

WHERE IS PROGRESS PROGRESSING?

Second world

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• steirischer herbst • Graz

Second World

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What, How & for Whom/WHW

... Humans are far more interested metaphysicians than they commonly admit today. A vague attendant feeling for their peculiar cosmic situation seldom leaves them. Death, the minuteness of the entire earth, the uncertainty of the ego illusions, the senselessness of existence, which becomes more insistent with the passing years...

Alexander Kluge, *Learning processes with a deadly outcome* (1973)

What we hear from all sides is the story of inevitability – there is no other way, it's common sense, it has to be done, we have no choice. As Frederic Jameson points out, universal belief 'that the historic alternatives to capitalism have proven unviable and impossible, and that no other socio-economic system is conceivable, let alone practically available'⁰¹ hinders the possibility of reimagining our social existence in any meaningful way. Although opting for the singular in its title, the exhibition *Second World* relates to the notion of multifold worlds, possible, parallel, fictional, desired worlds, worlds different to the one we live in, in which the past might have played out differently and the future is not irrevocably determined by the present. But rather than slipping into a celebration of art as an endangered enclave of imagination and free creativity, *Second World* remains firmly entrenched in the realities of the present, which happen to be dominated by the debilitating dogma of inevitability. The exhibition starts from the multitude of worlds

⁰¹ Frederic Jameson, *Introduction to Archaeologies of the Future. The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*, Verso, London/New York, 2007, p. xii

conjured between the unrealised possibilities that haunt the present, and the realistic threats that might as well cancel any imaginable future, and at the same time, it points to the fact that the one world we live in, whose 'connectivity' and globe-trotting is cynically promoted by the marketing of telecommunications companies, is actually divided and fragmented into multifold worlds, stratified into various levels of exploitation and privilege, and splintered into enclaves of identities.

The notion of a second world is taken here as critical and 'cognitive estrangement', in the way in which Darko Suvin, one of the leading theorists of science fiction, and an expert on Bertolt Brecht, proposes to interpret a radical defamiliarisation that science fiction often attempted to convey. Its explorations can lead to a new perspective on the contingencies of our world: oppressive social constructions, conditions of neo-liberalism reigning supreme, overpopulation, environmental catastrophes, deregulated labour, class divisions, etc. Detached and estranged as it is from the mundane and very real hurt produced by these contingencies, this perspective could break through the systemic, cultural and ideological closures and overcome the inherent incapacity to conceive potentialities beyond them.

On one hand the exhibition invests in the notion of 'Second World' as a Cold War geopolitical euphemism for a dark abyss between the First and Third Worlds that offered an illusion of the progress that was sooner or later bound to embrace all the people of the world, and on the other it relates to the possibility of imagining the future, not as something that comes after tomorrow, but which is invested with struggles fought in the present. As George Orwell puts it in 1984, 'Who controls the past controls the future, and who controls the present controls the past'. The exhibition uses the notion of second world as a cut through the temporal axis, looking at how to rescue some of the vision of emancipation and equality this notion

contained, without succumbing to the ideology of progress. We have to accept the fact that we have entered the phase of systemic failure, in which, as Immanuel Wallerstein poignantly puts it, 'The outcome may be inherently unpredictable, but the nature of the struggle is clear.'⁰²

With the ideology of 'economic growth' replacing that of 'progress', 'second world' as a geo-political term fell out of use, but in recent decades the inequalities and divisions it contained have increased in a 'surge of inequality', as Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm describes a dramatic growth in economic and social inequalities both within the states and internationally. Compromise between the demands of capital and labour started to rapidly deteriorate after existing for only a few short decades, following the crisis of 1973, as it became increasingly clear that 'golden age growth no longer allowed both profits and non-business incomes to rise without getting in each other's way'⁰³ As a national and etatistic endeavour, this compromise, which was the basis of two otherwise diametrically opposed ideologies, Western liberalism, and the pseudo-Leninist Soviet project, today is invoked with futile nostalgia. Contrary to the liberal discourse of the post-1989 'transition', with the demise of Cold War 'bipolarity', rather than moving on and 'catching-up' with the capitalist countries of the First World, most of the Second World in fact experienced rapid Third-Worldization. But what has become increasingly clear during the last decades, not least through the successive bursts of financial bubbles in country after country, is that the rise in inequality in one place is not independent of the same process in the rest of the world, on the contrary, it is very much related. The phenomenon of Third-Worldization

⁰² Immanuel Wallerstein, 'Structural Crises', *New Left Review* 62, March-April 2010, p.140

⁰³ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, Abacus, London, 1994, p.411

The cost of the mobility of capital is met by deteriorating social structures, and while workers' need for migration grows in direct correlation with the movement of capital, the resulting political instrumentalisation of immigration issues and border regulation feeds upon popular fears and anxieties, in their turn fuelled by increasing material insecurity for the majority of the population. The security promised by the post-World War II social-democratic state is replaced by a growing focus on physical 'security'.

progressed as the brutal socio-economic reality of the Third World became highly present throughout metropolitan areas of the world, no matter where they are, and while disparity increased everywhere, both favelas and mega-yachts became global phenomena.

The cost of the mobility of capital is met by deteriorating social structures, and while workers' need for migration grows in direct correlation with the movement of capital, the resulting political instrumentalisation of immigration issues and border regulation feeds upon popular fears and anxieties, in their turn fuelled by increasing material insecurity for the majority of the population. The security promised by the post-World War II social-democratic state is replaced by a growing focus on physical 'security'. This phenomenon, and the way it is reflected in the new systems of borders, forms of segregation and restrictions of movement, is explored in the project *Country Europa* (2010-2011) by Marcelo Expósito and Verónica Iglesia. By tackling several models of segregation and control, be it imposed, as in the case of prison, or voluntary, as in middle-class gated communities in Argentina, *Country Europa* questions mainstream and alternative ways of subjectivation and self-representation, while the inclusion of Expósito and Iglesia's experiences of travelling between Latin America and Europe shows the paradoxical 'openness' of the international art world. Interwoven narratives that draw an alternative cartography of the world are the basis of Bouchra Khalili's *The Mapping Journey* (2008-2011). This project outlines the hardships of immigrants from different countries during their travels and while they are trying to reach desired destinations in Europe. Through personal stories the journeys note detours and sudden changes of direction of their travellers, reflecting on a number of pertinent issues related to immigrant status in contemporary Europe, and portraying the real maps as problematic, arbitrary, constructed and conflicting.

Our sense of reality is burdened by strong feelings of extreme fragility and contingency, related to a perception of reality as one of the possible outcomes that might have turned out differently, in which other possible outcomes continue to haunt us as a spectre of what might have happened. Many works in *Second World* explore intricate connections between potentiality and actualisation in this world. The *Monument to the Memory of the Idea of the Internationale* (2010) by Nemanja Cvijanović takes up the idea of social revolution and its place in the collective memory. Through several 'stations' that are located in the exhibition, the sound of the *Internationale* is amplified, yet the tune itself becomes mixed with the noise and background sounds of the gallery, losing its original clarity. By engaging with material documenting the recent Egyptian revolution, *Night Visitor* (2011) by Maha Maamoun, addresses the revolutionary joy in the present, but also takes a hard look at different emotions, including the awareness of the ephemerality of the revolution's effects.

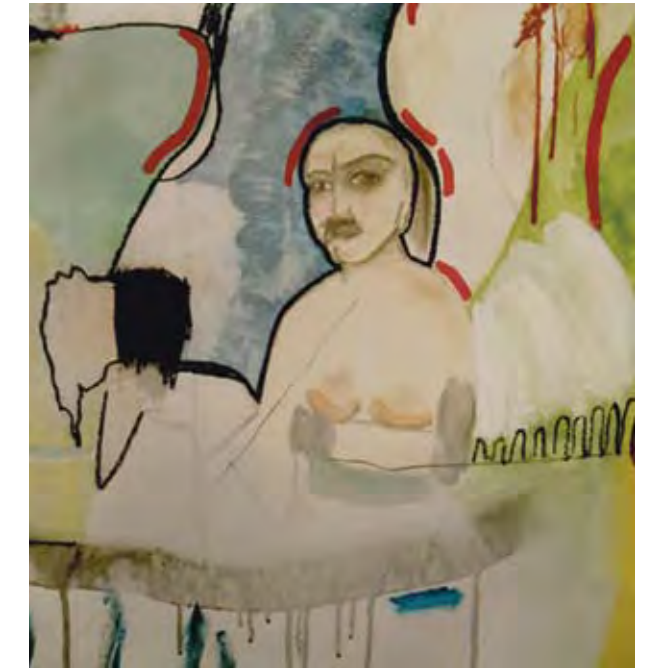
Chan-Kyong Park's works in the exhibition reflect on the painful consequences of the Cold War on Korea, examining ways in which politics and power intersect with fiction and myth. *The Sets* (2002) shows the sets of the North Korean and South Korean film studios, as well as the army sets for exercises in street warfare in South Korea, while *Power Passage* (2004) goes back to the US/USSR Cold War space race, relating it to underground spy tunnels dug by North Korea to infiltrate South Korea. These works deal with the seemingly wasted possibilities of the past, attempting to address both the ideological instrumentalisations and latent potentialities of the present. The interrelation of history with the present is central to the *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* (2008-2011) by Tom Nicholson. Mainstream accounts of the fatal colonial expedition by Burke and Wills in nineteenth century Australia focus on their perceived 'heroism' and 'victimhood' in the



Maha Maamoun, from the series *Night Visitor*, 2011

service of building the young nation. Taking the opposite approach, Nicholson's project engages an array of conceptual practices to reflect on the possibilities that were present in the early encounters between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Jumana Emil Abboud's works *Night Journey* (2010) and *O Whale, Don't Swallow Our Moon!* [*Quest for Spouse*] (2011) use a metaphorical approach to address issues of memory, loss, longing and identity in reference to the political situation in Palestine, where resilience and the struggle for continuity play a major role in offsetting the results of violent displacements. Using play, folklore, myths and devotional practices which attempt to bring together the supernatural and earthly, Jumana Emil Abboud reflects on different phenomena of Palestinian culture, meditating on the role of the mystic and magical in the social process.

Since Leibniz claimed that our world must be 'the best of all possible worlds', the notion of possible worlds wanders from the semantics of modal logic, first introduced in the 1950s by Saul Kripke and his colleagues, to the theory of fictional worlds which have used possible-worlds theory to address notions of literary truth, the nature of fictionality, and the relationship between fictional worlds and reality. A number of works in the exhibition challenge the imagination, through the unexpected and yet unspectacular, to the almost subdued, drawing new meanings from estrangement and possible misunderstandings. Man is replaced by his best friend in a number of domestic and outdoor scenes in *Terra Nova* (2003-2005), paintings by Ruben Grigoryan. The surreal nature of petit-bourgeois scenes of affection and leisure with dogs as protagonists makes them both funny and melancholic, pointing to the fragility of the disappearing middle-class. *We Used To Call It: Moon!* (2011) by Marko Tadić refers to two classics of science fiction, *The Invention of Morel*



Jumana Emil Abboud, from the series *Night Journey* (Drawings), 2010-2011

by Adolf Bioy Casares and *From Earth to the Moon* by Jules Verne, which both mention the discovery of a previously unidentified planet. By looking into ways in which the existence of the second moon would have been represented in popular consciousness and imagery, the work challenges the limits of the notion of the paradigmatic change and deeply set ideas about the nature of the reality. Daniel Knorr's *Archeotecture* (2011), a construction that is both a sculpture and inhabitable space, conflates the origin and nightfall of mankind in an image condensed in a kind of cave, a hole or a ruin, destroyed from within as if subjected to internal forces orchestrated by a premonition of the future that had already acted on the past, materialised within the exhibition space as a common denominator of 'civilization'.

As Sven Lütticken notes, 'for today's liberals, the collapse of existing order can solely be imagined in biological and ecological terms; social and political change can only take the form of minor adjustments.'⁰⁴ The biomorphic, hybrid forms of Mona Marzouk's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Energy's Evil* (2008-2011) combine elements of organic forms, mythological beings, architecture and technology, involving different cultural references, and challenging the notion of natural and human history as separate entities. Creating a futuristic imagery with references to science-fiction fantasy, the work meditates on a number of environmental issues and threats. Set in the year 2027, Lala Raščić's project *The Damned Dam* (2010-2011) uses epic and oral traditions from Bosnia and Herzegovina in its foray into the future, from which it looks back into the socio-political conditions of Bosnian post-war reality. Through the dystopian lens, focusing on the motif of natural catastrophe, the

project stages the disastrous consequences of current socio-economic organisation.

Daring to propose a seismic change for both Europe and the Middle East, even in times when it seems completely unattainable, the *Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland* (JRMiP), established in 2007 by artist Yael Bartana, calls for the return of 3,300,000 Jews to Poland. Without resorting to an apologetic approach the project calls for solidarity in the face of passivity and defeat, and questions the level of contemporary belief in the power of mainstream political processes. Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency projects' start by analysing the devastating effects of the spatial segregation and fragmentation of Palestine resulting from the Israeli occupation, and go further towards imagining the seemingly impossible – the re-use, re-habitation, and recycling of the architecture of the occupation. By opening up an 'arena of speculation' about the possible future of Palestine, this collective effort encourages both imaginative and practical planning about the areas that already have or will be liberated from a colonial occupation. Indicating the need for a move from the defensive to a planning approach, even in a situation where planning as such seems to support the illusory akin to creating utopia, it points to the crucial, and maybe the only important characteristic of art practice today – offering an imperative to imagine radical alternatives, even in situations, or precisely in the situations, when they seem utterly, and hopelessly impossible. ★

⁰⁴ Sven Lütticken, 'Unnatural History', *New Left Review* 45, May-June 2007

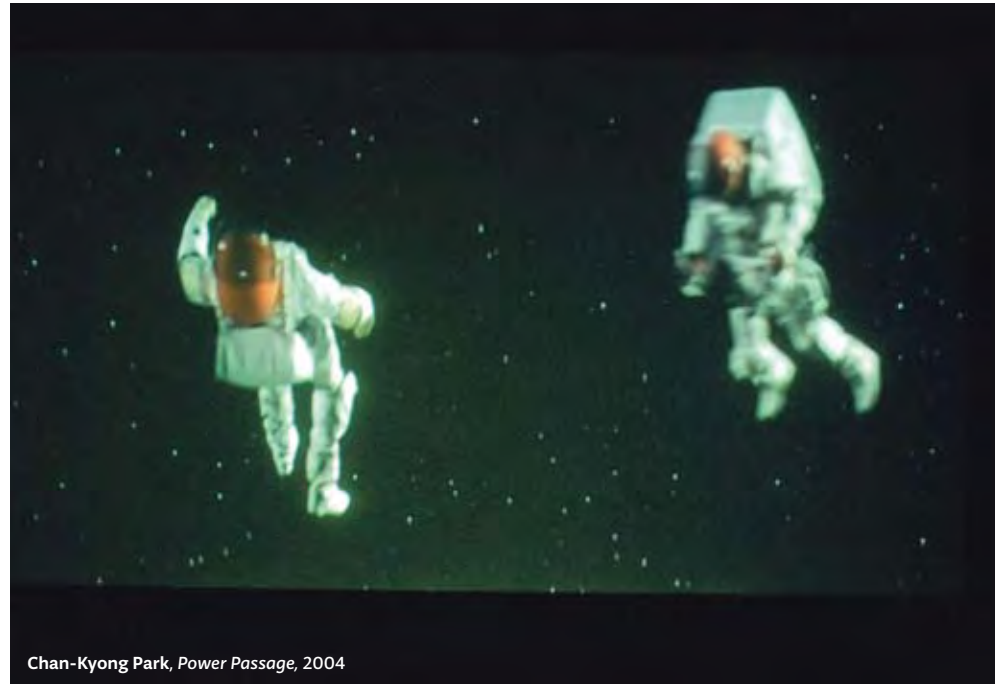


Mona Marzouk: *Curse Carriers*, 2011

I created *Curse Carriers* as a direct response to Alain Badiou's thesis in which he asserts that: "Non-imperial art must be as rigorous as a mathematical demonstration, as surprising as an ambush in the night, and as elevated as a star." This could be a confrontation between two ideologies that are multifaceted and ancient, each figure represents an ideology.
Mona Marzouk

Darko Suvin

On the Novum: Where is the progress progressing to?



