

**EXHIBITION:
Adam Vačkář
Citizen Archivist**

May 30 – July 18, 2015

**Opening: Friday, May 29, 2015, 6pm
Press preview: Friday, May 29, 2015, 4pm**

The exhibition includes *Untitled (Cadavre Exquis)*, 2015, a collaborative work between Adam Vačkář and Vittorio Santoro, based on an exchange of letters.

Adam Vačkář's project at Counter Space consists of several readings of the Czech artist's personal archive and history. Exploring family documents in various formats – film, letters, photographs and audio – Vačkář employs different ways of historical examination: searching for his grandfather's musical compositions on the Internet and collecting and tracing objects used by his grandparents. Vačkář examines history also through family records in the form of letters, which witness migrations and different *métier* strands in his family, such as that of the artist's grandfather, an army general born into a Czech family in Kiev, Ex-USSR, who fought in WWII, and that of his grandmother and other grandfather, an opera singer and a renown music composer.

In several cases of artists born in the former Eastern Bloc, there is a will to investigate the past, rooted in a feeling that their identity was constructed of lies and untrue propaganda. It is no coincidence that Adam Vačkář chooses this moment in time to extensively research his own history. Upon closer inspection it links to present day current events: Kiev, the hometown of his grandparents, is located in what is now Ukraine. Migration functioned then as it does today, as a form of adaptation to uncertain political or economic conditions. For Vačkář it is almost a matter of political engagement, he states: "There is much more to learn in the individual history than there is in the general and often politicized historical narrative we learn at school and read in newspapers."

In addition to numerous letters, poems, scores, audio recordings and photographs that were found scattered amongst his living relatives, Adam Vačkář supplemented the findings with targeted acquisitions on the Internet. One of these findings relates to his paternal grandfather, who was a highly decorated major general. From one photograph he looks towards us, the viewers, in three-quarter view, with a chest heavy with medals, the right eye covered by a flap. The general grandfather once seized a Walther PPK arm from a soldier of the German Army and kept it for life, under the pillow he slept on.

The political reversals of the late 19th century until the 1980s are evident and mapped out in the family genealogy; great-grandparents having lived in the multiethnic state of Austria-Hungary, as well as a branch of Vačkářs having moved to Kiev to finally under new conditions in communist Czechoslovakia of the late 1940s.

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**Special event:
Sunday, June 14, 2015
Brunch from 11am – 5pm**

As an extension of the exhibition, Adam Vačkář has exchanged handwritten letters with artist Vittorio Santoro. Written in three stages, with an alternation between the two, the correspondence takes on the tradition of the „exquisite corpse“. The result of their collaboration will be presented on June 14 as part of the Contemporary Art Days Zurich.

Adam Vačkář (b.1979)

Solo and group exhibitions (selection):

More Konzeption Conception Now, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen (2015), *First and Last Things*, Prague City Gallery (2014); *Mixed Feelings*, Gandy gallery, Bratislava (2013); *Rhythm in it. Or Rhythm in Contemporary Art*, Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau (2013); *Night on Earth*, OG2 - Kölnischer Kunstverein (2012); *Statements*, Art Basel (2012); *Videonale 13*, Bonn (2011); *It is Written*, Centre Pompidou Metz (2010); *Residency Palais de Tokyo*, Paris (2010); *Telling Stories*, WUK, Vienna (2010); *Re-reading the Future*, International Triennial of Contemporary Art, Prague (2008).

Counter Space

Counter Space is an independent exhibition and project space in Zürich, which aims to present the use of temporary and process-like methods in artistic work. With fervor, we seek to show chosen glimpses and fragments of work, through a cross-generational approach.

Curated by Angelo Romano, Linda Jensen and Tashi Brauen

Team: Vicenta Rodrigo-Jiménez (administration); Yasmin Kiss (project associate)

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