

## The Federation of Minor Practices

Curator: Martina Yordanova

Artists: Gery Georgieva, Maria Nalbantova, Rayna Teneva, Veneta Androva

The Bulgarian Pavilion is conceived as the headquarters of a fictional research lab operating within an experiment in a post sovereign, care oriented political form. The Lab is imagined as part of a speculative constellation referred to as The Federation of Minor Practices<sup>1</sup>, not a state or institution, but a dispersed formation sustained through attention, maintenance, and shared responsibility. Positioned slightly ahead of the present, the Lab looks back at the early twenty first century as the moment when the conditions for this formation first became legible.

The four films presented in the Pavilion constitute the near past of this formation. They do not appear as evidence, but as signals that register how political, social, and ecological tensions were already shaping everyday life. Gery Georgieva's *UWU Channel Radiance* mobilises myth, prophecy, and digital performance to question contemporary regimes of identity, pleasure, and mediated truth through an oracle figure assembled from online cultures and speculative mytho fiction. Veneta Androva's *Spray and Pray* examines the infrastructures of disinformation through the ecology of mushroom websites, exposing how algorithmic systems, economic incentives, and human participation co produce distorted realities. Rayna Teneva's *Geography Is Destiny* traces the entanglement of labour, territory, and fear in the Rose Valley, where the coexistence of rose harvesting and arms production reveals how care, survival, and violence are structurally intertwined. Maria Nalbantova's ongoing work at the Dragoman Marsh unfolds as a long term practice of ecological care, combining artistic research, environmental maintenance, and collective voice through the recording of local human and non human narratives.

Taken together, these works do not construct a unified narrative or ideological position. They register fractures, pressures, and contradictions across different fields of life, minor in scale yet persistent in force, where questions of labour, ecology, identity, truth, and belonging remain unresolved. The films operate as symptoms of an emerging condition, capturing

moments where inherited frameworks no longer hold and new forms of relation have not yet stabilised.

The Pavilion occupies the speculative present<sup>2</sup>. It is the site where these signals are gathered, translated, and put into use. The fictional Lab is not a space of detached observation, but a site of formation, where fragments of the near past are activated to generate orientation in the present. The Pavilion functions as a machine for continuous revision, holding the political present open and unfinished, responsive to participation and change. Attention is given not to resolution, but to calibration.

The present unfolds as a zone of suspension, a lacuna<sup>3</sup> between inherited structures and unformed futures. It takes the shape of an interactive environment based on a computer game, where play functions as a practice of calibration and orientation within uncertainty. Through a sequence of choices, reactions, and situations constructed from elements extracted from the four films, participants enter a process of exploring values, priorities, and relations that could shape a future polity. The game situation does not offer correct answers, but places participants in a condition of collective orientation, where individual decisions accumulate, interact, and begin to outline shared tendencies. Each gesture tests relations between care and extraction, labour and visibility, ecology and responsibility, truth and fabrication. The polity that takes shape here is not an identity, but a process of becoming<sup>4</sup>.

This process does not simulate reality or propose a model to be implemented. It stages world genesis. The Pavilion does not declare a future, but sustains the conditions through which futures begin to take form uncertainly, collectively, playfully.

The exhibition is framed from a future point of view that never materialises as image. This future exists only as a narrative position that looks back at the Pavilion as an early laboratory of formation, where signals from the past were first recognised and collective experimentation was first attempted. From that perspective, the Pavilion appears as the moment when a post sovereign political imagination began to assemble through shared procedures of attention, care, and play.

In this sense, the Pavilion resonates with the broader curatorial horizon of the 61st International Art Exhibition, which calls for attention to minor keys, to forms of life, relation, and imagination that operate below the threshold of dominance<sup>5</sup>. The Federation of Minor

Practices does not emerge through grand narratives or authoritative frameworks, but through attentiveness to small gestures, partial knowledges, and shared procedures. The Pavilion listens to what persists quietly, assembling meaning through proximity, duration, and collective attunement.

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## References

<sup>1</sup> The notion of “minor practices” draws on Erin Manning’s concept of the *minor gesture* as developed in *The Minor Gesture* (2016). For Manning, the minor does not denote scale or marginality, but a mode of activation that operates within and alongside dominant structures, subtly reorienting them through process, relation, and emergence. The Federation of Minor Practices adopts this understanding of the minor as a distributed, care-based logic that resists institutional closure, privileging attentiveness, maintenance, and shared responsibility over representation or authority.

<sup>2</sup>The Pavilion’s positioning within a speculative present is informed by practices of theory-fiction as articulated by Mark Fisher and others. Theory-fiction approaches speculation not as prediction or futurism, but as a method for thinking from within the present, where theoretical reflection and fictional construction operate together to expose latent structures and unrealised potentials. In this sense, the Pavilion functions as a space where speculation is enacted materially, allowing the present to be approached as a site of formation rather than transition.

