

OFF SCENE

OFF SCENE

23.-30.4.2014

school presents works by

Selma Doborac

Randa Maddah

Monira Al Qadiri

Ana Hoffner

Wafa Gabsi

23.4.2014, 19.00

KEX Studio

Lectures and sound sets:

Wafa Gabsi

Monira Al Qadiri

school

24.4.2014, 19.00

Kunsthalle Exnergasse

Exhibition opening with works by

Selma Doborac

Randa Maddah

Monira Al Qadiri

Ana Hoffner

Exhibition 25.-30.4.2014

Talking about war

In an age when we can witness war scenarios as they happen in real time, how should images look like in order to develop the potentials of a differentiated point of view? Four filmic works will be shown that deal with the memory and reality of war or what lies underneath and shift the gaze away from the centre of the scene. An attempt to expand the emotional vocabulary needed to fathom armed conflicts and our inherent involvement and to understand the political contexts and interests as well. (school)

school presents works by Selma Doborac, Randa Maddah, Monira Al Qadiri and Ana Hoffner

Monira Al Qadiri
Behind the Sun

In the past few years, »the apocalypse« has become a resurgent concept. With the Arab Spring, riots, financial crises, civil wars, natural disasters and random incidents of terrorism, apocalyptic theories have multiplied as we continue to live under uncertain circumstances. The future is dark, and the present seems to be ever more destructive in a myriad of ways. But how has the image of the apocalypse changed aesthetically because of this modern predicament? Is it still imagined within the religious framework of doomsday, or has it morphed into divergent more realistic scenarios? This work aims to explore these questions by recreating the latent nostalgic likeness of doomsday that lives within our imaginations, but which had also materialized in one instance. After the first Gulf War in 1991, countless oil fields in Kuwait were set ablaze during the retreat of invading forces. Those months following the war were nothing short of the classic image of a biblical apocalypse: the earth belching fire and the black scorched sky felt like a portrait of hell as it should be, an almost romanticized vision of the end of the world. Werner Herzog, lured by the surrealism of this present-day hell, shot his docu-fiction film »Lessons of Darkness« there which placed images of the oil fires alongside Christian biblical texts and a Wagner soundtrack. Inspired by his endeavor 20 years later, I am re-exploring this cataclysmic event and attempting to expand its meaning, especially because the idea of imminent doom is even more omnipresent in today's world. Amateur VHS video footage of the oil fires is juxtaposed with audio monologues from Islamic television programs of the same period. At the time, the tools used to represent religion were geared towards visualizing god through nature. Trees, waterfalls, mountains, and animals were the visual staple of religious media, and the narration was not that of the Koran, but of Arabic poetry recited by a skilled orator with a deep voice.





Selma Doborac

It was a day just like any other in spring or summer.

In »It was a day just like any other in spring or summer.« the first-person narrator explores over the course of three brief episodes the experiences of four people, all of them related to one another; the events occurred during a bomb attack in war-time Bosnia in 1992. The story is told partly through descriptions of a remembered past inscribed into the filmic image in the form of a sequential textual trace, partly through a landscape that is featured in the memories as well as seen in the present, mediated by a mise-en-scène that attempts to find a visual structure, by means of continuous tracking shots, corresponding to the narrated past on location per se. From the constant back-and-forth between what is seen and what is read an experimental set-up of representation emerges, resulting, inevitably, in an unresolved overall picture, as the textual level not only occasionally constrains the visual level but sometimes, of its own accord, even obliterates it. While the titles in which layers of memory are couched (de)construct the notion of non-communicability, the landscape images encased in rides both en-title and give away the impossibility of making a likeness of (war-like) actions.

Ana Hoffner
After the Transformation

System change 1989/90. While the political situation seemingly shifts from one day to another there is a long-term social process behind this change. At the same time the transformation is not complete, something which becomes visible in the every-day context of people who exist today in one and tomorrow in another system. »After the Transformation« by Ana Hoffner reflects these social transformation processes as an individual experience and combines an embodied and structural transformation, which emerges through the change of body and state. After having taken testosterone and having provoked a voice change Hoffner starts to work with a voice coach. (...) Together with the voice coach the artist trains how to make this text ›sound‹ or how to face the transformation. The training opens thus to an emancipatory negotiation of the transformation as an evaluation of an individual statement towards seemingly external circumstances which point at a collective normalization and incorporation into a system. In the video we experience for instance the moment of a voice break when the transformation might be finished. When Hoffner stops the training she refuses a complete transformation. As the voice break rejects certainty Hoffner marks a position inside and outside of a system and questions unification. (Julia Kurz)





