

BB4

**Bucharest
Biennale 4**

**Bucharest
International
Biennial for
Contemporary
Art
Bienala
Internatjonală
de Artă
Contemporană
București**

**May 21-
July 25
2010**

**21 Mai-
25 Iulie
2010**

PRESS RELEASE

21 May 2010 - BUCHAREST BIENNALE 4, the most important contemporary art event in Romania, was censored by the administration of the National Geology Museum and of the Geologic Institute of Romania.

Considered by the international press one of the most important contemporary art events in Europe, BUCHAREST BIENNALE (International Biennial for Contemporary Art) will take place in six venues in Bucharest, between May 21st and July 25th 2010, including the National Geology Museum.

In the National Geology Museum a series of internationally renowned artists would have been exhibited, including Kaucyila Brooke, whose insurance and transport budget was considerable. On the 7th of May 2010, the works of acclaimed artist Kaucyila Brooke, brought to Bucharest with the support of Austrian Cultural Forum, Austrian Embassy and the Cultural Ministry of Austria were taken down from the walls by the administration of the Geology Museum, that invoked the presence of pornography in the above mentioned works.

The attitude of the persons responsible for this censorship proves the antediluvian mentality that persists in some Romanian institutions. It is certain that there is still an evident inability to participate in an open debate on art and civil society. The violence with which part of the museum's employees has reacted evokes the stalinist times when party activists used to decide what is art and how can that be exhibited.

We consider the act of the National Geologic Institute and National Geology Museum's administration as a flagrant breach of the free speech right, a hindrance of the artist's dignity and an insult to human intelligence through gestures that don't qualify as proper behavior for 2010 and for a country member of the European Union.

BUCHAREST BIENNALE wishes to express regret for the absence from the exhibition of one of the major works of the event, the lack of time and space necessary for its installation rendering impossible its exhibiting in another venue of the biennial.

As this work was exhibited before in museums around the world, we asked Stella Rollig, director of Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz (a very respected and well known professional) to make a statement regarding this situation: "Kaucyila Brooke's comprehensive work "Tit for Twat", having been developed since the early 1990's, is one of the seminal works in gender oriented conceptual art of the last two decades. Highly original in content and refined in its aesthetics and its use of media, for good reasons it has been shown in many places and contexts all over the world. If, as I hear, its presentation at the Geology Museum in the frame of the Bucharest Biennale 2010 will be prohibited, this would not only mean a severe case of censorship but also a very sad denial for the Romanian public to see this outstanding, concise, political but at the same time warm and humorous work."

As the team of the BUCHAREST BIENNALE we will stand for the freedom of speech and the freedom of the arts and we will speak our position loud and clear any time the situation will require this.

We would like to express the special thanks and gratitude to Karin Cervenka, the director of Austrian Cultural Forum, and the Austrian Embassy for the support in this matter.

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THE STATEMENT OF KAUCYLA BROOK

It was with great enthusiasm in April 2009 that I received Felix Vogel's inquiry about my participation and cooperation with the 2010 Bucharest Biennale. I found it especially encouraging that he was knowledgeable about such a variety of the works and particularly engaged in thinking about my ongoing project Tit for Twat. I am so glad that I was invited to show this project and have truly enjoyed the production of new work and the chance to review the existing parts of this epic work throughout the last year. The question at the core of Tit for Twat is how we conceive of nature from the position of narratives of origin and it is a playful retort to that mythology. At the center of the garden is a tree with a snake coiled seductively up its trunk. In the chapters: Madam and Eve in the Garden and Can We Talk? – That snake is the microphone, which promises that if you speak through it you will be understood as you are and as you think i.e. that you will have a recognizable subjectivity at last. That is the false promise of a mediated self that produces a fantasy of a unified subject through fixed hierarchies of desire and power whether they are science or myth. It has been wonderful to work with these ideas in the context of the exhibition *Handlung. On Producing Possibilities*, which takes on the serious consideration of these central cultural questions. However, I am deeply disappointed and saddened to not be allowed to finally participate with my work in the Bucharest Biennale. As an art object, Tit for Twat employs the formal language of photomontage and illuminated manuscripts and its delicate arrangement of multiple and layered imagery must be seen in person to recognize the relationship between its form and content. Unfortunately, this experience will not be possible for the public attending the exhibition. I understand that there have been difficulties for all of those involved in confronting the censorship of my work in the exhibition and it is clear that a tremendous amount of resources have been marshaled from all sides.

I am extremely appreciative of the effort and I am keeping my faith in all the assurances that I have received that the Bucharest Biennale is committed to continue to fight for my work. I wish everyone great success with the opening and reception and send all my best to the other wonderful artists in the show, I am very sorry to miss the chance to meet everyone and learn more about their artwork.

I am also very sad that I will not share this event with all of you and am not able to stand along side you with my work exhibited as it was intended to be.

Kaucyila Brooke
May 18, 2010