



Navalny | Absence/Presence

International Mail Art exhibition
curated by Ruggero Maggi
organization Matera International Photography

Artists can do little, but little is always better than nothing. One cannot look, know and turn away. Reacting is a moral obligation for everyone. Alexei Navalny's name is added to the already long list of Russian martyrs for freedom and human rights. Freedom denied to an individual blameless except to oppose a totalitarian regime like Putin's is always to be considered an outrage for all human beings.

The ordeal Navalny has had to endure leaves one speechless. The truth will be known sooner or later, but the responsibility for what happened is certain. He died in the IK-3 maximum security prison in Kharp, after three years of suffering and torture. He was kept in a rigorous prison, in an isolation cell, a concrete box: a room of 6/7 square metres where there is nothing except a stool, a sink, a hole in the floor and a bed that is attached to the wall to prevent lying down, a glass, a book, a toothbrush. Nothing else.



Opponents of the regime must be put down: if they don't die killed by assassins, if they don't die poisoned, then they are sent to Siberia. What Putin will not be able to stop is the worldwide revulsion at his obtuse and criminal way of acting. Violence declined in all its possible forms, such as the war in Ukraine, the slaughter of every political and military antagonist. Blind brutality in place of reasoning, in place of dialogue. Weapons against books, against art, against culture. Ferocity as the only way. At the entrance to the Arctic gulag (Polar Wolf) where Navalny was killed, there is a gate with the mocking inscription: 'Happiness is not far away'. The resemblance to the ignoble 'Work makes you free' that overlooked the entrance to the Nazi lager in Auschwitz is evident and gives a good idea of who the Russians who desire freedom and democracy are fighting against. In Brussels, Yulia Navalnaya has asked the European countries to hit Putin harder. A woman to lead Russia... let's hope.

Navalnaya is taking the step many had hoped for: picking up her husband's political legacy and asking the Russian opposition, scattered between prison and exile, but not dead, to join her in the fight against Putin. Many see in Yulia a woman who has chosen to transform herself from wife, mother and friend into a leader, and want to believe in the words of writer Valerij Panjushkin: "Navalny's soul has passed through death and returned on the third day, it is the same, but different, it no longer jokes, it can barely hold back tears. And she is a woman. And she will win. Such a hero is not happy in the end, but he always wins".

Sometimes **Absence** screams more than **presence**...

The exhibition will take place in **November 2024** at the **Palazzo Ducale Malvinni-Mavezzi** as part of the project **"Matera, the art that unites"**.

1. THEME **NAVALNY | ABSENCE/PRESENCE**

2. SIZE **POSTCARD** (format 10.5x15 cm) up to a maximum of 3 postcards

3. **FREE TECHNIQUE**

4. **DEADLINE 15 September 2024**

5. **SEND TO**

Ruggero Maggi – (project Absence/Presence)

C.so Sempione 67

20149 Milano Italy

6. Please, from the extra-European Countries, write on the envelope:

NO COMMERCIAL VALUE DOCUMENTS / DOCUMENTI SENZA VALORE COMMERCIALE

The works will remain in Ruggero Maggi's Amazon Archive or at any other entity that will be deemed appropriate.

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