Randa Maddah
Light Horizon

»Light Horizon« by Randa Maddah is set in Ain Fit, one of many villages in the Golan Heights, where people carry identity documents that read »Nationality: undefined.« When Israel occupied the Syrian territory in 1967, most of the civilian population were pushed out of the area leaving the few remaining in a state of isolation. They and their descendants are eligible for both Israeli and Syrian citizenship, but the geopolitical situation prevents them from integrating fully into either state.* The film features an actress meticulously tidying up the room of a bombed-out house, decorating, making herself at home, until she sits down with her back to the observers and looks out in the distance, across a war-torn landscape. The scars of this ruined landscape are superposed with the reality of the deadly civil war going on in Syria for three years, turning national identity into something desperately destabilizing. In this tragic setting, the act of cleaning, which might be seen as a way of casting out the ghosts of a terrifying past, becomes deeply political in the midst of destruction.

* yourmiddleeast.com

Monira Al Qadiri
Behind the Sun
2013
9:30 min

Selma Doborac
It was a day just like any other in spring or summer.
2012
17 min

Ana Hoffner
After the Transformation
2013
15:52 min

Randa Maddah
Light Horizon
2012
7:22 min

Monira Al Qadiri is a Kuwaiti artist born in Senegal and educated in Japan. In 2010 she received a Ph.D. in inter-media art from Tokyo University of the Arts. Her research is focused on the aesthetics of sadness in the Middle-East, and her works explore the dysfunctional gender roles in Arab societies, as well as the displacement of cultural and religious identities. She is also a member of the artist collective GCC.
moniraalqadiri.com

Selma Doborac was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She lives in Vienna and works in the area of experimental and essayistic film, photography, installation and conceptual art. From 2002 to 2007 studies and graduation at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Department for Mixed Media Strategies (Bernhard Leitner). From 2008 to 2012 studies and graduation at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Department for Film and Art (Harun Farocki).

Ana Hoffner is an artist, theorist, performer and mentor based in Vienna. S_he teaches as a Senior Lecturer and researches as a participant of the PhD in Practice Program at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Hoffner understands the artistic field as a place of knowledge production. Body, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, migration and technology are deconstructed by means of analysis, positionality and embodiment and recontextualized in the visual field.
anahoffner.com

Randa Maddah was born in Majdal Shams in the occupied Syrian Golan. She graduated from Damascus University, Faculty of Fine Arts in 2005. She is a founding member of Fateh Mudarris center for arts and cultures at the occupied Golan Heights.

All four artists participate in solo and group exhibitions and festivals internationally.

Born in Tunisia, Wafa Gabsi studied Fine Art in Tunis and then earned her Master in Cultural Studies from the University of Paris, La Sorbonne. Currently, she is carrying out doctoral research on contemporary southern Mediterranean artists in the international circuit of art and cultural globalization. The central question of her research is about the issue of »Arab« identity.

school is a space and artist collective founded by Yasmina Haddad and Andrea Lumplecker in 2011. Their exhibition series PERFORMATIVE SCREENINGS focuses on the screening as a frame, and defines a specific realm within selected artistic positions that always relate to (political) realities.
weloveschool.org

KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE

Währinger Straße 59, Stiege / Staircase 2

KEX Studio

Währinger Straße 59, Stiege / Staircase 3

1090 Wien / Vienna, Austria

kunsthalleexnergasse.wuk.at

kunsthalle.exnergasse@wuk.at

T + 43 (0)1 401 21 41/ -42, F -67

Opening hours / Öffnungszeiten OFF SCENE: Freitag bis Samstag, Dienstag, Mittwoch

/ Friday to Saturday, Tuesday, Wednesday: 13-18.00

Limited building accessibility. If you would like to know more about accessibility,

please call prior to your visit: T +43 1 40121 41 / Limitierte Barrierefreiheit. Für

Information rufen Sie bitte vor Ihrem Besuch: T +43 1 40121 41

Leiterin / Director: Andrea Löbel

Ausstellungen / Exhibitions: Lina Morawetz

Medien & Ausstellungen / Media & exhibitions: Klaus Schafler

Technik / Technics: Ernst Muck, Stefan Ider, Thomas Sandri, Simon Schmid, Simon Schwaiger

Praktikantin / Intern: Laura Theuretzbacher

co-op eine Zusammenarbeit der Kunsträume Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Kunsthalle Exnergasse

und das weisse haus anlässlich der Mediterranea 16, Young Artists Biennale / a cooperation

of the art institutions Kunstraum Niederoesterreich, Kunsthalle Exnergasse and

das weisse haus on the occasion of the Mediterranea 16, Young Artists Biennale.

BUNDESKANZLERAMT  ÖSTERREICH

WIEN
KULTUR 

 bjcem

KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE | WUK

