

2 December, 2013, to 4 May, 2014

Vot ken you mach ?

**Art, Films, Concerts, Lectures,
Talks, Comics on Jewish Identities
in Europe Today**

Yael Bartana (Amsterdam / Tel Aviv / Berlin),
Amit Epstein (Berlin), Karolina Freino (Wrocław) mit James
Muriuki (Nairobi), Eduard Freidmann (Vienna),
Rafał Jakubowicz (Poznań), Sharone Lifschitz (London),
Nikola Radić Lucati (Tel Aviv / Belgrade), Tamara Moyzes (Prague),
Ruth Novaczek (London), Krystyna Piotrowska (Warsaw),
Barak Reiser (Frankfurt a. M.), Eran Schaerf (Berlin), Anna Schapiro
(Dresden), Maya Schweizer (Berlin / Rome),
Tehnica Schweiz - Gergely László & Péter Rákosi (Berlin / Budapest),
Tal Sternghost (Berlin), Shira Wachsmann (Berlin), Arye Wachsmuth (Vienna),
Claire Waffel (Berlin)

Kunsthhaus Dresden

Städtische Galerie für Gegenwartskunst

Rähnitzgasse 8, D-01097 Dresden

www.kunsthhausdresden.de

Di-Do 14-19 Uhr, Fr-So 11-19 Uhr, Fr Eintritt frei

Jeden Freitag Führung 16.30 Uhr

Vot ken you mach?

Art, Films, Concerts, Lectures, Talks, Comics on Jewish Identities in Europe Today

The Kunsthaus Dresden and its partners in Wrocław, Malmö and Dresden are delighted to open the exhibition and event series *Vot ken you mach?* dedicated to Jewish identities in present-day Europe. The Jewish-Russian composer Aaron Lebedeff posed this question in New York in the 1920s. In the project named after his song, a large variety of artistic answers are given almost one hundred years later. At the time, the song written in Anglicized Yiddish gave a linguistic form to the observation that identities are in a state of flux between different 'descents', the past and the future, thus corresponding with our present-day notion of identity as a constellation of potentialities.

Vot ken you mach? presents works in diverse media by young contemporary artists in Europe on the history and present of Jewish identity. The artists of the show examine historical constellations of lively experience and identity, constructing conditions that enable treating individuality and history in an open way. What they have in common in the third generation after the Shoah is their concern to depart from established patterns between inhibition, compensation and trauma and by means of formal artistic decisions and the reflection on images point ways to future forms of identity.

Vot ken you mach? Concerts, films, talks, performances and further exhibitions offer insights into questions related to art and (Jewish) identity: The thematic focuses include strategies of identity shifts in pop culture, new scenes of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe, family secrets and the silence between generations, remembrance as obligation, the unwritten cultural history of Jewish revenge and the search for a 'normal' Jewish everyday life.

Curatorial team

Christiane Mennicke-Schwarz (Dresden)
Dorota Monkiewicz (Wrocław)
Valentina Marcenaro (Dresden)
Rafał Jakubowicz (Poznań)

In cooperation with

the MWW - Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław
the Jewish Community in Dresden
the Malmö Konstmuseum

