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Architettura Design Arte Comunicazione Architecture Design Art Communication

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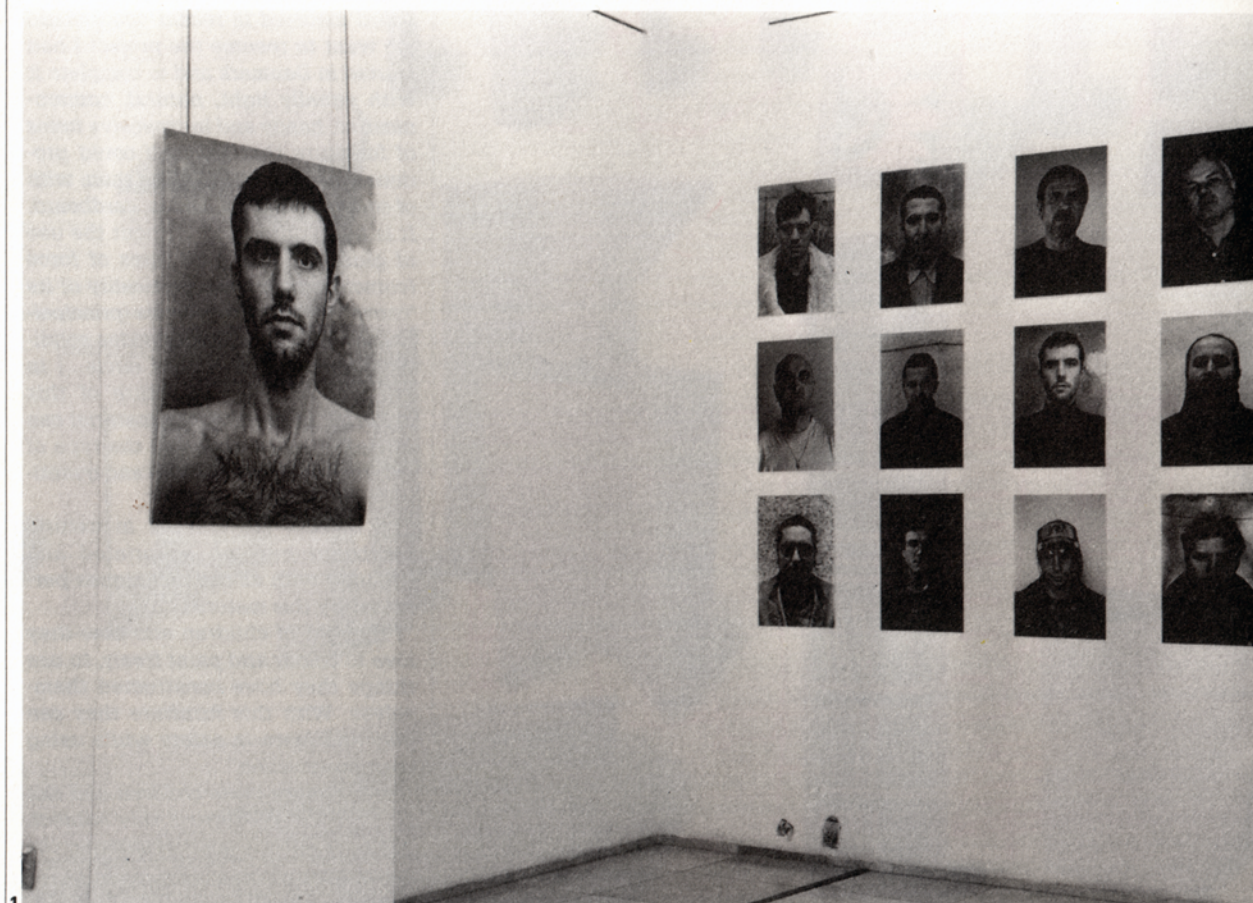
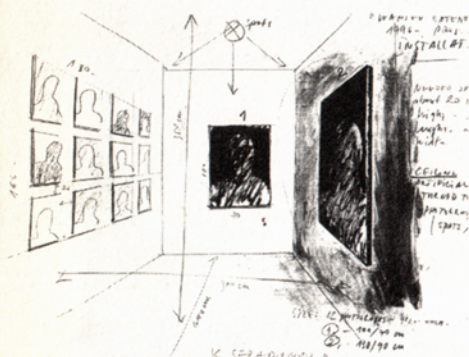