Chan-Kyong Park, *Power Passage*, 2004

The concept of progress should be anchored in the idea of catastrophe. The fact of “it going on” is the catastrophe: not what is in each case in front of us but what is in each case given.

— Walter Benjamin

SF & THE NOVUM

1. My argument starts with the conclusion in my 1979 *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* that SF is distinguished by the narrative hegemony of a fictional yet cognitive novum – a term adapted from Bloch to mean a totalizing phenomenon or relationship deviating from the author’s and implied addressee’s norm of reality. The (as yet) Unknown or Other introduced by the novum is the narrative’s formal and cognitive *raison d’être* as well as the generator, validation, and yardstick of its story or plot (*siuzhet*). Such a novum has as its correlate a fictional alternate reality, centered on deviant relations of the narrative agents to each other and to their world, and resulting in a different chronotope – different relationships developing in narrative time and space. Born in history and judged in history, the novum has an ineluctably historical character. So has the correlative fictional reality or possible world which, for all its displacements and disguises, always corresponds to the wishes and nightmares of a specific sociocultural class of implied addressees. Finally, the novum can be differentiated according to its degree of magnitude (from one discrete new ‘invention’ to a whole radically changed locus and agents), according to the cognitive believability of its validation, and according to its degree of relevance for a given epoch and class of readers.

“Summary:” 1979; “FORMAL AND ‘SOCIOLOGICAL’ ANALYSIS IN THE AESTHETICS OF THE SCIENCE-FICTION NOVEL”, in Proc. of the 9th Congress of the ICLA. Eds. Z. Konstantinović et al. Innsbruck: AMOE, 1982, 453-458

1. THE NOVUM & COGNITION

1.1. ...Now, no doubt, each and every poetic metaphor is a novum, while modern prose fiction has made new insights into man its rallying cry. However, though valid SF has deep affinities with poetry and innovative realistic fiction, its novelty is ‘totalizing’ in the sense that it entails a change of the whole universe of the tale, or at least of crucially important aspects thereof (and that it is therefore a means by which the whole tale can be analytically grasped). As a consequence, the essential tension of SF is one between the readers, representing a certain number of types of people of our times, and the encompassing and at least equipollent Unknown or Other introduced by the novum. This tension in turn estranges the empirical norm of the implied reader (more about this later). Clearly the novum is a mediating category whose explicative potency springs from its rare bridging of literary and extraliterary, fictional and empirical, formal and ideological domains, in brief from its unalienable historicity. Conversely, this makes it impossible to give a static definition of it, since it is always codetermined by the unique, not to be anticipated situationality and processuality that is supposed to designate and illuminate. But it is possible to distinguish various dimensions of the novum. Quantitatively, the postulated innovation can be of quite different degrees of magnitude, running from the minimum of one discrete new ‘invention’ (gadget, technique, phenomenon, relationship) to the maximum of a setting (spatiotemporal locus), agent (main character or characters), and/or relations basically new and unknown in the author’s environment. (Tangentially I might say that this environment is always identifiable from the text’s historical semantics, always bound to a particular time, place, and sociolinguistics norm, so what would have been utopian or technological SF in a given epoch is not necessarily such in another – except when read as a product of earlier history; in other words, the novum can help us understand just how is SF a *historical* genre.)

1.2. The novum is postulated on and validated by the post-Cartesian and post-Baconian scientific *method*. This does not mean that the novelty is primarily a matter of scientific facts or even hypotheses; and insofar as the opponents of the old popularizing Verne-to-Gernsback orthodoxy protest against such a narrow conception of SF they are quite right. But they go too far in denying that what differentiates SF from the ‘supernatural’ literary genres (mythical tales, fairy tales, and so on, as well as horror and/or heroic fantasy in the narrow sense) is the presence of scientific cognition as the sign or correlative of a method (way, approach, atmosphere, sensibility) identical to that of a modern philosophy of science.⁰¹ Science in this wider sense of methodically systematic cognition cannot be disjoined from the SF innovation, in spite of fashionable currents in SF criticism of the last 15 years – though it should conversely be clear that a proper analysis of SF cannot focus on its ostensible scientific *content* or scientific data. Indeed, a very useful distinction between ‘naturalistic’ fiction, fantasy, and SF, drawn by Robert M. Philmus, is that naturalistic fiction does not require scientific explanation, fantasy does not allow it, and SF both requires and allows it.

Thus, if the novum is the necessary condition of SF (differentiating it from naturalistic fiction),⁰² the validation of the novelty by scientifically methodical cognition into which the reader is inexorably led is the *sufficient* condition for SF. Though such cognition obviously cannot, in a work of verbal fiction, be empirically tested either in the laboratory or by observation in nature, it *can* be methodically developed against the background of a body of already existing cognitions, or at the very least as a ‘mental experiment’ following accepted scientific, that is, cognitive, logic. Of the two, the second alternative – the intrinsic, culturally acquired cognitive logic – seems theoretically the crucial one to me. Though I would be hard

⁰¹ Beyond the discussion in *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, see also my essays ‘Utopian’ and ‘Scientific’, *The Minnesota Review* N.S. No. 6 (1976), and now also “On the Horizons of Epistemology and Science.” *Critical Quarterly* 52.1 (2010): 68-101; //onlineibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8705.2010.01924.x/full

⁰² Works avowedly written within a nonrealistic mode, principally allegory (but also whimsy, satire, and lying tall tale or Münchhauseniade), constitute a category for which the question of whether they possess a novum cannot even be posed, because they do not use the new worlds, agents, or relationships as coherent albeit provisional ends, but as *immediately transitive* and *narratively nonautonomous* means for *direct* and *sustained* reference to the author’s empirical world and some system of belief in it. The question whether an allegory is SF, and vice versa, is, strictly speaking, meaningless, but for classifying purposes has to be answered in the negative. This means that – except for the exceptions and grey areas – most of the works of Kafka or Borges cannot be claimed for SF; though I would argue that *In the Penal Colony* and *The Library of Babel* would be among the exceptions.



Maha Maamoun, from the series *Night Visitor*, 2011

put to cite an SF tale the novelty in which is not in fact continuous with or at least analogous to existing scientific cognitions, I would be disposed to accept theoretically a faint possibility of a fictional novum that would at least seem to be based on quite new, imaginary cognitions, beyond all real possibilities known or dreamt of in the author’s empirical reality. (My doubts here are not so much theoretical as psychological, for I do not see how anybody could imagine something not even dreamt of by anyone else before; but then I do not believe in individualistic originality.) But besides the ‘real’ possibilities there exist also the much stricter – though also much wider – limits of ‘ideal’ possibility, meaning any conceptual or thinkable possibility the premises and/or consequences of which are not internally contradictory. Only in ‘hard’ near-future SF does the tale’s thesis have to conform to a ‘real possibility’ – to that which is possible in the author’s reality and/or according to the scientific paradigm of his culture. On the contrary, the thesis of *any* SF tale has to conform to an ‘ideal possibility’, as defined above. Any tale based on a metaphysical wish-dream – for example omnipotence – is ‘ideally impossible’ as a coherent narration (can an omnipotent being create a stone it will not be able to lift? and so forth), according to the cognitive logic that human beings have acquired in their culture from the beginnings to the present day. It is intrinsically or by definition impossible for SF to acknowledge any metaphysical agency, in the literal sense of an agency going beyond *physis* (nature). Whenever it does so, it is not SF, but a metaphysical or (to translate the Greek into Latin) a supernatural fantasy-tale.

1.3. Thus science is the encompassing horizon of SF, its ‘initiating and dynamizing motivation’ I reemphasize that this does not mean that SF is ‘scientific fiction’ in the literal, crass, or popularizing sense of gadgetry-cum-utopia/dystopia. Indeed, a number of important clarifications ought immediately to be attached: I shall mention three. A first clarification is that ‘horizon’ is not identical to ‘ideology’. Our view of reality or conceptual horizon is, willy-nilly, determined by the fact that our existence is based on the application of science(s), and I do not believe we can imaginatively go beyond such a horizon; a machineless Arcadia is today simply a microcosm with zero-degree industrialization and a lore standing in for zero-degree science. On the other hand, within a scientific paradigm and horizon, ideologies can be and are either fully supportive of this one and only imaginable state of affairs, or fully opposed to it, or anything in between. Thus, anti-scientific SF is just as much within the scientific horizon (namely a misguided reaction to repressive – capitalist or bureaucratic – abuse of science) as, say, literary utopia and anti-utopia both are within the perfectibilist horizon. The so-called speculative fiction (for example, Ballard’s) clearly began as and has mostly remained an ideological inversion of ‘hard’ SF. Though the credibility of SF does not depend on the particular scientific rationale in any tale, the significance of the entire fictive situation of a tale ultimately depends on the fact that ‘the reality that it displaces, and thereby interprets’ is interpretable only within the scientific or cognitive horizon.

A second clarification is that *sciences humaines* or historical-cultural sciences like anthropology, ethnology, sociology, or linguistics (that is, the mainly nonmathematical sciences) are equally based on such scientific methods as: the necessity and possibility of explicit, coherent, and immanent or nonsupernatural explanation of realities; Occam’s razor; methodical doubt; hypothesis-construction; falsifiable physical or imaginary (thought) experiments; dialectical causality and statical probability; progressively more embracing cognitive paradigms; *et sim*. These ‘soft sciences’ can therefore most probably better serve as a basis for SF than the ‘hard’ natural sciences; and they *have* in fact been the basis of all better works in SF – partly through the characteristic subterfuge of cybernetics, the science in which hard nature and soft humanities fuse. A third clarification, finally, is that science has, since Marx and Einstein, been an open-ended corpus of knowledge, so that all imaginable new corpuses which do not contravene the philosophical basis of the scientific method in the author’s times can play the role of scientific validation in SF.

2.1. Furthermore, the novum intensifies and radicalizes that movement across the boundary of a semantic field (defined by the author's cultural norm) which always constitutes the fictional event. In 'naturalistic' fiction this boundary is iconic and isomorphic: the transgression of the cultural norm stands for a transgression of a cultural norm; Mme. Bovary's adultery stands for adultery. In SF, or at least in its determining events, it is not iconic but allomorphic: a transgression of the cultural norm is signified by the transgression of a more than merely cultural, of an ontological, norm, by an ontic change in the character/agent's reality either because of his displacement in space and/or time or because the reality itself changes around him. I do not know a better characterization than to say that the novelty makes for the SF narration's specific *ontolytic* effects and properties. Or perhaps – since, as differentiated from fantasy tale or mythological tale, SF does not posit another superordinated and 'more real' reality but an alternative on the same ontological level as the author's empirical reality – one should say that the necessary correlate of the novum is an *alternate reality*, one that possesses a *different historical time* corresponding to different human relationships and sociocultural norms actualized by the narration. This new reality overtly or tacitly presupposes the existence of the author's empirical reality, since it can be gauged and understood only as the empirical reality modified in such-and-such ways. Though I have argued that SF is not – by definition cannot be – an orthodox allegory with any one-to-one correspondence of its elements to elements in the author's reality, its specific modality of existence is a feedback oscillation that moves now from the author's and implied reader's norm of reality to the narratively actualized novum in order to understand the plot-events, and now back from those novelties to the author's reality, in order to see it afresh from the new perspective gained. This oscillation, called estrangement by Shklovsky and Brecht, is no doubt a consequence of every poetic, dramatic, scientific, in brief *semantic* novum. However, its second pole is in SF a narrative reality sufficiently autonomous and intransitive to be explored at length as to its own properties and the human relationships it implies. (For though mutants or Martians, ants or intelligent nautiloids can be used as signifiers, they can only signify human relationships, given that we cannot—at least so far – imagine other ones.)

2.2. The oscillation between the author's 'zero world' and the new reality induces the narrative necessity of a means of reality displacement. As far as I can see, there are two such devices: a *voyage* to a new locus, and a *catalyzer* transforming the author's environment to a new locus; examples for the two could be Wells's *Time Machine* and *Invisible Man*. The first case seems better suited to a sudden and the second to a gradual introduction of a new reality; no doubt, all kinds of contaminations and twists on these two means are thinkable. When the *in medias res* technique is used in any particular SF tale, the means of displacement can be told in a retrospective or they can, apparently, totally disappear (more easily in a space/time displacement: our hero is simply a native of elsewhere/elsewhen). However, this semblance conceals the presence of displacement in a zero-form, usually as a convention tacitly extrapolated from earlier stories; the history of the genre is the missing link that made possible, for example, tales in another space/time without any textual reference to that of the author (as in most good SF novels of the last 20 years).

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2.3. ...Specifically, the SF 'future-story' has been well identified by Raymond Williams as the finding and materialization of a *formula* about society. A particular pattern is abstracted, from the sum of social experience, and a society is created from this pattern...the 'future' device (usually only a device, for nearly always it is obviously contemporary society that is being written about...) removes the ordinary tension between the selected pattern and normal observation.⁰³

Clearly, neither is the future a quantitatively measurable space nor will the ensemble of human relationships stand still for one or more generations in order for a single element (or a very few elements) to be extrapolated against an unchanging background – which is the common invalidating premise of futurological as well as of openly fictional extrapolation. The future is always constituted both by a multiple crisscrossing of developments and – in human affairs – by intentions, desires, and beliefs rather than only by quantifiable facts. It is Peirce's scheme or Williams's pattern rather than the end-point of a line.

Furthermore, anticipating the future of human societies and relationships is a pursuit that shows up the impossibility of using the orthodox-absolute or scientific-philosophy of natural science as the model for human sciences. It is a pursuit which shows, first, that all science (including natural sciences) is and always has been a historical category, and second, that natural or 'objective' and human (cultural) or 'subjective' sciences are ultimately to be thought of as a unity: 'Natural science will in

⁰³ Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1971), p. 307.

time include the science of man as the science of man will include natural science. There will be *one science*' – remarked an acute observer already in the first part of the nineteenth century.⁰⁴ As a corollary, the valid SF form or subgenre of *anticipation* – tales located in the historical future of the author's society – should be strictly differentiated from the technocratic ideology of extrapolation on the one hand and the literary device of extrapolation on the other. Extrapolating one feature or possibility of the author's environment may be a legitimate literary device of hyperbolization equally in anticipation-tales, other SF (for example, that located in space and not in the future), or indeed in a number of other genres such as satire. However, the cognitive value of all SF, including anticipation-tales, is to be found in its analogical reference to the author's present rather than in predictions, discrete or global. Science-fictional cognition is based on an aesthetic hypothesis akin to the proceedings of satire or pastoral rather than those of futurology or political programs.