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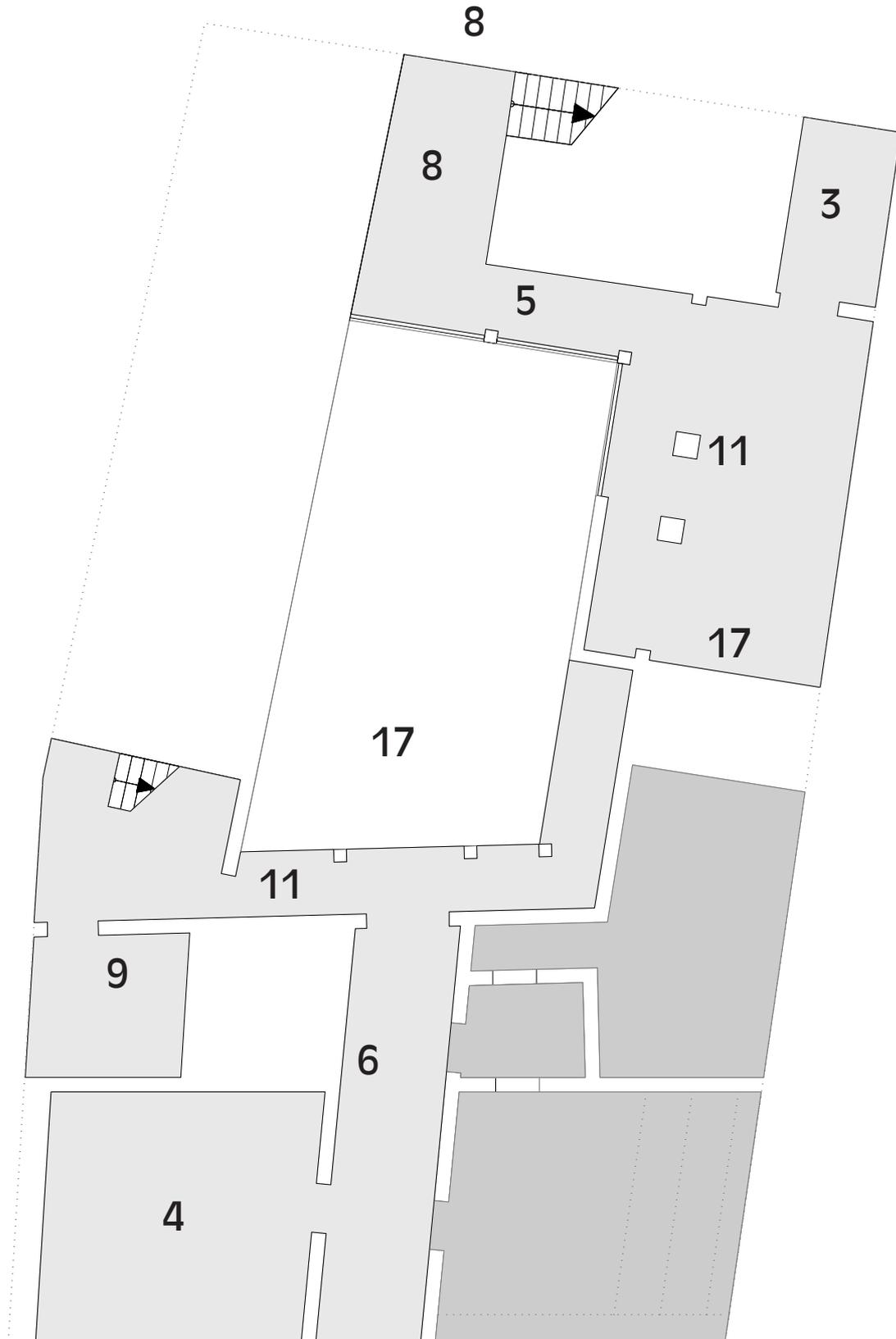
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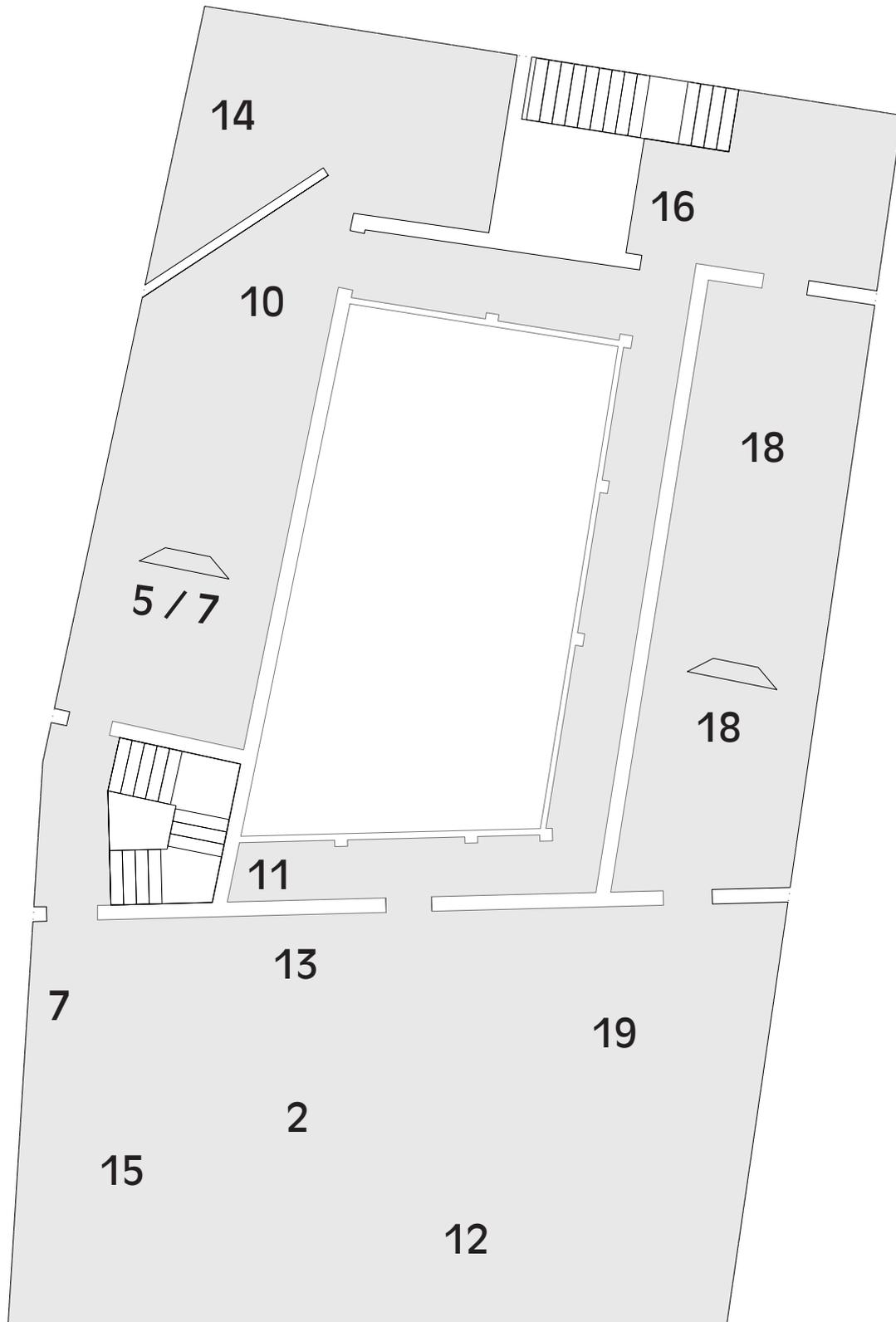
the German Federal Cultural Foundation
the die Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung with the Ostsächsischen Sparkasse Dresden

1 Yael Bartana
will be shown in Militärhistorisches
Museum der Bundeswehr

2 Amit Epstein
3 Karolina Freino mit
James Muriuki
4 Eduard Freidmann
5 Rafał Jakubowicz
6 Sharone Lifschitz
7 Nikola Radić Lucati



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| 8 | Tamara Moyzes | 14 | Maya Schweizer |
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| | | 19 | Claire Waffel |



Yael Bartana

1

Entartete Kunst Lebt / Degenerate Art Lives

2010

Film- und Klanginstallation, 16mm, 5 min. Loop

Courtesy Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

The piece *Degenerate Art Lives*, a 16 mm film installation by the Israeli artist Yael Bartana who lives in Berlin and Amsterdam, revives a central work of Otto Dix that is simultaneously connected to Dresden's history of art: His now famous depiction of the *Kriegskrüppel (War Cripples)* (1920) was shown at the first Dada exhibition in Berlin and was given as a gift to the collection of the Stadtmuseum Dresden. In 1933 the work was displayed in the first *Entartete Kunst* exhibition in Dresden as an example of an art defamed as 'degenerate'. The exhibition then toured numerous other German cities. From 1927 onwards, Dix was a professor at the Kunstakademie Dresden; he had to resign in 1933. He withdrew to "inward emigration" and receded to allegedly harmless landscape painting in his art. His pictures *War Cripples* (1920) and *The Trench* (1917), displaying the horrors of the First World War and from which Bartana took the characters for her film, were ranked as "degenerate art" by the National Socialists and were presumably destroyed.

The artistic work is an act of recovering Dix' lost works as well as his criticism of false ideals, patriotism, nationalism and heroism against the background of the First World War. The 'War Cripples' march again here. Instead of being excluded, dispelled or destroyed, they march in ever larger numbers, with ever louder steps on the screen and, in place of the ostracized political art of the 1920s, reclaim present-day significance: *Degenerate Art Lives!*

Yael Bartana, who in the past years has repeatedly triggered international controversies with her works regarding the way in which historical utopias and also current political issues are dealt with, alludes to the fact that art history and social development cannot be turned into closed chapters, and that one must reckon with the spirits of the past in the present as well.

Yael Bartana (* 1970, Kfar Yehezkel, Israel) lives and works in Tel Aviv, Berlin and Amsterdam.

Yael Bartanas film installation *Entartete Kunst Lebt / Degenerate Art Lives* will be shown as part of the exhibition *Vot ken you mach?* in cooperation with the Militärhistorisches Museum der Bundeswehr in Dresden in the museum building redesigned by Daniel Libeskind at Olbrichtplatz 2 (Tram 8).

