

# ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes

Boaz Arad & Miki Kratsman, Ariella Azoulay, Lisa Biedlingmaier,  
Diego Castro, Köken Ergun, Francesco Finizio, Thomas Galler,  
Roe Rosen, Anna Witt, Hannes Zebedin

Und die Sammlung von *And the collection of Rudi Maier*  
„So geht Revolution“ – Werbung & Revolte Advert & Revolt

Kuratiert von Curated by Siri Peyer und and Joshua Simon

Ausstellung Exhibition: 12.5. – 18.6. 2011

Eröffnung Opening: Mittwoch Wednesday, 11.5. 2011, 19h

Mit einer Einführung von With an introduction by  
Siri Peyer und and Joshua Simon

Projektblog: <http://recoco.tumblr.com/>

**KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE | WUK**

[www.kunsthalleexnergasse.wuk.at](http://www.kunsthalleexnergasse.wuk.at)

Di–Fr 13–18 Uhr, Sa 11–14 Uhr

Tue–Fri 1pm–6pm, Sat 11am–2pm

# VERANSTALTUNGEN EVENTS

**Donnerstag Thursday, 12.5.2011**

**17 h: Kuratorenführung Curatorial tour**

Siri Peyer & Joshua Simon

**18 h: Film-Screening Film screening**

Ariella Azoulay, *The Food Chain* (2000, 17 min.)

Ariella Azoulay, *I Also Dwell Among Your Own People: Conversations With Azmi Bishara* (2006, 50 min.)

***The Food Chain, (2002) 17 min***

“In 2002, I began working on a short film – *The Food Chain* – dealing with the question: is there or isn’t there hunger in Palestine? The figures in the reports of several humanitarian organizations and statements by various officials seemed rather ambivalent to me. I assumed that there is hunger in Palestine and that outdated conceptual categories – which identify hunger with the swollen bellies of children, as in the case of Biafra – have prevented us from seeing the situation in the Occupied Territories as it truly is. I conducted additional interviews with military officers, soldiers and policy-makers. All declared themselves to be fulfilling a humanitarian function. Gradually the picture became clearer. The spread of humanitarian speech to the networks of the military and the government was part of the exacerbation of conditions in the Occupied Territories. One arm strikes the blow, while the other arm provides assistance. This is the current phase of the Occupation – the Palestinians are constantly kept “on the verge of catastrophe”. Those who contend there is no hunger in Palestine are absolutely correct. There

is no hunger in Palestine, nor will there be. The mechanisms of assistance, which provide food to the hurting Palestinian population, counter-balance the fatal blow to the sources of food and accessibility to it.” (Ariella Azoulay)

Written and directed by: Ariella Azoulay / Camera: Miki Kratsman / Editing: Eliav Lilti / Music: Sharon Ben Ezer

Chorus: Ellie Armon, Noa Barak, Sharon Ben Ezer, Noam Ben Yosef, Talia Bernstein, Anat Biltski, Lior Brosh, Adi Chalfin, Rama Deuelle Luski, Irit Feigis, Sima Gutman, Noa Morag, Hagar Ophir, Liat Savin, May Zidni

This film was produced for the *Hunger Project* (Editor: Naomi Aviv, Producer: Amit Goren)

***I Also Dwell Among Your Own People: Conversations with Azmi Bishara (2005), 50 min***

Azmi Bishara is a Palestinian intellectual, a leading Arab politician and a former member of the Israeli Parliament. The film presents three aspects of Bishara’s distinction and “otherness”: the intellectual quality of his political program; his challenge not only to the Zionist ideology but also to the particular role it has assigned to the “Israeli Arab;” and the modernist, humanist, and civic aspects of his political vision, which are so outstanding on a background of nationalistic atmosphere and an emerging apartheid regime in Israel.

Written and directed by: Ariella Azoulay / Camera: Miki Kratsman / Editing: Eliav Lilty / Producer: Arik Bernstein, Alma films

## AUSSTELLUNGSINFORMATION

Die Ausstellung *ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes* hat die herrschende Übereinkunft zum Thema, dass sich unsere Wertvorstellungen, die sich mit dem Beginn der modernen Demokratie nach der französischen Revolution und speziell seit dem Ende des zweiten Weltkriegs etabliert haben, in einer Krise befinden. Seit dem Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs mussten sich parlamentarische Staaten mit neuen geopolitischen Konstellationen auseinandersetzen, und sich den Umständen eines technokratischen Kapitalismus stellen, der sich bei seinen Entscheidungen an ökonomisch-technischen Sachzwängen orientiert. Soziale Ziele stehen nicht mehr im Vordergrund. Unser Verständnis von Demokratie hat sich fundamental verändert.

Resignation, Konspiration und Korruption (Resignation/Corruption/Conspiracy – ReCoCo) beherrschen das Politische. Vermeintliche politische Wahrheiten präsentieren sich in Form von Verschwörungstheorien. Regierungen erscheinen korrupt. Politische Repräsentation richtet sich in zweierlei Arten an uns: einerseits als System der politischen Repräsentation (die Demokratie), andererseits als Repräsentation des Politischen (die Medien). Wir sind sowohl der Souverän als auch Publikum eines medialen Spektakels. Dieser doppelte Status drückt sich in verschiedenen Paradoxien aus; politische Beteiligung weicht Resignation, Ignoranz tritt anstelle politischen Wissens, Passivität erscheint einladender als politischer Aktivismus. Dementsprechend begegnen wir den Medien – Bildern, Bildunterschriften, Schlagzeilen und Nachrichten – passiv. Der „CNN-Effekt“, die direkte Übertragung von Bildern während 24 Stunden, 7 Tage die Woche, produziert ein konstantes Misstrauen. Es stellen sich uns andauernd dieselben Fragen: „Woher kommen diese Bilder? Wer zeigt sie mir? Und wieso werden gerade diese Bilder gezeigt?“

*ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes* reagiert auf die diskursive Explosion von Verschwörungstheorien als Folgeerscheinung der tiefgreifenden Umformungen von liberaler Politik. Die Bezeichnung ReCoCo ermöglicht einen Blick auf die Konstruktion und Organisation der unterschiedlichen politischen Konzepte von Repräsentationsregimen: Transparenz und Medien, Zuschauerschaft (spectatorship) und Souveränität, Zensur, Herrschaft und Bürgerschaft.

*ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes* stellt diese Formen von Wissen und Macht wie auch die ästhetischen Ökonomien, die sie produzieren, in einen Dialog mit künstlerischer Praxis. Und das zu einem Zeitpunkt der zunehmenden Ornamentalisierung der klassischen politischen Gesten der Souveränität – also ein „Rokoko“ dieser Metaphern (siehe Anlehnung im Titel). Die Ausstellung versammelt aktuelle Arbeiten, die repräsentative Regierungen und Wahrheitsregime (truth regimes) hinterfragen und experimentiert mit den Darstellungsformen von Repräsentation sowie dem inhärenten Stillstand gegenwärtiger parlamentarischer Systeme; sie bewegt sich dabei in Themen wie Spektakel und Verschwörung, Erscheinungsräume der Politik und politischer Resignation, Korruption und Governance, das Ende des Journalismus und das Aufkommen neuer nicht-repräsentationaler Formen wie Wikileaks und Live-TV.



