

PRAVDOLIUB IVANOV

Born 1964

About the Artist:

Pravdoliub Ivanov graduated from the National Art Academy, Sofia, Bulgaria, where he is currently a lecturer. Since 1995 he has been a Founding Member of the Institute of Contemporary Art – Sofia.

Pravdoliub Ivanov was trained in the traditional discipline of painting in the National Art Academy in Sofia graduating in the early 1990ies. However, he disposed of the means usual for a painter quite rapidly, agreeing with Damien Hirst that if painting is anyways dealing with the adaptation of already existing objects, then the artist is better off dealing directly with them. Thus the “characters” in the installations, the objects, the drawings, and the photographs of Pravdoliub Ivanov are most often the very ordinary objects that are with us daily or the typical situations where everyone can recognize his or herself.

The artist focuses his attention to the “secret life of things” and uses the hidden potential of these things through rearrangement of details and reassembling of their composite elements. Using a variety of materials in his works, ranging from the silk ribbons used for military orders and medals, and including cheese, plasters, plates, school desks and chairs, Pravdoliub Ivanov often combines the most unexpected substances, and forces the viewer to let go of firm ground and enjoy the unpredictable.

Pravdoliub Ivanov has a strong presence on the international art scene. In 2007, together with Ivan Moudov and Stefan Nikolaev he participated in the Bulgarian official representation at the 52nd Venice Biennial. His works were also presented at the 4th Istanbul Biennial in 1995, Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana, Slovenia (2003), at the 14th Sydney Biennial, Australia (2004) and at the 4th Berlin Biennial (2006). He has participated in big international shows such as: "In the Gorges of the Balkans", Fridericianum Museum, Kassel, Germany; "Blut & Honig, Zukunft ist am Balkan", Essl Collection, Klosterneuburg, Austria; "Who killed the Painting?, Works from the Block Collection", Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, Germany (2011); "The Unanswered Question. Ískele-2", TANAS and Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin (2013); "Heaven and Hell From magic carpets to drones", Villa Empain, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (2015); "The Travellers", Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2016).

“Pravdoliub Ivanov is among the most active Bulgarian artists today. His works include objects, drawings, sculptures, photographs, installations, texts, and recently video as well. Quite possibly the easiest and moderately irresponsible way to define him is to say that he is a post-conceptual artist. Although any elaboration on the notion “conceptual” would distance this text from Pravdoliub himself, still in his work there is almost always the hint of a question about what art is today and where its place is now. That obviously connects his work to the continuous, abundant, and fluid tradition of conceptualism.”

Iara Boubnova

PRAVDOLIUB IVANOV

1. *Trouble is Always Double*, 1997-2015

Two rods of stainless steel, two metal holders, red fabric
Total size: 282 x 120 x 165 cm

Edition: Unique

Ownership history: The Artist, Sarieva Gallery



PRAVDOLIUB IVANOV, *Trouble is Always Double*, 1997-2015

About the work:

In the 1990s Pravdoliub Ivanov's installations were very often a direct reaction to actual political events – the wars in the Balkans, for instance, with all the territorial claims, ethnic conflicts, and border disputes. However, he never wanted to create documents or historical narratives. His interests are related to the analysis of “otherness”, to the search for differences in meaning, the investigation of symbols, the exploration of the relations between the object and its representation.

Pravdoliub Ivanov has created two other installations using interpretation of flags - a series in transparent plastic and another series of flags, covered in mud, which became emblematic of his oeuvre. *Trouble is always double* is his third take on the symbolism of banners. All of those works were created in the 1990s.

Trouble is always double started as a drawing, made in 1997, which was then realized as an installation by the artist in 2015.

„The project for that work was created decades ago, so it is not the result of the current situation but is also not detached from it. The work is about the decay of ideologies, the merging of opposite political doctrines - the absurdity of politics and nationalism. The work uses banners as symbols of ideology and nation, state propaganda, or protests in an grotesque mix. The red color is symbolic but, in this case, with no sign of belonging to a particular ideology or country. It could be communist, national-socialist, Turkish, PKK (Kurds party), or Chinese. The visitors must decide what they see: one long banner hung on two posts or two flags merged down the floor.

The work tries to confuse our comfort in perceiving attributes of ideology and state symbols. The result is open for interpretation.”

Pravdoliub Ivanov