AMIT EPSTEIN

2

Stockholm.Syndrome

2007-2010

Video, 72 min

(Israel / Germany; Hebrew, Yiddish, English, German with English subtitles)

Part 1: *Golden Mission*, 2007 (15 min)

Part 2: *European Haven*, 2007 (10 min)

Part 3: *Jewish Revenge*, 2010 (47 min)

The film trilogy *Stockholm Syndrome* deals with the coming of age of young Israelis in a European culture of exile shaped by the grandparents and with the love between grandchildren and grandparents, through which the paradoxes of trauma and safety are passed on and transformed. Even decades after emigration, Europe remains the homeland of childhood and the resource of one's cultural identity for those who in response to anti-Semitism in Germany built up a state of their own or who later fled from certain murder. For the next generations, Israel and Europe are two poles of cultural orientation. In a futuristic way, the memorial of the Negev Brigade sets itself off in Part 2 as a site of remembrance of the Israeli war of independence, where two female dancers sing of Israel as the new homeland, before the young protagonist is drawn to the homeland of his grandparents. With *Golden Mission* (2007), *European Haven* (2007) and *Jewish Revenge* (2010), all three parts of *Stockholm Syndrome* will be shown for the first time in an exhibition. In the final part of the trilogy completed in 2010 entitled *Jewish Revenge*, the camera accompanies a young Israeli arriving in present-day Berlin. Confused, angry and shocked by the undestroyed sites in Berlin, the architecture of National Socialism and also by the sceneries of memorial architecture, the young protagonist played by the artist himself painfully becomes aware of the hitherto abstract historical relations he was only familiar with from history books. It is only in the encounter with Germany today that he feels paradoxically Jewish and becomes a 'Jew' in the eyes of others. Between the steles of the Holocaust memorial he meets Germans of the same age. In the ensuing meetings and relationships, mutual reservations, understandable impulses of revenge on the side of the young Israeli and concernment, sweeping anti-Israeli attacks and feelings of guilt on the side of the German siblings – staged based on the fairy tale Peter and the Wolf – are entwined to a fatal symbiosis. A chain made of golden human teeth metonymically symbolises both the horror of the Shoah and the millions of cases of private enrichment by the non-Jewish, German population through the expulsion and murder of their neighbours.

"It's been a while. I know I shouldn't have kept you waiting but I'm here now." With the aid of quotes from pop music and (historical) hit culture, Amit Epstein succeeds in accomplishing the impossible: Naming the traumas, the undealt-with perpetrator-victim relations that still remain effective in the third generation, as well as their unexpected, humorous transcendence. Epstein's film can be viewed in the double sense of the German word 'Heimsuchung' (visitation / affliction): When searching for the homeland, there is no way around grief.

The Stockholm Syndrome 1 - 3:

Director: Amit Epstein

Screenplay: Amit Epstein

Camera: Benjamin Chiram

Editing: Part 1+ Part 2: Becky Ofek ; Part 3: Sarah J. Levine

Actors: Amit Epstein, Renana Raz, Shira Raz, Idit Neudoerfer, Sandra Sade, Anna von Rueden, Christoph Glaubacker, Wolfgang Menardi, Irina Szodruch and Clarutza Arden

Jewish Revenge was funded by the Hauptstadtkulturfond Berlin.

Amit Epstein works as an artist, film-maker and costume designer at several theatres in Germany; he has been living in Berlin since 2003 and became a German citizen in 2013.

KAROLINA FREINO & JAMES MURIUKI

3

Kenyan Pyramids / Kenijskie Piramidy

2011

Installation with 2 light boxes / video (11:30 min)

“For quite some time, I was of the opinion that my personal family history withheld a profound identity from me. I grew up in a status of ‘neither/nor’. Today, I see it differently: The fact of being a Jewish Pole sensitised me to what it means to call something my ‘own’, it raised an awareness of cultural constructions, their strengths on the one hand, and their conventionality and transience on the other. In a certain way, being Jewish freed me from having to define myself.” (Karolina Freino)

Karolina Freino’s objects of research are media and urban spaces. In her works, she has often dealt with the themes of experience and memory, minority and the representation of history and power, the contents of which she always transfers to the present. In 2013, she created for the facade of the Kunsthaus her permanent work *S.O.S. (Save our Souls)*, consisting of 9 convex mirror elements and translating the Morse signals, three short, three long, three short, · · · — — — · · · , defined in 1906 by the 2nd International Radio Telegraph Convention in Berlin, into a three-dimensional language. James Muriuki mainly works in the medium of experimental photography and video on visual codes in urban spaces.

Kenyan Pyramids was realised in 2011 in the frame of a project dedicated to individual memory and public remembrance in Nairobi. The work jointly developed by Karolina Freino and James Muriuki took up a presentation form of unknown origin often seen at markets, namely, the arrangement of goods to a kind of pyramid. Work at the markets, which does not count much, is predominantly carried out by women, who in Kenyan history are hardly attributed a position of their own either. The result consisted in a documentary video, a conversation with Penninah, a woman selling goods at the market, and in 32 potato pyramids in the urban space of Nairobi placed along streets, on squares, in parks and near monuments. The precariousness of living history and the discrepancy between the assumed and attributed role stand in a deliberately chosen, contrasting and at once productive relationship to the theme of *Vot ken you mach?*.

Karolina Freino (*1978 in Szczecin, Poland) lives and works in Wrocław.

James Muriuki (*in 1977 in Nairobi, Kenya) lives and works in Nairobi.

EDUARD FREIDMANN

4

The White Elephant Archive. Setting No.2

2013

Installation

In dealing with the Holocaust, which is always inscribed with the question of representability, two different stances often clash: Forgetting or bearing witness. The installation by the artist Eduard Freidmann documents the challenging constellation that emerges when these opposite stances meet in one's own family history. As the grandson of Armin Freudmann, who survived internment in several concentration camps and saved the poems he wrote during this time, but who ultimately decided not to speak about his experiences, Freidmann takes up the task of staging the testimonies of his family in the form of a media collage. Born in Vienna in 1915, the engineer and poet Freudmann had abandoned the Jewish faith early on and turned to the idea of communism. Eduard Freidmann's installation, which is permeated by literary and theoretical excerpts, is based on the family archive that his grandmother compiled after the grandfather's death in 1978. The heart of the archive is formed by the poems written in different concentration camps between 1942 and 1945, as well as theatre plays, correspondences, testimonies, biographical documents and sound and super 8 recordings documenting the family's relationship to the Shoah and to communism in Austria – the "living past" as the grandmother calls the collected documents in a telephone conversation, which she recorded specifically for her private archive. In the English-speaking world, one speaks of a "white elephant" when something is at once a blessing and a curse. For a performance lecture, which is part of the installation, Eduard Freidmann uses the never-performed plays of his grandfather as a starting point. He navigates between the genres of documentary and object theatre. For him, experimenting with the form of the object theatre appears necessary due to the increasing lack of contemporary witnesses as historical sources. In view of his grandfather's decision to not talk about the Holocaust, Eduard Freidmann, at the end of his lecture, raises the oppressive question of whether he "misuses the white elephant" and whether he, as a member of today's generation, does not face the Shoah "like the blind in front of colour" (Jean Améry).