NOVUM: HISTORY, CHANGE, & PROGRESS?

3.1. The novum as a creative, and especially as an aesthetic, category is not to be fully or even centrally explained by such formal aspects as innovation, surprise, reshaping, or estrangement, important and indispensable though these aspects or factors are. The new is always a *historical* category since it is always determined by historical forces which both bring it about in social practice (including art) and make for new semantic meanings that crystallize the novum in human consciousnesses (see 1.1. and 2.2.). An analysis of SF is necessarily faced with the question of why and how was the newness recognizable as newness at the moment it appeared, what ways of understanding, horizons, and interests were implicit in the novum and required for it. The novelty is sometimes directly but sometimes in very complex ways (for example, not merely as reflection but also as prefiguration or negation) related to such new historical forces and patterns-in-the-final instance, to possibilities of qualitative discontinuity in the development of human relationships. An aesthetic novum is either a translation of historical cognition and ethics *into* form, or (in our age perhaps more often) a creation of historical cognition and ethics *as* form. 1979

"SF AND THE NOVUM"; in D. Suvin: *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, New Haven and London Yale University press, 1979, 63–84

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⁰⁴ Karl Marx, »Private Property and Communism«, *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. Loyd D. Easton i Kurt H. Guddat (Garden City, NY, 1967), p. 312.



Chan-Kyong Park, *The Sets*, 2002

3.2. But at a minimum the incantatory use of the novum category as explanation rather than formulation of a problem has to be firmly rejected. Novum is as novum does: it does not supply justification, it demands justification. This may be formulated as: we need radically liberating novums only. By "radically liberating" I mean, as Marx did, a quality opposed to simple marketing difference: a novelty that is in critical opposition to degrading relationships between people – and, I strongly suspect, in fertile relation to memories of a humanized past (Bloch's *Antiquum*). Where is the progress progressing to?

3.3. With this I come to my introduction of the novum as the distinguishing hallmark of SF. The novum is obviously predicated on the importance, and potentially the beneficence, of novelty and change, linked to science and progress. Perhaps because both socialists and liberals were comfortable with this, I have the impression no other part of my theoretical toolbox has been received with so little demur. I'll now proceed to doubt it. It's not only that the critical consensus makes me, an inveterate Ibsenian enemy of the solid majority, suspicious: what have I done wrong if I am praised in those quarters? It is also that living under Post-Fordism brings new insights: we are in a whirl of change that has co-opted science, but where has it got us?... So it suddenly comes into sharper focus that change within one lifetime grew to be normal and mandatory only with industrial capitalism and bourgeois revolutions, and that applied scientific mass production, characteristically, first came about in the Napoleonic Wars. Two hundred years later, we live in an ever faster circulation of what Benjamin called *das Immerwiedergleiche*, the recurring whirligig of fads that do not better human relationships but allow oppression and exploitation to continue with a new lease on life: "The perpetual rush to novelty that characterizes the modern marketplace, with its escalating promise of technological transcendence, is matched by the persistence of pre-formed patterns of life [...]: a remarkably dynamic society that goes nowhere"....

What if the great majority of scientific findings are today, axiologically speaking, fake novums? Predetermined by the mega-fake novum of science transubstantiated into capital, our contemporary version of Destiny, in an age when science and technology is "the racing heart of

corporate capitalism" (NOBLE XXV), they produce changes and innovations that make for increased market circulation and profit rather than for a more pleasurable, light, easeful life – brandy tinted brown by caramel rather than aging slowly in oak casks. This is masked behind obfuscating PR; and what if much art is in the same race, incorporating PR into text-immanent sensationalism, curlicues, and kitsch (see in Benjamin's essays the tension between Baudelaire and Brecht)? What happens to "making it new," the battle-cry of great anti-bourgeois Modernism from Baudelaire and Rimbaud on, when the horrors of world-wide wars become the leading, oft-employed, and never-failing labs for technoscientific and hierarchical "modernization" of society under increasing repressive control and conditioning?

3.4. Thus this analysis has finally arrived at the point where history, in the guise of analogical historicity, is found to be the next and crucial step in the understanding of SF: story is always also history, and SF is always also a certain type of imaginative historical tale (which could be usefully compared and contrasted to the historical novel). All the epistemological, ideological, and narrative implications and correlatives of the novum lead to the conclusion that significant SF is in fact a specifically roundabout way of commenting on the author's collective context – often resulting in a surprisingly concrete and sharp-sighted comment at that. Even where SF suggests – sometimes strongly – a flight from that context, this is an optical illusion and epistemological trick. The escape is, in all such significant SF, one to a better vantage point from which to comprehend the human relations around the author. It is an escape from constrictive old norms into a different and alternative timestream, a device for historical estrangement, and an at least initial readiness for new norms of reality, for the novum of dealienating human history. I believe that the critic, in order to understand it properly, will have to integrate sociohistorical into formal knowledge, diachrony into synchrony. History has not ended with the 'post-industrial' society: as Bloch said, *Judgment Day is also Genesis, and Genesis is every day.* ★

Corrected Approach, 1997-1998; "Where Are We? How Did We Get Here? Is There Any Way Out?: Or, News From the Novum (1997-98), reprinted in D. Suvin, *Defined by a Hollow: Essays on Utopia, Science Fiction, and Political Epistemology*. Oxford: P. Lang, 2010, 169-216

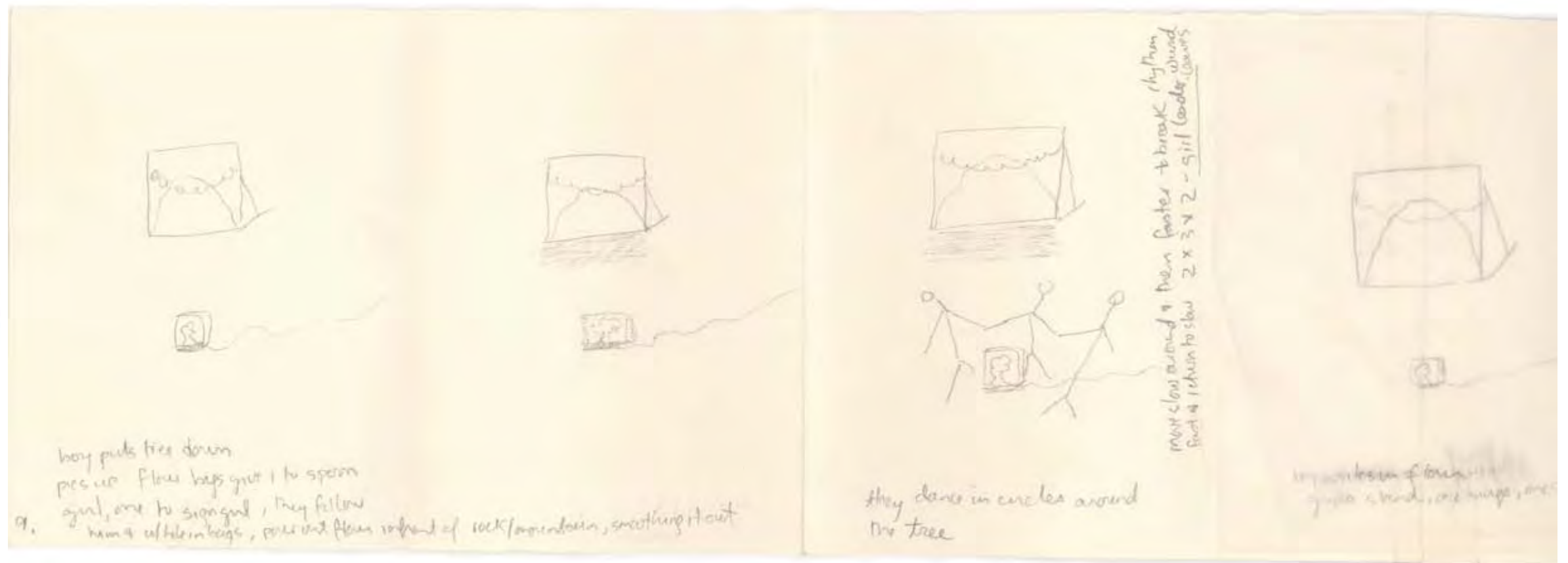
Jumana Emil Abboud

Born 1971, Shefa-Amer ♦ Lives in Jerusalem

Exploring various cultural traditions, from children's tales, female religious figures, spiritual heritage, folklore and the oral tradition, Jumana Emil Abboud reflects on a wide range of intimate but socially sensitive phenomena, such as the representation of women in the Middle Eastern context, the political potential of personal experience, and the role of the mystic and magical in the social process. The mixed media installation that comprises drawings, collages, and contact prints entitled *Night Journey* (2010), and a video work *O Whale Don's Swallow Our Moon!* [Quest for Spouse] (2011), rework the iconography of pilgrimage, talismans and devotional objects, developing a specific 'hieroglyphic' visual and performative language. *O Whale Don's Swallow Our Moon!* [Quest for Spouse] is a play inspired by motifs taken from Palestinian folklore and fairytales, the performers are children who reinterpret traditional formulas from oral culture while playing typical characters such as the Bride, Mother, Homeland and the Ghouleh (monster)/Guardian.



A girl signs the names of Palestinian wells, springs & caves, believed by locals to be inhabited by saints & demons; spirits that are both good & bad, of human, supernatural and/or animal nature: Ein Fleleh, En al Araq, Ein al Hadjar, En Wadied-Djai, En Haddju, En al Qasr, En al Lozeh, En ed-Djoz.



Jumana Emil Abboud, from the series, *Night Journey*, 2010–2011

Yael Bartana

Born 1970, Afula ♦ Lives in Amsterdam & Tel Aviv



The Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP), established in 2007 by Yael Bartana, calls for the return of 3,300,000 Jews to Poland. Freely borrowing from the iconography and propagandist methods of early Zionist and twentieth century political movements, JRMiP invites each of the exhibition's visitors, regardless of her or his ethnic and religious background, to become part of an international solidarity movement that sets out to transform Europe, and in the process, the Middle East. At first glance, looking at the JRMiP manifesto and materials, it seems that Bartana takes for granted the possibility of building a truly just European society. And yet the difficult question her project poses is – why is this so hard to imagine in the first place? The call for the return of Jews to Poland pinpoints the depth and complexity of the 'immigration issue', as well as the complicity of liberal democracies of the enlarged, new Europe, in today's global system of injustice.

Yael Bartana, *The Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland*, 2003–2011





Yael Bartana,
The Jewish
Renaissance
Movement
in Poland,
2003–2011



THE JEWISH RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT IN POLAND:

A MANIFESTO

- We want to return!
Not to Uganda, not to Argentina or to Madagascar, not even to Palestine. It is Poland that we long for, the land of our fathers and forefathers. In real-life and in our dreams we continue to have Poland on our minds.
- We want to see the squares in Warsaw, Łódź and Kraków filled with new settlements. Next to the cemeteries we will build schools and clinics. We will plant trees and build new roads and bridges.
- We wish to heal our mutual trauma once and for all. We believe that we are fated to live here, to raise families here, die and bury the remains of our dead here.
- We are revivifying the early Zionist phantasmagoria. We reach back to the past — to the imagined world of migration, political and geographical displacement, to the disintegration of reality as we knew it — in order to shape a new future.
- This is the response we propose for these times of crisis, when faith has been exhausted and old utopias have failed. Optimism is dying out. The promised paradise has been privatized. The Kibbutz apples and watermelons are no longer as ripe.
- We welcome new settlers whose presence shall be the embodiment of our desire for another history. We shall face many potential futures as we leave behind our safe, familiar, and one-dimensional world.
- We direct our appeal not only to Jews. We accept into our ranks all those for whom there is no place in their homelands — the expelled and the persecuted. There will be no discrimination in our movement. We shall not ask about your life stories, check your residence cards or question your refugee status. We shall be strong in our weakness.
- Our Polish brothers and sisters! We plan no invasion. Rather we shall arrive like a procession of the ghosts of your old neighbours, the ones haunting you in your dreams, the neighbours you have never had a chance to meet. And we shall speak out about all the evil things that have happened between us.
- We long to write new pages into a history that never quite took the course we wanted. We count on being able to govern our cities, work the land, and bring up our children in peace and together with you. Welcome us with open arms, as we will welcome you!
- With one religion, we cannot listen.
With one color, we cannot see.
With one culture, we cannot feel.
Without you we can't even remember.
- Join us, and Europe will be stunned!

Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland
Ruch Żydowskiego Odrodzenia w Polsce

Nemanja Cvijanović

Born 1972, Rijeka ♦ Lives in Rijeka

The Monument to the Memory of the Idea of the Internationale (2010) by Nemanja Cvijanović is an anti-monument that addresses the remnants of collective memory, ideals and imagination related to revolutionary potentials. The work functions as an interactive installation consisting of several 'stations' located within the exhibition. At the entrance a tiny mechanical musical box is positioned on a pedestal. As visitors turn the handle of the musical box, it produces the sound of the *Internationale*, the anthem of international socialism. Through a network of microphones, amplifiers and speakers the sound increases, and the tiny, fragile melody becomes stronger and stronger, eventually building to a powerful force. As the music mixes with sounds in the exhibition venue background noise interferes with the melody. *The Internationale* loses its original clarity, and while the non-materiality of the monument calls for the recovery of political imagination, it also refers to the marginal status of the revolutionary discourse in contemporary capitalism.



Nemanja Cvijanović,
The Monument to the Memory of the Idea of the Internationale, 2010

Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency / DAAR

DAAR is an art and architecture collective and a residency programme based in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem, Palestine. Its activity started in 2007.

Alessandro Petti ♦ Sandi Hilal ♦ Eyal Weizman

with Nishat Awan ♦ Michael Baers ♦ Amina Bech ♦ Benoît Burquel

♦ Luisa Cerlini ♦ Elisa Ferrato ♦ Alessandra Gola ♦ Suzanne Harris-

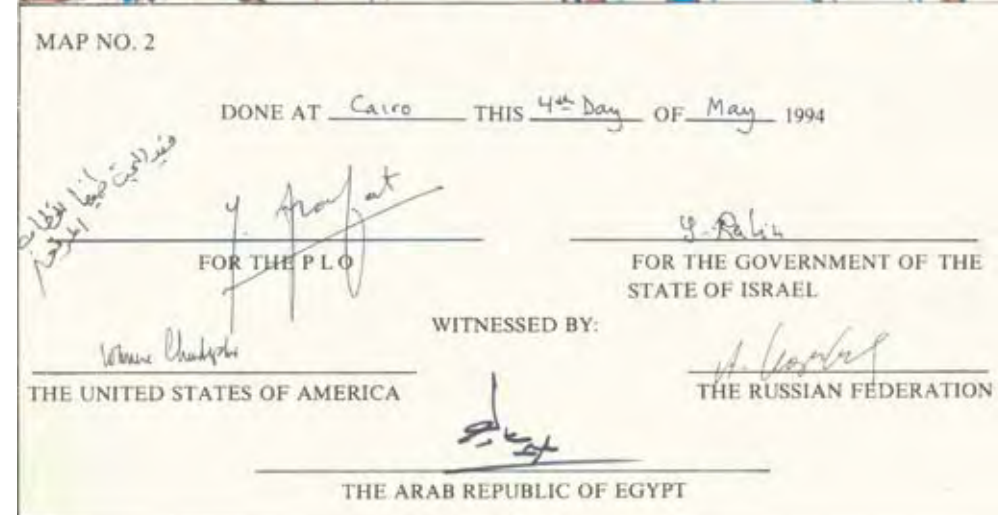
Brandts ♦ Benjamin Leclair-Paquet ♦ Cressida Kocienski ♦ Lejla

Odobašić ♦ Carina Ottino ♦ Elizabeth Paden ♦ Amy Zion.

