

Vladimir Tomic
Remembering the Nowhere





Still from:
History Now 2015
HD/VHS Video 26:45

Spør af ingensteder

Gitte Broeng

Erindringen vækkes af en madeleinekage i Marcel Prousts roman *På sporet af den tabte tid*. Stater rejser mindesmærker for at forme den kollektive hukommelse. Enkelt personer gemmer på mere beskedne ting. Vladimir Tomic er født i Sarajevo 1980 og voksede op i Den Socialistiske Føderative Republik Jugoslavien. Et land, der ikke længere findes. Som 12-årig flygtede han til Danmark fra Bosnien, sammen med sin mor og storebror. Tiden svinder for alle mennesker, men flygtningen oplever et tab af både tid og sted. Fraværets aftryk på identiteten er et tilbagevendende tema i Tomics arbejde. Det består især af film- og videoværker i krydsfeltet mellem billedkunst og dokumentarisme, fx den prisbelønnede film *Flotel Europa* (2015), der er skabt udelukkende på basis af bosniske flygtninges egne videooptagelser fra den første uvisse tid i Danmark.

Remembering the Nowhere er ligeledes bygget op omkring eksisterende materiale. De udstillede genstande tilhører Vladimir Tomic og andre flygtninge fra det tidligere Jugoslavien. Personlige ejendele, som samtidig vidner om en fælles tabserfaring. Tomic har udvalgt objekterne, og de konceptualiseres på enkel vis. Iscenesættelsen er minimal og dog effektiv. Flere af de tilsyneladende banale genstande har han placeret i montere. Deres symbolske vigtighed understreges af den museale installation. Amatørbilleder fra familiealbums er indrammet på en måde, der mimer kunstfotografi. Motivernes betydning fremhæves, og de er arrangeret i sigende konstellationer med angivelser af tid og sted. I værket *History Now* benyttes de videobreve, som hans familie sendte hjem til slægtninge og venner i Bosnien, sat over for nutidige optagelser af Tomics mor, der ser brevene igen. Grundlæggende taler tingene for sig selv – fra et ukendt sted mellem før og nu – og det gør de dybt bevægende. Hos Proust fremkalder madeleinekagen en subjektiv erindring. Her vækker de fysiske genstande betragterens indlevelse. Vladimir Tomics ‘medmenneskelige museum’ minder om, at livet i landflygtighed er en skæbne, der potentielt kan overgå enhver. Og at tabet trækker spor af fravær gennem identiteten.

Traces of nowhere

Gitte Broeng

In Marcel Proust's novel *In Search of Lost Time*, memory is stirred by a madeleine. States erect monuments in order to create collective memory. Individuals hold on to more modest things. Vladimir Tomic was born in Sarajevo in 1980 and grew up in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A country that no longer exists. At age twelve he fled to Denmark from Bosnia along with his mother and older brother. Time dwindles for everyone, but the refugee experiences a loss of both time and place. The impact of absence on identity is one of the recurring themes of Tomic's oeuvre, which consists mainly of film and video works that reside in the intersection between art and documentary, such as the award-winning film *Flotel Europa* (2015), which was made entirely of video footage taken by Bosnian refugees during the uncertain beginning of their stay in Denmark.

Remembering the Nowhere is likewise constructed around existing material. The exhibited objects belong to Vladimir Tomic and other refugees from former Yugoslavia. They are personal belongings that also bear witness to a common experience of loss. Tomic has selected the objects and they are conceptualised in a simple manner. The staging is minimal but effective. He has placed several of the apparently trivial objects in display boxes. Their symbolic importance is underscored by the museumlike installation. Amateur photographs from family albums are framed in a way that mimics art photography. The images' meaning is emphasized and arranged in telling constellations with captions giving date and place. The work *History Now* uses the video letters his family sent home to relatives and friends in Bosnia, juxtaposed along more recent footage of Tomic's mother who is watching the letters again. Fundamentally, things speak for themselves – from an unknown place between before and now – and they do it in a deeply moving way. In Proust, the madeleine provokes a subjective remembrance. Here the physical objects evoke the viewer's empathy. Vladimir Tomic's "compassionate museum" reminds us that life in exile is a fate that can happen to anyone. And that the loss leaves a trail of absence in one's identity.



“De her er fra min mor.”

“This is from my mom.”



“Efter krigen så jeg min havelåge foran naboens hus.”
“After the war, I saw my gate in front of the neighbor’s house.”



“Da jeg viste ham mit pas, sagde Røde Kors medarbejderen – Dit udlændingenummer er 28.055.429.”
“When I showed him my passport, the Red Cross worker said – Your foreigner number is 28.055.429.”



“Jozo mistede sit øre et eller andet sted på vej til Danmark.”
“Jozo lost his ear somewhere on the way to Denmark.”



“Vi forventede det værste, men håbede på det modsatte.”
“We were expecting the worst, but hoped for the opposite.”



