

Flash Art

R E V I E W S

SARAJEVO

MAJA BAJEVIC

NATIONAL GALLERY



MAJA BAJEVIC, *Etui*, 2005. Photography and video, 21 mins. Courtesy Peter Kilchmann, Zurich, and Michel Rein, Paris. Photo: Dejan Ćekić and Thierry Bal.

In most of her works Maja Bajevic deals with absent or lost spaces — spaces that have existed as actual homes or homelands. For her first solo show in Sarajevo, at the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Maja Bajevic reassembles her major works under the title “Home Again.” More than a retrospective, it’s an open homage to her native city, to the home she left.

In the recent series of photos “Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,” suburban houses under reconstruction are already decorated with Christmas ornaments. The atmosphere is still anguishing, although the period of postwar transition is characterized by the attempt to achieve normality. The re-conquered spaces are shaped by imagination, empathy and memory. Thus, the video *Etui* (2005) reveals that a house, a supposed setting, is still a fragile category and needs a cover to be sheltered.

The way the works are displayed on three floors is a sort of temporal trip back into Bajevic’s production. One steps backward: the loss of home is explicit in the video *Green green grass of home* (2002). Here the artist walks alone and paces out the dimensions of her old, occupied apartment. The works on the second floor relate to the painful social issues that caused that loss as well as prominent events of recent history. The video *Double Bubble* (2001) focuses on the schizophrenic misuse of religion while the infamous effect of phony patriotism is testified by the sound installation *Avanti Popolo* (2002-05).

The exhibition ends with a series of three collective performances. *Women at Work* fosters the awareness of the intersection between public and private, individual and collective. The domestic activities staged by the artist and five women refugees from Srebrenica heal the war wounds, re-creating a feminine and homey universe.

Ana Janevski