The performance lecture was recorded in the form of a two-channel video installation showing in parallel to the lecture Freidmann's hands leafing through the text documents. Slides of selected archive documents are projected onto a table. In addition, the wall picture of a fist is on view, created in collaboration with Vera Freudmann. The fist is taken as a detail from the cover of a publication on the history of the KPÖ, the Austrian Communist Party. It belongs to her grandmother and represents her untiring will to actively shape the political events of her time and the practices of remembrance in the Freudmann family.

Eduard Freidmann (* 1979 in Vienna) lives and works as an artist in Vienna.

RAFAŁ

5

JAKUBOWICZ

Swimming Pool (Light projection)

2003 / 2013

A Swimming Pool, Wroniecka Str. 11a, Poznań, Poland

Friday, 4 April, 2003

Photography on aluminium, postcard

On 4 April, 1940, the stars on the dome of the synagogue on Wroniecka Street were taken down with the help of ropes [...] Afterwards the city officials gave the command to convert the building into a swimming pool. On the same day, sixty-three years later, Rafał Jakubowicz, in a one-time artistic intervention in his hometown of Poznań, projected the word “swimming pool” in Hebrew letters above the entrance of the old synagogue. The swimming pool installed in the synagogue by the National Socialist occupiers is in operation until this day. A photograph, a video and postcards, a medium that Rafał Jakubowicz frequently uses, are what remain of the artistic action. Neither the passers-by, who experienced Jakubowicz’ projection by chance, nor the children playing in the pool were probably aware that the swimming pool is a desecrated sacred building. The memories of it are erased in public consciousness and the projection in Hebrew also causes more irritation than insight. There are no traces of the synagogue to be found on the inside either, which Jakubowicz also filmed. The search for traces blurs in a diffuse play of water and light.

Chai

2011 / 2013

Photograph, postcard

In the form of blue graffiti on the walls of Israeli cities one can find the lettering ‘Am Israel Chai’ – “The people of Israel live!” This watchword has a long tradition, it stands for overcoming persecution and submission and is used as a heading, as a blessing, on numerous occasions, but it is also a reminder of fear and oppression. Rafał Jakubowicz’ interest lies in the message of the lettering but also in the comments and reactions surrounding it. In Israel, the graffiti ‘Am Israel Chai’ seems to have a stimulating effect, it can always be found with further commenting or expanding graffiti in urban space. In Polish or German cities, a Star of David can usually be found alongside anti-Semitic slogans, the words ‘Am Israel Chai’ are incomprehensible here in several respects, and especially in the snow they appear oddly out of place.

The ‘Chai’ project is accompanied by a postcard edition at the respective venues. It was realised for ‘A Cookbook for the Political Imagination’ (ed. by Sebastian Cichoński and Galit Eilat, 2011) which accompanied Yael Bartana’s exhibition in the Polish Pavilion at the 54th International Art Exhibition in Venice.

Rafał Jakubowicz (*1974 in Poznań) lives and works in Poznań.

RAFAŁ JAKUBOWICZ

5

&

NIKOLA RADIĆ LUCATI

7

Das Seine - Forschungsprojekt

2011

Nikola Radić Lucati, *As They Stand*, 14 photographs
Rafał Jakubowicz, *FIASKO*, lettering made of corroded steel

The artistic research project *Das Seine* connects places whose historical meanings today appear diametrically opposed to us: Staro Sajmište, the old fair ground in the centre of Belgrade which was turned into a concentration camp by the SS and Gestapo, and architecture views from the south of Tel Aviv and Jaffa. The architectural similarities between the photographed building complexes are therefore all the more striking to the viewer. Together, the fourteen photographs by Nikola Radić Lucati and a sculptural work by Rafał Jakubowicz, the lettering *FIASKO*, form the artistic research complex *Das Seine*, in which individual branches of the Bauhaus tradition are examined in different historical constellations. All fourteen photographs by Nikola Radić Lucati depict architectures built under the influence of the Bauhaus that were meant to give a positive signal for a social departure to modernism. While the buildings in Israel were to offer modern dwellings for a young nation, Staro Sajmište was erected in 1937 as an international fair complex and as a representative part of a 'New Belgrade', four years before the invasion of the National Socialists. Between 1942 and 1944, around 32,000 people were interned on the area between representative pavilions before being driven on to other camps. The camp counted as one of the most brutal Gestapo camps in occupied Serbia and was the site of incredible atrocities; the 7,000 Jewish women and children and elderly of Belgrade as well as members of the Roma people were murdered here. After the war, the grounds were offered to artists as studios. Today, the artists and descendants Roma families are living in the dilapidated buildings; all attempts of various initiatives to establish a memorial center for the victims have failed until now, despite a resolution by the city council.

The German lettering *FIASKO* made of corroded steel by Rafał Jakubowicz is the second part of the joint work *Das Seine*. By using a historical typography, Jakubowicz refers to the historical synthesis of two developments conceived of as contrary in German history, the artistic avant-garde and National Socialism. As an inmate of the Buchenwald concentration camp, the former Bauhaus student and colleague Franz Ehrlich designed the gate inscription *Jedem das Seine* in the style of the Bauhaus, which was partly adopted by the Nazis despite the official despise of international modern style. After being released in 1939, Ehrlich went on to design further structures including the commander's villa in Buchenwald and the camp's zoo. Afterwards, he was a soldier of the punishment unit 999 in Greece. In 1946 Franz Ehrlich allegedly returned from war imprisonment in Yugoslavia to Germany, where he became the head of the department for reconstruction in Dresden. As a master student of the Bauhaus, but also as a celebrated architect in the GDR, Ehrlich's biography invites one to call into question what is seemingly clear by considering the ambiguity of the missing parts of his biography.

Nikola Radić Lucati (*1971 in Belgrade) lives and works in Tel Aviv and Belgrade.
Rafał Jakubowicz (*1974 in Poznań) lives and works in Poznań.

