

Press Release

## **Stefan Sulzer – The Reading Room**

Duplex, Sarajevo

July 17 – 31, 2010

Opening: July 17, 2010, 19:00

Curated by Sandra Bradvić

The first solo exhibition of the Swiss artist Stefan Sulzer outside of Switzerland will be held from July 17–31, 2010 at the international exhibition space for contemporary art DUPLEX in Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sulzer's works often results from an intensive involvement in the social and socio-political circumstances that are characteristic for the geographical location of the presentation. "The Reading Room" was specifically conceived for the exhibition at Duplex and developed in close cooperation with the curator Sandra Bradvić and the National and University Library (NUB) Sarajevo. Based on the fact that more than 80% of the books of the NUB were destroyed during the Sarajevo siege in the period from 1992 to 1995, the work evokes questions about the importance of a cultural memory preserved only in fragments as well as of the current access to the archive.

The major part of the preserved books were part of special collections, which are difficult to access by the public. They can only be used after an official approval of a written application in the reading rooms of the library. Therefore, three videos entitled "The Reading Room" were shot in the reading room containing special collections of the NUB. The videos show an actor/actress who is reading aloud a short story from the special collection "Old and Rare Books". They will be shown as a projection during the exhibition at Duplex. In this way, the public will not only get to know a literary topic, but will also have the opportunity to remember and also to revive forgotten or lost contents.

Sulzer is not interested in the evaluation of the above named historical facts. His interest in the visualization of geographical, social and cultural characteristics of a society is, as in all his works, by no means idealistic or politically motivated: It can most likely be understood as a subtle gesture that enables an attentive audience to reflect on these characteristics on their own.

The text selection is based on an intensive research conducted by the artist and curator on site as well as on the competent advice provided by the NUB. The texts include a folk tale "Zlatoruni ovan" (Ram with the Golden Fleece) from a reading book for the first school grade, Sarajevo, 1868; a short story "Kavgadžija" (The Brawler), from a collection of short stories from Bosnia, Belgrade, 1897; as well as a short prose "Severna tica" (The Northern Bird) of the renowned Bosnian author Hamza Humo, Sarajevo, 1928. The readers were Pjer Žalica, director and professor at the Academy of Performing Arts, Sarajevo; Jasna Žalica, actress and professor at the same Academy; and Aleksandar Seksan, actor and member of the company of the National Theater of BiH, Sarajevo. The videos are subtitled in English.

Sandra Bradvic, 2010

## Stefan Sulzer, Zurich/London

Education: 2004-2008: Zürcher Hochschule der Künste; 2009-2011: MFA Fine Art Goldsmiths College, London. Exhibitions (selection) 2010: "No Soul for Sale", Tate Modern, London/GB; "Requiem Aeternam", Institut Furkabblick, Furka Passhöhe/CH. 2009: "Plattform09", ewz-Unterwerk Selnau, Zürich; "Work and Studio Scholarships of the City of Zürich", Helmhaus, Zürich; 2008: "Camp David", message salon, Zürich; "All the Things between" Intergallery, Beijing. Awards: Contribution to Fine Arts of the Canton of Zürich 2008. [www.stefansulzer.com](http://www.stefansulzer.com)

## Sandra Bradvić, Zurich

Sandra Bradvić is an art historian and free curator from Zürich. Since 2006 she has been working as a scientific collaborator at the Institute for History and Theory of Architecture "gta", ETH Zürich, where she has realized the exhibition about the Swiss architect Valerio Olgiati. [www.stalder.arch.ethz.ch/personen](http://www.stalder.arch.ethz.ch/personen)

## Duplex, Sarajevo

Duplex is a contemporary arts centre with international perspective, directed by Pierre Courtin and dedicated to exhibiting and promoting artistic projects that spring from a variety of media, and that are carried by innovative artists from Sarajevo, the Balkans, and the international stage. [www.duplex10m2.com](http://www.duplex10m2.com)

## OPENING

Saturday, July 17, 2010, 19:00

19:30 Welcome speech by Dr. Ismet Ovčina, Director of the National and University Library, Sarajevo

## TALK

Sunday, July 18, 2010, 16:00

Public discussion

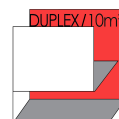
The title "How to read, The Reading Room" aims at an analysis of the extent to which the work may be interpreted as a result of a cultural and curatorial practice focused on a specific geographical context of the exhibition and to what extent it evokes and answers questions that are related to the importance of a cultural memory that was preserved only in fragments. Participants: Stefan Sulzer, artist; Nadina Grebović, Special Collections, National and University Library, Sarajevo; Molly Kleiman, Senior Editor, Triple Canopy, Online Magazine, New York; students of the Academy of Fine Arts of Sarajevo. Moderated by Sandra Bradvić. On Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, Duplex exceptionally remains opened.

## Press contact

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Duplex, Stakleni Grad, Ferhadija 15, 71 000 Sarajevo. Opening Hours: Everyday 14:00-19:00 (except Wed and Sun).