Boaz Arad & Miki Kratzman, 21:40, 2002

In ihrer Zusammenarbeit beschäftigen sich **Boaz Arad** und **Miki Kratsman** mit nationaler Identität und geografischen Konflikten. Ihre Videoarbeit *21:40* (2002) untersucht die kollektive Erinnerung an die Ermordung des israelischen Premierministers Yitzhak Rabin im Jahr 1995. Im Video werden PassantInnen aufgefordert, die Ermordungsszene nachzuspielen. Bezeichnernderweise werden die unterschiedlichen Erinnerungsfragmente alle in ähnlicher Weise dargestellt; eine Mischung aus Medienbildern (die Ermordung wurde von einem Amateurfotografen dokumentiert) und klischeehaften Gewalt-Gesten, wie sie aus Filmen bekannt sind.

**Ariella Azoulay's** *The Museum of Dark Regimes* (2011) ist eine imaginäre Institution und ein visuelles Archiv, womit die Erfahrung von Gewalt in „wirklich existierenden Demokratien“, despotischen und totalitären Regimen dokumentiert, erfasst und zur Schau gestellt werden kann. Sie zitiert die Eigenschaften des Museums, um Bedeutung und Öffentlichkeit zu generieren, gleichzeitig ist Azoulay's imaginäres Museum ein Ort, an dem die BetrachterInnen den gezeigten Bildern neue Narrative und Auffassungen zuschreiben können. Die Bilder sollen nicht als objektive Dokumentation vergangener Ereignisse verstanden werden, sondern als Instrumente einer bestimmten Geschichtsschreibung. Das Museum ist ein Vorschlag, dominante historische Überlieferungen neu einzuordnen und „gegen den Strich“ zu lesen.

**Lisa Biedlingmaier** beschäftigt sich mit Traditionen in unterschiedlichen Gesellschaften. Welche Traditionen werden von welcher Gemeinschaft gepflegt, und warum? Welches Interesse haben Politiker an Traditionen, und wie verändern sich diese mit der Zeit? In dem Video *Ninka's*



L. Biedlingmaier, *Ninka's Institute For Democracy*, 2011

*Institute For Democracy* (2011) kombiniert Biedlingmaier einen traditionellen georgischen Tanz mit Accessoires, wie sie bei Demonstrationen verwendet werden – einem Banner, einem Megafon. Die Gesten und Bewegungen des Tanzes werden im Studio von einer einzelnen Tänzerin einstudiert und geprobt, und dann politisch aufgeladen, indem eine Gruppe diesen Tanz schliesslich in traditioneller Bekleidung vorführt.



L. Biedlingmaier, *Ninka's Institute For Democracy*, 2011

**Diego Castro's** Videoinstallation erzählt die Geschichte des ORWO-Hauses im Berliner Stadtviertel Marzahn, das früher in der Ostzone der Stadt lag. ORWO war ein Überbleibsel der AGFA Fabrik (in der sowjetisch besetzten Zone – der späteren DDR – nach Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs), wo Film, Fotopapier und Magnetbänder erzeugt wurden. Sie gehörte zu einer der wenigen ost-europäischen Industrien, die mit westlichen Standards vergleichbar waren. Nach der Annektierung der DDR an Westdeutschland zog die Bundesregierung ORWOs Vermögen ab und übergab es einem Treuhandfond. Die Privatisierung von ORWO führte zur Schließung der Firma und Entlassung aller MitarbeiterInnen. Mit ORWO-Film macht Castro Bilder vom früheren DDR-Arbeitsministerium im Herzen Berlins (heute das Finanzministerium der Bundesrepublik Deutschland), begleitet von einer langsamen Version des Scorpion-Songs *Wind of Change* – die Hymne der Neuen Weltordnung von 1989 und der Ideologie der Privatisierung. Castro verweilt sozusagen in



Diego Castro, *Das ORWO-Haus*, 2011

diesem Moment der Wende. Er macht auch Aufnahmen vom ORWO-Gebäude selbst, das jahrelang leer gestanden hatte. Heute beherbergt es einen Verein von MusikerInnen, die in dem Gebäude Räumlichkeiten für ihre Bands geschaffen haben. Angesichts der Veränderungen in den Strukturen von Eigentum sowie dem Verständnis von Nutzung und Austausch von Werten, steht die Geschichte des ORWO-Hauses exemplarisch für die ideologischen Verschiebungen seit der deutschen „Wiedervereinigung“.

**Köken Erguns** *The Flag* ist der zweite Teil einer Videoserie über die staatlich gelenkten Zeremonien zum Nationaltag der türkischen Republik. Aufgenommen während der Tag-des-Kindes-Feierlichkeiten am 23. April, dem Datum der Gründung des neuen türkischen Parlaments und damit auch des offiziellen Untergangs des osmanischen Reichs von 1920, dokumentiert der Film auf geteilten Bildschirmen eine pompöse patriotische Darbietung – erdacht von Erwachsenen um dann von Kindern ausgeführt zu werden. Unter der Patronanz des Bürgermeisters und des Gouverneurs von Istanbul und unter Teilnahme eines hochrangigen Generals tragen VolksschülerInnen in der Zeremonie lautstark Gedichte und Eide vor, währenddessen Patriotismus zu einem Hardliner-Nationalismus gerät. Ein Mädchen rezitiert leidenschaftlich *The Flag*, worin sie gelobt, „das Nest jedes Vogels zu zerstören, der beim Vorbeifliegen nicht der Flagge [ihres Landes] salutiert“ und „einem jedem ein Grab gräbt, der die Flagge nicht so ansieht [wie sie].“

In **Francesco Finizios** Installationen geht es um Ökonomien der Macht und Bedeutung. In seiner Auseinandersetzung mit populären Medien, der Zirkulation und dem Austausch



Francesco Finizio, *Correspondence with the FBI*, 2003



von Bildern untersucht Finizio Populärkultur und deren Zusammenhänge mit Terror und politischer Manipulation.

Seine *Correspondence with the FBI* (2003) besteht aus Muster-T-Shirts sowie Briefen, in denen dem FBI vorgeschlagen wird, Shirts mit seiner Liste der Most Wanted Terrorists zu produzieren.

**Thomas Galler** bedient sich in seiner Arbeit Druckmedien, Filmen und Found Footage aus dem Internet, um Repräsentationen und Rezeption von Macht, Krieg und Gewalt in den Medien zu untersuchen und abzubilden. *Various Fires* (2011) zeigt eine Auswahl von Pressebildern aus seiner Sammlung *Demonstrations/Manifestations/Riots* (2009-2011). Das Nebeneinanderstellen dieser Bilder offenbart Analogien und Muster und befragt eine mögliche Typologie in der Darstellung von Demonstrationen sowie der damit einhergehenden (Polizei-)Gewalt.

