



Ola Vasiljeva, *En Rachâchant*, 2022, painted steel, 157 1/2 x 126 x 1 1/2." Installation view.

VIENNA

"The Prompt"

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Wassergasse 14

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As part of the annual Curated By festival in Vienna, curator Adomas Narkevičius responded to the general theme of "*Kelet*" (Hungarian for "The East") with "The Prompt," a showcase of three Baltic artists hailing from different generations. Their works have a puckishness about them that rotates the gaze around to assume the position of a "West" that gets to pick and choose which other has the right to speak and when.

Ola Vasiljeva bisects the space with *En Rachâchant*, 2015-22, a standing metal frame that loosely sketches out a portrait of the title character of *Ah! Ernesto*, a 1971 children's book by Marguerite Duras. The stubborn young student refuses to learn what he does not already know, thus making him a ready stand-in for the so-called West in all its obstinacy. Elena Narbutaitė's *Fumy Frig Sour*, 2013-18, uses a laser to create the impression of a deep magenta gash in the far wall. Referencing both medicinal and military technologies, the work is a reminder that not all wounds leave behind visible scars.

The late Lithuanian photographer Milda Drazdauskaitė’s series of portraits from the 1970s and ’80s counter stereotypes of late-Soviet life with glimpses into individual realities from the Soviet republics. The subjects portray a subversive strength through their fashion and facial expressions, tapping into both feminist and punk aesthetics. Narkevičius’s curatorial text connects these photographs to Drazdauskaitė’s performance practice, which mocked Soviet cultural norms alongside other non-conformist artists (she was known to pose as a soldier or a milkmaid and once paraded around the university with her engineering diploma). Her use of mischief to defy prevailing power structures is an inspiration for “The Prompt.”

— Àngels Miralda

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