

**LIA PERJOVSCHI**  
**Performances 1987 - 2007**

**Project Space: 22 May – 29 June 2008**

Wilkinson Gallery is pleased to present a solo show of documented performances by Romanian artist Lia Perjovschi. An active artist for over 20 years both independently and in collaboration with her partner Dan Perjovschi, she has built up a vast body of work that reflects both her personal development and the momentous history of her country.

The exhibition curatorally distinguishes between works made before and after Ceausescu's toppling in the revolution of December 1989 and charts Perjovschi's sometime angry, sometime melancholic, sometime humorous responses to Romania's ever changing, perhaps progressing, social and economic development through performance. In *Prohibited Area to Any Exterior Utterance*, performed in 1991 within Romania, she stands dominating a jetty; the peaceful sea beyond at odds with her angry, frustrated, figure dressed in a black leotard, make-up smeared over her face; throwing screwed up messages on paper to the land-based audience. What do the messages say? Are they a challenge? A challenge to those outside the marooned jetty, those in the West? In *I am fighting for my right to be different* (1993) the artist appears sitting alongside a crude human dummy. The artist takes off her outer layer of clothing, dresses the dummy to make it appear like her. With every shift of her body, every change of sitting, she tempts the dummy to imitate her before losing her temper and wrestling the dumb object to the ground. Pressure and persuasion has not worked, and aggression is the last resort for the desperate. Four years previous to the performance, Romania bucked Europe's trend of peaceful revolution against communism with the violent overthrow and execution of Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife.

Perjovschi's body of work remains visceral throughout, yet through physical humor, she never allows it to be self-worthy. In *Lia Approach* (1997 – 2002), documented six times in this exhibition, the artist approaches and 'befriends' an unwitting participant. Typically the 'victim' at first fails to notice, discomfort and bemusement sweeping over their faces as they realise this encroachment. For the viewer however it is amusing to see a stranger's natural fear of the other, of the uninvited. Again, in *Lia Loop* (1997), a playfulness can be discerned through the artist's repeated bouncing on an unseen trampoline. Yet the artist remains in silhouette against the concrete Bucharest skyline observed behind her. In the same manner Perjovschi's work is that of contrasts, an artist expressing twenty years of physical creative freedom against a turbulent, oppressive, historical backdrop.

This exhibition marks Perjovschi's first exhibition with Wilkinson and only her second in London. Her work has previously been included in exhibitions at Tate Modern and the ICA and will be at the Biennale of Sydney 2008 and Modern Art Oxford in 2009. Collaborating with Dan Perjovschi she shared a major retrospective at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University (2007). The artist currently lives and works in Bucharest.