Research by Nicola Perugini

Video by Amina Bech

Model production by TryeCo



The Line overlapping with the domestic space
PHOTO: Amina Bech

DAAR's work combines discourse, spatial intervention, education, collective learning, public meetings and legal challenges. DAAR's practice is centred on one of the most difficult dilemmas of political practice: how to act both propositionally and critically within an environment in which the political force field is so dramatically distorted. It proposes the subversion, reuse, profanation and recycling of the existing infrastructure of a colonial occupation.

In 1993 a series of secret talks held in Oslo between Israeli and Palestinian representatives inaugurated what was later referred to as the 'Oslo Process'. As is well known, this process defined three types of territories within the West Bank: Area A under Palestinian control, area B under Israel military control and Palestinian civilian control, and area C under full Israeli control. When the process collapsed and the temporary organisation of the occupied territories solidified into a permanent splintered geography of multiple prohibitions, a fourth place was suddenly discovered. Existing between all others – it was the width of the lines separating them.

Less than a millimetre thick when drawn on the scale of 1:20,000, it measured more than 5 metres in real space.

Our project dives into the thickness of this line then follows it along the edges of villages and towns, across fields, olive and fruit orchards, roads, gardens, homes and public buildings. The line represents an extraterritorial space, perhaps 'all that remains' from Palestine, a thin but powerful space for potential political transformations. Political spaces in Palestine are not defined by its legal zones or 'Peace agreements', but operate through legal voids.

Investigating the clash of geopolitical lines onto the domestic space of a house or the interior of a parliament building, and operating on the margin between architecture, cartography and legal practice, we sought to make a case that calls for an anarchic regime of political autonomy to inhabit this line. It is in the extraterritorial dimension of these seams, small tears in the territorial system, that open the possibility for tearing apart of the entire system of division. ✖ DAAR

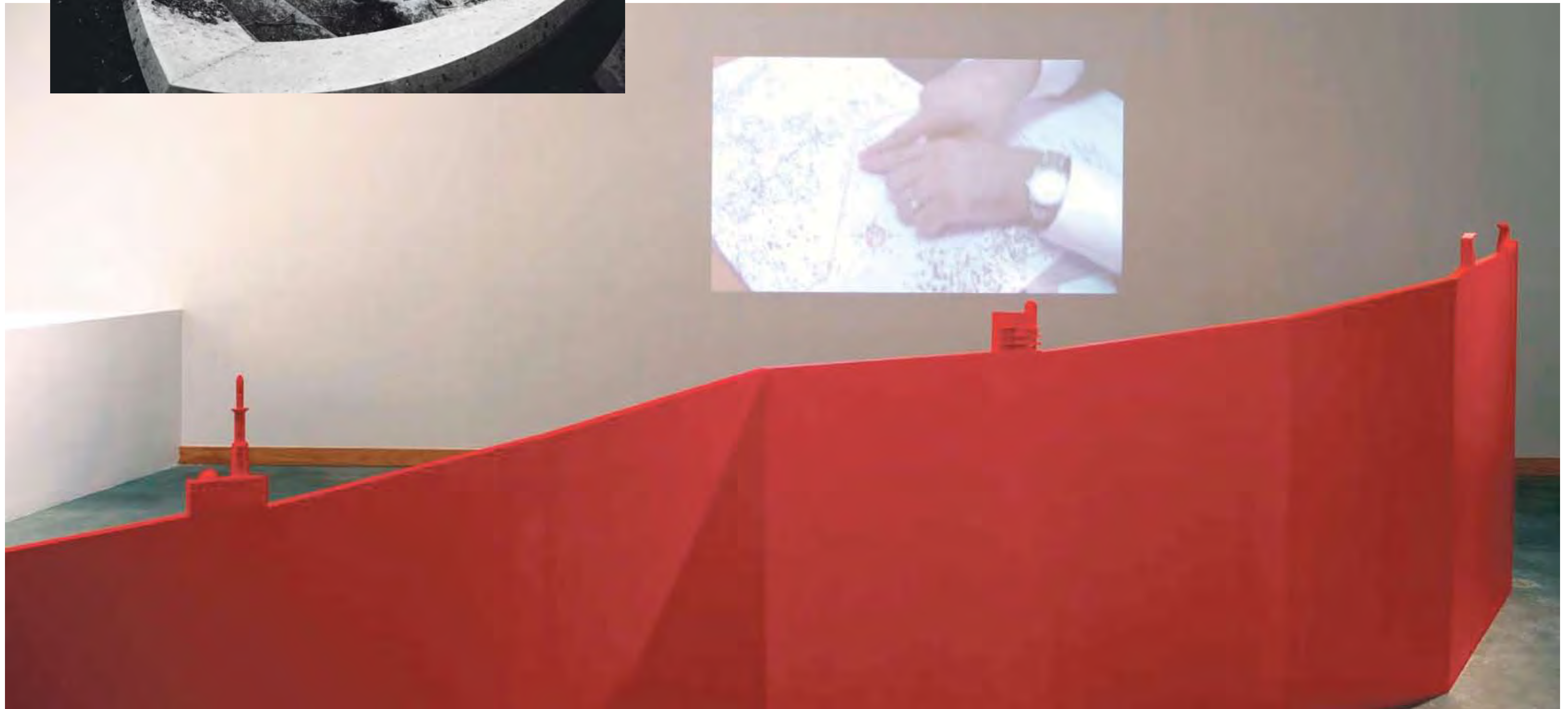
The Line from the Oslo Map, 1994



The Line crossing the
Palestinian Parliament
Building
PHOTO: Carina Ottino,
Alessandra Gola

The line represents an extraterritorial space, perhaps 'all that remains' from Palestine, a thin but powerful space for potential political transformations...

The case studies on the
Lawless Line
PHOTO: Scott Groller,
COURTESY OF REDCAT
GALLERY, LA



Marcelo Expósito & Verónica Iglesia

Born 1966, Puertollano ♦ Lives in Barcelona & Buenos Aires

Born 1972, Buenos Aires ♦ Lives in Buenos Aires

Exploring the ways in which notions of security, control and segregation are implemented using new forms of spatial division, border and labour regulations, *Country Europa* (2010-2011) by Verónica Iglesia and Marcelo Expósito was originally conceived for *Manifesta 8* in Murcia in 2010 as a long-term collaborative project that takes the form of a book. It encompassed photography workshops carried out with male and female inmates in the Murcia Penitentiary Centre. In the words of the artists: "The idea behind this project is to trigger a multiplicity of antitheses (to counteract victimizing images, or images that correspond to a humanist understanding of 'the prisoner', to counteract images of the inmates' own situation of confinement that duplicate the real, physical confinement onto the symbolic plane, etc.) and also generate new proposals (how to activate desire and the imagination in conditions of restricted freedom)."

P rivate neighbourhoods, borders, prisons. Three elements that common sense tells us are heterogeneous figures, without any apparent connection between them. But what material and symbolic forms are adopted by the different spaces of confinement and self-confinement? How do they function interrelatedly – like an image in which one is the negative of the other –, and thus reverse the relationship between interior/exterior, inside/outside, security/dangerousness, us/them? In what many different ways will

the security prophylaxis fail in terms of preventing the constant interpenetration of the extremes of each of these pairs, through the inevitable porosity of borders? What do the current forms of these types of spatial segregation tell us about the transformation and overlaps between the logic of discipline and the logic of control? How do these physical constructs of internment and spatial segregation relate to the production of racial, sexual and class stereotypes, and to the symbolic representation of potentially dangerous population groups?



C ountry Europa is a project that approaches the issue of security logics today, and their implementation in new forms of spatial division and border systems, of labour and transit of people regulations. It deals with the contrast between the forms of transnationalisation or globalisation that contemporary art and culture supposedly permit or encourage, and the reality of control and discipline that is exercised on the international circulation of populations. Between the dream of free-flowing circulation of individuals and creativity, and the everyday microfascism of the border regime and migration laws.

We have carried out an artistic intervention – in the form of a photography workshop – in an archetypal, segregated, protected space: a jail. The furthest place imaginable from the free and publicly accessible nature of the idealised image with which the globalised system of contemporary art chooses to identify itself with.

Nevertheless, we have refused to allow these images from prison to become a purely aestheticised spectacle of otherness. We have contextualised the images we produced in cooperation with the prison inmates – experiments in self-representation following the work of fantasy – within an assemblage of various contemporary typologies of spatial segregation (from prisons to Argentinian 'countries' or gated communities), border division, control of the movement of people (with special attention to european preventive logics of regulation and imprisonment of migration). Our intention has been to make visible the paradoxical experience of our own travels between Latin America and Europe, putting ourselves into the spot. Image and knowledge are produced here under the following contradiction: while collaborative art practice has the potential to create a space for autonomy, our (precarious) work is also overdetermined by the institutional frameworks to which we are inevitably subordinated. We

believe this contradiction has to be politically dealt with from within. In the context of Europe, where everyday life is being transformed under the sign of fascistization, micropolitical experimental processes of collective re-subjectivation are becoming more and more urgent.

I t should be possible to produce images that express a 'creative' work space: images that speak of how the current naturalisation of subordinate labour is carried out in places where the subject appears to be free to act according to flexible rules, with broad margins for personal initiative. The representation of a 'creative' work environment would thus show how the subject is provided with the technical tools that he or she requires to express his or her innovative, relational, communicative skills to the maximum degree. A typical representation of a 'creative' work space should also show how certain new types of post-Fordist labour are literally embedded into the body of the old mode of Fordist social production: former factories, former military barracks, former hospitals, former jails, are transformed into new buildings, the new factories of culture, modified with additional technically advanced elements, sometimes profiting from the original façades or structures of these old institutions of modernity. But the continuing presence of the physical epidermis of these old institutions erases or avoids the deep history and memory of the power associated with these structures; and it also entails wiping the memory of the resistances, conflict, antagonism and tensions that were always inscribed in disciplinary institutions of modernity.



In February 2010, we coordinated a photographic workshop with inmates of the Murcia Penitentiary Centre, a project that was originally a commission from a contemporary art biennial. It was one of the few times we had worked in a situation that offered such a complex overlapping of our social activism practices and 'creative' work subordinated to the art institution.

In contemporary art, in newspaper reportage and in documentary making – whether socially committed or not –, it is usually taken for granted that the production of visual 'representations' is a practice consisting of the alienation of the image in regards to the subjects that are affected by said representations. But our work should ensure that critical trends against the existing modes of political representation, the desire for change that will bring about new societies which is now expressing itself all over the world, are reflected in new critiques of representation and in image production practices in which the division of labour and the existence of mediations, although they may be inevitable, do not automatically entail a predefined hierarchisation or a symbolic and material expropriation of subaltern subjects.

Our photographic workshop was conceived as a 'co-production'. A collaborative production, in which the negotiations around the material conditions of the workshop (distribution of income, image rights, participant selection process, ownership of the technological tools acquired... as well as food, workshop timetable, etc.) were as crucial as the construction of a situation of relative autonomy – generating a shared affect within a regime of conviviality –



and also as the process of thinking a coherent politics of image distribution based on justice and respect. Twelve people, men and women of different origins (Latin American, Spanish and Eastern European), worked intensely to embody desire in images. Dreams and fantasy became the driving force for other materialisable worlds, because an image is a construction, not just an immaterial representation of a preexisting reality but also a possible model that can unfold.

Some of the comments we have received have expressed annoyance: 'they don't look like images from a jail, you don't show or denounce the day to day situation of the prisoners'. For

a few days, we swapped between the roles of teachers and learners, photographers and lighting technicians, bullfighters, stage directors, actors and actresses, birds, flamenco singers, gangsters from the Bronx, sex-symbols, horsewomen, winners and losers of gambles for fortune and love. We looked and allowed ourselves to be looked at with affection, with love, with conflict and with desire. Singular dreams were co-produced, the image of oneself and a dreamed world was always constructed through the participation of the others. But fantasy is not a pristine world: it is also a territory where stereotypes can become a battlefield, because they are not just the unchanging codification of stable social identities. Recombining signs, symbols, spaces and times was our way of constructing a real world that was ephemeral but counteracted, from within, the logic of segregation and of the prophylaxis that organises the planet. We did it in a place where it would appear that urgency does not allow the freedom to experiment imaginatively with subjectivity.

We have agreed to disseminate this material in the form of an 'artwork' and a book, not merely in order to transmit a message of good intentions, but to explicitly express a political critique and present the programmatic outline of a practice. And also to promote the spread of a pervasive desire for change, for the collective construction of other worlds. ✘

Marcelo Expósito & Verónica Iglesia, *Country Europa*, 2010–2011



Country Europa was originally produced for **Manifesta 8** (Murcia, Spain), as a part of the curatorial initiative of **Chamber of Public Secrets**, in collaboration with the non-governmental organization **Paréntesis** and a group of inmates at **Murcia Penitentiary Centre**.

It also forms part of the collective research project *creating worlds*, an initiative of the **European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp)**.

It has been updated for the exhibition **Second World**, in the framework of **Steirischer Herbst Festival** in Graz, curated by **What, How & for Whom/WHW**, for which a specific photo-text installation and a new version of the **Country Europa** book has been produced.

The hegemonic logic of security needs the delimitation of a terrain, because without a threat to protect against, it loses its legitimation. The terrain comprises a space, being in which is never permitted to everyone in the same way, and with this a community that defines itself through belonging. This collective that is never homogeneous is constituted through inequalities: among those who belong, as well as in relation to those who come into it – often only temporarily. Inequalities emerge through the distribution of labor as well as through the heterogeneity of rights. One of the central regimes resulting in hierarchizations and categorizations into multiple relations of gradations is the border. Borders are always permeable and porous – the borders of Europe as well as those of a prison or a gated community. Among other things, because the border is always characterized by the impossibility of closing it, there is no complete security. Through the regulation and control of the permeable border, permanent insecurity is produced for the security of the community to be protected: precarization becomes an instrument of governing, with which populations are regulated in different ways.

