

MACS

Musée des Arts Contemporains
Grand-Hornu

Nedko Solakov
The Miner's Dream

20.09.25 > 10.05.26

PRESS PACK





A Cornered Solo Show #6. *The Miner's Dream* (studio view), 2025. Photo: Dimitar Solakov

Introduction to the exhibition

Bulgarian artist Nedko Solakov began his career in the 1980s, after studying mural painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sofia, and then training at the Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp (HISK) in 1986.

He emerged onto the art scene in a tense socio-political context, Bulgaria being at the time under the influence of the Soviet regime. Very early on, he adopted a critical stance towards this regime, an attitude which he has maintained throughout his career by regularly addressing contemporary political and social issues.

Writing and storytelling occupy a central place in his work. Through text, Solakov infuses his works and installations with irony and humour imbued with gentle sarcasm and self-mockery.

A multidisciplinary visual artist, he explores the polysemy of language and ideas, playing with a multiplicity of supports and materials. His visual language, at first appearance naïve, in fact, conceals a complex practice, at once committed, poetic and playful.

With *A Cornered Solo Show*, Nedko Solakov has, since 2021, been installing his creations in the discreet corners of museums – often neglected passageways such as halls, stairwells or changing rooms. He arranges drawings, paintings, collages and handwritten texts, playing with the walls and their angles to create a form of marginal exhibition, engendering a dialogue of complicity between his work, the place and the visitors. His interventions address current issues – wars, ecology, institutional absurdities, and museum crises – in a tone that mixes sarcasm and personal reflections. By investing these ‘corners’, he transforms the periphery into an introspective, critical space.

For this sixth part of the series, the exhibition *The Miner’s Dream* is inspired by the stories and hopes that have traversed the Grand-Hornu site.

A Cornered Solo Show #6 evokes the reverie of a miner, his contemplative dream at the top of a mountain, surrounded by his family. This daydream provides him with strength to work and feeds his desire for a peaceful, contemplative existence. This figure embodies both the endless cycle of hard labour and the vital dependence on it to ensure the survival of his family. Like Sisyphus, he exhausts himself tirelessly in a repetitive task, the exit from which seems to be constantly postponed, generating an allegory of work as a necessity, a burden and a driving force of hope.

Before his intervention at the MACS, five institutions had already hosted an installation from the series: the Grand Duke Jean Museum of Modern Art in Luxembourg (MUDAM), the National Museum of 21st Century Arts in Rome (MAXXI), the Belvedere in Vienna, the National Gallery of Fine Arts in Sofia, and the Ludwig Museum in Budapest.

A Cornered Solo Show

#1
MUDAM - Musée d’Art Moderne
Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg,
2021