**Roe Rosen** *The Death of Cattelán* (2011) entführt uns in konspirative Welten. Rosen benutzt vielfältige Texte – Artikel und Stories aus Zeitungen, Werbungen, Geschichten von Märtyrern, Erzählungen und Aphorismen – als



Coverttexte für eine darin verwobene parasitäre Story. In einem paranoiden politischen Klima von Intrige und Verdacht halten sich beständig Gerüchte von Terroristen, die in den Zeitungen Steganografie benutzen: „Verschlüsselte Terroranleitungen in Online-Texten“ und „Terrorgruppierungen hinter Web-Verschlüsselungen“. So sehr Rosens Arbeiten der geheimen Welt der Spionage und codierten Botschaften folgt, sind sie doch in der gleichen Art wahr, wie wir auch die täglichen Nachrichten als Code wahrnehmen, der uns dazu nötigt, selbst einen Zusammenhang herzustellen.

**Anna Witt** befasst sich mit der Konstruktion von kulturellen Stereotypen und der Positionierung des Individuums innerhalb sozialer Systeme. Ihre Arbeiten beziehen eine ambivalente Stellung zwischen fiktionalem Reenactment und dokumentarischer Inszenierung. Dabei deuten sie auf die Problematik der Subjektbildung im Kontext von Identitätspolitik, Arbeit, Repräsentation, Kollektivität und Bürgerschaft. Für das Dreikanal-Video *Flexitime* (2010) heuerte Witt PassantInnen zu einem symbolischen Honorar an. Deren Aufgabe war, sich mit erhobener Faust – die historische Geste der Arbeiterbewegung – vor die Kamera zu stellen. Die Dauer der Aufnahme hing davon ab, wie lange die ProtagonistInnen die Pose vor der Kamera einnahmen, was ihnen selbst überlassen war. Diese neu gewonnene Selbstbestimmung über „Arbeitszeit“ brachte die TeilnehmerInnen in ein Dilemma: sie realisierten, dass sie festlegen mussten, welchen Preis ihre geleistete Arbeit hat.

**Hannes Zebedins** Videoarbeit *Untitled* (2009) beschäftigt sich mit dem Thema Demonstration als Marsch. Der/die ProtagonistIn ist hier weder der/die engagierte DemonstrantIn noch die Polizeikräfte, sondern eine ziemlich nebensächliche Figur: ein Hund, der hinter seinem Besitzer herläuft. Der Marsch als eine Geste politischen Handelns wird hier zu einem Spaziergang. Das Ausführen des Hundes als eine Metapher für die Demonstration

hinterfragt die Effektivität unseres demokratischen Rechts, heute Widerstand auszudrücken.



Hannes Zebedin, *Untitled*, 2009

Die Sammlung „so geht Revolution“ – *Werbung und Revolte* von **Rudi Maier**, einem Kunsthistoriker aus Ludwigsburg, besteht aus über 3000 Werbesujets von den 1960er Jahren bis heute. Die Sammlung zeigt die gegenseitigen Entsprechungen von Protest und Pop, Macht und Mode, Widerstand und Design im Zeitalter des Konsums. Das Archiv birgt die Frage, was Konzepte wie Freiheit, Radikalismus und Revolte heute bedeuten.

## INFORMATION ON THE EXHIBITION

Resignation, conspiracy and corruption (ReCoCo), have become the ways in which we understand and narrate politics. *ReCoCo - Life Under Representational Regimes* comes at a time of shared understanding that the political devices that have been established since the beginning of modern democracy, namely those of liberal democracies, are in a deepening crisis, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Block.

For the majority today, political agency takes its form as resignation, political truth arrives in the shape of conspiracy theories and governance is synonymous with corruption. As we are subjected to a politics of representation in two ways – one is the system of political representation (parliamentary regimes) and the other is that of the representation of politics (through the media), we find ourselves to be both the sovereign ("The people") and the audience of spectators ("The viewers"). This dual status produces a series of paradoxes: political resignation becoming a new form of agency; ignorance becoming our political knowledge; passivity turning to be our political activism.

In these post-democratic times, under the rule of Capital's technocratic Fascisms, a form of conspirative knowledge has emerged and we find ourselves reading images from the media – photos, captions, headlines, and news stories – in a paranoid way. The 24/7 live catastrophe on the news networks produces a constant disbelief. The same questions arise over and over: "Where did this image come from? Who brought it to my knowledge? Why am I seeing this?"

*ReCoCo - Life Under Representational Regimes* answers to the discursive explosion of conspiracy theories, which stems from a widespread re-visioning of

liberal politics. *ReCoCo* is a term through which we can look at the construction and organization of various political concepts of representational regimes: transparency and media, spectatorship and sovereignty, censorship and hegemony and citizenry.

*ReCoCo - Life Under Representational Regimes* puts these forms of knowledge and power, and the aesthetic economies that they produce in negotiation with artistic practice. This, at a moment of enhanced ornamentalisation of the classical political gestures of sovereignty – a rococo of those tropes (hence the echoing of term in the title). The exhibition brings together contemporary works that engage with questioning truth regimes and representational governments, experimenting with the performance of representations and the inactivity embedded in contemporary parliamentary systems, exploring spectacle and conspiracy, political spaces of appearance and political resignation, corruption and governance, the death of journalism and the rise of new non-representational forms such as wikileaks and live TV.

**Boaz Arad** and **Miki Kratsman** look at National identity and geographical conflicts in their collaborative work. Their video work *21:40* (2002) explores the collective memory of the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995. In the video, passers-by are asked to re-enact the assassination. Their different recollections strangely are all played out in a similar way; a mixture of images from the media (as the assassination was video documented by an amateur photographer), together with clichéd gestures of violence taken out of films.

**Ariella Azoulay's** exploration *The Museum of Dark Regimes* (2011) is an imaginary institution and visual archive, in which the violence experienced under 'really-existing democracies', despotic and totalitarian regimes, can be documented, filed, and exhibited. Citing the museum's ability to simulta-



Ariella Azoulay, from: *The Museum of Dark Regimes*, 2010-11

neously produce meaning and make things public, Azoulay approached this imaginary museum as a space in which spectators could create new narratives and understandings from the images they would see. Calling for a new kind of museum design and experience, Azoulay suggests that images and the institutionalization of dominant histories must be read against themselves.

**Lisa Biedlingmaier** questions the practice of traditions in different societies. Which traditions are maintained by different communities, and why so? What interests have politics in traditions, and how they change with time. Her video *Ninka's Institute For Democracy* (2011), incorporates a traditional Georgian dance with the accessories used for demonstrations the banner, the megaphone. The gestures and movements of the dance are tried out in the studio by a single dancer, but then are re-charged politically by dancers performing the dance in traditional apparel as a group.