Speaking Germany

2004 - today

In newspapers, conversations, on billboards and advertising columns, and on today's exterior facade of the Jewish Museum in Munich as well as on the internet (www.speaking-germany.de)

5 framed photographs, 3 framed newspapers

Video:

Munich In Four Courses (München in vier Gängen)

Sharone Lifschitz With Graham Westfield

2008, 29:22 min, one-channel HD video

Speaking Germany, an ongoing art project that began in Munich in 2004 by the London-based artist Sharone Lifschitz, visualises identity as a principle of encounter. In several German newspapers, the artists placed an ad reading: "Young Jewish woman visiting Germany would like to have a conversation about nothing in particular with anyone reading this" and thus opened up an artistic space of exchange that is less oriented towards answers than towards a personal dialogue and its continuance in the social discourse.

Through an invitation to an international art competition for the new building of the Jewish Museum in Munich, in which *Speaking Germany* won the first prize, a dialogical principle was initiated whose results are visible until today on the facade of the Jewish Museum.

Sharone Lifschitz began the project with the ads in various local and national newspapers, then set off on a tour of Germany in four legs from April to September 2005, meeting a total of 45 individuals and couples who had responded to the newspaper ad. The conversations lasting between an hour and a day (some continuing to the present) took place without a predetermined course. Sharone Lifschitz: "I had no pre-formulated questions, no plan of events and no central focus of interest. None of the persons I met was old enough to have been even just a teenager during the years of the war. Some had childhood memories; for others, it was history lying far in the past. No-one who had actively taken part in the war ever contacted me."

The artist then had excerpts from the conversations that came about in this manner printed on posters and ads in public space. The conversation therefore never reached a real end, but continued in the social discourse. From December 2006 to May 2007, text fragments from personal discussions and email correspondences between the artist and her dialogue partners appeared at public squares in the city of Munich.

Lifschitz divides the phases of publication and her video work with which she recorded impressions of the project according to the courses of a meal (as follows): *Aperitif: Several introductory questions and assumptions. Starter: About the way we picture people we have never met before. To be seen in the city. Main dish: Conversations on nothing special and related themes. A last drink: Farewells, subsequent thoughts and a few things that were almost left unmentioned.*

Sharone Lifschitz (*1971 in Beer Sheva, Israel) lives and works in London.

NIKOLA RADIĆ LUCATI

7

The fever (numismatic value)

2013

Installation

Research: Milovan Pisarri,

Photography: Archive of Yugoslavia

Commemorative plaques have a special function in history, they should ensure that famous people and events are permanently remembered in an aesthetically pleasant way. In Yugoslavian socialism, remembrance was closely tied to the hierarchy of state and party, medals were awarded for active resistance. Civilian victims were only remembered in exceptional cases. Nowadays, in the times of historical revisionism and fascist movements regaining strength, victims are intentionally left to oblivion in order to avoid remembrance leading to uneasy revelations and insights.

The commemorative plaque for providing a false testimony should transcend the obliteration of memory by connecting the living testimony with the atrocity at the location where the crime was committed. The commemorative plaque should simultaneously overcome the possibility of censorship by being mobile and installable in interior spaces in which the testimony can be guarded and preserved. Commemorative plaques are not artworks. The discovery of a historical site of an event of the Holocaust in present-day Serbia has a different meaning today and other consequences than if such an event had occurred twenty years ago.

In the age of revisionism and the new social norm of appeasement through mutual recognition, it is a call to review the established framework of the political order that still determined hierarchies of victims, in which the testimony, based on forensic findings, is brought to the fore of a new political discourse again. This demand will not necessarily lead to a return to the ethic category of responsibility in contemporary consciousness as long as the other concept, which has the same roots, namely respect, cannot be called upon either.

The permanent marking of the event at the site where it occurred would only serve to make the event a part of the media landscape of a post-war and post-genocide state with its socio-economic and ethnic majorities that still advocate ideologies that are perfectly suitable to stabilise the injustice of the past wars.

At the same time, it is not possible not to enter into the discourse and not offer the crime and the testimony of it to the sacrificial altar as long as there is the slightest chance to make the gold in the eye of the “innocent present” sparkle, if not to speak their language, only for a moment, so that the “higher meaning-carriers”¹ which is in no way influenced by the silence of the past, can hear the words of the witness.”

(Text: Nicola Radić Lucati)

¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, Zone Books: New York, 1999.

Nikola Radić Lucati (*1971 in Belgrade) lives and works in Tel Aviv and Belgrade.

TAMARA MOYZES

8

Prague 7

Commercial Centre Instead of a Holocaust Memorial

Performance

2012

Print on a lorry tarpaulin, shopping trolley, text

Photo: Michal Šajmír

Video (Source: Czech TV – News, 1:51 min.)

The inconspicuous Holešovice square located in Prague's district 7 bears a history no longer visible today that resulted in the murder of a large part of the Jewish population in Prague: Between 1941 and 1945, 44,688 people were deported to concentration camps from here. In 2002 the plan was made to build a shopping centre and a town hall on the grounds. Part of the plan was to erect a publically accessible space of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust. In 2006 the Slovakian-born artist Tamara Moyzes was asked to design the draft for this memorial. But since this first request, public interest in Prague has died down, in a city that Vilém Flusser once described as a cosmopolitan metropolis of free European thought up until the 1930s and that adorns itself with its Jewish history especially for tourism. The reason lies not least in the nationalist tendencies that are becoming stronger in the Czech Republic. The focus is now on the economic wish to sell the property to private investors. Tamara Moyzes seeks to draw attention to this bad state of affairs. She aptly terms her performance "artivism", as a work between art and activism. On display is a snapshot of the demonstration on the grounds, printed on a lorry tarpaulin in the outdoor area of the rear entrance of the Kunsthaus facing Hauptstraße, and a news report on her action against the promise that was not kept and against forgetting.

Tamara Moyzes (*1975 in Bratislava, Slovakia lives and works in Prague.

RUTH NOVACZEK

9

RADIO

Episode, 2004, 4:08 min

Sense, 2005, 3:31 min

Phoneo, 2008, 4:11 min

Alibi, 2010, 5:53 min

Radio, 2011, 4:56 min

2004 - 2011

5 short films

The five presented films by the British artist Ruth Novaczek have one feature in common. They are all in a state of flux: Their audiovisual snapshots – images, sounds, text excerpts – flow one after the other, despite their fragmentary character, at times slower, at others faster. Yet differences can be found in both the tempi and the colouring. In *Sense*, black-and-white images alternate with monochrome images in red, green or blue. One can repeatedly discern urban motifs, New York, Venice: “running from one place to another”, the female narrating voice comments. Travelling permeates Novaczek’s films as a leitmotif, with the films functioning like a diary. In the deliberately diffuse picture quality of the recycled images recorded with a mobile phone or shot from a screen, the experiences dissolve to a train of thought; the viewer can grasp individual elements only at certain points. Novaczek indeed wants rational access to fail at times. Because our identity turns out to be similarly ‘intangible’ as the world we try to perceive: “We are an identity in flux, Jewishness has many registers and tones, any of my own works embeds these questions within narratives that are not always overt, just as identity inhabits a subtextual dimension, informing and inflecting expression rather than forcing meaning out of the obvious.” The narrating voice in *Episode* corresponds with this: The loose sequence of city and landscape shots is accompanied by sentences such as “It was a long journey, it didn’t make sense, nothing really connect to”. In this incoherence of events one can also find a statement and a sense of life that the seemingly distinct determination of meaning, sense and identity is confronted by being “out of place” in an historically preconfigured present, not as an idealised form but as an open sketch of identity.

