

## Press release

**Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, a foundation committed to supporting the production of contemporary art and actively engaging in commissioning unconventional projects, is proud to be a co-producer of the POPPY FIELD by Sanja Ivekovic at documenta 12 in Kassel.**

***“Since red is slowly taking over Friedrichsplatz it gives me some hope that it will turn into a “red square” (and maybe in the future Friedrichsplatz will be Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz!) Now it’s time for women’s voices to be heard.” (Sanja Ivekovic)***

For documenta 12, **Sanja Ivekovic** has transformed the Friedrichsplatz in front of the Fridericianum into a **POPPY FIELD** (2007). For this artwork, the original shape of the place remains intact: the seeds consist of 90% “red poppies” and 10% “opium poppies”. Both the square and the poppy have a changing history and represent a multitude of meanings. In the 18th century, the Friedrichsplatz has become one of the largest inner city squares in Germany. As early as the late nineteenth century, but particularly during the time of National Socialism, the square has been used for military exercises, for parades and rallies. The poppy, on the other hand, opens up a varied field of historical and cultural references. In the English-speaking world, the red poppy has become a symbol of the memory of soldiers killed in the war, while in the countries with a communist past it has been „adopted“ to represent the spirit of resistance and revolution.

By sowing seeds of the opium poppy Sanja Ivekovic wants to point out the issue of the cultivation of the opium poppy for drug purposes. Today, six years after the „democratic“ government has been installed by the USA, Afghanistan is the country where 92% of the world’s opium supply is produced. Afghan women are often direct victims of atrocities resulting from the illicit drug trade. As in many other of her public art works, in POPPY FIELD, Sanja Ivekovic has been collaborating with the feminist/activist organization - in this case with Lezbor from Zagreb, Croatia, and with RAWA, The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan. Therefore, the voices of Afghan and Croatian women’s choirs singing the revolutionary songs will be heard at Friedrichsplatz (via loudspeakers) twice a day.

By occupying the public space Sanja Ivekovic thematizes the human rights’ component of the subject. Not only a criticism of the violation of women’s rights, Ivekovic and her collaborators also radically criticize the „democratic“ societies they live in and share the belief that capitalism should not to be considered as a „natural state of things“ and, therefore, „the best of all worlds“. For all these images and references, Sanja Ivekovic’s poppy field in front of the Fridericianum provides both a projection surface and a background against which the multifarious implications of the cultivated plant can be applied. (press text documenta 12)

## Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

Founded in Vienna in 2002 by Francesca von Habsburg, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary represents the fourth generation of the Thyssen family's dedication to the arts. Committed to supporting the production of contemporary art and actively engaged in commissioning and disseminating unconventional projects that defy traditional disciplinary categorizations, the foundation sustains a far-reaching regional and international orientation and explores modes of presentation that are intended to broaden the way viewers perceive and experience art. In addition, it shares its collection and commissions with numerous museums and public institutions.

Projects initiated by the foundation promote artistic practices that are research-based, context- and site-specific, performative, and often informed by an interest in social aesthetics and sociopolitical concerns. Many of the projects reflect the shift away from the material object and toward the concept, as well as the use of unconventional and ephemeral materials and the employment of new technology as an essential component of the work. These strategies challenge interpretation and the traditions of collecting, preserving, and presenting works of art.

In Vienna the foundation curates thematic exhibitions of selections from its collection. **Sanja Ivekovic's** work **TRIANGLE** is currently part of the group exhibition **Shooting Back**.

**Your black horizon Pavilion**, a collaboration between artist **Olafur Eliasson** and architect **David Adjaye**, on the Croatian Island of Lopud is open to the public until October 31, 2007.

### **documenta 12, Kassel**

until September 23, 2007

Opening times: Monday - Sunday, 10 am - 8 pm

Location: Friedrichsplatz 18, 34117 Kassel, Germany

**[www.documenta.de](http://www.documenta.de)**

### **Shooting Back**

**Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna**

until October 28, 2007

July & August: Tuesday - Friday, 12- 6 pm

September & October: Tuesday - Sunday, 12 - 6 pm

Himmelpfortgasse 13, 1010 Vienna, Austria

**[www.tba21.org](http://www.tba21.org)**

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