To Stage an Idea: *Hiroshima Project* by Bojan Radovič

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## Bojan Radovič brand new series of photographs with the title *Hiroshima Project* is on Japan from Japan, where he recently spent a period of time, being invited as an artist in residency. The title of the series is unmistakable: Hiroshima. It instantaneously recalls remembrance of the dropping of the atom bomb on the Japanese cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945 by the United States that brought the World War II to a quick end. The two cities were obliterated and the bombs killed thousands of people.

These two traits, life and remembrance of destruction, and the ruins as monuments, appear simultaneously and powerful in this project by Radovič. We have on one side the contemporary Japanese society, Radovič uses the esthetics of street photography, photo diarism, and the depiction of mundane spaces, identities, and on the other the history of the bombing of Hiroshima. Radovič superbly use the power of “snapshot aesthetic” for everyday life that is juxtaposed to his intensely conceptual photographic view on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945.

Through the snapshots comes an enormous vitality and expression of life. These photographs open a path for re-thinking the Japanese society as a symptom of the West especially in media, fashion, public spaces, or when re-using avant-garde strategies in everyday life. Here we can think of uniformity and identity, or of pop subculture and fashion styles and identity. In examining the parallels in between West/West (the hyper capitalist Japanese society) or East/West, we can find examples of symptomatic logic of Western media strategies and visual representation connected in quite challenging ways.

To this is then juxtaposed the medium of photography that thinks history. In which way? Conceptually. Using photography not to reconstruct history but to stage an idea that is the idea of a clash in between life and history, life and destruction.

Radovič uses performativity and the re-photographing of historical images and monuments, bringing into play a whole set of crossroads that problematize the photographic apparatus in itself. This part is experimental, taking elements of documentation or staging them in new ways. He uses a passerby to hold the iconic historical photograph of the mushroom cloud from the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan on August 9, 1945. Or, he explores the textures of the trees in Hiroshima by scanning the trunks of the trees with an improvised device. The trees are old enough and still alive after surviving the bomb explosion.

The body (human or from nature) is therefore pre-eminently central in all these photographs. These bodies are ecstatic and cataleptic at once, showing that masking, decorating and transcoding the body and history is a way of communication and connection.

And more, Radovič exposes that today images are losing their credibility, for example, in the process of judging events in the world. This is not simply a question of truth or falsity. Questions of plausibility and implausibility override those concerning whether an image is simply true or false. Therefore the problem exposed so poignantly by Bojan Radovič in the *Hiroshima Project* has no longer to do only with the mental images and historical consciousness, but with the paradoxical facticity of new media images, and as well photographic images. Therefore Bojan Radovič whole body of work is fundamentally concerned with the articulation of  a representational politics of photography.