Ruth Novaczek (* 1956 in London) lives and works as an artist and film-maker in London.

KRYSTYNA PIOTROWSKA

10

Portrait from memory 2, 1984

Exercises from a Portrait a, b, 1980

Exercises from a Portrait c, d, 1980

Exercises from a Portrait 1,2, 1980

Exercises from a Portrait 3, 4 1980

Catalogue 1,2,3, 4, 1979

Catalogue 5,6,7,8, 1979

Yoga 1, Yoga 2

2006

Video, 3:30 min

The face is part of our body that we mostly associate with our identity, with which we express feelings and from which we attempt to read the feelings of others. The “exercises” of the Polish artist Krystyna Piotrowska appear as experiments in which someone artificially “assembles” and changes an identity using fragments, superimpositions and clichés; melancholy is inscribed in the result of these attempts: The faces are inevitably distorted and exposed to the eyes of the viewer in this “injured form”. Why do we find her drawings oppressive? The cause of the overlaps and intersections seems to lie less an overabundance of identity drafts than in a strong discomfort or an existential shock. We know that we are fragile, but do we want to face this fact?

The face decomposed to nose, mouth and eyes or according to a schematic grid is fatally reminiscent of the race-theoretical insanity that had an effect on the human sciences and popular scientific publications from the 19th century up until the 1980s. In the Nazis’ pseudo-scientific propaganda the so-called ‘race atlas’ was issued as teaching material and contained large-format plates with captions such as “The soul of the race speaks from this face”. Piotrowska’s works still described the trauma of the repercussions of these ideologies in the early 1980s.

One of the lithographed portrait drawings, *Portrait from Memory*, is crossed out by two strips that obliterate the essential traits – eyes, nose, mouth – and rob the face of its identity. Next to this drawing, the two adhesive strips with the missing fragments drawn on them. The viewer can put them back together and gain a complete picture of the person.

Her video work *Yoga 1, Yoga 2* also stands in the tradition of the portrait. The artist’s brother is recorded performing yoga exercises in an extremely disciplined manner. The off-screen voice supplements the images in the style of a profile giving important information on his personality and identity, things we cannot see. It becomes evident in this portrait how strongly identity is the subject of personal decisions and everyday life; at the same time, the video gives an impression of the force of external attributions in regard to one’s own identity and bears witness to the shocking existence of current anti-Semitic attitudes in society.

Krystyna Piotrowska (* 1949 in Zabrze, Poland) lives and works in Warsaw.

BARAK REISER

11

Erich, 2007, Video, 7 min

Seen / Seen, 2010, Video, 17 min

o.T., 2013, (A Graph Without A Photo)

Tzel, 2013, installation (light and shadow)

The video piece *Erich* (2002, 7 min.) shows a flâneur walking through the city, passing four places that lie close to each other and were part of the life of the artist's grandfather, Erich Strauss, before he emigrated to Palestine in 1936: A new residential building instead of the old one, the wall of a Chinese garden and the former sites of the synagogue and the municipal library. *Seen / Seen* documents the hands of two persons. "I have seen it all / I have seen nothing" writes one hand, while the other erases the writing.

Predominantly using the medium of video, but also analogue media such as drawing, collage and text, Barak Reiser's works address the patterns of representation and perceptibility of different historical levels and languages. His pieces translate statements from one visual language into the other, from the binary code as the language of the digital world into two-dimensional collage, from the flickering screen to ink and acrylic paint.

The Hebrew word Tzel – לצ, belonging to the same word family as *Tzilum* (Engl.: photography) and *Tzelem* (Engl.: graven image or also picture) appears as a key motif in his work, alongside other, at first plausible, but at second glance rather paradoxical statements: "The longer one looks at it, the clearer it becomes." Placed in different locations in the building, Barak Reiser's pieces establish connections to the site and to the directly adjacent artworks.

Barak Reiser (*1973 in Haifa) lives and works in Frankfurt am Main.

In collaboration with Ofri Lapid

Doing Synagoga. A Proposal

2013

5 plots, 4 screen prints on textile, 6 wooden tables, rubber band

In Eran Schaerf designed a “mobile synagogue” as a commissioned work for the progressive Jewish congregation Beit Ha‘Chidush in Amsterdam. The Beit Ha‘Chidush congregation does not have a synagogue of its own but uses a plain communal room – now multifunctional thanks to Schaerf – in the so-called Uilenburger Synagogue, a cultural centre in a former synagogue. So that it can/may be used for worship service, the artist designed a wooden ensemble consisting of Aron (table, Torah cabinet) and Bima (lectern). The corresponding mappots, elaborately embroidered fabrics that are used to ‘dress’ the Torah scrolls, for example, cover the furnishing. In addition, one can discover in them the diverse identity of this modern, Amsterdam kehille.

These mappots depicts not only sacred motifs but also secular symbols and text excerpts proposed by Eran Schaerf and jointly selected by the members of the community. Hence, Eran Schaerf conceived not only a design but also a novel form of worship service. The cloths he had printed supplement the present ritual, and their design can and should be further developed by embroidering them. The mappots thus form a lively link between traditional rituals, people’s everyday lives and the historical as well as current aspects of Jewish identity at different places of the world, containing an alternative interpretation of the ‘ban on images’ regarding the commandments handed down by Moses (Ex 20,1-5).

In the exhibition, large-format plots on six tables document background information on the project. In addition, several printed but not yet embroidered mappots are on display.

Beit Ha‘Chidush (Engl.: House of Renewal) is a congregation in Amsterdam founded in 1995 by Jews who at that point did not feel at home in the existing Jewish congregations. Among other things, the progressive congregation is known for having among its members homosexuals as well as so-called ‘father Jews’, i.e., Jews who have turned to the faith due to the Jewish identity of their father. The first rabbi of the congregation was the German-born Elisa Klapheck, the very first female rabbi in the Netherlands. The current rabbi is Clary Rooda.

Eran Schaerf (*1962 in Tel Aviv) lives and works in Berlin. Ofri Lapid (* 1983 in Haifa) lives and works in Berlin.

