

Lots

Lots brings together all the video works made by Milutin Gubash since 2004. Aside from the idea of quantity, the program's title conjures several other notions, including collecting, dividing, selecting – even fate, the circumstances assigned to someone by chance, destiny and nature. A “lot” can also be a plot of land, a future construction site, the setting for a project soon to become a reality. < < Milutin Gubash creates his reality-steeped fictions in a practice that fuses video, performance and photography. At the heart of his approach is the fundamental aesthetic choice to make his life part of his work. In a web project executed in 2003, he “re-enacted” (with the participation of his parents) a number of tragic stories gleaned from a local newspaper in Calgary, where he was raised. In *Re-enacting Tragedies While My Parents Look On*, Gubash himself plays the role of the victim in situations that include *Man Falls 12 Stories to Death*, *Softball Kills Boy at Church Picnic* and *Man Beaten and Set Afire*. For Gubash, the “unreal” nature of these events acts as a catalyst. He focuses on their incongruity. Elegantly dressed in a dark suit, watched by his parents, Milutin Gubash plays dead. With exquisite irony, he undermines the reality-referring function of the classical image. It is an approach nourished both by a meditation on the new reality of the site – a familiar place that henceforth embodies the tragedy's secret emotional charge – and by a desire to connect. “My aim,” he says, “is to inscribe myself in places I feel I don't belong. These re-enactments are ways to address death in different terms by reversing roles, and to express the untold that hovers silently in the family.” His father Stevan Gubash, already in shaky health during this project, passed away in 2005. << The artist revisited these places – the *Bridge*, *Park*, *Parkade*, *Mountain*, *River*, and *Drive-in* of the web project – in 2004 and 2005 (again in the company of his parents) for the making of his first video cycle, a series of six works entitled *Near and Far*. The suited-and-tied Gubash is again central to the series. He is the only “character” – all the other people are who they are in real life. “My father plays the role of ‘my father’ in my videos – a simple equation, but one that seems to turn everything upside down. He is the authority figure in my life, but in my work I'm the one directing him.” The various scenes are directed improvisations. His parents have to negotiate their presence in front of the camera in terms of each particular context and within the parameters of the project as a whole. Their “characters” are not really the subject of the work, but one of its motifs. “More precisely, for me, the videos have to do with thinking about the complexity of the relationships I have with the people who are around me... rather than thinking about how to represent a situation.” < < Somewhere between presentation and representation, Milutin Gubash juxtaposes different levels of consciousness and plays on ambiguity; he operates in a kind of interspace, a realm that is half-real, half-pretend. The relations between the characters, the place and the scene being played out highlight the fragility of any definition of reality. “Why are we ‘here’ – both in the video and in the world?”

What is real, both within and beyond the frame of the video as a reference? What does it mean for someone to depart from that frame of reference?" < <

Just as Milutin Gubash draws those around him into the process of creating his works, so does he (extending the logic of the approach) draw his entourage into the art world – via his exhibited work, but also via performance. At the opening of the exhibition presenting *Near and Far* at the Vu centre, in Quebec City, Milutin Gubash turned his presence into a performance that would become a new segment in his next video cycle. "I feel that without the performance aspect to the exhibition, the proposals I make in my work stay just as pictures, and perhaps do not extend into the world to exist as meaningful changes that have been effected through our engagements." < <

Born in Yugoslavia in 1969, Milutin Gubash grew up in Alberta. After studying philosophy and photography at the University of Calgary, he completed a master's degree in photography at Concordia University. He currently lives in Montreal. < As one project after another takes shape, his oeuvre forms a continuum of recurring places and characters. The "while-my-parents-look-on" device is also used in his video *Tournez*, a pivotal work filmed at the site of his very first performance, staged in 1988 while he was still a student. < <

Each new piece contains something of the previous one, and through this perpetual *mise en abyme* – this endless series of pictures-within-pictures – the conceptual structure of his works becomes ever more complex. Through the seventeen videos included in the *Lots* cycle, Milutin Gubash tells a story about a borrowed costume and a task to be accomplished. The cycle's numerous scenes reveal his interest in early cinema, his penchant for combining "bad acting" and "good cinematography," his taste for buffoonery. The cycle begins *Two Years Later...*, with Gubash's character falling from the sky. For the first time in this cycle the four women constituting the collective called Women With Kitchen Appliances (one of whom is the artist's lover), seen previously in *Near and Far*, appear here with each playing a different role. WWKA will be seen again in a performance taking place at the Musée on March 3, 2007. A friend of the artist's mother is also featured: she talks to him about mysterious things and entrusts him with a mission. "This notion of a 'quest' is to my mind a metaphor for the creative process itself." < <

Milutin Gubash's entire oeuvre is impregnated with his need for connection, his desire to construct a whole out of the fragmented reality of the everyday. But it is not necessary to acknowledge all the links to his life to fully appreciate his work. It is not necessary that all be revealed for us to sense and understand the powerful need for wholeness that drives him. <

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Milutin Gubash's words are all extracts from interviews I conducted while preparing this project. I thank him for his generous collaboration.