**Diego Castro's** video installation tells the story of the ORWO-house in the former East Berlin neighbourhood of Marzahn. ORWO was the remaining part of the AGFA factory (in the Soviet occupied zone – later GDR – after the end of the Second World War), manufacturing film, photo paper and mag-

netic tapes. This was one of the few Eastern European industries compatible with Western standards. After the annexation of GDR into West Germany, the Federal government stripped ORWO of its assets putting them in the hands of a trust fund. The privatization of ORWO resulted in the closing of the firm and the laying-off of all its workers. Using ORWO photographic film, Castro goes and takes photos of the former GDR ministry of labour in the heart of Berlin (today the German Republic ministry of finance), accompanying the gesture with a slowed down version of the Scorpions' *Wind of Change* - the anthem of the 1989 New World Order and the ideology of privatization. By that, Castro lingers on that moment of change. Castro also films the actual ORWO building which has stayed vacant for years. Today an association of musicians, who have started their band rooms in the building, occupies it. As structures of ownership and notions of use and exchange values changed, the history of the ORWO house holds an exemplary status for the ideological shifts since the German "reunification".

**Köken Ergun's** *The Flag* is the second part of a video series about the state-controlled national day ceremonies of the Turkish Republic. Shot during the April 23rd Children's Day celebrations, which mark the establishment of the new Turkish Parliament, and hence the official demise of the Ottoman Empire back in 1920, this split screen film documents a pompous patriotic performance devised by elders to be performed by children. Hosted by the mayor and governor of Istanbul, with the participation of a high ranking general, the ceremony features poems and



Köken Ergun, *The Flag (Bayrak)*, 2006

oaths read out loud by primary schools students, while patriotism becomes a hard-lined nationalism. One of them; *The Flag* is recited passionately by a girl who vows to “destroy the nest of any bird who doesn’t salute [her country’s] flag in flight” and “dig the grave of anyone who doesn’t look at the flag the way [she does].”

**Francesco Finizio’s** installations revolve around economies of power and meaning. Finizio’s way of working with popular media, the circulation of images and their exchange, enables him to examine popular culture and its relation to terror and political manipulation. His *Correspondence with the FBI* (2003), includes sample T-Shirts and letters proposing the FBI to issue shirts with their list of Most Wanted Terrorists.

**Thomas Galler** uses print media, movies and found footage from the Internet for his work, mapping and contemplating the representations and reception of power, war and violence in the media. His work *Various Fires* (2011) is a selection from his collection of photos taken from the press *Demonstrations/Manifestations/Riots* (2009–2011). Through the juxtaposition of these pictures analogies and patterns become apparent as a typology of politics as policing.



Thomas Galler, *Various Fires* (Backlight Series), 2011

**Roe Rosen’s** *The Death of Cattelan* (2011) brings us into the conspirative mind. Various texts – articles and stories from newspapers, advertisements, tales of martyrdom, novels and aphorisms – are used by Rosen as cover-texts



for a parasite story laced in them. In a paranoid political climate of intrigue and suspicion there are consistent rumours of terrorists using steganography in the newspapers: “Terrorist instructions hidden online” and “Terror groups hide behind Web encryption”. As much as Rosen’s work follows that of the secret world of espionage and coded messages, it is actually true to the way in which we perceive the news to be a code compelling us to connect the dots.

**Anna Witt’s** practice involves the construction of cultural stereotypes and individuals positioning within social systems. Her works ambivalently situate themselves between fictional re-enactment and documentary staging. They bring forward the problematics of subject-formation in relation to identity politics, labour, representation, collectivity and citizenry. For her three channel video *Flexitime* (2010) Witt hired by-passers for a symbolic remuneration. Their task was to stand in front of the camera with a raised fist, a historical gesture of the working movement. The length of the shot depended on the duration of the pose the protagonists would strike in front of the camera, and was decided only by them. This newly won self-determination of “working-time” lead the participant to a dilemma – realizing they have to decide what is the price for the labor they are performing.

Anna Witt, *Flexitime*, 2010



**Hannes Zebedin's** video work *Untitled* (2009) engages with the theme of demonstration as a march. The protagonist here is not the engaged demonstrator nor it is the police forces, but rather quite a minor figure: a dog following its owner. The march, as a gesture of political agency becomes here a stroll. The walking of the dog as a metaphor for the demonstration, questions the effects of this democratic right to manifest dissent today.

The collection „so geht Revolution“ – Advertising and Revolt by **Rudi Maier**, an art historian from Ludwigsburg, contains over 3,000 advertisings from the 1960s until today. The collection shows how protest and pop, power and fashion, resistance and design complement each other under the reign of consumerism. Out of this archive a question arises – what do concepts like freedom, radicalism and revolt mean today?



Rudi Maier, „so geht Revolution“ – Werbung und Revolte

## ÜBER DIE KÜNSTLER\_INNEN ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Boaz Arad** was born in Israel 1956. He lives and works in Tel Aviv and teaches art at Bezalel Academy of Art and Design and at the Hamidrasha School of Art. Arad's work focuses on history and its different perspectives. Arad says that he is trying to presents several levels of history: the first aspect is the history of the world, the story of the world. The second aspect is the history of art and the artists' role in this context (the themes which are raised: the hierarchy of the art world. The third aspect is the private history of my family, the cultural roots and also the relationships between Israel and (East) Europe (the Diaspora) and Africa where he spent his childhood.

<http://boazarad.net/>

**Ariella Azoulay** is the author of several books, including *Civil Imagination: The Political Ontology of Photography* (Verso in English, 2011); *From Palestine to Israel: A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947–1950* (Pluto Press, 2011; English translation of *Constituent Violence 1947–1950*, 2009); *Act of State* (Etgar, 2008 in Hebrew; published in Italian as *Atto di Stato Palestina–Israele, 1967–2007: Storia Fotografica dell’Occupazione*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan, 2008); *The Civil Contract of Photography* (Zone Books, 2008); *Once upon a Time: Photography Following Walter Benjamin* (Bar-Ilan University Press, 2006 in Hebrew); *Death's Showcase* (MIT Press, 2001) and (with Adi Ophir) *This Regime Which is Not One: Occupation and Democracy Between the Sea and the River (1967 - )* (Stanford University Press, 2011).

Her films include: *I Also Dwell Among Our Own People – Conversations with Azmi Bishara* (2004); *The Food Chain* (2004) and *A Sign from Heaven: a Film in 22 Letters Arranged Alphabetically* (1995).

Azoulay is also a curator and her recent exhibitions include *Untaken Photographs*. Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana, Zochrot, Tel Aviv, 2010; *Constituent*

*Violence 1947-1950*. Zochrot, Tel Aviv, 2009; *Act of State – 1967-2007, Photographic history of the Occupation*. Minshar Art Gallery, Tel Aviv; Internazionale, Ferrara; Constitution Hill, Johanseburg; Centre de la photographie, Genève; Centre de la Imatge, Barcelona (2007-2010).