#2
MAXXI - Museo nazionale delle
arti del XXI secolo, Rome, 2022

#3
Belvedere, Vienna, 2023

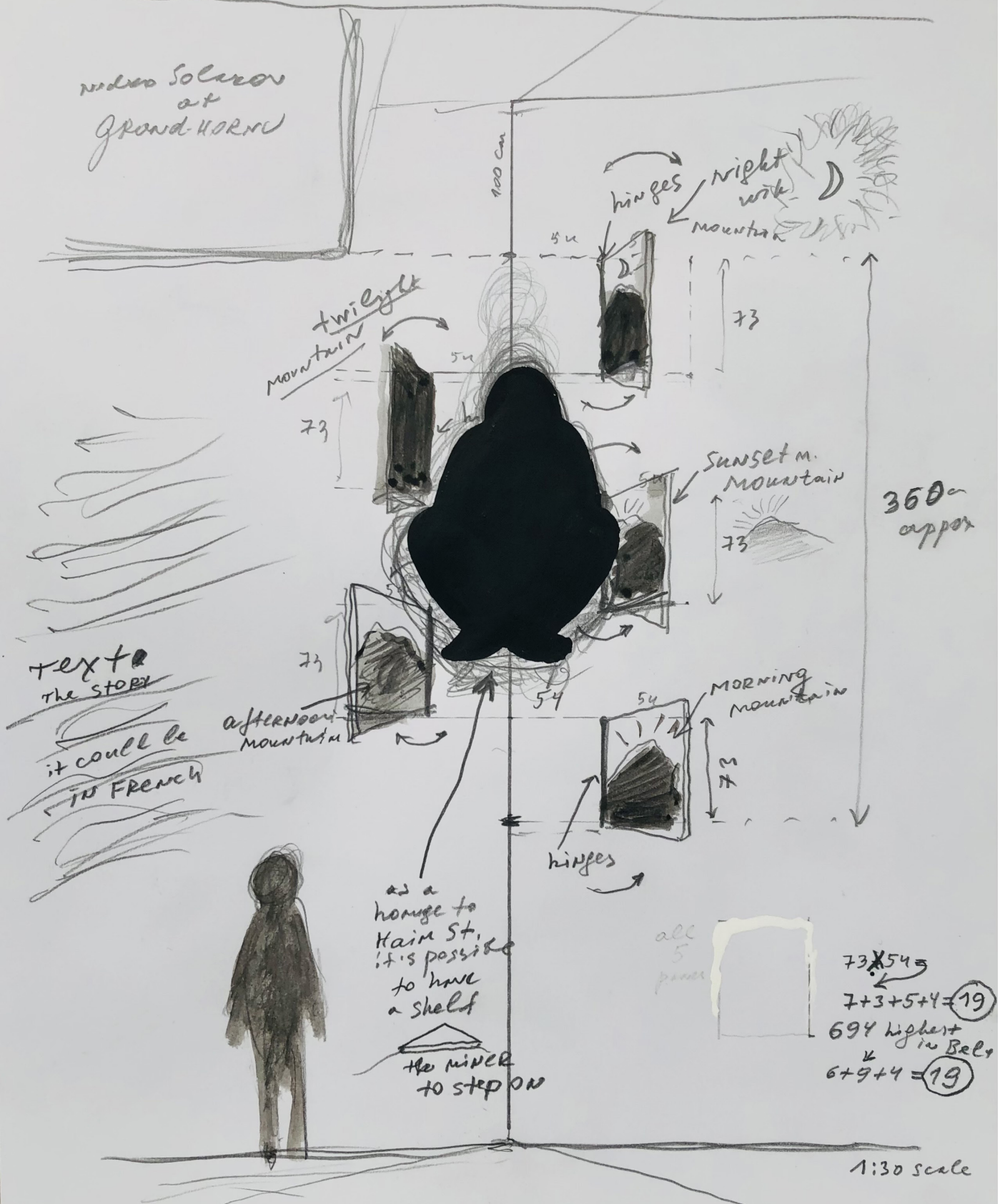
#4
The National Gallery, Sofia, 2024

#5
Ludwig Museum, Budapest,
2024

#6
MACS - Musée des Arts
Contemporains au Grand-Hornu,
2025

A CORNERED Solo Show #6 The MINER'S DREAM

video Solonov
at
Grand-HORNU



73x54, all panels -> gesso over plywood -> oil/acrylic on hinges all So we could read just this. it's possible the first two to be moved by visitors.

CONV 24
1.9.

The Miner's Dream

By Nedko Solakov

There was this miner who was working hard to provide for his family. Sometimes when he went down the shaft, packed in the elevator cage with his fellow miners, he would fall asleep for just a few seconds and would always have this dream – that he was suddenly with his family on the top of that beautiful mountain, which was as high as the depth of the deepest shaft of his mine and, of course, the mountain was much higher than that hill known as “the highest mountain in the whole of Belgium”, which was only 694 meters; and that much-higher mountain was so beautiful in his dream, especially when the light changed it – from morning mountain to afternoon mountain and then to sunset mountain and then to twilight mountain and then to moonlit nighttime mountain and back to dawn mountain. Thanks to that dream, which lasted only a few seconds, he had the strength to work hard and to keep providing for his family, even though he felt a bit isolated, as he was always being squeezed into the corner of that tiny elevator cage by his fellow workers (one day, quite naively, he shared his dream with them).

If the curator would give carte blanche, I can move this heartbreaking story into one of the big exhibition rooms, but for the time being, it seems, it will remain here, cornered.

This text, handwritten by the artist on the wall, is part of the installation.



About the artist

Born in 1957 in Cherven Bryag, Bulgaria, Nedko Solakov lives and works in Sofia.

Since the 1990s, Nedko Solakov's artworks have been exhibited on many occasions in European and American museums. His work has also been presented at numerous world-renowned art events, such as the Venice Biennale, the São Paulo Biennial, and the Kassel documenta. In 2007, at the 52nd Venice Biennale, he received the 'Honourable Mention to an artist exhibited in the central international exhibition' award.

His works belong to more than fifty international museums and public collections, among them MoMA New York, Tate Modern, London and Centre Pompidou, Paris.