The impossibility of security and the permeability of borders have grown in western capitalist modernity out of the controllability of the circulation of people and commodities that is never complete. The political focus is therefore on the regulation and control of border-crossing to legitimate security mechanisms with respect to those circulating persons constructed as dangerously different. Instead of strictly guarding against those who are dangerous, however, this regulative manner of governing focuses on preventive strategies: the anticipation of flexible, contingent tactics of crossing borders. The flexibility and contingency of the control of the border is, among other things, a violent reaction to the flexibility of migration, which can intertwine with the practices of traveling.

This thematic complex is developed and actualized in the project *Country Europa* by Verónica Iglesia and Marcelo Expósito. And even more: the two knowledge producers inscribe their artistic project constitutively into the crisis and transformation processes of current capitalist relations, security and precarization logics, and provide in their critical art practice a line of flight, in which the combined and produced border-knowledge presented in it is compared with art institutions' current strategies of dissolving borders.

The project resulted in a book (<http://countryeuropa.net>), an assemblage of various contemporary security logics and border regimes and the precarization of labor and life arising from them. Iglesia and Expósito write their own experiences of crossing borders into this assemblage, so that a complex structural (in-)security ensemble becomes evident, which perpetually refigures itself through movements, movements of people, in which the ensemble manifests itself in a subjectifying manner and is challenged at the same time. ✘

Isabell Lorey

Excerpt from "Governing Permeable Borders. Country Europa – A Project by Marcelo Expósito and Verónica Iglesia", originally published in *transversal. art/knowledge: overlaps and neighboring zones*, 03.2011, <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0311/lorey/en>. English translation by Aileen Derieg.



Ruben Grigoryan

Born 1954, Yerevan ♦ Lives in Yerevan

Terra Nova (2003-2005), paintings by Ruben Grigoryan, raise the question of the status of the other, turning upside down dominant power relations and representational forms. Therefore, they can be seen as a challenge and critique to the anthropocentric concept. Although not directly inspired by actual literary and film references, the specific atmosphere inevitably evokes key science fiction works, such as *The Planet of the Apes*, in which people struggle for supremacy with the apes. What kind of conflict lies behind this inversion? Where have the men gone? – these are the questions implicitly posed by this series of paintings.

Ruben Grigoryan,
Kindergarden, 2004

Don't Be Sad, 2003



Holidays, 2004

I depict what I like, what fits the frame of my mind at a particular moment. The images come to my mind gradually, but by the end they transform into lucid compositional structures.

I start with geometric schemes to create principles of symmetry and contrast. I do not have a rigid system of choosing images. The only thing that could be considered as a system is my intuition and mood. I always want to create a state in my paintings where I am present.

So it is a very subjective environment that I create. I even try to pump out the air from that environment and leave everything that has been depicted in a vacuum. The only precondition is that all those elements should fit my state of mind at that very moment, or sometime before. I can compare my art to a quick turn of the head when one's eyes capture more than is commonly believed. As if with the blink of an eye one catches all that passes between the starting and the final points of that quick movement.

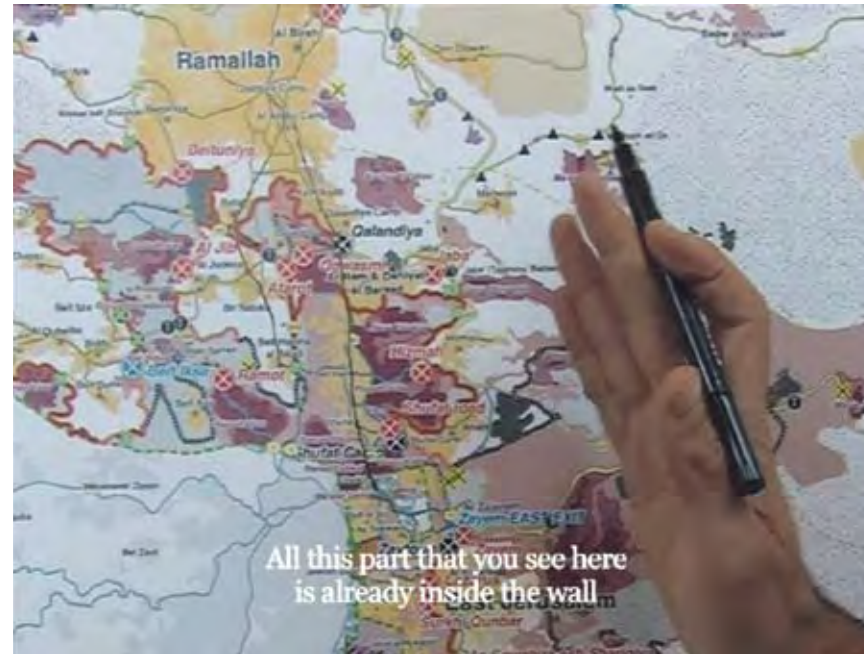
— Ruben Grigoryan



Bouchra Khalili

Born 1975, Casablanca ♦ Lives in Paris

Inspired by a Debordian notion of psychogeography, *The Mapping Journey* (2008–2011) by Bouchra Khalili is a long-term project that uses an interview format to outline various interwoven and parallel narratives, and draws an alternative cartography of the world map. The work is based on the recounting of journeys taken by clandestine immigrants who in search of a better life tried to enter 'fortress Europe' from different parts of the world. While recalling their journeys, the immigrants draw the exact routes they took on maps, and through personal stories, the drawings of the journeys mark detours and sudden changes of direction in their travels. The routes reflect a number of pertinent issues connected to immigrant status in contemporary Europe, as well as the personal motivations that lie behind decisions to take risks and suffer injustices making such hazardous journeys. The work comments on illegal migration without further victimisation of its protagonists who have not only endured the challenges of their journeys, but also offer bitter and poignant political analysis of their status, and the circumstances that have created their situations. The protagonists are not shown; the camera captures only their voices and close-ups of their hands drawing on the map. The details of the real maps thus become 'alternative' protagonists of those journeys.



Bouchra Khalili, from series *Mapping Journey*, 2008–2011

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST & GALERIE POLARIS, PARIS



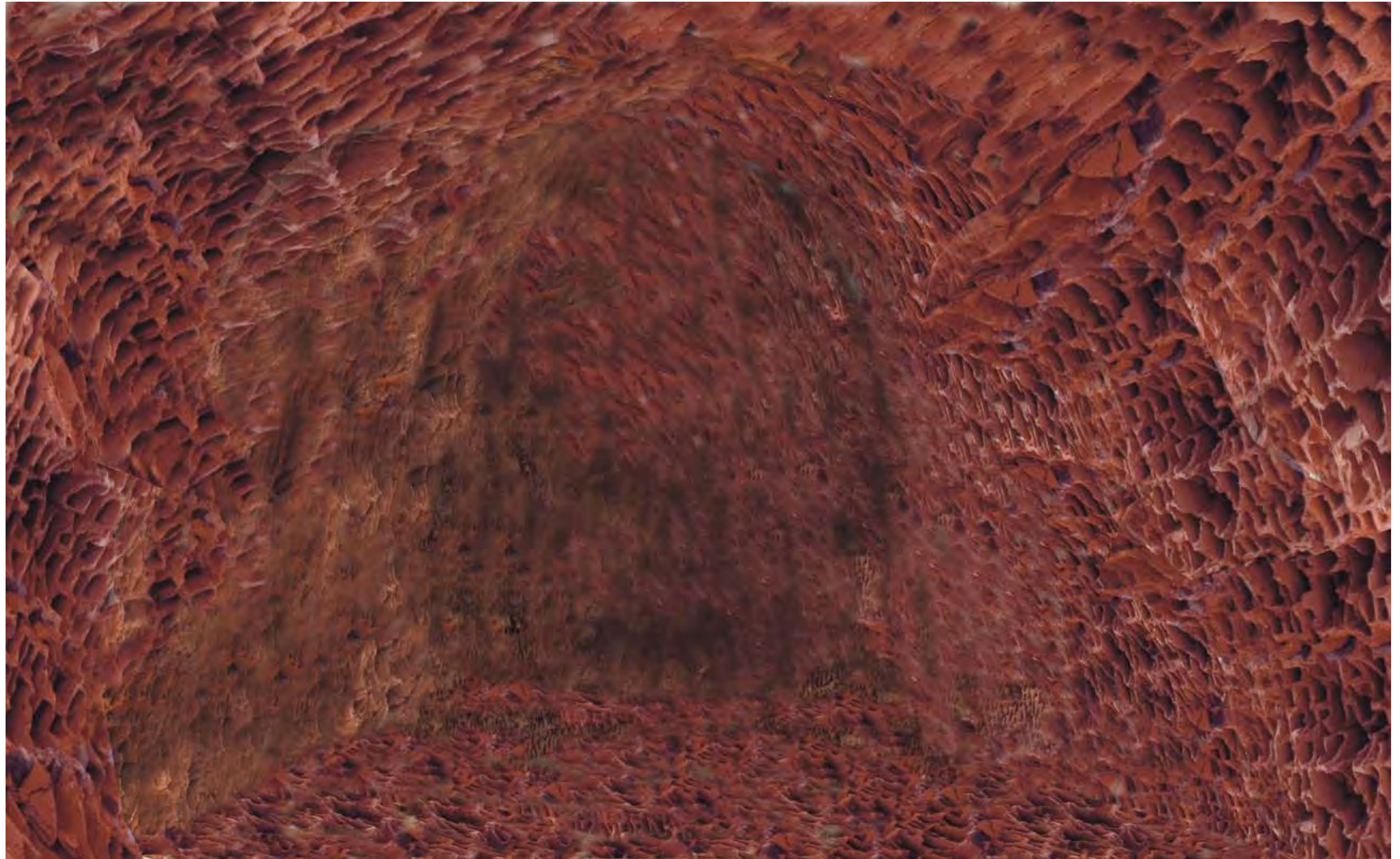
Bouchra Khalili, from series *Mapping Journey*, 2008–2011, [Installation view]

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST & GALERIE POLARIS, PARIS

Daniel Knorr

Born 1968, Bucharest ♦ Lives in Berlin

Daniel Knorr's *Archeotecture* (2011) is a projection into the past and the future at the same time. The construction, which is both sculpture and inhabitable space that might be a shelter or excavated ruin, is as amusing as it is uneasy. The resulting image condenses into a kind of cave, a hole or a ruin, as if destroyed from within. Invoking no nostalgia for a 'golden age' nor deriving pleasure from fatalistic predictions, *Archeotecture* doesn't stage an affirmative representation of reality, but rather shocks us out of complacency and resignation by framing the experience of a present as a negotiation open to different interpretations and unpredictable outcomes.



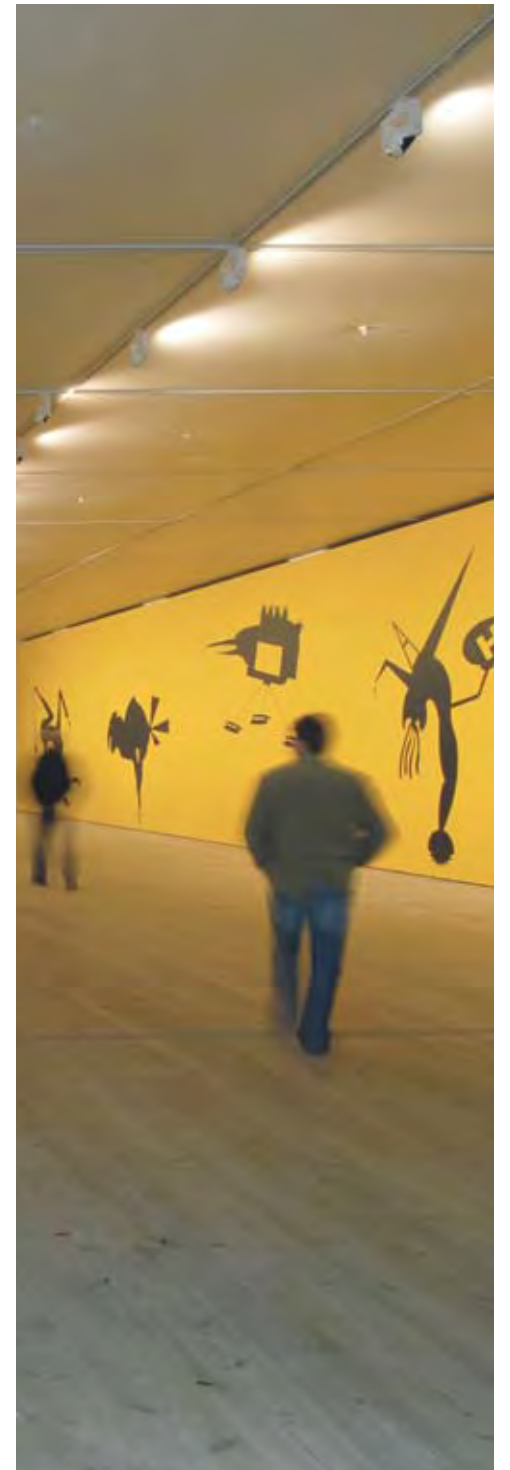
Maha Maamoun

Born 1972, California ♦ Lives in Cairo

Historically, the term 'Night Visitor' referred to undercover police investigators who would attack houses and arrest political activists in the dark of the night. On this night the roles are reversed, at least for a few hours, and the hunted become the hunters. Using material that documents the recent Egyptian revolution, shot by the protagonists of events while storming the state security offices, and later posted on the Internet, the series of photographs and video work *Night Visitor*, by Maha Maamoun, address different layers of sentiment accompanying this time of rupture and blurring of demarcation lines.



Maha Maamoun, From the *Night Visitor* series, 2011



Mona Marzouk

Born 1972, Alexandria ♦ Lives in Alexandria

The biomorphic, hybrid forms of Mona Marzouk's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Energy's Evil* (2008-2011) combine elements of organic forms, mythological beings, architecture and technology, mixing different cultural references and challenging the notion of natural and human history as separate entities, as well as our attitude toward the strange and the unknown. In the animated film that is part of the installation, the dreamlike turns into the dystopian, as the strange hybrid creature, half whale and half giant insect, looking like it is washed up on a shore, gushes oil-like fluids from its tentacles, seemingly in pain. The threats of an exploitative present seem to turn the future into a bleak place.