<http://cargocollective.com/AriellaAzoulay>

## **Lisa Biedlingmaier**

(1975\* in Tscheljabinsk/Ural, aufgewachsen in Georgien. Lebt und arbeitet in Zürich und Stuttgart.)

Was ist Tradition? Welche Traditionen einer Gesellschaft werden gepflegt und zu welchem Zweck? Welches Interesse hat die Politik an diesen Traditionen? Müssten sich Traditionen an die Entwicklung der Zeit anpassen? Dies sind die Fragen, die mich immer wieder beschäftigen im Hinblick auf nationale Identität und ihre politische Ausrichtung. Georgien ist ein interessantes Beispiel dafür.

Das kleine Land im Kaukasus musste sich Jahrhunderte lang gegen zahlreiche Bedrohungen von Aussen zur Wehr setzen, dies förderte das Festhalten an den eigenen Traditionen. Im Tanz spiegelt sich das nationale Selbstverständnis der Georgier wieder. Er versinnbildlicht den weit verbreiteten Stolz auf die eigene Geschichte. Einzigartig in seiner Form, hat der Tanz sich seit der Blüte der georgischen Kultur im 12. Jahrhundert kaum weiter entwickelt.

Gemeinsam mit der Choreografin Maka Mamporia entwickelte ich ausgehend von traditionellen Tanzelementen, neue Schritte, die zeitgemässe politische Themen, wie Demokratie, Meinungsfreiheit, Gleichheit und Individualität als Leitfaden haben. Mit diesen neuen Tanzschritten, festgehalten auf Video, reiste ich nach Georgien. Das Kinder-Tanzensemble aus Kazreti integrierte die neuen "demokratischen" Elemente in einen bestehenden, traditionellen georgischen Tanz.

[www.lisabiedlingmaier.net](http://www.lisabiedlingmaier.net)

## **Diego Castro**

Nach grafischer Grundausbildung in Hamburg, Studium der bildenden Kunst in Kiel, Saint-Etienne und Nantes, Critical, Curatorial und Cybermedia Studies in Genf, schreibt Diego Castro derzeit an einer Dissertation über partizipative Kunst. Seit 1995 zahlreiche internationale Ausstellungen. 1998 Stipendium Post-graduate international, Ecole Régionale des Beaux-Arts, Nantes. 2002 Nordwest-Kunstpreis, Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven. 2004 Stipendium Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral. Lebt und arbeitet in Berlin.

Castro's Arbeit befasst sich seit 2005 verstärkt mit politischen Themen und Fragen zur kollektiven Geschichtsschreibung. Hier befragt er insbesondere Konflikte, die sich aus offizieller und inoffizieller Geschichtsschreibung ergeben und wie sich in ihnen dominante und autonome Diskurse begegnen. Dies betrifft Fragen wie Kriegspolitik, Revisionismus, soziale Gerechtigkeit, identitäre Politik sowie Untersuchungen über die Freiheit der Kunst. Hierbei bezieht er sich auch auf Wechselbeziehungen zwischen offizieller und populärer Kultur.

[www.diegocastro.de](http://www.diegocastro.de)

## **Köken Ergun** (\*1976 in Istanbul. Lives and works in Berlin)

„Köken Ergun's work is about ritual. That is, about ritual, circling contemporary popular ceremony as its subject of examination, picking at the unwitting detachment and wilful fervour of its participants, looking at what we would see on the television and at what we would not, pointing as much to its ragged edges as its transformative social power. It records these public situations (and also sometimes (re)constructs them) not to extend them into personal or collective memory, nor as the imprint of propaganda, but as the means for a broader analysis which finds its form in a visual language that is at once off-hand, casual and precisely because of this acutely, carefully revealing. It is a practice that might be read through that to which it is op-

posed, to uncover the coordinates of what it is for.

Ergun's work in general, and his two signature video installations *The Flag* (2006) and *I, Soldier* (2005) in particular form a paradigmatic opposition, for instance, to Leni Riefenstahl's landmark film of the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics, *Olympia* (1938). *Olympia* is a work of bravura filmmaking – iconographic, idealising – in which bodies and actions become (pure) form, almost to the point of abstraction, or to a point at which they lose any semblance of human fragility; crowds without the mess of life, high divers who never hit the water, discus throwers who turn but might as well not, so closely do they resemble classical sculpture. Riefenstahl's are indivisible images, reinscriptions of spectacle. Like her fabrication of the "ancient tradition" of the Olympic torch carried by a series of athletes from Mount Olympus to Berlin - in fact a fiction existing solely in the film and only subsequently adopted as a feature of the build-up to the Games – they are absolutely invested in the generation of myth as if the film is in and of itself a ritual. What it proposes as aesthetic, if not also ideological certainty, Ergun's videos transcribe as a question mark." (Text by Ian White, originally written for the catalogue of *Labyrinth of Memory* exhibition organized by Ars Cameralis, Poland, Fall 2009).

<http://indexofworks.com>

## **Francesco Finizio**

(\*1967 in New York, USA. Lives and works in Brest, France).

Finizio's work with popular media and the economy of images and exchange has enabled him to examine popular culture and its relation to terror and political manipulation. His installations revolve around circulation and economies of power and meaning. In Finizio's work, ideology is not addressed as only being a set of meanings, images and practices but rather it appears to be produce economies of enjoyment that hold, release and distribute enjoyment. With humor and craftsmanship, Finizio is able to bring ideology

to its limit - turning it up-side-down. Recent exhibitions include: *Back Room*, Centre d'art passerelle, Brest (2009); *Ce qui vient*, Ateliers de Rennes, on the occasion of the Biennale d'art contemporain (2009); *Double Bind*, Villa Arson, Nice (2009) and *In & Out of Business*, Galerie ACDC, Bordeaux (2008).

## **Thomas Galler**

(\*1970 in Baden, lebt und arbeitet in Zürich)

Thomas Gallers Werk kreist um Fragen der medialen Repräsentation, der Autorschaft und des Bedeutungstransfers von gefundenen Materialien und reflektiert mit einer gesellschaftskritischen Haltung die Erzeugnisse und Phänomene der Massenkultur.

Eine wichtige Gruppe von Bildern innerhalb der vom Künstler seit 1999 zusammengetragenen Sammlung von Zeitungsbildern, Abbildungen aus Magazinen und jpgs aus dem Internet sind die *Fires*, Aufnahmen von Feuern aus der politischen Berichterstattung. Diese repräsentieren Krisenherde und Konfliktsituationen, deren Geschehnisse das globale, gesellschaftliche Gefüge verändert haben. Mit *Various Fires* präsentiert Galler eine Serie von digitalen Fotocollagen, die aus diesem Bildfundus anhand typologischer Kriterien zusammengestellt werden. Eine Künstlerpublikation mit dem Titel *Various Fires and Four Running Boys* zeigt weitere Abbildungen aus dieser Sammlung. Sowohl Titel wie auch Format und Gestaltung der Publikation beziehen sich auf das legendäre Buch *Various Small Fires and Milk* von Ed Ruscha aus dem Jahre 1964.