Three Relatives

2013

Paper, ink, wax

Anna Schapiro's works navigate between sculpture and painting. In contrast to the classical notion of an artwork with a determined form, her pieces are flexible and often adapt themselves like a second skin or surface to the respective site. The given space is not only the place where the work is staged, it becomes the work's vis-à-vis and medium. For Anna Schapiro, as for many other artists of the show, the Jewish part of her family history and thus of her identity or even her artistic work is not firmly defined, but remains an open question. Identity as a form of dialogue and interaction, combined with the search for corresponding artistic forms, is perhaps an important stimulus here. Her works are crumpled strips of paper that were dyed and dipped into wax. The work process is completed by gravity, leading to wondrous structures vacillating between ossification and motion. Identity was long grasped as something 'fixed'; based on a 'core personality', the self was interpreted as stable and unambiguous. Today, in contrast, we experience our identity as dynamic; it is in no way rigid, but can be shaped and altered. This dynamism is also expressed in Anna Schapiro's art. Her paper works have taken on a form for the moment, but they can change again. In regard to the notion of a (Jewish) identity, this would imply: "It doesn't exist! There are only different ones. And these different ones are themselves subject to change." This approach also bears a moment of freedom. Against this background, *Vot ken you mach?*, "What can you do?", must also be read as "What do I want to do?"

Anna Schapiro (* 1988 in Moscow) lives and works in Dresden.

I, an archeologist

2013

HDV video, colour, ratio: 16/9, with sound, duration: 20 min

A young archaeologist working as a tourist guide is in a dark space with an engineer controlling the light and an imaginary group. She would like to rehearse her tour of the Jewish catacombs of Rome. The scene becomes a monologue of the young woman, in which she mingles fragments of the history of the Jewish catacombs with thoughts on her appearance and instructions to the lighting engineer. The narration hovers between a stage play and the real historical site.

The film shows almost nothing, but instead keeps things all but programmatically in the dark. Yet one does learn something about the Jewish catacombs, whose existence is not too well known in Rome either and that are very difficult to access. The viewers are told that six Jewish catacombs have been found in Rome until now and that a part of this catacomb was discovered by chance in 1918 during renovation work beneath the stables of Mussolini's residence in the park of Villa Torlonia. One also learns about or at least gains an impression of the framework conditions of historical narratives between tourism and private economy.

In her works, Maya Schweizer is repeatedly interested in public spaces and sites of remembrance. "People come to memorials to see them and maybe touch them, depending on what it is, they walk through them and approach them in order to embrace them. I film in public space hoping to make a part of history 'visible' and almost tangible for the viewers."

The film *I, an archeologist* offers starting points to think about filmic decisions and, in a transferred sense, decisions on what can and cannot be shown at a given moment; and how history offers a different picture depending on the temporary framework conditions of its perception.

Maya Schweizer (* 1976 in Paris) currently lives and works in Rome and Berlin.

TEHNICA SCHWEIZ 15 (GERGELY LÁSZLÓ & PÉTER RÁKOSI)

The Idol of Denial / Der Götze der Verdrängung

A popular scientific lecture / Ein populärwissenschaftlicher Vortrag

2013

Video, 28 min

“When different layers of our history overlap, crystalline structures emerge that in a seemingly accidental way set patterns and places in relation to each other. Traces, spirits of past times encounter each other, they appear simultaneously like complex collages. These collages are perceived by everyone and they form our identities. (...)” Gergely László & Péter Rákosi

The film *The Idol of Denial* was created based on such a crystalline (historical) constellation in the Hungarian town of Kecskemét. The synagogue built there right next to the town hall in the 19th century was used as a stable by SS officers and the interior was entirely destroyed. Of the 1,431 Jews who lived in Kecskemét, 1,222 died during the Second World War. At the end of the 1960s, a house of science and technology was installed in the entirely gutted building. Among the crucial sights are fifteen true-to-original plaster casts of Michelangelo’s most important statues from the largely destroyed Museum of Fine Arts in Budapest.

In the former synagogue, one can now view copies of Michelangelo’s statues that are otherwise spread throughout the world: the Dying Slave from Paris, David from Florence, the Madonna from Bruges – and the famous Moses statue created in 1545 for the grave of Pope Julius II in Rome (San Pietro in Vincoli). It is the starting point of the filmic work by the Hungarian artist duo TEHNICA SCHWEIZ created for *Votken you mach?*. The sculpture of the founder of religion whom Michelangelo depicted with horns is not only one of the most prominent anti-Semitic images of art history but was also a crucial source of inspiration for Sigmund Freud’s last work *Moses and Monotheism* (1939).

The lecture in Hungarian is composed in the literary tradition of the Melitzah, a mosaic of fragments and sayings from the Hebrew bible, Rabbinic writings and the liturgy, and consists, in correspondence with this tradition, of quotations and cross-references. According to Freud, Moses himself was an Egyptian, he was later murdered by Israelites and this prompted the act of foundation of the subsequent religious and social order. Later on in history, a gradual “return of what was denied” occurred in the establishment of the “father religion”. The filmic mises-en-scène in the historical synagogue of Kecskemét shaped by the interior extensions of the 1960s revolve around the ban on images and on questions related to the recurrence of cultural stereotypes and constellations, not only in present-day Hungary, and to the way they are designated and overcome.

The lecture was compiled by Zoltán Kékesi together with Tehnica Schweiz.
A German translation of the lecture is available in the video booth.

Gergely László (*1979 in Hungary) has been living and working in Berlin since 2012.
Péter Rákosi (* 1971 in Hungary) lives and works in Budapest.

TAL STERNNGAST

16

Ein Kind für / Let's Talk About Children

2006

Two-channel video installation, 8 min

The installation *Ein Kind für (Let's talk about children)* consists of two films projected onto two spatially offset surfaces; they can be viewed simultaneously or one after the other. In the right-hand projection, actors mime a therapeutic session: The exchanged viewpoints sound disconcerting, when she says "It is up to women." "What?" "To increase the birth rate. I only gave birth to one child for Germany," signalling that the young woman's trauma links different temporal and historical levels. While the 'therapist' gets caught up in psychoanalytical clichés, the 'patient' remains alone with the fragments of her family's history in the conversation in which they talk past each other. These image and sound fragments partially contrast and are partially associatively connected to what is shown on the second screen: Set to diffuse hissing are historical pictures of children from the 1970s who grew up in kibbutzim. The viewer automatically establishes a connection between the 'documentary' images of the super 8 film and the fictitious conversation at the therapists. For example, when the 'patient' unexpectedly remarks: "My childhood was made out of the longing for Europe." This 'ideological' appropriation of children is reflected by, among other things, the patient's disturbing complaint of having given birth to 'only one child' for 'Germany' until now. In contrary ways, Germany and Israel share a distinct history of biopolitical agendas. In the 'myths' surrounding the (physical and ideal) continued existence of both nations, the question regarding the establishment (or possibility) of true personal/individual identity arises as a focal point.

