

On Difference 2 Sofia BG

<http://ondifference2.i-space.org/>

As part of On Difference 2 project InterSpace Media Art Center have organized a series of events eyeballing the cultural and socio-political situation in Bulgaria, which artistic activity is by assumption dozed off in the country. The OD2 initiatives in Sofia included a call for video works, a one day workshop for instructional video, production of short films and a screening of these works during a thematic seminar. The local events aimed to further develop the main activity of the project – the exhibition in Stuttgart, to explore the very actual issues of the project and provoke the local artistic community, especially the youngest generation, to respond to these topics.

InterSpace chose the format of interpreting the idea of the general project On Difference 2 in Bulgaria to be through production of short movies as something that is easy to be done also having in mind the big number of young and very motivated filmmakers we have met with during Cinemasports film challenge we organized twice in Sofia.

Local artists, under the age of 35, were invited to produce a short film addressing the cultural and socio-political situation in Bulgaria. The call for participation launched in February received 28 applications by film making teams in which are involved 62 people.

On 4th of March 2006 we held a workshop on which we brought together the participants to present the idea and the format of On Difference 2, Sofia BG – in terms of 20 days to create a short film that should deal with some specific social, political and cultural issues in the format of instructional / How-to video. The format of instructional video was chosen because of its specifics to be easily understandable by large audience, to give knowledge and in this case a clear message of the artists in at the same time humorous, and serious way.

The announced competition among the teams strengthen their motivation and efforts to make a movie in which to raise questions for some very hot issues in the country, and to present their position toward the reality they live in. As a result we received 18 short films as 13 of them have reached to the final phase of the project – a public presentation and discussion.

The screening on 1st of April in Goethe Institut Sofia attracted more then 160 people and the hall turned out to be small for all the people willing to see the short films produced in terms of the project. The participants dealt very interestingly with the task of the project - not only to reflect the reality but also to give their meaning to it, which immediately made a feedback with the audience. All the films have very strong ideas, message and good communication approach. Surely there were no master pieces but this was not the task – none could do a very professional film for only 20 days with almost no budget. Rather the willing effect was in direction of clear socio-political message that was given in an incredibly fresh and exciting cinematic way. Most of the teams have chosen the documentary stylistics for their film, some have quite intentionally presence of fiction plot in the film, and just few of them have literally used the instructional format. Distinguishing for all the films was the very good sense of humor and a positive view in interpreting some very serious problems. That naturally created very nice atmosphere of 2-hours screening and it could be seen on the audience's faces all the time...

The specially compiled jury of 5 young members – Yana Kostova (curator), Vladia Mihailova (cultural scientist), Mariana Hristova (film critic), Missues (journalist and host/director/author of a cultural TV show), and Galia Dimitrova (curator and organizer of the project) met great difficulties while choosing the five winning films. After very long discussions they decided to award six movies, which are:

Bulgaria - A Country of Unlimited Impossibilities by Art Group Haide

Crossover by UFO and Kontrabanda

Early Spring Time by Ivo Ivanov

TUNNING by Panaiot Alexiev and Borislav Milotinov

Living on Wheels by Triple

How to Cross a Street in BG? by Victor Petkov, George Krastev, Neno Belchev

Although the discussion following the screening could not keep the good spirit of the event and revealed some typical for the geographical location of the country temperament. The initial idea to discuss the participants approach and generally the topics of the project turn out in a topical dispute which issue is important and which is not and why the teams have chosen this way to present it. Obviously is much easier to present one's view on the reality a film then in a talk... or we still need time and learn to be tolerant to listen and understand other's opinion.