Diverse internationale Ausstellungen u.a. *Small Fires*, Sint-Lukasgalerie, Brussels (2011), *Why do you resist?*, Galeria Arsenal, Bialystok, Poland (2011), *The Right to Protest*, Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem (2010), *Lust und Laster. Die sieben Todsünden von Dürer bis Nauman*, Kunstmuseum Bern & Zentrum Paul Klee, Bern (2010), *Karaoke, Bildformen des Zitats*, Fotomuseum Winterthur (2009), *DARK SIDE II, Fotografische Macht und fotografierte Gewalt, Krankheit*

*und Tod*, Fotomuseum Winterthur (2009), *Walking through Baghdad with a Buster Keaton Face*, Aargauer Kunsthhaus (2009) und *Shifting Identities, [Swiss] Art Now*, Kunsthhaus Zürich (2008)

Publikationen: *Various Fires and Four Running Boys*, edition fink, Zürich (2009), *Walking through Baghdad with a Buster Keaton Face*, edition fink, Zürich (2009)

[www.thomasgaller.ch](http://www.thomasgaller.ch)

**Miki Kratsman** has been for over twenty-two years committed to documenting the evolution of the Israeli occupation, and mainly, its bitter consequences on the daily life of the Palestinian population. Kratsman was born in 1959 in Buenos Aires, Argentina and immigrated to Israel in 1971. His photographs appear regularly in "Ha'aretz" newspaper in the column "The Twilight Zone" on which he is signed together with the journalist Gideon Levi. Since 2006 he presides as head of the photography department of Bezalel Academy of Art, Jerusalem, the fifth recipient of Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography, Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology, Harvard University 2011. Selected exhibitions include: Venice Biennale, 2003; the New Hebrews exhibition at Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin, 2005; the 2006 Sao Paulo Biennale and MARCO, Vigo, Spain, 2006; the Jewish Museum New York and the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Santiago, Chile, 2007; the Centre of Contemporary Culture of Barcelona (CCCB), the Katzen Arts Center, American University Museum, Washington DC, the Jewish Museum Amsterdam, The Jewish Museum, Frankfurt and Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, 2008; Felix-Nussbaum-Haus, Germany, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Kultur Bahnhof Eller, Dusseldorf and Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem, 2009, Witte de With, Rotterdam, Media City Seoul, Korea, 2010, and most recently Miki Kratsman: *All About Us* at Ursula Blickle Foundation, Germany 2011



**Rudi Maier**, Aktivist und Empirischer Kulturwissenschaftler, D-Ludwigsburg. Seine Themen sind Werbung und Konsum, die Logoscapes des 21. Jahrhunderts, die Multitude und die Kommunikationsguerilla sowie die Welt der Arbeit im Wandel. Als Alleinunterhalter "MC Orgelmüller" tourt er immer mal wieder mit seiner Lecture Performance zum Thema Firmenhymnen durch die Lande. Seit einigen Jahren organisiert er die Wanderausstellung und Sammlung "*so geht revolution*" - *Werbung & Revolte*, die derzeit ca. 3000 Werbeanzeigen aus den Jahren 1967 bis heute umfasst. Die Sammlung zeigt, wie sich in der heutigen Konsumgesellschaft Protest und Pop, Macht und Mode, Demonstration und Design auf wundersame Weise ergänzen und sie fragt danach, was Begriffe wie Freiheit, Radikalisierung und Revolution heute bedeuten sollen. Er spielt gerne Heimorgel und Krocket.

<http://home.bawue.de/~mauss/revo.html>

## **Roe Rosen**

(born 1963, lives and works in Tel Aviv) is a painter, writer, filmmaker and art theorist. His artistic strategies involve the interweaving of visual and literary creations, organized into complex, powerful narratives. Rosen heads the advances visual arts program at HaMidrasha College of Art and teaches at the Bezalel Academy of Art, Jerusalem. For his installation of paintings and texts *Live and Die as Eva Braun*, first shown in 1997, Rosen created a visual/literary screenplay, allowing the viewer to virtually play the title role of Eva Braun, a historical character, Adolf Hitler's mistress. Through this role playing, viewers could see through her eyes the world in a Berlin bunker during the last days of World War II - with all the perverse, erotic, political and ethical consequences of such a game. *Live and Die as Eva Braun* stirred a political scandal when first exhibited at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Later, Rosen dedicated years to his fictive feminine persona, the Jewish-Belgian Surrealist painter and pornographer Justine Frank. The project culminated in Frank's retrospective (Herzliya Museum, 2003; Extra-City, Antwerp, 2009), a short

film entitled *Two Women and a Man*, where Rosen appears in drag as a Frank scholar (2005), and in a book, *Justine Frank, Sweet Sweat* (Sternberg Press, 2009). Rosen's recent film projects include *The Confessions of Roe Rosen* (2008), consisting of three short films, and an hour long feature, all involving puppeteering of agents (Rosen's son and three female migrant workers), reciting the artist's confessions; *Hilarious* (2010) an experiment in the field of dysfunctional humour, a staging of a tragedy in convention of a stand-up comedy show and *Out!* (2011) an exorcism/BDSM (Bondage-Domination-Sadism-Masochism) session involving quotes from Israel's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Avigdor Lieberman, renowned as one of the most extreme right-wing politicians in the country. Some key elements in Rosen's work, as CCA Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw curator Stach Szabłowski wrote, for the artist's most recent solo exhibition, are the "study of the intellectual potential of transgression and of the iconoclastic gesture, manipulation of the concept of identity, a question about the possibility of creating fictional people, blurring the boundary between the viewer's consciousness, author, and presented characters, acts of turning into the Other, who becomes the medium of para-theatrical performance, but also a victim of symbolic Possession".

[www.rg.co.il](http://www.rg.co.il)

## **Anna Witt**

Die Video-Arbeiten von Anna Witt basieren auf Handlungen und konfrontieren den Betrachter mit Bildern. Sie zeigen performative Eingriffe im öffentlichen Raum. Manchmal ist es die Künstlerin selbst, die agiert, manchmal sind es fremde Personen. Mit unvoreingenommenem Interesse an ihrem Gegenüber schafft Anna Witt spielerische Situationen und ermöglicht gemeinschaftliche Interaktion. Witt beschreibt ihre grundlegende Methode so: „Ich stelle Personen einen Handlungsraum zur Verfügung, den sie selbst gestalten können.“ Vielfach werden diese physischen Handlungen durch Sprechakte der Mitspieler ergänzt. Nonverbale und verbale Artikulation-

nen öffnen dann Denkräume für grundlegende Neudefinitionen unseres Zusammenlebens. Kürzlich waren ihre Arbeiten zu sehen: (Soloausstellungen 2010/2011) *Zivile Übernahme* | Magazin 4 | Bregenz; *Marusa, Sagadin & Anna Witt* | Grazer Kunstverein (mit Marusa Sagadin); *Zivile Übernahme*, Lothringer13, Städtische Kunsthalle München; *Radikal Denken* | Galerie Michael Wiesehöfer, Köln. (Gruppenausstellungen 2010, Auswahl) *Was draussen wartet* | 6. Berlin Biennale für zeitgenössische Kunst; Triennale Linz 1.0 | Lentos Kunstmuseum; *Where do we go from here* | Secession Wien; *Bilder in Bewegung: Künstler & Video/Film* | Museum Ludwig, Köln; *Lust und Laster. Die 7 Todsünden von Dürer bis Nauman* | Kunstmuseum Bern.