- 1** Wanted category, 1996, photo installation with black and white photographs, variable dimensions, Ata-Ray Gallery, Sofia.
- 2** Do you feel we you are different?, 1996, text installation with paper, letters, faxes, text, wooden stands, variable dimensions, annual exhibition of the "Soros Center for the Arts", Sofia.
- 3** Heating up the air, 1995, installation with four tin panels (75 x 75 cm), heaters, cable, three phase current, Old Turkish Bathhouse, Plovdiv.
- 4** Keep the weapon as your tooth-brush, 1995, installation with six black and white photographs (145 x 145 cm), wood, pistol, tooth-brush, "National Autumn Exhibition", Plovdiv.

Pierre Restany

About to turn thirty, Kalin Serapionov has already established himself as a protagonist of the relational aesthetic signaling the rise of young creators from the fringe of our changing world. Serapionov's generation belongs to the post-1989 epoch in Bulgaria. The advent of democracy after the fall of



communism sparked a drastic shift in the country's cultural climate, now permeated by total intellectual freedom and a restructuring of inter-human relations. Kalin Serapionov's art is the absolute translation of this new existential atmosphere. He has accomplished his aim to immediately identify his art with the imperious search for a new quality of life in the Bulgaria of today, rapt in its discovery of a liberal economy.

This search for a new quality of life is not in the least swayed by any "politically correct" bias or preconception. The young Bulgarian artist's expressive material is spontaneously linked to the new lingua franca of international multimedia – as spoken by manifesto-texts, photographs, and ready-made objects found in miscellaneous fields of real life and presented as such in their dimension of gratifying truth. These "means of production", as the artist himself likes to call them, go hand in hand with his own innermost phantoms, to create a kind of second reality, a mirror, so to speak, of sentimental reality, ironic and ultimately truer than nature.

On my last trip to Bulgaria in November 1996, for the Sofia Triennale, I visited the third annual exhibition of the Soros Centre for the Arts, where works by the emerging generation were grouped together. Kalin Serapionov showed the results of a survey promoted by him on the basis of an interrogative theme: "Do you feel different?". The answers received from the four corners of the earth demonstrated the breadth of the question and its existential connotations. To find out more about this artist, I went to Sofia's most in-thing, the Ata-ray Gallery, run by Ms Raymonda Moudova. And there I found a panorama of installations done during the previous two years.

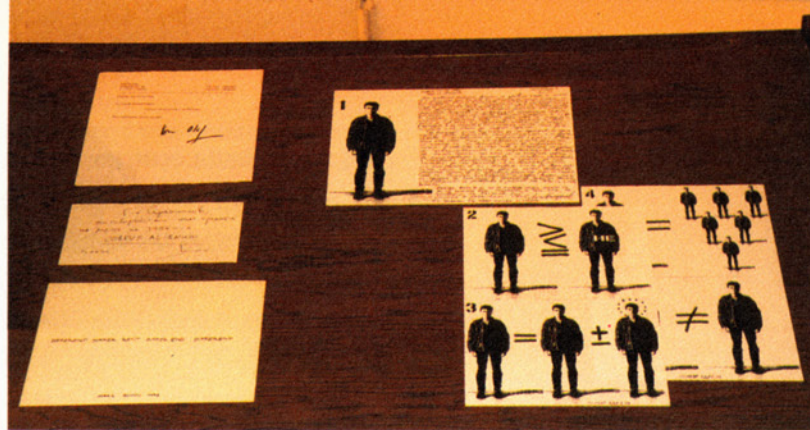
The work of Kalin Serapionov revealed itself to me as a fascinating guide to the existential maze of Bulgarian culture today; a questioning and problematical culture, associated with all the conflictual impulses of a poetic, sometimes sentimental mind, rich in referential humanism and pathetic humanity.

