


[Home](#)
[___ About us](#)
[GAM Activities](#)
[___ Conferences](#)
[___ Lectures](#)
[___ Publications](#)
[___ Grants](#)
[___ Exhibition](#)
[___ Network](#)
[Global Window](#)
[___ Monthly Guest Author](#)
[___ MoCA of the Month](#)
[Global News from "The](#)

MoCA of the Month

press to exit project space

press to exit project space press to exit project space was established in September 2004 by artists Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska as a special program-based artist initiative for research and production in the field of visual arts and curatorial practices. The program is focused on four main strands including: Visiting Curatorial Initiative – an invitation only residency program for emerging curators; New Project Productions – an invitation only program supporting independent production by (mainly) Macedonian and regional artists; Lectures, Presentation and Exhibition Series – an ongoing and dynamic forum for debate and exchange of ideas while exploring ways of generating, producing and presenting regional and international projects and collaborations; and the Publishing Program which publishes artistic, curatorial, theoretical and architectural research projects. **press to exit project space** is dedicated to undertaking a critical examination and evaluation of the questions raised by contemporary artists, curators, architects and theorists in relation to the contemporary socio-political framework in which their practices

Current MoCA

- [press to exit project space](#)

Archive MoCA

- 2012/07

[CCA Lagos](#)

- 2012/06

[BAS](#)

- 2012/05

[UCCA](#)

- 2012/01

[Raw Material Company](#)

- 2011/12

[NCCA | National Centre for Contemporary Arts](#)

emerge. We are part of a number of international networks and forums that have been crucial in helping us develop our practice internationally and with more social consequence.



The Visiting Curatorial Initiative is set up to provide an opportunity for emerging international curators to research and produce new projects in Macedonia, to share their knowledge and gain understanding of the local and regional cultural context. Since 2004 **press to exit** has worked with Sebastian Cichocki, Basak Senova, Suzana Milevska, Daniele Balit, Alenka Gregoric, Fatos Ustek, Agnieszka Kurant, Marko Stamenkovic, Goran Petrovic, and others.

As part of this ongoing program, **press to exit** has recently organized the international workshop and symposium *Curating Exchange* (June 2012). Designed as a week-long event, the symposium emphasized the need to reassess the role of the curator in the present socio-political times and to question the potentiality of the curator to be a catalyst for socio-political and cultural change. Aim of Curating Exchange was to provide insight into

● 2011/11

[PERMM – Perm Museum of Contemporary Art](#)

● 2011/10

[Sàn Art](#)

● 2011/09

[National Gallery of Australia](#)

● 2011/08

[CAC - Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius](#)

● 2011/07

[TMCA | The Total Museum of Contemporary Art](#)

● 2011/06

[MoBY | Museums of Bat Yam](#)

● 2011/05

[Cemeti Art House](#)

● 2011/04

[OCT – Contemporary Art Terminal](#)

● 2011/03

[The State Museum of Contemporary Art of Thessaloniki](#)

● 2011/02

the collective regional and international perspectives in the field of curatorial practices and integrate new knowledge and expertise in the context of events in Macedonia.

The New Project Productions series is designed to engage emerging artists, curators, designers and cultural theorists in production of new content reflecting on social, cultural and political realities. Since 2004 **press to exit** has engaged in projects with Jeanne van Heeswijk, Per Huttner, Daniela Paes Leao, Inga Zimprich, STEALTH, Srdjan Jovanovic – Weiss, as well as Aleksandar Stankoski, Biljana Stefanovska, Elena Veljanovska, Marjan Denkov, Prva Archi Brigada, Flora Alijuce, Goran Dachev, OPA, Dejan Spasovic and others.

The Lectures, Presentations and Exhibitions series is an ongoing and dynamic program that welcomes individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions, to present recent research, projects, publications, and productions. Since 2004 **press to exit** welcomed Wolfgang Tillmans, Marjetica Potrc, Kyong Park, NORM, Peet Pienaar, Tadej Pogacar, Jens Hanning, Albert Heta, Anders Kreuger, Maia Damianovic, Barbara Holub, Per Huttner, Linas Jablonskis, Krist Gruijthuisen, Nebojsa Milikic, kuda.org, and others¹.

[The Vargas Museum](#)

- 2011/01

[MSU–Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb](#)

- 2010/12

[Al-Ma'mal Foundation](#)

- 2010/11

[The Zinsou Foundation](#)

- 2010/10

[Today Art Museum](#)

- 2010/09

[Bandjoun Station](#)

- 2010/08

[Ateneo Art Gallery](#)

2010/07



Public Faculty no.1, commissioned interactive public art project by the Dutch artist Jeanne van Heeswijk, Skopje 2008

Interview with Yane Calovski

We spoke with Yane Calovski, artistic director of **press to exit project space**, about the challenge of opening and managing an experimental art space off the traditional poles for contemporary art.

We hope the interview will help providing a deeper insight on press to exit's profile and activities and that this will be the first of several encounters with the artists and curators behind new art organizations.

How did you come up with the idea of opening an art space in Skopje?