Die 1981 in Deutschland geborene, und in Wien lebende Künstlerin studierte performative Bildhauerei an der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien. 2010 erhielt sie das Staatsstipendium für Video- und Medienkunst des Landes Österreich und wird 2011 unter anderem an der Sommerakademie Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern teilnehmen.

[www.annawitt.net](http://www.annawitt.net)

**Hannes Zebedin** arbeitet in unterschiedlichen Medien wie z. B. Installation, Videoinstallation, Video, Objekt, Intervention, Kunst im öffentlichen Raum. Bezug genommen wird hierbei an Strukturen von sozialen, politischen und urbanen Räumen. Der Künstler untersucht mittels minimalistischer Herangehensweise die Auswirkungen von Handlungen einzelner im Verhältnis zur Gesamtheit sowie die Wechselwirkungen von Mikro- und Makroebenen. In die systematische Analyse wird auch immer das eigene künstlerische Agieren eingeschlossen. Neben Interventionen im öffentlichen Raum Ausstellungen und Beteiligungen u.a. bei Kunsthalle Sankt Gallen, White Space, Zürich, Dortmund Bodega, Oslo, Centar Abrasevic, Mostar, Kunstbüro, Wien, Temporary Gallery Cologne, Galerie im Taxispalais, Innsbruck, Steirischer Herbst, Museum der Moderne Salzburg. 2010 Gründung von *Hotel Charleroi* gemeinsam mit Adrien Tirtiaux und Antoine Turillon.

# ReCoCo – LIFE UNDER REPRESENTATIONAL REGIMES

Siri Peyer and Joshua Simon

“THE CRISIS OF THE NATION STATE AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY  
CORRESPONDS TO A CRISIS OF THE MODERN THEORIES OF GOVERNMENT”

Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Commonwealth*, 2009

*ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes* comes at a time of shared understanding that the political devices that have been formulated since the beginning of modern democracy with the French revolution, and have been established since the end of the Second World War, namely those of liberal democracies, are in a deepening crisis, especially since the collapse of the Soviet Block. Under the parliamentary regimes of the past decades we have been subjected to the rule of capital’s technocratic Fascism – a bureaucratic elite of economists and political practitioners executing a new form of colonialism – privatization. With an increasing policing of public life, fuelled by sentiments of xenophobia we have entered the realm of post-democracy. Resignation, conspiracy and corruption have become the way we understand politics (ReCoCo). Political agency takes its form as resignation, political truth arrives in the shape of conspiracy theories and governance is synonymous with corruption.

*ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes* answers to the discursive explosion of conspiracy theories, which stems from a widespread re-visioning of liberal politics. ReCoCo is a term through which we can look at the construction and organization of various political concepts of representational

regimes: transparency and media, spectatorship and sovereignty, citizenry and Nielsenism<sup>1</sup>.

*ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes* puts these forms of knowledge and power, and the aesthetic economies that they produce in negotiation with artistic practice. This, at a moment of enhanced ornamentalizing of the classical political gestures of parliamentary regimes. A rococo of those tropes (hence the echoing of term in the title). The exhibition brings together contemporary works that engage with questioning truth regimes<sup>2</sup> and representational governments, experimenting with the performance of representations and the inactivity embedded in contemporary parliamentary systems. *ReCoCo – Life Under Representational Regimes* focuses on works by artists whose work goes beyond representationalism, exploring spectacle and conspiracy, political spaces of appearance and political resignation, corruption and governance, live TV and dead democracy.

## RESIGNATION

### WHO IS REALLY WINNING THE ELECTIONS?

It seems that today governance has become synonymous with corruption. It seems that corruption has become the prevailing concept when addressing the truth of politics. There is no other way to discuss truth in the political sphere today, other than through conspiracy theories and tracings of deals between elected officials, public servants, big business, the clergy, lobbyists and other parties of interest. Echoing the Nineteenth-century's restoration era, our political discourse cannot offer historical processes. The works of Naomi Klein and Michael Moore, among others, unfold vast conspiracy realities backed up by journalistic investigation. These have become a familiar expression of criticality in the political sphere. The deep mistrust in the

mediation of news corporations has generated the phenomenon of Wikileaks which aims go beyond representational forms of journalism. Perhaps it is no coincidence that under today's parliamentary governments, corruption expresses itself in the form of primitive accumulation – as real estate deals: the stories around the activities of the Prime Minister of Portugal José Sócrates as a civil engineer; Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's links in Napoli and other places; the fires and political upheaval following the 2007 elections in Greece; Hezbollah's rebuilding of bombed neighbourhoods in Beirut following the Israeli attacks of 2006; the new neighbourhoods of Cairo that Gamal Mubarak, son of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, is building around the capital; The Clintons White Watergate controversy; and former Israeli PM Ariel Sharon's 'Greek Island' affair and Mallal B village are but a number of examples of a widespread phenomenon.

Ever since the latifundia granted to Roman soldiers, all the way through Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann's rebuilding of Paris under Napoléon the Third in the mid Nineteenth-century (and the descriptions of the speculation market it created in Émile Zola's *The Kill (La curée)* of 1871-72), real estate has been closely linked to the management of the political – the public sphere, the built one and the mental one, has been shaped and dominated by this mechanism. The prominent ideology of Privatizations gave rise to a class of politicians tied to the genealogy of neo-liberalism – all with strong ties to key business figures who benefit immensely from the ongoing waves of privatizations they have been implementing in the last two decades throughout parliamentary regimented countries. Privatization, as a form of inner-colonization, is an ongoing project of a debt economy – based on mortgage and credit card systems as forms of social engineering. This system has experienced in the last two year its biggest crisis – one that has been spreading from the inner cities in the US to Florida and Orange County, California and has lead to a global financial crisis. And so, it does not matter

who wins the elections, the oligarchy of practitioners from the OECD, IMF and World Bank are echoing the oligarchy of the Soviet politburo.

Anti-immigration racist populism, in the manner used by Geert Wilders in Holland, Thilo Sarrazin in Germany and Nicolas Sarkozy in France, Heinz-Christian Strache in Austria and Pia Merete Kjærsgaard in Denmark, has brought forward an anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, anti-unions, anti-welfare politics. Under the reign of capital's technocratic fascism, we notice that politics is dominated hermetically by right-wing vocabulary. And so the question of politics is a question of articulation. For example, in Europe today, women's rights are being articulated through xenophobia. Therefore, the question we pose in the political realm should be, who is able to articulate what and how?