Heating up the air, done in 1995, caused a big stir in Bulgaria. The old and abandoned Plovdiv Turkish baths are a semi-ruin, in an acute state of disrepair. The artist's action in one of the rooms of these baths was intended to restore it to a functional life. The metal sheets covered with horizontal neon tubes created the 'thermal' sensation of a hammam. Incidentally (1995) is an installation of porno-photographs laid out in reverse on a table and reflected in a mirror opposite. Wanted Category (1996) comprises a series of photo-portraits of the artist and his male colleagues. As a member of this social category, Serapionov presents himself as an ordinary man and also as a transvestite. "Keep the weapon as your tooth-brush (1995) shows, next to a series of large photos of an anguished human face, a casket with a pistol and a toothbrush in it. The simple description of these recent installations is highly significant of the expressive power carried by a direct language, based on the most lucid

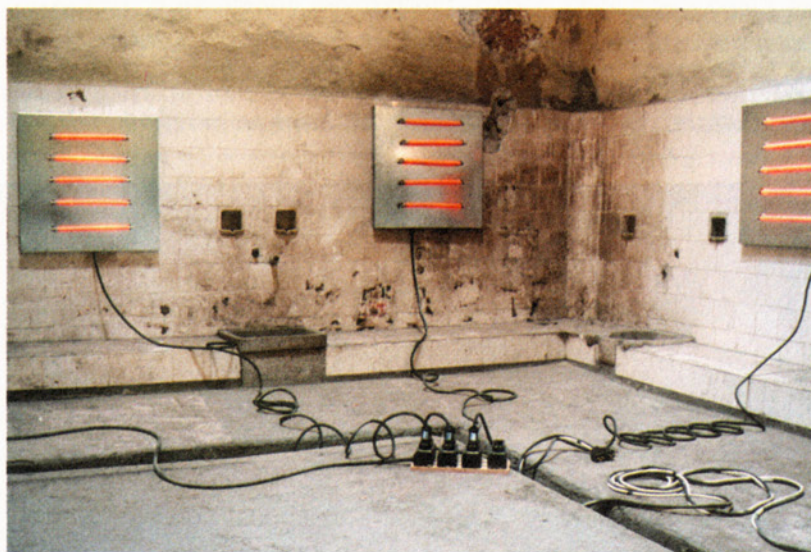
observation of fragments of present reality and its immediate existential connotations.

Kalin Serapionov's talent resides in the absolute freshness of an art profoundly human in its critical realism. Serapionov cries out his truth, and the cry of alarm is tempered by a vitally keen optimism. I want to hail in Kalin Serapionov the vision of a Bulgaria reaching for the new humanism of its destiny.

