It went like this—I prepared for the curators’ meeting in my Sofia studio in early January 2014 as precise and concise visual information as possible for all the sensible works I have done since my graduation from the Sofia Art Academy in 1981. 30 years of production, 5,683 files, 14.2 gigabytes altogether, put on fancy memory sticks for everybody. We went through all of them in two days (seeing also, in original, all of the pre-1989 works). At the end of the second day, all the curators came to a consensus and selected -the best works for each year (I didn’t interfere, mostly). You can see the selected works now presented as thumbnails on all thirty spreads related to the thirty years of art making.

Later each one of them selected only one work per year; some works overlapped, some didn’t. These works, which will be presented live in the venues are nicely placed on many pages, with a yellow mark for IKON, a blue one for S.M.A.K., and red for Serraves. Out of the broad selection, I made the so-called Folders for each year, which the visitors can look through and read, while sitting on the folders’ crates. Some of these are also inside the book. As you can see from the title, all this is called All in Order, with Exceptions.

But there is a special ‘insert’ into this traveling show—in Galleria Civica Trento, I will do All in (my) Order, with Exceptions. I have selected works out of the works initially rejected by the curators, the best of the bad ones. They have gray dots.

Enjoy, if you can; I am tired.
NEDKO SOLAKOV
All in Order, with Exceptions

Nedko Solakov (1957, Cherven Briag, Bulgaria) occupies a singular position in the contemporary art scene, as illustrated by his large-scale project for dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel. Solakov resorts to a wide range of artistic techniques, from drawing to painting, from photography to collage, from sculpture to installation, from text to video, to unmask the conventions of daily life, as well as the stereotypes of contemporary behavior and thought through a sharp and precisely targeted humour, articulating his own personal history with collective history, the private sphere with the social dimension, reality with imagination.

Now presented at the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, All in Order, with Exceptions, Nedko Solakov's most comprehensive retrospective to date, is a co-production with some of Europe's leading arts institutions: Ikon Gallery (Birmingham, UK), S.M.A.K. (Ghent, Belgium) and Galleria Civica (Trento, Italy). The show features an extensive chronologic selection of Solakov's artistic practices between 1981 and 2011.

In each museum, the exhibition has featured different works selected by the directors of the co-curating institutions, who have worked closely with the artist in researching his archive. Thus each institution has displayed sets of 30 pieces not shown by the others, except in the cases where the directors' choices may have overlapped.

The vast quantity and diversity of drawings, paintings, murals, photographs, videos, reconstructions of installation pieces, as well as original projects made specifically for this exhibition, will certainly surprise Serralves visitors' this summer, including those who may have some familiarity with the artist's work.

To a certain extent, the exhibition becomes another artwork in itself. This is an ambitious project that reconstitutes Solakov's life and work according to an autobiographical trajectory arranged from room to room. The vastness and diversity of the work produced across thirty years, which spanned important historical changes in both Bulgaria and Europe, will also be accessible to visitors through a set of archive folders created especially for this occasion, allowing both a personal and encyclopaedic knowledge of Nedko Solakov's world, filtered by his keen sense of humour.

To accompany the show, a major catalogue was published including images of all the works featured in the four exhibitions, as well as documentation from the artist's personal archives and especially commissioned essays by Iara Boubnova (Director of the Sofia Institute of Contemporary Art), Christy Lange (Associate Editor of Frieze Magazine), and an interview with the artist by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev (Artistic Director of dOCUMENTA (13)).

João Fernandes
Director of the Serralves Museum
Curator: João Fernandes
Co-production: Ikon Gallery, Birmingham; Fondazione Galleria Civica-Centro di Ricerca sulla Contemporaneità di Trento; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent; Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves, Porto

Guided Tours:
20 SEP (Thu), 6:30 pm
by João Fernandes

11 OCT (Thu), 6:30 pm
by Ricardo Nicolau

Saturdays from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., guided tours by the Educational Service, in English.