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an ihrem Alltag. Gerade in *Maskirovka* scheint es so, als würden maskierter und intimer Einblick sich gegenseitig stützen.

Radek Krolczyk (geb. 1978 in Pyskowice, PL) ist Inhaber der Galerie K' in Bremen (DE). Für seine Texte zu Kunst wurde er 2018 mit dem Kritikerpreis der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutscher Kunstvereine (ADKV) und der Art Cologne ausgezeichnet.

sonsbeek20→24: Force Times Distance—On Labour and Its Sonic Ecologies

Various venues, Arnhem, 2. 7. – 29. 8. 2021

by Eva Maria Ocherbauer

The sonsbeek exhibition was originally initiated in 1949 in an effort to surmount the trauma caused by the Battle of Arnhem in 1944 during the Second World War. The twelfth edition of sonsbeek under the auspices of the artistic director Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung and his curatorial team—Antonia Alampi, Amal Alhaag, Zippora Elders, Aude Christel Mgba, and Vincent van Velsen—looks deeper into the history of the Dutch city of Arnhem, going back in time to investigate its structure in relation to its colonial legacy. *Force Times Distance* follows five core trajectories—exhibition, radio, educational and public program, publications, and archive—which are used to articulate ideas around labor and framed by issues like race, gender, class, and politics, narrated in a continued public process through 2024.

In recent times, the coronavirus pandemic has taught us a lot about essential labor, in terms of what is perceived as essential for a society to



Kudzanai-Violet Hwami in collaboration with Belina Zhawi, Baktu, Anna, Nehanda, from the installation: *Black Anna*, 2021. Mixed media, sound system, silkscreen, oil, acrylic on canvas, 178 x 149 cm. Photo: Victor Wenekes.

keep functioning and what is not, all of which imposes the question: Who determines fundamental needs and for whom? We have been given new categories to define ourselves, like being essential or nonessential workers. How do cultural workers see themselves in times where museums

are closed despite the fact that they can provide clear hygiene concepts and have enough space to guarantee safe physical distancing? We have to question the role of culture in society, not only as entertainment, but as an essential part of our well-being, as the substantial bond that keeps us together. It follows that we must respect all work done as essential, unemployed persons included, as we all contribute to the fabric of our communities.

Sonsbeek Park was constructed by thousands of people who were engaged in building and maintaining its structures as visible or invisible, paid or unpaid workers. The park's original owner imported sugar from plantations located on the island of Java, Indonesia, so we have knowledge of what generated his wealth. How essential was the work of the plantation workers who didn't receive any validation, about whom we know nothing, in comparison to the proprietors and their families, about whom we know so much? For her contribution to sonsbeek, Kudzanai-Violet Hwami collaborated with Belinda Zhawi to create the installation *Black Anna* (2021), consisting of sound, film, and paintings, and centered around an unknown woman shipped from Suriname to Arnhem in 1727, accompanying the family she worked for, supposedly as a maid. We only know about her existence because she must have been ill, as a doctor's bill found in the family bookkeeping suggests. The installation imagines narratives related to this woman's identity that go beyond her life as a servant who was given the fictional name Anna. Simultaneously, Hwami introduces Paula, a present-day Black Anna uprooted from her country of origin who works as a servant for a European family. Who is Paula to this family apart from her work? Hwami invites the viewer to see Black women's personhood for what it is: a rich existence beyond the narrative of bare life that was and still is placed upon them.

Farkhondeh Shahroudi's installation *Performative Poetics of Matter* (2021) relates to the perception of Black Anna as well. Her performative sculpture, located right next to Zypendaal Castle where Anna lived, consists of red flags embroidered with Farsi, German, and English poetry. While neither territorializing nor stereotyping ways of belonging, the sculpture allows the spectator to experience the loss of words in interaction with the text. The work reflects on the geographical movement of people, navigates between the political and the intimate, and moves from language to speechlessness. Olu Oguibe, in turn, addresses sex work in his piece of huge neon writing installed in Arnhem's city center and once again in Sonsbeek Park, consisting of the words "Sex Work Is Honest Work." Referring to various notions of sex work, the artist explores the confluence of morality, legality, and capital, looking into the historical denial of this form of labor as work and examining its complexities as migrant or indentured labor. In Hira Nabi's docu-fictional film *All That Perishes at the Edge of Land* (2019), the container vessel "Ocean Master" is anthropomorphized, entering into dialogue with several workers at the Gadani ship-breaking yard in Balochistan, Pakistan. The conversation moves between dreams and desire and the structural violence embedded in the act of dismembering a ship at Gadani. The workers recall the homes and families they left behind, as they are forced to confront the realities of their work, where they are faced with death on a daily basis. A network of linked industries aggregating wealth provokes contamination of all the surrounding elements through exploitative