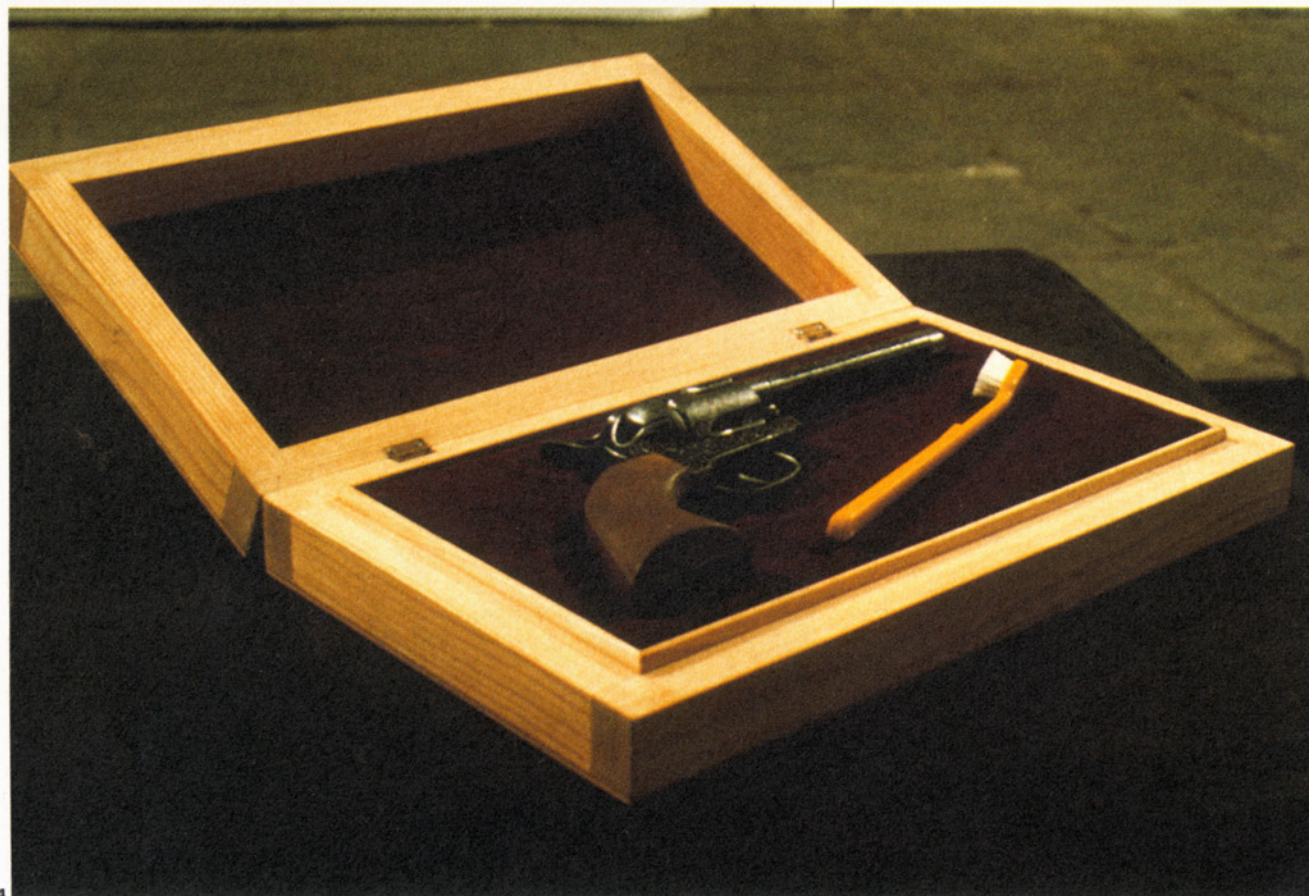
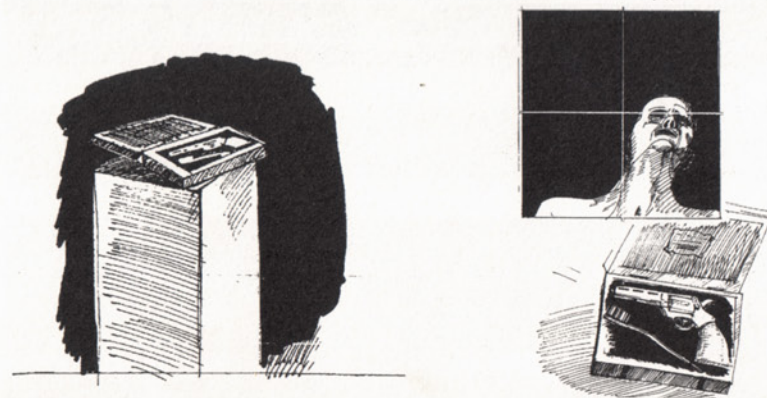
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