

## In Transitional Landscapes

\_ LECTURE by Suzana Milevska \_ 16 January 2015, 6.30 p.m. \_ at Packhaus

### Landscapes Without Bodies: Beyond the “Innocent” Topology of Transitional Spaces

If the science of topology seeks certain properties of convergence, connectedness and continuity regarding the spaces and objects (in algebra dubbed “topological spaces”) that are invariant upon transformation, I propose that looking at artworks dealing with acts of violence, coercion and the rampant neo-liberal appropriation of every “available” inch of territory might provide us with certain “clues” about the invariants of transitional landscapes in sociopolitical and cultural terms.

The artworks addressing various coercive acts and events, focusing on the collision between the recalcitrant persons and the hegemonic structures of power, mostly consider using recorded audio testimonials or certain visual imageries, either of the perpetrators of the violence or its victims (such as protestors or other activists and disobedient citizens). Just as important as these mostly figurative representations and testimonials, however, are the spaces that form the “backdrops” for such events and clashes. The lecture will therefore address the phenomenon of “guilty landscapes”, discussing the potentialities of the artistic strategies of “representation without representation”, namely the practices raising awareness that space is less “innocent” than it first appears. Such works, I want to argue, seek to disclose how the sociopolitical and cultural relations of power, discipline and appropriation “are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life” (Edward Soja).

**Prof. Dr. Suzana Milevska** is a theorist and curator of visual art and culture from Macedonia. Currently she teaches at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna as the first Endowed Professor for Central and South European Art Histories. Her theoretical and curatorial interests include postcolonial critique of hegemonic power regimes of representation, feminist art and gender theory, participatory and collaborative art practices. She holds a PhD in visual culture from Goldsmiths College London where she taught from 2002-2004. In 2004 Milevska was a Fulbright Senior Research Scholar at Library of Congress. She taught visual culture and gender at the Gender Studies Institute and theory of art at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Skopje. In 2010 Milevska published the book *Gender Difference in the Balkans* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2010) and *The Renaming Machine: The Book* that summarised her long-term cross-disciplinary curatorial and research project *The Renaming Machine*. In 2011 she was a researcher for the project *Call the Witness – Roma Pavilion* at the 54 International Art Exhibition – Venice Biennale-Collateral Event and curated the exhibitions *Call the Witness, BAK, Utrecht*, and the *Roma Protocol* at the Austrian Parliament. In 2012 Milevska was awarded the ALICE Award for Political Curating and the Igor Zabel Award for Culture and Theory.