Mona Marzouk, *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Energy's Evil*, 2008, installation view BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead

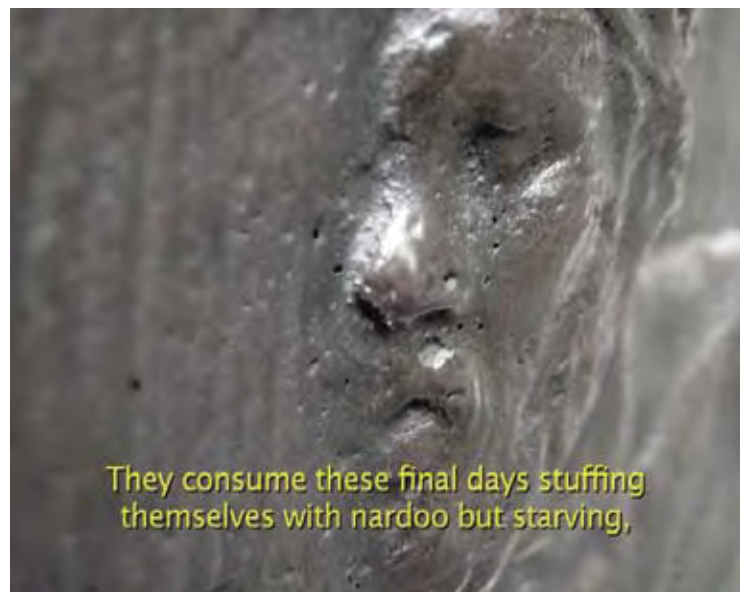
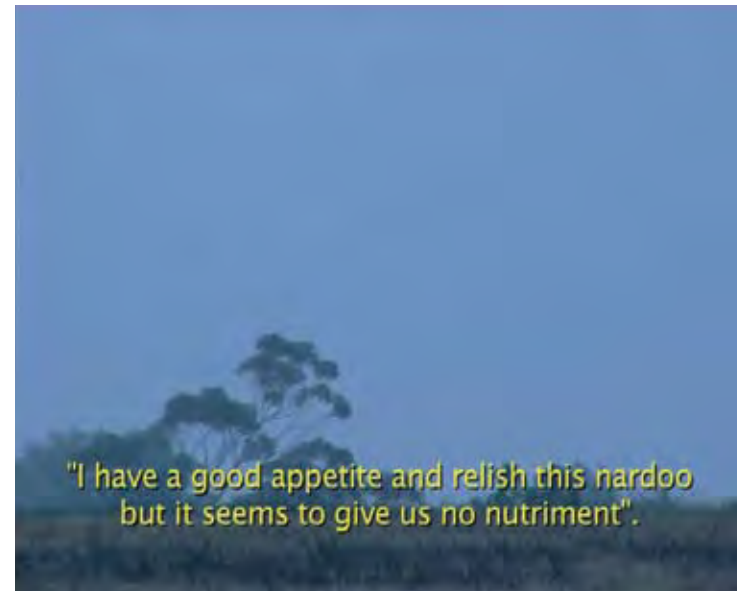
Tom Nicholson

Born 1973, Melbourne ♦ Lives in Melbourne

Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park (2008–2011) by Tom Nicholson is a long-term project that tackles the traumatic legacy of Australian colonialism. Questioning its contemporary status, Nicholson's project uses an array of conceptual practices to reflect on the possibilities that were present in the early encounters between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, which could have taken history in another direction.

The project refers to the era of historical explorations of the Australian interior. From 1860 to 1861 R. Burke and W.J. Wills led an expedition with the intention of crossing Australia from Melbourne to the north. *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* deconstructs the dominant narrative of this expedition, while symbolically focusing on *nardoo*, a local plant that Burke and Wills consumed during their

final days in Cooper's Creek. They were introduced to the Yantruwanta habit of making cakes from *nardoo* but failed to observe the correct preparation of the seed, mainly due to Burke's antipathy towards Aboriginal culture and his hostility towards any reliance upon it. Eating large quantities of incorrectly prepared *nardoo* caused apoptosis and both Burke and Wills starved to death. While using the powerful metaphor of the *nardoo* plant that offers both nutrition and starvation Nicholson rethinks Australia's colonial past. The idea of a monument and the very act of commemoration is embedded in an image of *nardoo* sporocarps scattered throughout Royal Park to create the illusion of a red flood.



Tom Nicholson, frames from *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park*, 2008–2011



Chan-Kyong Park

Born 1965, Seoul ♦ Lives in Seoul

Two works by Chan-Kyong in the exhibition address the harmful legacy of the Cold War and the traumatic separation of Korea. The sequence of slides within *The Sets* (2002) includes photographs of film sets depicting the streets of Seoul at the Korean Film Studio in North Korea, where propaganda films depicting South Korea are made; the army sets for exercises in street warfare in South Korea, made for training during obligatory military service; and sets depicting the Joint Security Area between two Koreas, built for a feature film made in South Korea. While the Seoul constructed in the North Korean studio looks much older than it actually is, corresponding more to the city in the North than in the South, both the military and film locations made in the South are 'realistic'. And yet all three places depicting the 'enemy' and the 'other' are clearly ideological instruments, pointing to the role of fictionalised narrative in propaganda that is created through entertainment, education and the military.

Chan-Kyong Park
Power Passage, 2004
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND P K M GALLERY, SEOUL

With references to two cult science fiction films – John Sturges' *Marooned* (1969) and Robert Altman's *Countdown* (1968) – *Power Passage* (2004) goes back to the US/USSR Cold War space race and the famous Apollo-Soyuz Test Project (ASTP) of 1975, the first joint Soviet/US space flight. This symbolic peak of US/USSR Détente, that in fact served as a showcase of military strength and technological advancement for both superpowers, is related to the strained relationship between two Koreas, and the ghosts of the Cold War that haunt the Korean peninsula despite the passage of time, as reflected in the network of underground spy tunnels dug by North Korea to infiltrate South Korea.



Tarik's efforts of winning Merima's affection have just been interrupted by a catastrophe. Follow our heroes over the geography through which the epic romance takes place.



1. In the year 1964, before the Modrac Dam was officially fully operational, warm weather caused rapid snowmelt. The River Spreča brought vast amounts of water into the valley of what was to become Lake Modrac. The water forcefully rushed through the Dam's three floodgates and three spillways. The inexperienced management of this new dam panicked and quickly called the designer of the Dam, the renowned engineer Maksimović. He arrived in Modrac with his family, pitched a tent under one of the arches, started playing ball with his child, proudly concluding: "This dam is indestructible."

2. The land is transversely by Corridor 5C. Power lines and fast highways criss-cross the country, transporting people, goods and energy, paying no heed to the plight of the people that live in forgotten towns and villages. The administration's sole concern is the exploitation of the country's hydro-energy sources. Small, local roads are upturned, and washed away by erosion. Many other areas of life have been abandoned. The infrastructure has collapsed and jobs have disappeared, including the monitoring of the Dam. Constructed in the past to supply now-obsolete industries with water, it has been neglected for years, with the purpose of turning it into a hydropower plant.

3. Merima loses her job in Sarajevo. Lamenting her fate, she calls her grandmother in Lukavac and cries. Her grandmother tells Merima to return home and describes the beauty of nature, since all the industry Merima remembers from childhood has died away. The grandmother tells Merima how the Grey Egret has returned to the area, and compares her return to it.

4. As Merima travels to Lukavac, the landscape she sees out of the window is described: the buildings of Sarajevo, the shopping centres and big company franchises, the lights of the city she is leaving behind her, protruding antennas and power lines, the deserted landscape. Merima remembers her father, a professor of literature at the University of Tuzla, and the day in 2000 when he decided to move his family out of Lukavac, after a spoof broadcast of an audio drama about the Dam breaking. She again laments her fate, dreading small town life and the isolation of its inhabitants.

5. The transporter leaves Merima in the middle of nowhere, by an eroded road. The landscape looks familiar and she starts walking but is picked up by her grandmother's neighbour. Merima arrives to Lukavac; her grandmother is so happy she cries. The two women talk and go into town. Merima is surprised at how things have changed for the worst. Her grandmother assures her that she will easily find a job. During their walk, Tarik sees Merima on the streets of Lukavac and remembers her as his first love as they met as children in the year 2000.

Lala Raščić

Born 1977, Sarajevo ♦ Lives in Zagreb, Sarajevo & New Orleans

A narrative backbone is at the core of the series of video and sound-based works that Lala Raščić often combines with performative elements, drawings and paintings. Narration is conveyed through vocal performance that reworks the tradition of classic radio plays, stand-up comedy and storytelling of folk epic tradition. The main plot of the *The Damned Dam* (2010-2011) project is located in the post-transitional future of the small Bosnian town of Lukavac in 2027. It follows the adventures of the two main characters, a young engineer Tarik and his beloved Merima, who in a search of a better life, try to escape from a series of catastrophic floods. The impulse for the project came from the actual radio show *Catastrophe* (2000) that used the form of a fake news broadcast to inform listeners that the Lukavac dam was collapsing. The play had a similar effect to the famous radio drama *The War of the Worlds* by Orson Welles. Located in a dystopian future, and emphasising the worst possible outcome to our present circumstances and actions, the project comments on a range of contemporary social issues such as Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to the EU, the threat of ecological disasters, the problematic management of public resources, and the loss of public space by private-public partnerships that dominate the whole region.



Lala Raščić, *The Damned Dam* – Illustrations, 2010–2011

6. Tarik recalls the events of that day when a spoof audio drama about the Dam breaking was broadcast on the radio. He falls in love again but is unsuccessful in wooing her as he has a speech impediment – he stutters and he is just a worker at the Dam – the *only* worker there. Merima, meanwhile, gets a new job, again with an American company. A work-related issue brings the two of them together, when, due to years of negligence, the Dam starts crumbling. In order to save the citizens of Lukavac from death by flood, they join forces and broadcast the audio drama of 2000. Everyone is saved except Merima's grandmother. Merima is grief-stricken.

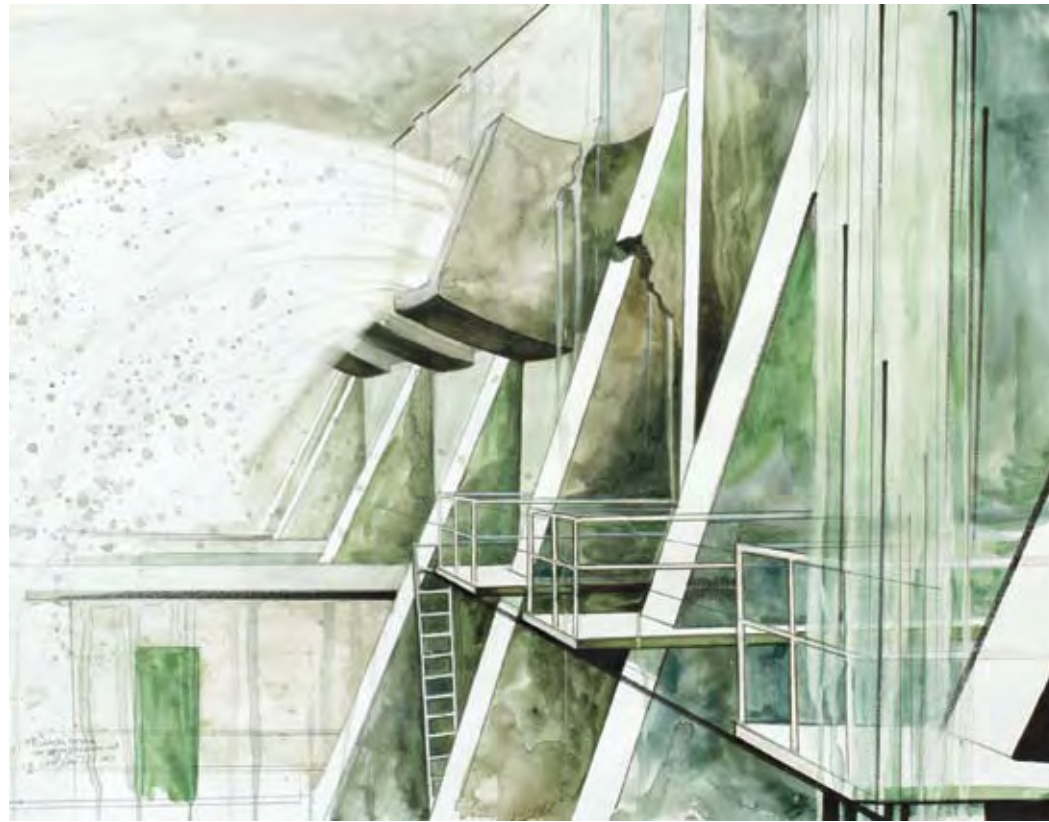


7. Without anything left in the world Tarik and Merima set off on a raft over the lake, hoping to start again somewhere else. Merima still rejects Tarik's stuttering expressions of love. While she is asleep the lake fairy, known as the White Woman, appears to Tarik and advises him to seek out his cousin Janja in Belgrade. Tarik asks the fairy to cure his speech problem. The fairy suggests that they sink Merima to the bottom of the lake and that she take Merima's place. "She was proud, but is now without anything, while I have my magic powers", the fairy says.

Angered, Tarik yells out a curse, banishing the fairy to the bottom of the lake. As dawn breaks they float into a river and he finds that he no longer stutters.

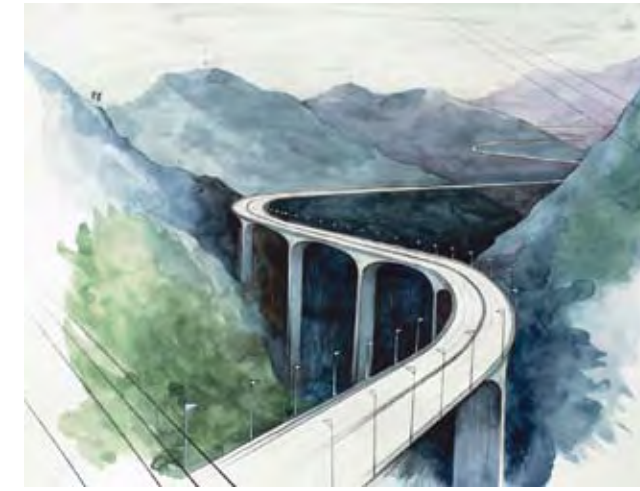
8. The River Spreča runs their raft into a huge highway. It is Corridor 5C, the fifth pan-European corridor. Tarik and Merima talk about their future plans.

She is impressed at how Tarik lost his stutter and warms to him. She now trusts him fully and loves him as a close friend. He is satisfied. After they climb up onto the highway, the narrative loses track of them for the next two years. Their whereabouts during that time are unknown. Speculations are that they travelled to Russia following Corridor 5C.



9. Tarik and Merima resurface in Belgrade, now called Europolis, as a couple in love. Remembering the fairy's advice Tarik seeks out his cousin Janja. Janja works on a raft on the river Sava and gets them jobs. The three of them conceal their relationship from the boss and work out a successful system of stealing from the bars and the cash registers on the disco raft. By accident they meet the generous Mr. Ilko who helps them by letting them live in his hut on a flood island surrounded by a floating shantytown on the rivers between the Old Town, New Belgrade and Third Belgrade. Descriptions of the history of the shantytown and its structures follow.

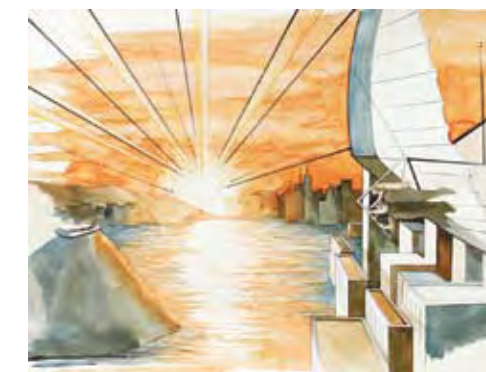
Realising a big flood wave is coming, Tarik and Merima hurry home to warn Mr. Ilko. They arrive in time by running through a secret underground corridor connecting Zemun and Kalemegdan.



The two manage to warn their neighbours but they find themselves again on their raft, the flood wave washing them downstream.