Solo exhibitions (selection)

Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea do Chiado, Lisbon (2002) ; de Appel, Amsterdam (2002) ; CCA Kitakyushu, Japan (2002) ; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2003) ; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (2003) ; Centre d'Art Santa Mònica, Barcelona (2004) ; Kunsthaus Zurich (2005) ; Castello di Rivoli, Rivoli (2009) ; Sofia City Art Gallery (2009) ; Galleria Borghese, Rome (2010) ; Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg (2015) ; BOZAR, Brussels (2018) ; ICA – Institute of Contemporary Art, Sofia (2018) ; La Panacée, Montpellier (2018) ; Mudam Luxembourg – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (2021) ; MAXXI – Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome (2022) ; Oberes Belvedere, Vienna (2023) ; The National Gallery, Sofia (2024) ; Ludwig Museum, Budapest (2024).

In 2003-2005 an extensive mid-career "A 12 1/3 (and even more) Year Survey" was presented at Casino Luxembourg, Rooseum, Malmö and O.K Linz.

In 2008-2009 the "Emotions" solo project was exhibited at Kunstmuseum Bonn, Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, and Institut Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt.

In 2011-2012 his retrospective "All in Order, with Exceptions" was presented at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Fondazione Galleria Civica Trento ("All in (My) Order, with Exceptions"), S.M.A.K., Ghent and Fundação de Serralves, Porto.

Collective exhibitions (selection)

Venice Biennial, 45th (Aperto'93), 48th (1999), 49th (2001), 50th (2003), 52nd (2007) ; Istanbul Biennial, 3th (1992), 4th (1995) et 9th (2005) ; São Paulo Biennial (1994) ; Manifesta, Rotterdam, 1st (1996), 2nd (1997), 4th (2011) ; 5th Lyon Biennial (2000) ; Sonsbeek 9, Arnhem (2001) ; Cetinje Biennial, Montenegro, 4th (2002), 5th (2004) ; 1st Lodz Biennial (2004) ; 7th Sharjah Biennial (2005) ; 3th Tirana Biennial (2005) ; 2nd Seville Biennial (2006) ; 2nd Moscow Biennial (2007) ; documenta, Kassel, 12 (2007), 13 (2012) ; 16th Sydney Biennial (2008) ; Prospect 1, New Orleans Biennial (2008) ; 3th Singapore Biennial (2011) ; Kathmandu Triennale (2017) ; 1st Riga International Biennial for Contemporary Art and Lahore Biennale (2018) ; Biennial Lahore 02 (2020).



The MACS | GRAND-HORNU

Established in the former Grand-Hornu colliery (an example of 19th century industrial archaeology now listed as UNESCO world heritage), the MACS is acknowledged as one of the most successful examples in northern Europe of the conversion of an abandoned industrial site into a cultural centre. Since it was opened in 2002, the museum has indeed offered a broad public the opportunity to discover major international exhibitions within an architectural showcase that combines the site's history with contemporary creation.

Located away from major urban centres, the Grand-Hornu site is noted for the "genius of the place" which for more than 20 years has inspired a number of internationally recognised artists, including Christian Boltanski, Anish Kapoor, Giuseppe Penone, Tony Oursler, Adel Abdessemed and Matt Mullican, to create specific projects here. As an engaged partner alongside the artists, the MACS supports the production of ambitious works, notably through its artists' residency policy, undertaken by the museum's team both in situ and extra-muros (LaToya Ruby Frazier, Fiona Tan and Daniel Turner), and pays particular attention to the visual arts scene in the Wallonia-Brussels Federation through its monograph exhibitions.

Together with the Centre for Innovation and Design of the Province of Hainaut (CID), the MACS forms a cultural hub which, has become a popular destination for art lovers and cultural tourism, not least as it can also offer them the pleasures of a park, a gastronomic restaurant and a specialist design and contemporary art shop.

Engagement programme and arts education activities

MACS is dedicated to making contemporary art accessible to everyone through a variety of engagement activities. These include free daily guided tours, creative workshops, family days, meetings, debates, and lectures. The museum places a strong emphasis on serving schoolchildren, for instance, by offering mobile classroom activities as part of the PECA (Cultural and Artistic Education Public Programme). Additionally, MACS is committed to including vulnerable audiences and collaborates with local institutions to create innovative partnerships that support mediation and arts education activities.

FOR A COMPLETE LIST OF ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS AVAILABLE TO THE AUDIENCE, VISIT THE MUSEUM'S WEBSITE.

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