labor practices that perpetuate structures of destitution and destruction.

The sonsbeek exhibition looks at labor in relation to sound and also in terms of music production, in the sense of techno beats resulting from the noise generated by car factories in Detroit. Drexcia, an American duo known for exploring the outer reaches of electronic music, developed



Farkhondeh Shahroudi, *Performative Poetics of Matter*, 2021. Anna Mermaid, needlework on fabric; Seedbomb, hand-stitched carpet, wood construction. Photo: Django van Ardenne.

a nautical Afrofuturist myth by proposing that Drexcia is an underwater country populated by the descendants of the unborn children of pregnant African women who were thrown off slave ships during the dreadful Middle Passage crossings to the Americas. In the book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Paul Gilroy describes Black identity as multifaceted and difficult to define due to the multinational position of Blackness. Gilroy utilizes the imagery of the slave ship to demonstrate the position of diasporan Black bodies between two (or more) lands, identities, and cultures that are not easily defined by or located within established borders. Ellen Gallagher's *Watery Ecstatic* (2001–ongoing), on display at Waalse Church, is an ongoing series of watercolors combining marine biology with the Afrofuturist mythology of Drexcia. The watercolors, in Gallagher's own improvisation on the mythology, symbolize the lost future of the children of these drowned slaves.

The *Force Times Distance* exhibition acts as a choreography of sonic frequencies, thereby encouraging different modes of listening; it endeavors to recover, reconstitute, and eventually repair the still segregative conditions under which we live. As a space to meet, debate, interact, and listen, Ibrahim Mahama's *Parliament of Ghosts* (2019) is set up in the nave of St. Eusebius Church. Residues from Gold Coast railways and the Ghana Railways Corporation, as well as other relevant archives of Ghana's post-independence era, comprise this installation and foster a dialogue between different temporalities, materials, and stages of decay, thus connecting old, abandoned spaces with new ecologies. The installation raises questions concerning the difference between—and the political implications of—staging an artwork and building a stage as a work of art. Or it explores how the past can travel through time to the present in order to heal it: an idea that strongly resonates with this installment of sonsbeek.

Eva Maria Ocherbauer is an Austrian-born artist, curator, writer, and lecturer based in Berlin (DE), whose work has been featured internationally in various exhibitions and publications. Jointly with Sylvester Okwundo Ogbecchie she heads the FotoFactory.Lagos in Lagos (NG) since 2016.

Zineb Sedira: Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go

Jeu de Paume, Paris, 15. 10. 2019 – 19. 1. 2020

Bildmuseet, Umeå, 19. 6. – 24. 10. 2021

Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon, February – April 2022

IVAM – Institut Valencià d' Art Modern, Valencia, 2022

by Koshik Zaman

It's by mere chance that I get to see Zineb Sedira's *Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go* at Bildmuseet, her second time exhibiting at the museum following the solo exhibition *Under the Sky and Over the Sea* in 2010. French-born of Algerian descent and based in London, Sedira has notably been selected to represent France at



Zineb Sedira, *Standing Here Wondering Which Way to Go*. Installation at Bildmuseet, Umeå, 2021. Photo: Mikael Lundgren.

the 59th Venice Biennale next year. There's an evident kinship with the other exhibition I've just seen at the museum: Naeem Mohaiemen's *Jole Dobe Na*. If Mohaiemen, born to Bangladeshi parents, brings attention to the history of Bangladesh through the means of photographic



Zineb Sedira: *A Brief Moment / L'espace d'un instant*.