10. Merima wakes up as they are washed ashore. She recognises the Sava Rapids Recreational Centre. She has done business with them. Hiding Tarik, she convinces the director of the Centre to hire her as a manager. In turn she gets Tarik hired as a rafting instructor.

The layout of the sports centre is described. The arrival of Slovenian extreme sportsmen is narrated and the story seems to be progressing well until the dam that provides the rapids, waves and waterfalls starts to crumble. A dialogue between the mayor and his assistant follows.



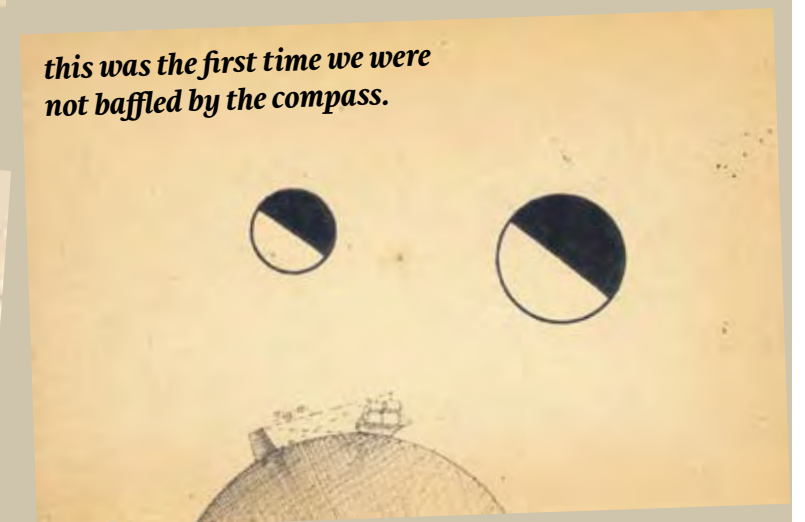
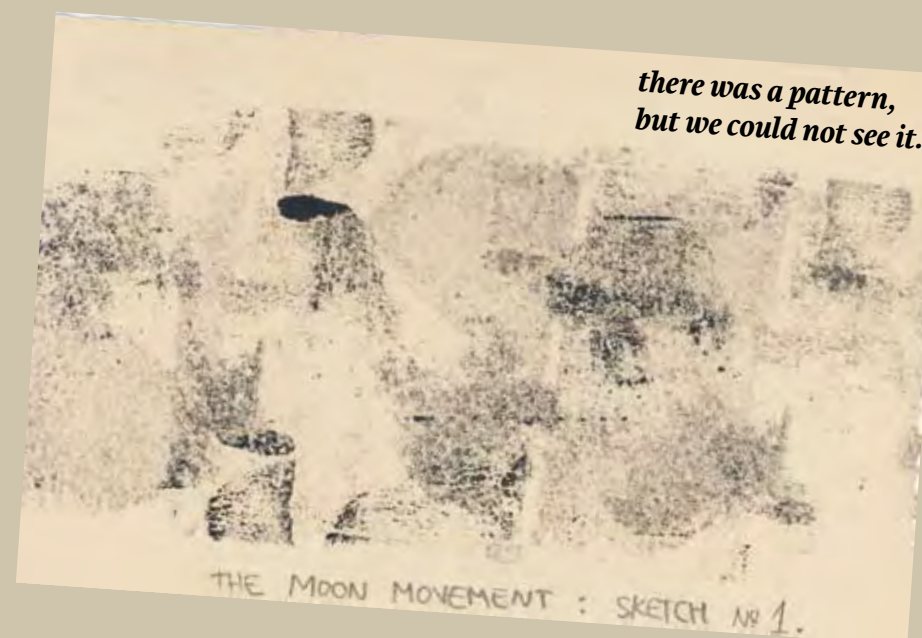
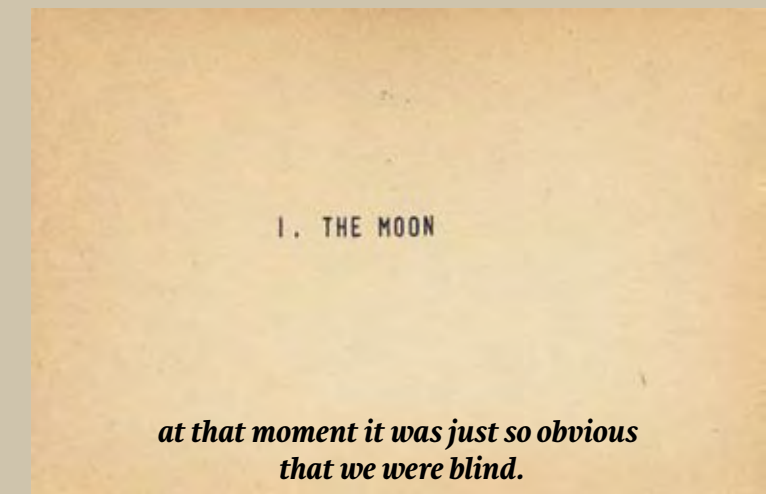
They manage to save the Slovenian sportsmen from death by assembling them all on a barge. The barge washes up on top of the hill used by the centre as a paragliding polygon. Tired of the constant flooding Tarik and Merima mount a parachute and set off, over the tower blocks of New Zagreb, into the sunset, towards a brighter future. ✖

Lala Raščić, *The Damned Dam* – Illustrations, 2010–2011

Marko Tadić

Born 1979, Sisak ♦ Lives in Zagreb

Referring to two sci-fi classics, *The Invention of Morel* by Adolf Bioy Casares and *From Earth to the Moon* by Jules Verne, which both mention the discovery of a previously unidentified planet, *We Used To Call It: Moon!* (2011) by Marko Tadić produces imaginary, fictitious worlds, in order to look at the possibilities of re-examining the perception and imagery of both the past and the future. Intervening in obsolete and used everyday materials, such as private notebooks or old postcards, Tadić explores the visual possibilities of the discovery of a second moon; how it might have been recorded and passed to collective imagination. He creates an 'archive' of diverse scenes of known and anonymous tourist destinations, sentimental motifs and kitsch illustrations in which the image of the second moon is inserted discreetly, but obsessively. Oscillating between fiction and documentary, the set-up of the work recalls the 'wunderkammer' atmosphere, opening a door to a parallel reality where the second moon serves as a catalyst that transforms the familiar into another locus composed of fragments of a possible world.



Marko Tadić, *We used to call it: Moon!*, 2010–2011

»THE HABITS OF OUR LIVES MAKE US PRESUME THAT THINGS WILL HAPPEN IN A CERTAIN FORESEEABLE WAY, THAT THERE WILL BE A VAGUE COHERENCE IN THE WORLD. NOW REALITY APPEARS TO BE CHANGED, UNREAL.

WHEN A MAN AWAKENS, OR DIES, HE IS SLOW TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE TERRORS OF THE DREAM, FROM THE WORRIES & MANIAS OF LIFE.«

»THE INVENTION OF MOREL«
Adolfo Bioy Casares

Marko Tadić

Gallery Nova • Zagreb

Drugi svijet / Second World / Zweite Welt

- exhibition
17/06-25/07/2011
Nevin Aladağ ♦ Tamar Guimarães ♦ Daniel Knorr ♦ Chan-Kyong Park ♦ Marko Tadić



Gregory Sholette,
Dark Matter: Art and Politics in an Age of Enterprise Culture
(Pluto Press, 2011)

- lecture Stephen Wright: "The Word for World is Worlds"
- work presentation Tamar Guimarães "Canoas"
- lecture Gregory Sholette: "From radical solidarity to 'whatever' collectivism: political art and the rise of crisis capitalism" & "Dark Matter" book presentation

- exhibition
15/09-19/11/2011
Tom Nicholson ♦ Maha Maamoun ♦ Mona Marzouk ♦ Isa Rosenberger
- lecture Bassam El Baroni "Just What Is It that Makes Today's Transnationalism So Prescribed, So Paradoxical?"



Tom Nicholson, *Action for 2pm Sunday 6 July 1835*, 2005

The Zagreb series of events received additional support from:

Allianz Kulturstiftung

City Office for Culture, Education & Sports of the City of Zagreb

Erste Foundation

Danish Arts Council

ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen e.V.

Korea Foundation

National Foundation for Civil Society Development of Republic of Croatia

Ministry of Culture Republic of Croatia

All events in Gallery Nova are co-organised by WHW and AGM

AGM

Dance is very important in your life...
When does dance turn political?
And do you dance at parties?

Dance turns political whenever it allows for the possibility of a rupture in the daily fabric of habit. This can happen through sudden and quasi-involuntary bursts of energy or creativity in gestures, steps, leaps, or deep stillness. Or it can happen through the careful choreographic composition of elements that all of a sudden form an atmospheric saturation where the transmission of an affect creates a transformative effect in the social situation where the dance is taking place—one needs only to be always aware if such effect is politically progressive and affectively joyful or politically regressive, reactionary and affectively sad. I dance at parties, but only with my eyes closed.

What does the idea of love mean to you, and has that changed over time?

I long thought that love was a harbor and that the harbor had to be what life was really about after all. It was safe and comfortable, and one could stay there for a long time, protected from the tumult of everything irrational and uncontrollable, like the sea. That is, I thought that until I really fell in love for the first time, perhaps, and learned that love could, in fact, instead be that very sea: it was irrational and uncontrollable, indeed, making it dangerous but also transportative, its movements challenging and questioning so many of the usual givens that I thought were stable, but, most importantly, rather than the predictable contours of a harbor, bounded by neatly defined limits, love could be, indeed must be, as vast as the sea is vast, infinite and engulfing.

What do you feel passionate about?

I am passionate about the world, the world in the twenty-first century. It seems to be continually and perpetually spiraling into global chaos, its attention fixated on the forthcoming

lack of energy resources, the imminent destruction of our natural resources, and an insurmountable lack of fertility. In essence, today's world is like that of *Barbarella*: a dystopia where human desires are exploited and controlled.

What does tolerance mean to you?

Usually I am the tolerating one, and I am sick of it. Too much tolerance is self-torturing. And it makes you grow a tumor inside. If I had the luxury I wouldn't be tolerant at all. It is not healthy. I really had enough of it, and I think I cannot take it anymore. Too bad...

What attracts you physically to other people?

Hmmm, what a hard question... it's hard for me to feel physically attracted to anyone BEFORE I've felt any kind of warmth in their company. Then I appreciate their eyes first and then smile. And their demeanor. The walk also, there's a lot you can tell from a walk. But actually physically, it's the hands and arms for me. I'm a sucker for interesting agile hands and the lines that define the muscles in the not too toned arms and a defined back.

Autog. / excerpt

Thanks to the participants of this interview:

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Shahen Merati, Dan Peronchi,
Kirstine Reetzorff, Stephanie Rommha, Dirk
Snauszott, Wojciech Szepiel,
Eszeg Utiak, Sabine B. Vogel
and Daniela Zyman.

Nevin Aladağ interviewt Nevin Aladağ
Wien

2010

In welches Land würdest du ungern reisen wollen?

In letzter Konsequenz ist es eine Frage der Wahrung von Menschenrechten. Es fällt mir mittlerweile sehr schwer in Länder zu reisen, in denen Menschenrechte missachtet werden und wo ethnische, religiöse und andere Arten der Ausgrenzung von Minderheiten oder die Verfolgung von Dissidenten politischen

oder lebensanschaulichen Ansichten praktiziert werden. Ich bin mir natürlich im Klaren, dass dies eine kontroverse Haltung ist und es auch gute Gründe dafür gibt, gerade aufgrund dieser Verstöße, die gegen die Zivilbevölkerungen gerichtet sind, diese nicht noch weiter durch „Embargos“ zu stigmatisieren.



Nevin Aladağ interviews Nevin Aladağ,
2010



for the elite, like this one and many others



when we enter the dictatorship



and it was in the middle of the dictatorship



it's just that we don't remember these things about Brazilian history



and spent a sleepless week writing the Dirty Poem



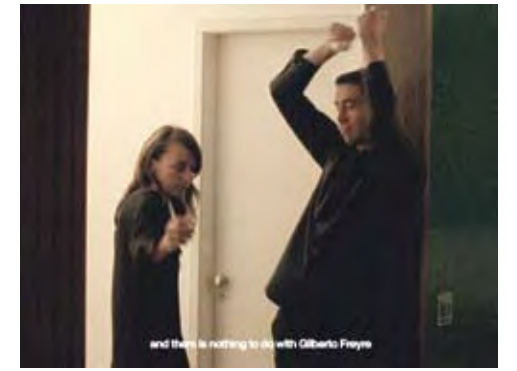
Feelings...



and the military went to his house



and then himself's party at the time



and there is nothing to do with Gilberto Freyre



large parts of the super blocks in Brasilia were built



and the colour is not quite right either



and asked if she knew how to swim



called and said 'Machado needs a coat'



it itself has an architect who transcends class



but the aim of the super blocks was to house the state bureaucracy



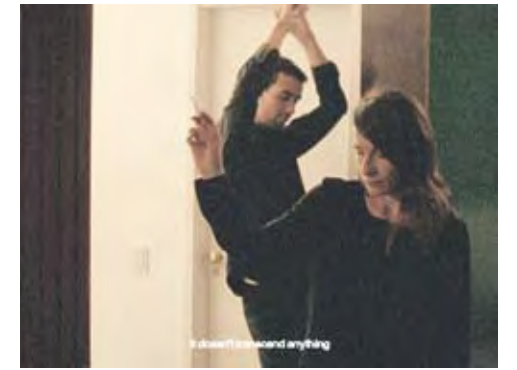
this yellow is nice



and he asked why



and do we not



it doesn't record anything



it wasn't only about building wonderful luxury houses



how do you understand the Mitterrand project of social housing



and a little way away from making proper champagne



because one of these days we'll pass by to take you for a little ride



two minutes before the dictatorship was installed there



DEATH APPEARS

1-7

D = Death

Tall. An extremely complex, multi-faceted rôle of rapid change of attitude. Dynamically he moves from brutal strength to extreme gentleness and back. Requires strong, clean, powerful technique, rhythm and stamina.



Isa Rosenberger: *Spiral* (An Hommage to Kurt Joos), 2010/11
 DANCER: Amanda Piña
 LEFT: Labanotation by Kurt Joos

Stephen Wright

Betwixt Worlds



Mona Marzouk: *The New World* (Installation View), 2007, installation view Gallery Sfeir-Semler, Beirut

When one refers to “the artworld” it is in distinction to non-art worlds, not to some constellation of other, competing artworlds. This is crucial because it points up one of the mainstays of contemporary liberal ideology, which in the name of global domination is determined to impose the idea that we live, one and all, in the same world – and through the homogeneity of market forces, is dead-set on imposing a one-world ontology

–And what world is that there? What people dwell in it?

Fontenelle, *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds* (1686)

I want focus on the following question: what does it mean to change worlds? An age-old project to be sure, but one which has lapsed into disrepute. Today people seem more concerned with surviving in the world than with changing it.

