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Zagreb: Boxenwerk

Deatra Cohen and Adam Siegel

Abstract

The melancholy dreamscape of consumption in the post-socialist, post-imperial, post-Habsburg urban centers of Central Europe is documented and rendered by means of the legacy of vitrine, display windows, and advertising in the Croatian capital of Zagreb.

“If, on a journey's wanderings, a traveler is fortunate enough to meander the streets of Zagreb, a feast for the senses is theirs to enjoy. Amidst this bounty, countless window boxes, like silent carnival barkers, beckon the walker with their mysterious charms. Should one to take heed of their message, many an alley or alcove awaits. And, once around the bend, hidden shops, sometimes nestled by unexpected gardens, can be found.”

-- Hector A. Dean, “Rambles in the Alps” (1897)

Merchandise. Wares. The dream-life of the arcades in its truest and most melancholy home: Central Europe.

Zagreb center, the commercial life in the province. Ilica and Ban Jelačić. The *flaneur's* place here not the commodification of things, nor the commodification of everyday life, but the last vestiges of the feudal: cobblers, barbers, dentists, shopkeepers.

All the estates, snug, in their places. So Habsburg legacy.

The other great dream-life of Central Europe: the tiny theater, the pocket proscenium, an absence of teeming. The box and its audience.

The inner life of the petit-bourgeois at the margins of Central Europe, as de Chirico should have seen it.

Every vitrine, every display, an invitation not to stroll or browse, but to *enter*.

Consumption. Reflection. Orientation. *Pursuit*.



Figure 1. *Panika*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 2. *Cipele 11*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 3. *Kaiser*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 4. "Marko." Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 5. *Latino shop*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 6. *Cipela*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 7. Zvonimir. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 8. *Fotokopiranje*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 9. *Bulbs*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).



Figure 10. *Untitled*. Deatra Cohen. (2013).

About the authors

Deatra Cohen is an artist who lives in Northern California. Born and raised in Philadelphia, she received her B.A. in Art Studio from UC Davis with an emphasis in painting.

Adam Siegel is a librarian at the University of California, Davis as well as a translator. His most recent translations include works by Jovan Nikolić, George Saiko, Hubert Fichte, and Hans Henny Jahnn.