Born in Yugoslavia in 1969.
Lives and works in Montreal.

Biobibliography

An asterisk (*) indicates a publication.

Principal solo exhibitions

- 2007 *Milutin Gubash: Lots*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montreal (Que.), Canada.*
Galerie Thérèse Dion Art Contemporain, Montreal (Que.), Canada.
- 2006 *Near and Far*, Stride Gallery, Calgary (Alta.), Canada.*
- 2005 *Near and Far*, Gallery 44 Centre for Contemporary Photography, Toronto (Ont.), Canada.
Near and Far, VU, Centre de diffusion et de production de la photographie, Quebec City (Que.), Canada.
- 2004 *Milutin Gubash and Isabelle Hayeur*, Paved Arts + New Media, Saskatoon. (Sask.), Canada.
- 2003 *Re-enacting Tragedies While My Parents Look On* [web project], Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver (B.C.), Canada. – iprojects. – <<http://www.iprojects.org/tragedies>> [accessed 2006/11/20].
Plan large, Quartier Éphémère, Montreal (Que.), Canada.
- 2002 *Playing Possum*, Access Artist-Run Centre, Vancouver (B.C.), Canada.*
Playing Possum, Latitude 53 Gallery, Edmonton (Alta.), Canada.
Dream Factory: Gubash and Thauburger, Open Space Artist-Run Centre, Victoria (B.C.), Canada.
- 2001 *Playing Possum*, Gallery TPW, Toronto (Ont.), Canada.
- 2000 *Playing Possum*, Espace 410, Belgo Building, Montreal (Que.), Canada.
In and Out of Grace, VOX Gallery, Montreal (Que.), Canada.

Principal group exhibitions

- 2006 *MakeBelieve*, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton (Alta.), Canada.
- 2005 *In Every Dream Home*, Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon (Sask.), Canada.
Off Grid, The Ottawa Art Gallery, Ottawa (Ont.), Canada.*
Manif d'art 3 : Cynismes? – Manifestation internationale d'art de Québec, Quebec City (Que.), Canada.
Public Matters, Private Matters: Video Works by Allyson Clay, Osman Bozkurt and Milutin Gubash, Strand on Volta Gallery, Washington, D.C, United States – <<http://www.strandonvolta.com/#>> [accessed 2006/11/20].

TAAFI marks the 5th anniversary of solo exhibition, Toronto Alternative Art Fair International, The Drake Hotel, Toronto (Ont.), Canada.

Télétaxi, Year Zero One, Montreal (Que.), Canada. – [with the participation of Dare-Dare and C.R.U.M.].

- 2003 *Tomorrow's News*, Hippolyte Photographic Gallery, Helsinki, Finland.
2002 *Wreck Room*, Helen Pitt Gallery, Vancouver (B.C.), Canada.
2001 *To Remain at a Distance*, Open Space Gallery, Victoria (B.C.), Canada.

Principal journal and catalogue articles

- 2007 "Milutin Gubash: Lots." – [Text, Louise Simard-Ismert]. – [Montreal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal]. – brochure [6 pp].
- 2006 Boucher, Mélanie. – "Des œuvres polymorphes : trois cas types = Polymorphous works : Three classic examples." – *Espace*. – no. 75 (spring 2006). – pp. 20-24.
- Simon, Kim. – "Milutin Gubash: Near and Far." – Calgary: Stride Gallery. – brochure, pp. 3-4: <http://www.stride.ab.ca/archive_06/04.06/gubash.pdf> [accessed 2006/11/07].
- Willard, Christopher. – "Milutin Gubash: Near and Far." – *C Magazine*. – no. 91 (fall 2006). – pp. 46-47.
- 2005 Guimond, Nathalie. – "Télétaxi : Envoyez-moi le 235!" – *Voir*. – vol. 19, no. 14 (April 7, 2005). – p. 16.
- Lamarche, Bernard. – "Taxi, suivez cette œuvre!" – *Le Devoir*. – (April 2, 2005). – p. E-7.
- 2004 Gubash, Milutin. – "Re-enacting Tragedies While My Parents Look On." – *BlackFlash*. – vol. 21, no. 3 (2004). – pp. 24-29.



Near and Far. Photos: Milutin Gubash