Alain Badiou, Seminar of 16 June 2010

It is commonsensical enough to maintain that we all live in one and the same world. Conversely, it would seem to require some theoretical framing to hold and uphold the opposing point of view – that we live in a number of saliently different worlds. For it requires constantly foregrounding that worlds are not natural features of the universe – like solar systems or something – but are constructs of collective human consciousness; as they are made, they can be remade, replicated, modified, superseded – and indeed they are all the time. Common parlance is ambivalent on the issue: the singular seems straightforward (as in the question “why in the world?”) but the plural is not uncommon (“worlds apart”) and it isn’t always necessary to tag the “s” on the end to imply a kind of differentiated polyworldism (as in, “the Arab world” or, in more hierarchical form, the “third world”). Yet this only goes so far, for when one refers to “the artworld” it is in distinction to non-art worlds, not to some constellation of other, competing artworlds. This is crucial because it points up one of the mainstays of contemporary liberal ideology, which in the name of global domination is determined to impose the idea that we live, one and all, in the same world – and through the homogeneity of market forces, is dead-set on imposing a one-world ontology. When possible, pluralists are dismissed as benevolent dreamers – like the superego of the one “real” world, telling us how it ought to be, or used to be, but isn’t – until they start to find ways to have their dreams made real, in which case they are scorned as cranks or worse.

One might of course argue that contemporary ideology thrives on the slipperiness of the notion of worlds – at one moment insisting justifying global plunder by arguing that we’re all in the same world, then the next showing remarkable openness for pluralism as we are all encouraged to become prosumers, which requires the individualizing of experience and thus the apparent proliferation of worlds. But this apparent ambivalence is an illusion. For one thing, because what appears to be a pluralizing of worlds is in fact nothing more than accommodating and defusing difference within a single overarching world frame, paying nothing more than lip service to harmless, because defanged, possible alternatives to the brutally real world. And perhaps still more importantly,

because worlds are not private initiatives any more than languages are; like languages, worlds are collective, intersubjective undertakings, and though they are constructs, they are not the product of any individual consciousness or subjectivity – and this is precisely what gives them their ontological consistency and resilience.

In an essay on the meaning of the sequence of riots of the past year, whose provocative title – “Shoplifters of the World Unite” – inadvertently reminds us that polyworldism is not inherent to Marxism, Slavoj Žižek writes:

“Alain Badiou has argued that we live in a social space which is increasingly experienced as ‘worldless’: in such a space, the only form protest can take is meaningless violence. Perhaps this is one of the main dangers of capitalism: although by virtue of being global it encompasses the whole world, it sustains a ‘worldless’ ideological constellation in which people are deprived of their ways of locating meaning. The fundamental lesson of globalisation is that capitalism can accommodate itself to all civilisations, from Christian to Hindu or Buddhist, from West to East: there is no global ‘capitalist worldview’, no ‘capitalist civilisation’ proper. The global dimension of capitalism represents truth without meaning.”

Though, understandably, his comments drew considerable flack – particularly, but not exclusively, in the “Arab world” – Žižek does capture something of the exceptional ontological status of capitalism, whose dynamics undermine every stable frame of critique. As a world system, capitalism thrives on its own irregularities, subsuming even the most erratic forms of excess into the fold. Though a totalizing normality would stifle the market, this is not to say that there is no capitalist world. And indeed what Badiou actually argues in his monumental *Logics of Worlds* is not so much that our time is devoid of world, but that the hegemonic capitalist world is as he puts it “atonic.”⁰¹ That is, it is literally “pointless,” offering no standpoint from which a subject can be both the principle of its transformation and at the same time remain sufficiently immobile to assert its reality and destination. But “worldlessness” is a sloppy translation of “atonic,” for capitalism continues to function as a coherent world-altering force – instantiating itself as a world like no other before it. Referring to the well-known passage from *The Communist Manifesto* about the “de-territorializing” force of capitalism which dissolves all fixed social forms, Badiou notes Marx’s strangely enthusiastic tone for the world-unmaking power of Capital:

“The fact that Capital revealed itself to be the material power capable of disencumbering us

⁰¹ “Atonic worlds are simply worlds which are so ramified and nuanced – or so quiescent and homogeneous – that no instance of the Two, and consequently no figure of decision, is capable of evaluating them.” *Logics of Worlds*, p. 420.

of the “superego” figures of the One and the sacred bonds that accompany it effectively represents its positively progressive character, and it is something that continues to unfold to the present day. Having said that, the generalized atomism, the recurrent individualism and, finally, the abasement of thought into mere practices of administration, of the government of things or of technical manipulation, could never satisfy me as a philosopher.”

Nor should it begin to satisfy any worldly being.

WHEN SUBSTANCE DISSOLVES INTO FUNCTION

Of course, one might say all of this is a moot point – what possible difference does it make if there is one big all-inclusive world or a bunch of smaller more singularized worlds? This point was nicely made by pragmatist philosopher William James in his book *A Pluralistic Universe*, where he notes that the issue between monism and pluralism tends to evaporate under scrutiny. James’ student, Nelson Goodman, puts it this way in his *Ways of Worldmaking*:

“If there is but one world, it embraces a multiplicity of contrasting aspects; if there are many worlds, the collection of them all is one. The one world may be taken as many, or the many worlds taken as one; whether one or many depends on the way of taking.”

Why, then, do both James and Goodman (like Ernst Cassirer) so insist on the multiplicity of worlds – and why might we wish to follow suit? The answer is twofold, though we must be clear that we are not talking about merely “possible” alternative worlds, that tend to subordinate themselves right off the bat to the single, so-called “real” world, but of multiple actual worlds. First, because it is a fact that many different world-versions of independent interest and importance exist, without any requirement or presumption of reducibility to a single base. Goodman eloquently sums up his outlook in this passage:

“Worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds already on hand; the making is a remaking. (...) With false hope of a firm foundation gone, with the world displaced by worlds, there are but versions, with substance dissolved into function, and with the give acknowledged as taken, we face the questions how worlds are made, tested, and known.”⁰²

⁰² “Worldmaking” writes Goodman in another passage, focusing more on the nuts-and-bolts pragmatics of the operation rather than its ontological consequences, “consists of taking apart and putting together, often conjointly: on the one hand, of dividing wholes into parts and partitioning kinds into sub-species, analysing complexes into component features, drawing distinctions; on the other hand, of comprising wholes and kinds out of parts and members and subclasses, combing features into complexes, and making connections. Such composition or decomposition is normally effected or assisted or consolidated by the application of labels: names, predicates, gestures, pictures...”

Bearing in mind that aesthetics itself was initially premised on poly-worldism may be of succour as we try to challenge the supremacy of “the” increasingly atonic artworld and quit the cognitive quagmires where art-critical discourse lies in suspended animation, politely arguing with itself as to whether art can truly change “the” world.



Željko Jerman, *This Is Not My World*, action, SKC Gallery, Belgrade 1976

In the history of ideas, it would seem that the one-world / polyworld debate intensifies every so often when a certain worldly consensus becomes saturated and begins to burst – rather as if one-worldism were the fallback position whereas its ultimate fragmentation is the historical exception which emerges in moments of instability and crisis, before a new world picture emerges, garners support and is embodied by the conceptual institutions of a worldview. To take a quick example, modern usage of the word “aesthetics” was coined by 18th-century German philosopher Baumgarten, who defined it in the first sentence of his book *Aesthetica* as “the science of... sensual cognition” (and only secondarily of art *per se*) and went on to found that science on a boundless



constellation of what he calls “*alterocosmoi*” (for some reason, he wrote his treatise in Latin, but the title translates easily, unlike the rest of the book, as “other worlds”),⁰³ Bearing in mind that aesthetics itself was initially premised on poly-worldism may be of succour as we try to challenge the supremacy of “the” increasingly atonic artworld and quit the cognitive quagmires where art-critical discourse lies in suspended animation, politely arguing with itself as to whether art can truly change “the” world.

⁰³ More recently (2010), there has been some interest in post-materialist thought that grapples with the question of how to avoid denial about the “thereness” of “the” actual world while challenging its propensity to shut down other ways of actualizing worlds. In *The Waning of Materialism* (Robert C. Koons & George Bealer [eds.]), Terry Horgan has this to say in his essay, “Materialism, Minimal Emergentism, and the Hard Problem of Consciousness”: “In seeking a satisfactory formulation of materialism, it helps to employ the notion of a possible world. Possible worlds are plausibly construed not literally as universes other than the single real universe (i.e., not as *cosmoi*), but rather as total ways the cosmos might be – i.e., maximal properties instantiable by the single real world (the single *cosmos*). On this usage, the item designated as the actual world – considered as one among the various possible worlds – is not itself the *cosmos* either, but rather is the total *cosmos*-instantiable property that is actually instantiated by the *cosmos*. But it will be convenient in practice to speak as though the actual world is the *cosmos* and as though other possible worlds are other such *cosmoi* – a harmless enough manner of speaking, as long as one bears in mind that it is not intended literally.” That last line deals a gently devastating blow to one-world theory in general and to its proponents in the artworld in particular.

WORDS BETWEEN WORLDS

Let’s consider for a moment the words “second world,” which the curators have given to this exhibition. Among the many things those words might evoke, they undeniably pry open between worlds – between the dubious ontological glamour of the “first” world and the next in line. As a verbal readymade, it reminds us of a world-that-was, while at face value it names a proposition of a world. For those with the historical background to hear it, the readymade meaning comes first. But even as it calls to mind a now-defunct world of social relations, it also names – even proclaims – another world. Yet it does so without expressing any futile imperative. It’s a humble enough formula, expressively and creatively idle like any readymade, but intriguing enough to dislodge something implicit, its semantic content quite undeniably holding the proposition of another world before us.

Thus in its own modest way, it is quite in keeping with the most forward-looking contemporary practice in art, which rather than seeking to represent a world, or translate it into an image or down to the scale of an artwork, operates on the 1:1 scale – actually being a full-scale instance of whatever it is (a restaurant, journal, online archive, painting business, school, demonstration, housing development, you name it) and simultaneously a proposition of whatever it is. Not an arty version of whatever it is, but the real McCoy. Of course, this is true to varying degrees in different cases, many oscillating to and fro between the established artworld and the emergent world which they propose. Nonetheless, we can safely say that to a very real extent Iain Baxter’s *Eye Scream restaurant*, the journal *Third Text*, *aaaaaarg*, *That’s Painting*, *lecollege ou The Public School*, Jochen Gerz’s *Two, Three Streets* project – and countless others – are both what they are, and propositions of what they are. They have a double ontology. They are of two worlds.

Such practices – which, though still marginal, are growing in power – are a radical departure from anything art history has known. Unlike 20th-century practices, they are not a movement. They tear art from itself, take it elsewhere, deploy it as a self-understanding rather than a form. Perhaps most radically of all, they forego the specific visibility provided by mainstream framing devices: while not invisible, they are not seen as art. In this respect, though, they are clearly in the lineage of conceptualism – and give renewed political corrosiveness to that term.

MANY WORLDS IF ANY

They emerge at a time when we are both assailed by a growing sense of worldlessness and the rumblings of other worlds, reminding us that there must be many worlds if any. Perhaps it is because we are historically “be-tween” worlds that we can both understand the implicit assumption that we all live in one and the same world, and the more counterintuitive assertion that worlds are constructs rather than natural features of being. Of course, the



Ruben Grigoryan: *Terra Nova*, 2003

signal advantage of one-world theory (and the tremendous advantage that capitalism has over any alternative system of social relations) is that it requires no theoretical justification: it is self-evident, it operates impersonally, “behind our backs” (and really only needs to be enforced by the judicial apparatus of States, augmented when necessary by their war machines). Alternative worlds don’t have that advantage – they have to be organized and laid out with a fully conscious strategic intelligence (something which has proven noticeably difficult to do). The point, I guess, is that a world is a collectively embodied, ontological construct, which though depersonalized provides a standpoint for self-understanding, enabling it to be at the same time a proposition of a world.

That is a tad abstract, but it allows us see how art’s potential comes into play, in light of its own singular ontological fate since Duchamp (above all by what he called the reciprocal readymade, which deframes art instead of framing non-art). For it just may be that the “double ontologies” of

contemporary post-mimetic art-related practice are rather similar to what the current world-shifting situation calls for – being both what they are and a proposition of what they are, that is, a way of worldsplitting and world-doubling.

Once art has shed its external forms, its inherited techniques, its specialized materials, what does it have to offer to the other worldmakers with which it collaborates? Since it no longer has anything inherently its own to bring into the equation, it can only bring a kind of double consciousness, an estranging awareness that it both is what it is, and a proposition of what it is. That sounds and certainly looks like precious little. But by ramping up the act’s ontology to the second power, it makes worlds of difference. ★



Jumana Emil Abboud

Stomachs

2010

Jumana Emil Abboud

I am my own Talisman

2010

Jumana Emil Abboud

Night Journey [Drawings]

2010 – 2011

Jumana Emil Abboud

O Whale, Don't Swallow Our Moon!

[Quest for Spouse]

2011

7'

ALL WORKS COMMISSIONED BY SARJAH ART

FOUNDATION.

Yael Bartana

The Jewish Renaissance Movement

in Poland

2003 – 2011

Nemanja Cvijanović

The Monument to the Memory of the

Idea of the Internationale

2010

DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture

Art Residency)

The Lawless Line

2010

DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture

Art Residency)

2010

8'1"

Marcelo Expósito & Verónica Iglesia

Country Europa

2010 – 2011

Ruben Grigoryan

Don't Be Sad

2003

Ruben Grigoryan

Kindergarden

2004

Ruben Grigoryan

Terra Nova

2003

Ruben Grigoryan

When Everybody Is Sleeping II

2005

Ruben Grigoryan

Those From The Opposite Shore

2007

Ruben Grigoryan

Wish You Were Next to Me

2010

Daniel Knorr

Archeotecture

2011

Bouchra Khalili

Mapping Journey #1

2008

4'30"

Mapping Journey #3

2009

3'30"

Mapping Journey #5

2010

11'

Mapping Journey #7

2011

6'

ALL WORKS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST &

GALERIE POLARIS, PARIS

Maha Maamoun

Night Visitor

2011

Maha Maamoun

Night Visitor

The Night of Counting the Years

11'

2011

Mona Marzouk

The Bride Stripped Bare

By Her Energy's Evil

2008

2'44"

Tom Nicholson

Monument for the Flooding

of Royal Park

2008 – 2011

Andrew Byrne/Tom Nicholson

Music for an Imaginary Launch

2010

Andrew Byrne/Tom Nicholson

Monument for the Flooding

of Royal Park [Poster]

2011

Chan-Kyong Park

Power Passage

2004

Chan-Kyong Park

The Sets

2002

ALL WORKS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST &

P K M GALLERY, SEOUL

Lala Raščić

The Damned Dam

2010

36'

Lala Raščić

Illustrations

2010 – 2011

Lala Raščić

Catastrophe

2000

20'

PRODUCED BY RADIO LUKAVAC

Marko Tadić

We used to call it: Moon!

2010 – 2011

Second World

steirischer herbst • Graz

23/09-16/10/2011

Drugi svijet / Second World / Zweite Welt

steirischer herbst 2011
23/09–16/10/2011

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Utopia as a form is not representation of radical alternatives, it is rather simply the imperative to imagine them.

Fredric Jameson, “Archaeologies of the Future – The Desire Called Utopia & Other Science Fictions”



still from Lala Raščić, *The Damned Dam*, 2010

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Marko Tadić

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