Release of his book *Vies potentielles* (Seuil 2010).

2012-2013 He moves to Berlin with his three children.

2013 Release of the first 3D-Opera *La Chute de Fukuyama* (influenced by John Adams) at the Salle Pleyel directed by Daniel Harding. CHTO is responsible for the libretto and video.

2014 Exhibition "Secession" in Berlin, also next to Anri Sala and Kader Attia. Plaidoyer for a "postcynical" art. Their main reflections are about the question of transmission. The exhibition is the attempt of a "Cartography of a migrant Europe"

2014 Hans Ulrich Obrist asks him to write an editorial for the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art.

2015 CHTO opens the first of his three Solo-Shows in the Spinnerei at Leipzig: March-April *L'Exposition potentielle*, May-June *History Reloaded* and October-December *Europa / Eutopia*. The Focus of the exhibition-series is on the recurring of history and violence as well as the necessity to rethink the future.

2016-2017 Three volumes about the exhibition-series in Leipzig in preparation at Manuella Édition (France), a Graphic Novel (*Le Testament d'Illia Brodsky*), a theatre piece (*Sur une île*) and a new exhibition with the title *Capitalist Melancholia ...*