

# Captured State @ Summerhall, Edinburgh

Aesthetics and politics blend in *Captured State*, a compact and concentrated showcase of some of today's leading Macedonian artists



Review by Megan Wallace | 15 Nov 2017



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The former Yugoslavian country Macedonia seems rather distant to the UK, with it being likely that audiences here are not attuned to the Macedonian art scene. However, curator Jon Blackwood unites six art practitioners with work centring around ideas emerging across the international art world. The familiarity of themes such as urbanism and consumerism frees the spectator to attune themselves to the cultural specificity of Macedonia, a nation which is infrequently reported on by British media.

Despite stressing the internationalism of artists featured, the exhibition is firmly rooted in Macedonian history and contemporary social issues. For example, [Verica Kovacevska's](#) video piece *The House We Grew Up In* (2017) explores the impact which temporary, prefabricated houses had upon the urban space of Skopje, an anarchic influence which bypassed the dominant architectural voice of the city.

Elsewhere, in *The Artist* (2013) Kovacevska interrogates the role of the artist, measuring the worth (or lack thereof) placed upon the occupation by society. Ironic humour is made manifest via a deliberately cold, detached atmosphere. With this sense of critical distance between viewer and subject, Kovacevska draws on the social documentary's claims of objectivity in order to highlight the frame of prejudice through which the arts are viewed.

A similar theme is picked up by artistic collaborators OPA ([Obsessive Possessive Aggression](#)) who use faux seriousness to explore the role of the artist in a society where creative opportunities are limited. Against the backdrop of a politically ensnared economy, OPA questions how artists are able to survive without bending to dominant values and aesthetics, while simultaneously

underscoring the power and necessity of art as a tool for political critique.

[Captured State at Summerhall, Edinburgh, until 30 Nov](#)

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