With a foreword by Quentin Bajac and contributions by Marta Jecu, Gilane Tawadros and an interview between Zineb Sedira, José Miguel G. Cortès, and Pia Viewing (fre./eng.). Jeu de Paume; Les presses du réel, Paris 2019. 168 pages, 24.8 x 31 cm, numerous b/w and color illustrations. € 39.– / ISBN 978-2-915704-90-7

archives, artifacts, and memory, then Sedira in a similar fashion probes and shines light on crucial historical events in her parents' native Algeria.

At hand is literally a very welcoming show. The walls are painted in shades of green and yellow, exuding an air of warmth and joy. At the center, placed slightly angled, is a 1:1 replica of Sedira's own London living room. The walls are covered with trompe l'oeil photo wallpaper and the room is furnished with Sedira's own personal belongings. *Way of Life* (2019) is the most elaborate of the four scenes into which the exhibition has aptly been divided. Examined throughout the show is a part of Algeria's timeline in which Algiers was hailed an epicenter for political and revolutionary movements, following the Algerian independence gained some years prior. As a testament of the zeitgeist stands the Pan-African Cultural Festival, an event held in 1969, serving here as a point of departure for surveying collective and constructed memory and the promotion of national identity and political ideologies through arts and culture.

In the midst of the exhibition, my mind springs to Woodstock '69, a pop-cultural notion so embedded in global memory. Something that so many have a concept of, while few actually experienced it. The discrepancy of how two pivotal cultural events held in the same year have been reproduced in the modern day blows my mind. This is an exhibition serving a few epiphanies, but with ease—rich and illuminating, highlighting Sedira's ideas in a manner that appears accessible for a wide audience, enhanced by the upbeat exhibition design.

Hats off to Bildmuseet and the other institutions involved in the production for pointing my gaze in the right direction. If contemporary art, as asserted by some, has been exhausted by political and postcolonial discourse, then I'm more than happy to partake. Sedira's exhibition strikes me as an act of generosity, and one that counts among the best I've had the pleasure to see this year.

Koshik Zaman is a Stockholm-based (SE) freelance curator and cofounder of *C-print Journal*, a noncommercial art project with the objective of highlighting a diversity in artistic expression. It takes the shape of an online art journal and a nomadic exhibition vehicle.

Shuruq Harb: Ghost at the Feast

Beirut Art Center, Beirut, 10. 6. – 10. 9. 2021

by Natasha Gasparian

On the opening days of Shuruq Harb's exhibition *Ghost at the Feast*, the sound of a mesmerizing electronic refrain permeated through Beirut Art Center's capacious and high-ceilinged building (formerly an industrial storage facility). On that opening day especially, the sound transfixed viewers and compelled them to move in the direction of its source: Harb's award-winning video *The Jump* (2021). It is one of five works currently on view and best encapsulates the underlying political stakes of the show; namely, the subjective possibilities of living under—if not traversing—the settler-colonial rule.

In *The Jump*, an acousmatic robotic voice tells the story of a man who had journeyed to the Jordan Valley and leaped with the intention of committing suicide or else accidentally fell. The dividing line between a willful act and a tragic accident is left intentionally ambiguous. The narrative is voiced over majestic shots of the valley and interspersed with monologic reflections by Wafa Darwish (a professor of literature at Birzeit University) and Laila Atshan (a psychologist in Ramallah) on the quest for freedom. Sitting on the edge of two separate swimming pools—the pool being a now-familiar cinematic trope of the unconscious, though problematically conceived in terms of depth rather than of topology—Darwish and Atshan muse on the thrill of jumping. References to *Leap Into the Void* (1960), likely a nod to Yves Klein's photomontages, recur throughout the duration of the video as metaphors for a precarious freedom, or perhaps, more precisely, an escapist fantasy.

The question of freedom—the undeclared yet principal concern of the show—is deliberately unresolved in *The Jump*, as it is in another, earlier video, *The White Elephant* (2018). Composed of found footage shared online by Israelis during the First Intifada (1987–93) and the Gulf War (1991), Shuruq Harb's work follows the adventures of a teenage girl, recounted in the