

Places of Transition Exhibition at the MuseumsQuartier Wien

In search of various forms of contemporary models for living, the exhibition „Places of Transition“ at freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL shows a selection of international works that examine the visual and discursive possibilities of location-specific transition. On the basis of predominantly photo and video installations, the exhibition explores processes of transformation and in narrative form addresses some of the global changes we have experienced in recent years and decades. Curated by Gülsen Bal with Walter Seidl, the show opens on January 23 at 19:00.

„Places of Transition‘ marks the beginning of the exhibition year at freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL, which will feature three major exhibitions organized in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. I look forward to having another opportunity to present visitors with a variety of artistic perspectives in response to current issues,“ says Dr. Christian Strasser, director of the MuseumsQuartier Wien.

The diversity of our approaches to transnational issues through shared forms of interaction calls for an examination of global power structures. While the East/West problem in Europe is gradually disappearing, the power struggles in the Middle East have undermined the promise of the Arab Spring and triggered a debate on an international level about politics in transition.

In this respect, the exhibition focuses on the problems faced by various territories and the question of how they can be linked on the basis of a joint criticism of politically dominant narratives and regulations. In addition, various levels of lived experiences of the self are reflected and own and other conventions of seeing analyzed. The participating artists often treat the individual themes in terms of the situation in their own countries, which allows the exhibition to engage in various points of view from a political perspective.

„Art has to radically challenge society to promote real change,“ say exhibition curators Gülsen Bal and Walter Seidl.

The exhibition also poses the question how artists deal with certain traditions in their home countries. Despite a personal tendency toward laicist models, many artists examine country-specific models and radically deconstruct them in their works. This results in critical statements about the past, present, and future that have the potential to effect new approaches to thinking.

The video installation by Oliver Ressler is a good example. The film „Socialism Failed, Capitalism Is Bankrupt: What Comes Next?“ was shot in 2010 in the largest bazaar of Yerevan, called „Bangladesh.“ In the film, merchants at the market tell about their battle for survival in the crisis of a post-socialist state in which the majority of all of the factories from the Soviet era have been shut down and the social security network was dissolved.

The video and photo piece by Milica Tomić also refers to a very personal situation. „Portrait of My Mother“ (1999) was produced in the days after the Nato bombardments of Belgrade. Tomić examines the complex relationship between the trauma of the lost Yugoslavian modernity and the new identity policies of the Milošević years.

Akram Zaatari’s video „Tomorrow Everything Will Be Alright,“ in turn, examines forms of transition on a very personal level. Two former lovers have a conversation after separating ten years earlier and confess to each other that they have a desire to see each other again. But the words they exchange are written on an old-fashioned typewriter,

which invites viewers to voyeuristically partake in this very personal and poetic conversation.

In his multimedia installation “Monika Ertl’s Pistol,” Marco Poloni refers to historic circumstances. Underground fighter Monika Ertl is alleged to have murdered consul Roberto Quintanilla Pereira in 1971 at the Bolivian Consulate General in Hamburg. The murder was committed with a pistol belonging to Italian publisher Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, who was also known under the code name Osvaldo.

Libia Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson are showing a seven-meter-long neon sign installation with the phrase: “Your country does not exist.” With this statement, they are making reference to present-day migration movements prompted by political, economic, or professional conditions. The dissolution of nationalist governments due to the advent of global, neoliberal structures challenges country-specific structures and at the same time calls for a pluralism informed by ethnic and cultural awareness.

Santiago Sierra is showing his video “Burned Word” in which the word “Future” is publicly burned. The video was produced in 2012 in El Cabanyal, a historic district and fishing quarter in Valencia threatened by the potential development of a new roadway crossing through the area.

Aslı Çavuşoğlu’s audiovisual installation “191/205” refers to the fact that in 1985 the General Directorate of the Turkish Radio and Television Corporation TRT banned the use of 205 words in television and radio broadcasts because they allegedly had nothing to do with the Turkish language or did not correspond with the general Turkish standard.

Some of the participating artists are artists-in-residence of quartier21/MuseumsQuartier in connection with the exhibition. For instance, Bulgarian artist Vikenti Komitski will be producing a new piece on location. Vikenti Komitski’s works have to do with readymades and the way they influence other objects and ideas. This can sometimes lead to a critical statement about the function of works of art per se. Köken Ergun will also be showing a version of one of his works specially adapted for the MQ. His works refer to strictly political and religiously articulated positions and social reactions to them. He pays special attention to social contradictions.

The exhibition is also accompanied by a side program with lectures, performances, and a children’s workshop.

Artists:

Libia Castro (ESP)* & Ólafur Ólafsson (ISL)*, Köken Ergun (TUR)*, Vikenti Komitski (BUL)*, Aslı Çavuşoğlu (TUR), Marco Poloni (SUI), Oliver Ressler (AUT), Milica Tomić (SRB), Santiago Sierra (ESP), Akram Zaatari (LIB)

* quartier21/MuseumsQuartier Artists-in-Residence

“Places of Transition” is organized in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

Places of Transition

Length: Jan 24 to Mar 13, 2014, Tue to Sun, 13:00-19:00, free admission

Press preview: Thu, Jan 23, 10:00

Opening: Thu, Jan 23, 19:00

Location: freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL/MuseumsQuartier Wien
www.quartier21.at

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