

Marcin Dudek - Akumulator

Opening reception: 6-8pm, Thursday 14 November 2019
Exhibition: 15 November - 20 December 2019
Tuesday to Saturday 11am - 6pm



Akumulator is a one-to-one scale replica of a gym I built in a squatted basement of a Krakow council estate in the 1990s. Akumulator is anti-readymade; analogue resistance to mass mechanisation; a sanctuary of neglected materials. Akumulator is not used as an empty exercise machine for repetitive body building movements – it is a manifestation of resistance, a laboratory for solution finding, an alternative pathway for crime-driven youth or a model for survival in economically deprived situations.

Akumulator can be activated anytime, anywhere.

- Marcin Dudek

Edel Assanti is pleased to present Marcin Dudek's *Akumulator*.

Over the past five years, Dudek has explored the materials, messages and political contexts of the stadium in an ongoing investigation of group behaviour and crowd control. The artist's preoccupation with football hooliganism has autobiographical roots, retracing Dudek's steps as a teenage member of Cracovia football fan club. In 2013, Dudek published *Akumulatory* (translation: "Battery"), an artist book collating snapshots of underground DIY gyms in Poland, which Dudek sourced from online forums where images of these adapted training facilities are shared. The actual gyms are created in squatted residential spaces, with equipment made from whatever materials are available: steel, wood, concrete, bricks.

Akumulator, the artist's fourth exhibition with Edel Assanti, sees Dudek construct his own immersive DIY gym. Dudek's installation is made using rudimentary materials that convey scarcity, utility and urgency, combined with adapted personal belongings. A tense atmosphere of solitary preparation and self-transformation pervades in this stripped down training facility, where bodies, ideologies and cultures take shape, ready for confrontation above ground on the streets.

The central component of the installation is a cube made of welded scrap metal, whose proportions were determined by the dimensions of a real basement in one of the Krakow Podgorze district's council estates, where Dudek's crew's original gym was assembled. The door to the installation was sourced from the basement of Dudek's childhood block of flats – a standard issue council house door from the late 1970s. The door has been covered with different materials from the artist's archive – cardboard from the box of the Dudeks' first television set, posters and leftover panels from old furniture.

A monumental collage made from cloth tape acts as one of the walls of the space, resembling an anonymous mapping of an underground network, taking inspiration from Giovanni Battista Piranesi's imaginary prisons (*Carceri d'Invenzione*, 1745-50). Each corner of the room is occupied by an abstracted DIY gym apparatus. The bench press' weights are made from sections of a dismembered old radiator, attached to a welded metal bar.

The bench rests on a carpet, woven by the artist using black cloth tape in a design recalling the faux-oriental patterns that adorned domestic carpets popular in Poland in the era of Dudek's childhood. We inhabit the space of *Akumulator* as temporary visitors to a private space that speaks at once of a hidden collective history and a deeply personal narrative. It accesses a frozen moment in time, somewhere between the individual's steps and the marches of the crowd.

Marcin Dudek studied at the University of Art Mozarteum, Salzburg, and Central Saint Martins, London, graduating in 2005 and 2007 respectively. Recent exhibitions include *The Crowd Man*, MWW Wroclaw Contemporary Museum, 2019; *The Lure of the Arena*, MNAC National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, 2019; *Giochi Senza Frontiere*, Palazzo Mazzarino, Manifesta12, Palermo, 2018; *Steps and Marches*, Edel Assanti, London & Harlan Levey Projects, Brussels, 2017. Dudek's immersive installation *The Cathedral of Human Labor*, 2013, is on permanent view at the Verbeke Foundation in Antwerp. His work is included in international collections including MWW Wroclaw Contemporary Museum and National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest. Dudek lives and works in Brussels.

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