Tal Sternngast (* 1972 in Israel) lives and works as an artist, film-maker and journalist in Berlin.

WACHSMANN

Kohle

2006

Charred tree stems, iron construction

Without borders

2013

Video installation, 16 min., bronze candelabrum

Shira Wachsmann's works are based on natural materials that humans have used for ages. Clay, branches, feathers and charcoal trigger associations in regard to the universality of human needs, protective spaces, the provision of warmth and food, shelter. The circle repeatedly appears as a basic form in her works of the past years; it is also the starting point of the structure made of charred tree stems in the inner courtyard. The walkable structure growing narrower at the top can be perceived as a dwelling, yet it is 'burnt' in a metaphorical sense as well, the walls aren't closed, the house cannot be used. The circle as a utopian form in Shira Wachsmann's works derives from the contemplation of maps on which towns and cities are marked as circles. Old Israeli maps from 1953, which Wachsmann found in an antiquarian bookshop in Tel Aviv, also indicate towns in the form of a circle. Right next to the circle one can often find the old Arabic name of the town in brackets, with the note that it was destroyed. The circular charcoal works by Shira Wachsmann juxtapose the utopia of a closed, homogeneous territory or community with the heterotopia of destruction that precedes this notion. The Nest also gives way to archetypical conceptions of safety and protection, but also of fragility and the permanent threat to such a shelter.

Without borders is the title of her video work, an excerpt from her larger film project *4 Schwestern*. Shira Wachsmann films her mother and 3 sisters. They grew up in Germany after the war but did not regard themselves as German. They spoke German as their mother tongue, but German culture was not their culture. As adults, each of them emigrated at different times to Israel, each with a dream and fantasy of Israel.

Shira Wachsmann (*1984 in Tel Aviv) has been living and working in Berlin since 2006.

ARYE WACHSMUTH 18

*Shever** (ist ja fabelhaft / isn't it fabulous)

For this fable is a catastrophe about to break out of its shell.
And we are that shell. The story is about you.

Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*

* Hebr: Shever / Dt: Bruch / Engl: Fraction

2013 (Part I: Spatial installation made of 6 elements)

*Shlavim** / work-in-progress Installation:

A preliminary array / A collection of materials

* Hebr: Shlavim / Dt: In Schritten / Engl: Steps

2013 (Part I: Spatial installation made of 6 elements)

Arye Wachsmuth's works, multilayered images and installations, transform technology, history, perception and memory into an object of artistic exploration. The focus of the two-part installation is on the attempt to understand abstraction as the scientific and philosophical foundation of human progress, but also as an instrument of total domination.

"Our entire culture is called into question," wrote Vilém Flusser. He referred to the – as he called it – unique event of Auschwitz. For this reason, any attempt to come to terms with the present leads to the question: How could it come to Auschwitz? According to Flusser, Auschwitz is not only a result of the Western way of thinking, but rooted much deeper in occidental culture: "Therefore, the question is not: How did it come to Auschwitz? The question is: How could it come to Auschwitz?" And thus: How can one continue living in a culture capable of Auschwitz?

The starting point of the installation is formed by concrete images and objects from the history of art and culture, as well as technological achievements and attempts at a philosophical interpretation. The six volumes of the interrogation minutes of Adolf Eichmann (which came to the family estate through Alexander Wachsmuth, Arye's father who in 1961 followed the trial in Jerusalem as a reporter) are a part of the considerations, as are the ambivalent symbol of the pentagram and Lucio Fontana's *Concetto spatale, Attesa* as a reference to the potentials of the dystopian, the fractured and fragmented as positive dimensions of non-totalitarian thought.

In analogy to crystalline descriptions (Deleuze), it is subjective constructions of reference that Arye Wachsmuth is interested in. The mirror recurs in Wachsmuth's works as a metaphor of reflecting on and embedding what one has seen, with organic and abstract forms superimposing and contrasting each other. The installation entitled *Shever* (Engl.: fraction) addresses the break with civilisation as the inevitable condition of our present-day life, while the title of the second installation in the same room, *Shlavim*, means *stepwise*. In a preliminary experimental set-up, Arye Wachsmuth examines the medial and bureaucratic surface of current asylum policies and establishes formal analogies between the mechanisms of exclusion, persecution and murder of the National Socialist state and current European government policies.

In the installation *Shever*, one can find the reproduction of a 'self-portrait' of looting persons from the 1940s in Vienna, a citation from the installation *Retracing the Tears*, which Arye Wachsmuth developed together with the art historian Sophie Lillie in many years of research work. By showing the back sides of dispossessed pictures from Jewish property, *Retracing the Tears* performed a retracing: They bear witness to persons who were robbed of their culture before being murdered or deported – with the aim of annihilating them in their entirety. Even more than the views of the painted pictures, the back sides of the paintings auctioned in 1996 as 'abandoned cultural assets' reveal the Nazis' attempt to establish a cultural identity based on the destruction of Jewish property.

Arye Wachsmuth (*1962 in Hamburg) lives and works in Vienna.

Interior Curtain

2013

Curtain rod, cotton, hooks, rope

Die Rede

2013

HD video, 17 min

Claire Waffel employs different media such as film, photography, drawing and installation to create an interplay of temporal levels which we usually perceive separately. Her art combines biographical motifs and narrative elements with her interest in abstract and formal examinations and their results. She predominantly deals with the question of “how to visualise different levels of time that are inscribed next to each other in people, architecture or places”.

Claire Waffel’s previous exploration of historical presences in our time is set in a biographical relation in the show *Vot ken you mach?*. A 17-minute speech on the occasion of his departure from professional life held by the executive director of the Employers’ Federation of North Rhine-Westphalia (representing employers’ interests vis-à-vis the unions and the government), who is also Claire Waffel’s father, is the starting point of a video work. The speech was held and recorded once more in the empty auditorium of the House of World Cultures in Berlin. In the original speech, Claire Waffel’s father had wanted to look back on his professional life and also take a stand on personal mistakes. For example, he deemed it an act of omission never to have mentioned the Jewish identity of his wife and children throughout his entire career.

In the actually held speech and in the re-enactment in the House of World Cultures, this omission is upheld, the family’s Jewish identity is not addressed. How is Jewish identity lived in Germany/Europe and in which way is it made a theme in society? The twice repeated omission gives rise to questions on the cause of this void and the attendant social context.

A further work consists of several lengths of fabric crossing the gallery space of the Kunsthaus from ceiling to floor. The individual lengths are attached to rails and therefore potentially moveable. The installation *Interior Curtain* enables approaching the question of identity in an abstract way – moveable components of a permeable structure that have no essence, no secret core, merely an alterable constellation of elements in a given space.

Claire Waffel (*1978 in Lüdenscheid) lives and works in Berlin.

texts

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Kristina - Monika Hinneburg