The idea to start a program-based initiative in Skopje emerged in the spring of 2004. At that time I was concluding my research fellowship at the Fine Art Department at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht and I was already going back to Skopje more often than before (until then I lived in Philadelphia from 1991 until 2001 and in Maastricht 2002 -2004). During my visits to Skopje I was able to meet new and old friends, and we would often have these lengthy discussions in regard to artistic production, social and political responsibility, local and regional issues,

● 2010/07

[Moderna galerija](#)

● 2010/06

[MASS MoCA](#)

● 2010/05

[CAV/ MdB](#)

● 2010/04

[Inhotim](#)

● 2010/03

[BAC](#)

● 2009/12

[MAC-USP](#)

● 2009/11

[santralistanbul](#)

● 2009/09

[MUAC](#)

● 2009/07

[Devi Art Foundation](#)

● 2009/06

[Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon](#)

the lack of qualitative discourse in regard to contemporary art, curatorial practice and general lack of ways to exchange of ideas with international artists, curators, theorists, etc. I wanted to contribute in some way and felt the timing was right to move back to Skopje, realizing that it would be more productive and somewhat critical. For the way my artistic and research practice is set up, I knew that it would have not suffered but only be enriched by such a decision. Together with artist Hristina Ivanoska, with whom I have worked before, we wrote the blue print of **press to exit project space** on the grounds of the small exhibition initiative that was already initiated as part of the Swiss Cultural Programme Office Headquarters in Skopje. From the Swiss partners we were asked to develop and initiate an international programme that will not exceed a 4-year mandate which I would run as a artistic director and Hristina as a program adviser. The entire 2005 was a test year for us during which we worked like mad to set up and run a program while also trying to maintain our own individual art practices. But somehow we managed and exceeded our expectation in terms of both program and audience development and both local and international partnership. One of our highlights is co-producing and curating the first solo exhibition of work by Wolfgang Tillmans in Eastern Europe. During this time it was critical having along in our team as cultural manager our friend Biljana Tanurovska who was among the first to join us in the team and helps us achieve our goals.



Wolfgang Tillmas, the artist installing his work at press to exit project space, September 2005, produced in partnership with MASSO, Skopje, in the framework of for LGBT festival 'Love is Love', 2005

Being a project space you don't have a proper collection. How do relate with or how do you conceive the topics of creating a shared knowledge and memory?

We see ourselves as a platform that creates knowledge through our main programmes: Visiting Curatorial Initiative, New Project Productions, Lectures, Exhibition and Presentations Series and the Publishing Incentive. We try to document as much of our activities and provide an archival account for each one of our activities on our web site. We try to publish at least two books a year that become educational tools not mere catalogues of experiences but including additional theoretical and methodological input by invited writers and practitioners. In addition we try to organize and conduct workshop and symposia whenever possible. We are also continually building our research library

with help of donations by other organizations and individuals that has grown over the years and has become a reference available to researchers. Also, in the last couple of years we have been part of a collaborative project developed as a regional (Western Balkan) incentive with a number of influential artists collectives and organizations from the region such as kuda.org, Rex Cinema and STEALTH. The idea was to make our archives and active productions available for a regional dissemination among smaller and in-development arts organizations in Serbia and Macedonia. It has worked rather well and we hope to continue with it.



Future-perfect, detail of exhibition and the gallery concert of Macedonian hard-core punk band XoXoXo, Skopje 2008

Close to the issue of cultural and collective memory is also the establishment of a dialogue with the local community. Is your intention to relate also to the local context and its history or do you rather see press to exit as a free space for artists to express

themselves?

We do relate to local cultural, political and educational context and we try to manifest an idea of inclusiveness and collaboration. We are continually building a community together with our collaborators and audiences. It becomes a challenge now since we do not have our own site but disseminate our programs and activities through various partner institutions that have infrastructure. Not having our own space due to financial constraints has forced us to find alternative ways to remain active and visible. One of our recent activities is helping set up and run a new association of the independent art scene called Jadro (which means Nucleus, www.jadroasocijacija.org.mk) whose primary aim is to fight legislatively for the rights of the smaller actors on the independent art scene in Macedonia that are suffering under the present conditions within the political, social and cultural agenda of the government. We have to secure longevity and progressiveness among the independents and empower them with tools and new knowledge so that we can all be better prepared to make some changes in our present.

How do you address the local community or rather the local communities?

Our programs are open to everyone. We try to understand what is our community and who comprises our audience continually as this is something that changes. We are aware that most of our production are aimed at professional development and affirmation of artists, curators and theorists, but we try to think of ways to extend our practice beyond the immediate core group and be relevant to other communities.

Footnotes

¹ All information compiled from materials provided by the institution.

Cultural Center

press to exit project space

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Macedonia

[→ go to](#)

City, Country: Skopje, Macedonia

Region: Europe/Eastern Europe

Opening:

Director: Yane Calovski

Architect:

Facilities:

Exhibition Space:

Funding:

Mission Statement

Activities:

Collection

Collection Focus

History

[^^ Back to Top](#)