<sup>3</sup>The understanding of the present as a zone of suspension draws on Hannah Arendt’s essay *Between Past and Future*(1961), where she describes the present as a rupture between inherited traditions and unarticulated futures. For Arendt, this interval is not a void, but a space of thinking, judgment, and action, where new beginnings become possible precisely because established frameworks no longer suffice. This conception structures the Pavilion as a space that holds the tension of the present open rather than resolving it.

<sup>4</sup>The emphasis on becoming is informed by Rosi Braidotti’s *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*(2002). Braidotti shifts the political question away from fixed identity toward processes of transformation, asking not who we are, but who we want to become. Her notion of nomadic subjectivity foregrounds the need for new figurations, representations, and social locations that function as “living maps” of power relations. This perspective underpins the Pavilion’s approach to political formation as dynamic, situated, and continuously reconfigured.

<sup>5</sup>The reference to “minor keys” resonates with the curatorial concept of the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, curated by Koyo Kouoh. *In Minor Keys* calls for attention to subtle frequencies, relational modes of existence, and forms of imagination that operate beneath dominant narratives and monumental gestures. Rather than privileging spectacle or proclamation, the Biennale framework emphasises tone, duration, care, and the persistence of life through shared practices. The Pavilion aligns with this horizon by privileging attentiveness, collective attunement, and minor forms of political imagination.

## List of Works

**Artist:** Gery Georgieva

**Year:** 2020

**Title:** *UWU Channel Radiance*

**Format:** Seven-channel video

**Countries of production:** United Kingdom

**Duration:** 9 min 55 sec

**Language:** English with Bulgarian subtitles

**Colour:** Colour

*UWU Channel Radiance* presents a fictional oracular character constructed from the aesthetics, language, and gestures of online platforms, streaming culture, and digital subcultures. Through a combination of performance, animation, and digital visual effects, the work traces how identity, desire, and truth are constructed and circulated within contemporary media environments. The film explores the relationship between virtual presence, myth-making, and self-staging, questioning the authority of the voice and the role of prophecy in the digital age.

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**Artist / Director:** Veneta Androva

**Title:** *Spray and Pray*

**Year:** 2026

**Format:** Single-channel video / Animated speculative documentary

**Countries of production:** Germany, Bulgaria

**Duration:** 15 minutes

**Language:** Bulgarian with English subtitles

**Colour / Sound:** Colour, 5.1 sound

*Spray and Pray* focuses on the phenomenon of so-called mushroom websites—online platforms that appear and disappear rapidly, often disseminating questionable or misleading information. Through a visual and narrative investigation of these digital ecosystems, the film examines how content, algorithms, and user behaviour interact in the production and circulation of disinformation. The work traces how the boundaries between knowledge, advertising, belief, and manipulation become blurred within a digital economy driven by attention and clicks.

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**Artist / Director:** Rayna Teneva

**Title:** *Geography Is Destiny*

**Year:** 2025

**Format:** Documentary film

**Countries of production:** Bulgaria, Germany

**Duration:** 80 minutes

**Language:** Bulgarian with English subtitles

**Colour:** Colour

*Geography Is Destiny* explores the social and economic landscape of Bulgaria's Rose Valley, where traditional rose harvesting exists alongside weapons manufacturing. Through observations of labour processes, industrial environments, and local contexts, the film examines how geography and economy shape everyday life, fear, and perceptions of security. The work foregrounds the tension between care and violence, tradition and industry, revealing the complex interdependencies between local labour and global political processes.

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**Artist:** Maria Nalbantova

**Title:** *Marsh Song*

**Year:** 2026

**Format:** Video

**Country of production:** Bulgaria

**Duration:** approx. 7 minutes

**Language:** Bulgarian with English subtitles

**Colour:** Colour

*Marsh Song* is a video work dedicated to the Dragoman Marsh and the interweaving of its history, ecological transformations, and significance for the local community. Filmed as a single continuous shot of the marsh itself, the work follows the performance of a specially composed “marsh song” by the women’s choir of the Dragoman 1925 Community Centre. The choir was dissolved in 2025, and the song becomes its symbolic “swan song.”

The text of the song is composed of personal stories, memories, and imagined narratives collected by Maria Nalbantova over a three-year period from residents of Dragoman, alongside conversations with ecologists involved in the restoration of the marsh. In collaboration with the choir’s conductor and composer, these narratives are transformed into a shared voice, expressed through song.

The song traces the fate of the marsh: its drainage in the 1950s, the construction of a pumping station, socialist-era volunteer labour campaigns, the digging of canals and corn cultivation, the changes after 1989, the return of water, and the migration of birds and people within this border region of the European Union. Deeper layers are interwoven as well, including the migration route Via Aristotelis, the ancient Roman road Via Militaris, fears of mosquitoes, the disappearance and return of species such as the carnivorous plant aldrovanda, and the return of cranes.

*Marsh Song* reflects, like a watery mirror, the transformations of a complex ecosystem shaped by political, social, and personal layers within this border territory.