

## **Adrian Paci**

Location: Tal Museum, 2nd floor, new part

Foreignness is a feeling that can be very strong. To overcome it, instead of being captured by it, sometimes a simple smile, a friendly word, a welcoming gesture is enough.

Adrian Paci knows the feeling of foreignness all too well. In 1997, shortly after graduating from the Art Academy in Tirana, he fled from the Albanian civil war to Italy, where he still lives today. Since then, his art has explored the consequences of migration and displacement, questions of exile and the enrichment of social coexistence through cultural mixing.

In the 20-minute video installation *The Encounter*, on view at the Tal Museum, Paci stands on a square of a small Sicilian town and shakes hands with hundreds of people. In a long filee, they pass him in a semicircle for a brief handshake and a small bow. From the slightly elevated perspective of the camera, which presumably overlooks the square from the upper floor of one of the adjacent houses, it remains unclear whether they are greeting Paci, congratulating him or receiving a blessing from him. The artist's interaction with the crowd unfolds a captivating effect. His hand creates movement on the square. It creates community in the hundredfold encounter with each and every individual and thus makes the potential connection between all people visible in a kind of ritual of closeness. With *The Encounter*, Paci conceives a utopian moment of the absence of foreignness. (roe)

Adrian Paci, born in 1969 in Shkodra, Albania, lives and works in Milan, Italy. He took part in the Biennale di Venezia in 1999 and 2005, represented Albania at the Venice Architecture Biennale in 2014 and had highly acclaimed solo exhibitions at the Haifa Museum of Art, Israel (2022), the Kunsthalle Krems, Austria (2019), and the Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve (National Gallery of Art), Tirana, Albania (2019), among others.