“Jeg bragte denne med mig i eksil.”
“*I brought this with me into exile.*”



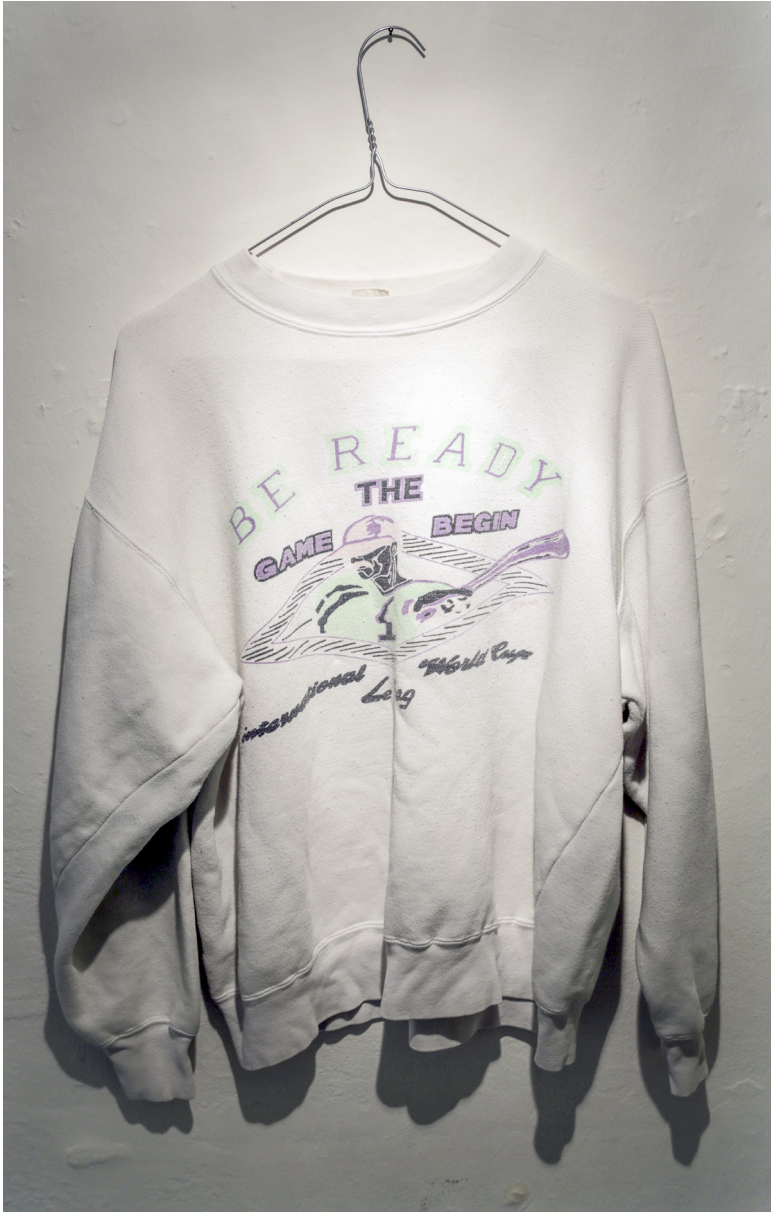
“Vores kabine i flygtningecentret havde intet vindue, så jeg tegnede et til mine børn.”
“*Our cabin in the camp didn't have a window so I made one for my kids.*”



“Der findes krig, og så findes der tanker om krig.”
“*There is war, and then there is thinking about war.*”



“Vi gemte dette til min fætter, som aldrig slap væk fra krigen.”
“*We were saving this for my cousin who never made it out of the war.*”



“Da jeg blev flygtning, kunne jeg ikke et ord engelsk.”

“I didn’t know a word of English when I became a refugee.”



YUGOSLAVIA, BORACSKO JEZERO 1991



DENMARK, REFUGEE CAMP FLOTEL EUROPA 1992



YUGOSLAVIA, DUBROVNIK 1990



CROATIA, DUBROVNIK 1991



BIOSNIA, GRADISKA 1992



ISRAEL, REFUGEE CAMP KATZUR 1974



BOSNIA, SPALADIČKA 1999



DENMARK, BLOKHUS 1999



DENMARK, REUNION CAMP 2 JORDAN, EUROPA 1995



FLAT, EUROPA 1994

Vladimir Tomic, født 1980 i Sarajevo. Bor og arbejder i København. Uddannet 2003-2009 ved Det Kgl. Danske Kunstakademi med studieophold 2008-2009 på Akademie der bildenden Künste, Wien.
www.vladimirtomic.com

Vladimir Tomic, born 1980 in Sarajevo. Lives and works in Copenhagen. Educated 2003-2009 at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts with studies 2008-2009 at Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna.
www.vladimirtomic.com

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G A L L E R I
IMAGE

Vestergade 29

DK 8000 Aarhus C

Tel +4586202429

www.galleriimage.dk



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