

# CAMOUFLAGE

## Dardan Zhegrova

December 14 2024 opening at 11:00

December 14 2024 – March 31 2025



**Dardan Zhegrova** presents *CAMOUFLAGE* curated by *Donjetë Murati* at **ARKIV the Institute of Contemporary Art, Peja**

ARKIV the Institute of Contemporary Art is proud to announce the start of the show and presentation by artist Dardan Zhegrova, titled *CAMOUFLAGE*. Beginning with the workshop that opens to the public on December 14, 2024.

*CAMOUFLAGE* is a three-part show that unfolds in three phases through three mediums within a single landscape

Camouflage draws inspiration from the mantis, an insect that leads a solitary life, using camouflage as a survival mechanism. This skill in adaptability inspires the works in this exhibition as a reflective exercise about what happens through the processes of blending into our environments. Like the mantis, the artist has used his works in creating landscapes that were an extension of his worldly and inwardly experiences as a means of coping with loneliness.

The first phase of the opening begins with a workshop, where the public and students of the *Odhise Paskali* Art School in Peja are invited to create masks inspired by the Zhegrova 2020 series *I Keep Catching a Glimpse of Myself Hiding While You Stare at Me*. This workshop encourages everyone present in this opening to express their creativity and through that allow themselves to show up and not hide, no matter who is staring.

In creating these masks, participants are invited to project aspects of their identity onto a new "entity." This entity, although distinct from the creator, embodies the unique traits of its maker, symbolizing a personal totem. Through this process, participants identify with their inner wishes and bring forth idealized versions of themselves. Through this process the public is asked to build a mask that by choosing an animal to draw and mirror on the sheet. This act of mirroring the drawing on the piece of paper, creates the necessary elements that within one mask a whole landscape to come to life. The mask then becomes a tool for connection and expression, enabling participants to reveal hidden aspects of their identity while creating habitat(s) and blurring the lines in between the artist and the public.

The second phase opens in February, followed by the final phase in March 2025.

The Second phase will see the installation of poetry presented through wave writings across the school's objects, furniture and other additions, alongside masks that were made with the public in December thus blurring the lines of artist and public even further.

For the closing, Dardan Zhegrova will develop a new performance with lucky Pierre. Lucky Pierre is a persona made by an artist through his performative practice. Lucky Pierre's closing performance will highlight the concept of loneliness through a recitation / live poetry.

**Opening Event:** The opening/ workshop at ARKIV the Institute of Contemporary Art with an opening reception and mask making from 11 AM to 5 PM

#### **About Artist**

Dardan Zhegrova (\*1991, Prishtina, lives and works in Prishtina) works are object- and performance oriented. His works are most often based on poems that stand always at the beginning of the conception of a new work. His texts deal with partially fictional and actually experienced events, which are mostly described from the first-person perspective. Often a (imaginary) counterpart who is sought after by the artists is addressed. There are no pronouns like her and him - the narrative unfolds between the I and the You. Here, the border between the artists subject and the addressed person often seems to blur. This dissolution of the boundaries of a classical narrative form can also be seen in relation to the structure of time in the poems, often blurring future, present and past. This breaking down of the different boundaries in Zhegrova's work also reflects his queer identity, which oscillates between female and male attributes and deliberately rejects and transcends a normative understanding of gender.

#### **About Curator**

Donjetë Murati is a researcher, curator, and cultural worker in Prishtina. She completed her master's studies in Sociology at "The New School" in New York, focusing on the Sociology of Arts, Politics, and Discourse Analysis, and her undergraduate studies in Sociology at the University of Prishtina. Recently, Murati has been part of the team drafting Prishtina's Art and Culture Strategy 2025-2030 with IETL Institute. Previously, she was the program and research coordinator at the Center for Narrative Practice of the nomadic Biennale "Manifesta14 Prishtina." She was responsible for the public program at the newly established institution, the production of artistic works and programs, as well as moderating events and public discussions. Previously, she collaborated on programs and research at the Lumbardhi Foundation. Her recent projects include "Prej Studio" with Ermir Zhinipotoku, "Beyond Binary: Through the Gender Spectrum" with the Zine Collective and the Sekhmet Institute, "Why Haven't We Built a Dyson Sphere?" a collective exhibition commissioned by Kosovo 2.0, and "Monument of the First Flower" with Astrit Ismaili at the Ministry of Culture Gallery. Murati is one of the founders of PART (Workers in Art), an initiative that brings together researchers, artists, curators, and independent practitioners in the field of art, exploring and generating responses to shaping cultural policies in Kosovo.

## About ARKIV

ARKIV, the Institute of Contemporary Art, is the first public institution dedicated to contemporary art in the Peja region. By bringing together local, national, and international artists across all disciplines, ARKIV will be a center for advanced research, critical thinking, experimentation, and dialogue.

ARKIV aims to offer visitors an unparalleled experience of culture and contemporary art. It will examine the past through collection and archiving, inform the present through exhibitions and production, and inspire the future through education and development. This institute will contribute to the advancement of contemporary art in Kosovo through direct engagement of artists and the public, creating exhibitions and programs that communicate the transformative power of art in our time.

A fundamental value of ARKIV is the promotion of opportunities for public dialogue about art and the ideas that artists generate, making their work part of a national and international conversation. It serves as a special place and a unique platform for discourse and engagement in a society where members of different ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups preserve and develop their traditional cultures.

At ARKIV, there is a belief in fostering community building by bringing people together through art and ideas, recognizing that art is a human necessity, and the sharing of its experience promotes collective engagement and international dialogue. ARKIV will be an institution that collects, preserves, organizes, and publishes historical values. The history of Kosovo and beyond has been primarily produced but consumed and documented to a lesser extent. Therefore, ARKIV sees itself as an archive that proposes a space for discussion on contemporary art from Kosovo and beyond.

ARKIV, the Institute of Contemporary Art in Peja, is a non-profit public NGO founded in 2018 by artist Sislej Xhafa. ARKIV is in the current public school "Vaso Pash Shkodrani." The building of this school dates back 1946, serving as the first primary school in Peja, and is strategically located near the city's national park.

**The image:** self-portrait, *I keep catching a glimpse of myself hiding while you stare at me*, Swiss Institute, New York, 2020

## AGENDA

Launch of ARKIV and Exhibition Agenda

Press conference: Dec 14 at 11:00 - 12:00.

Opening of the exhibition: December 14, 2024, 11:00 – 17:00.

Duration of the exhibition: December 14, 2024 – March 31, 2025

## ARKIV

Working Hours: Tuesday - Sunday, 14:00 - 17:00

School, "Vaso Pashë Shkodrani"

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