



## **To the press**

**Petrit Halilaj**

**«Who does the earth belong to while painting the wind?!»**

**21 July – 23 September 2012**

Press preview: Friday, 20 July 2012, from 11 a.m. on (in presence of the artist)  
Opening: Friday, 20 July 2012, 6 p.m.

Petrit Halilaj (\*1986) does not shy away from using his personal biography as a source for his work. The Kosovan artist's childhood memories, centred on the drama of war and the subsequent refugee tragedy, are the motor for the creation of complex and often monumental installations. For those affected the search for an understanding of home is still a significant theme today. This is influenced both by world history as well as a personal definition of one's own identity. In his artistic practice Halilaj uses simple materials such as earth but also live chickens and found archives from vanished museums in Kosovo to illustrate this permanent quest. His exhibitions are precisely conceived narrations that know how to move an audience.

At Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen Petrit Halilaj is presenting new works which are evidence of his continuous endeavour to find and show what has been lost and thereby to come closer to abstract concepts such as home and identity. Oversized reconstructions of various pieces of his mother's jewellery will be on view at the exhibition. During the war she buried the original valuables along with her son's childhood drawings in a casket on their land in Kosovo to protect them from looters. Alongside these large-format sculptures Halilaj is also showing the drawings which have survived. These impressively demonstrate how important the transformation of experiences into art already was for him at a very early age. The jewellery and drawings are simultaneously carriers of memories as well as elements that create identity in an exhibition which can also be read as a declaration of love for his mother and his home country.

The ruin of the family home in Kostërrc, which was destroyed in the war and which already played an important role in earlier pieces, will also appear in St. Gallen in various forms. The house is a central element in Halilaj's work which does not only raise questions about dealing with one's personal past and one's own understanding of home but also becomes a symbol of a national tragedy and evidence of global politics. The jewellery sculptures are thus created with pigments and building materials from the debris of the ruin. Other pieces of rock serve as seating for watching a video in which the ruin goes through gentle revitalisation: regardless of their fragility, butterflies breathe new life into the remains of the house and give expression to the hopeful attitude of the young artist.

**About the artist:**

Petrit Halilaj (\*1986, Kosovo, lives in Berlin, Kostërrc/Kosovo and Mantova/IT) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Brera in Milan. Solo exhibitions took place at the following institutions and galleries: Kunstraum Innsbruck (AT); Statement, Art Basel (2011); Center for Contemporary Art Prishtina, Kosovo; Chert, Berlin (2009). Further, he participated in various group exhibitions (amongst others): ERROR ONE, a nomadic initiative for contemporary art, Antwerp; Kunstverein Nürnberg (2012); RaebervonStenglin, Zurich; Bonner Kunstverein; New Museum, New York; Atelierhaus Monbijoupark, Berlin; Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster (2011); The Institute of Social Hypocrisy, Paris; 6th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (2010); Siemens Gallery, Istanbul; Kunstverein Arnsberg (DE) (2009).

**Events and educational program:****Guided tours**

Tuesday, 14 August 2012, 6 p.m.

Sunday, 23 September 2012, 3 p.m.

**Art Lunch**

Thursday, 20 September 2012, 12 noon

Guest cooks: Kati Michalk & Christine Enz, team of the foundation Lokremise St. Gallen

Admission: CHF 25/members CHF 22; please sign up at [info@k9000.ch](mailto:info@k9000.ch)

**Workshops for school classes**

From 13 August we are offering workshops at the exhibition free of charge.

More information: [www.k9000.ch](http://www.k9000.ch) (Art Education/Workshops for Schools).

**Information to the press**

High-resolution images can be found in the press kit on our website (Information/Press). For further questions please contact Giovanni Carmine ([carmine@k9000.ch](mailto:carmine@k9000.ch)) or Maren Brauner ([brauner@k9000.ch](mailto:brauner@k9000.ch)).

The Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen is supported by St. Gallen City Council, Kulturförderung Kanton St.Gallen, Swisslos, Migros-Kulturprozent, Kulturförderung Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Martel AG, St. Galler Tagblatt. The educational programme is made possible by Raiffeisen.

Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen  
Davidstrasse 40  
CH-9000 St. Gallen  
Tel: +41 (0)71 222 10 14  
Fax: +41 (0)71 222 12 76  
[info@k9000.ch](mailto:info@k9000.ch)  
[www.k9000.ch](http://www.k9000.ch)

Opening times:  
Tuesday to Friday 12 noon–6 p.m.  
Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m.