## CONSPIRACY

### THE SPECTATOR / SOVEREIGN:

Jorge Luis Borges's 1944 short story *Theme of the Traitor and the Hero* offers a model for reading into (and writing) conspiracy theories. The story begins with a researcher writing a book on the Irish liberation movement of the mid Nineteenth-century and its leader Fergus Kilpatrick. It is the story of some Irish rebels, one of whom (Kilpatrick) has confessed to betraying their movement. After confessing, "he and his cabal decided that he should die a hero, a martyr, thus redeeming his traitorous act by furnishing Ireland with a shining example of heroism". Taking their inspiration from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Abraham Lincoln's assassination, and using the entire town as a stage, it is decided that Kilpatrick will play the role of a hero and sacrifices himself "in order to preserve his heroic image and the peoples' passion for the cause". The execution takes place in the theatre with the audience witnessing it as

an assassination. The researcher in the story realizes the truth – the assassination was in fact an execution. The role of the audience at the theatre was therefore of constituting and validating the theme of assassination of the hero over that of the reality of the execution of the traitor.

As we are subjected to a politics of representation in two ways – both under the system of political representation and under that of the representation of politics – the system of elected representatives who, supposedly represent us – ‘The People’; and the system of political representations, by which the media informs us – ‘The Spectators’. The tension between us being viewers (‘The Spectators’ in the media) and us being the sovereign (‘The People’ in the parliamentary governments) is expressed in a series of paradoxes. Under parliamentary governments today, political resignation has become a new form of agency; Ignorance has become our political knowledge; Passivity has turned to be our political activism; and deregulation of finances has become the regulation of poverty. The omnipresence of capitalist propaganda generates a critic of each and every image. The way we read the media; photos, captions, headlines, and news stories, is a paranoid one. The ‘CNN effect’ of 24/7 live TV broadcasts produces a constant disbelief. Under the regime of the media a series of questions arise: where did this image come from? Who brought it to my knowledge? Why am I seeing this?

Live broadcasts, especially those of sport events, present themselves with a strict truth regime. As truth regimes they are validated first of all by their construction of space and continuation of movements (the way they are being edited suggests them as presenting the event while it is happening). In sports broadcasts the referee’s limited perception on site validates the mediated knowledge of the viewer as better (the TV cameras *always* see more than the referee). With the sport event taking place live in front of our eyes, as TV viewers, it unfolds through our passivity, and our passivity constitutes it as a truth regime. But as we learnt from so many sports



conspiracies and conspiracy theories, as we passively watch a sporting event on TV a black market deal has taken place, a crime was executed; fraud, theft and bribe. And so, we were watching a corruption as it took the form of a sports event on TV. Following Borges's story, the role of the audience at home is of constituting and validating the sport event as it happens over that of the crime. Hence, by accepting the truth regime of the sports event we are part of the conspiracy.

## CORRUPTION

### HOW COME POLITICIANS ARE ALWAYS WRONG?

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), Hannah Arendt suggested the Dreyfus affair to be a 'foregleam' of the Twentieth-century, a grand rehearsal of the rivalling ideological powers of Twentieth-century Europe. With the help of Karl Marx's analysis of the fall of the Second French Republic and the rise of Napoléon the Third and the Second Empire in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), one can borrow this 'grand rehearsal' idea and apply the grave mishaps of the Second French Republic to Twentieth- and Twenty-first-century representational regimes. Marx is giving an insightful account of the events unfolding, describing how the logic of lesser evil and (almost) free general elections results in proto-Fascism. In his text Marx shows how the February 1848 Revolution, calling for universal manhood suffrage, resulted in just a few months in the election of a 'grotesque mediocrity' of a president, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, who was elected President of the Republic with almost 5.5 million votes (75 % of the total). Bonaparte would later on eliminate the Second Republic and restore a Second Empire on December 2, 1852 (what Marx refers to as his Eighteenth Brumaire – the coronation date of Napoléon Bonaparte as emperor, on the revolutionary calendar). And so, the perpetual rituals of elections under parliamentary

regimes result in Capital's technocratic Fascism (with variations on the neo, post, proto or semi-Fascisms in the way it is implemented). Marx would have probably agreed with Deleuze and Guattari when they say: "No, the masses were not innocent dupes; at a certain point, under a certain set of conditions, they *wanted* Fascism."

In an interview he gave François Truffaut in 1966, Alfred Hitchcock illustrated the term 'MacGuffin' which he used in his suspense films with a story: "It might be a Scottish name, taken from a story about two men in a train. One man says, 'What's that package up there in the baggage rack?' And the other answers, 'Oh that's a MacGuffin.' The first one asks, 'What's a MacGuffin?' 'Well,' the other man says, 'It's an apparatus for trapping lions in the Scottish Highlands.' The first man says, 'But there are no lions in the Scottish Highlands,' and the other one answers 'Well, then that's no MacGuffin!' So you see, a MacGuffin is nothing at all." Hitchcock explained the term as a "mechanical element that usually crops up in any story. In crook stories it is almost always the necklace and in spy stories it is most always the papers". This way, for example, we never ask what is whispered into the ear of Dr. Ben McKenna (James Stewart) in the Casablanca market in Hitchcock's *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) — the meaning has no meaning. The MacGuffin is, in many ways, the pseudo-event of the live TV broadcast.

We live under a totalitarian representational regime (think of money as the purest representation which defines our political imaginary and economical vocabulary). This regime is totalitarian to the extent that it is redundant to name it so. Unlike previous totalitarian party-lead regimes, undermining this one by calling it totalitarian is meaningless. Since its grip is all encompassing, naming it so seems to have no subversive currency. The crisis of representation is such, that the second American war in Iraq brought journalism, as we knew it, to its demise, with all the news networks col-

laborating with the WMD lie. The death of journalism gave way now to the rise of new non-representational forms such as Wikileaks. When all is left of politics today is policing, we should re-evaluate the spaces of appearance of political participation. Twenty years after 1989 the model of state censorship has changed into the economic threat of legal censorship by libel and slander lawsuits. Self-censorship by the press is what defines the narrow boundaries of mainstream politics today. While the model of state-censorship is that which creates the image that the press has of itself, as actually having something to say, it is the self-censorship which is internalized by the media, which proves that it no longer has anything to say.

---

<sup>1</sup> Nielsenism is a term that comes from the Nielsen Ratings audience measurement systems, that were introduced in the US first in the 1920s in an effort to determine the audience size and composition of radio and later on television programming. These are used to calculate exposure and efficiency of advertisements. Nielsenism defines a mode of commodification in a post-Fordist economy in which, through advertising, the viewer is the product that is being sold by the radio station and TV network to the advertiser.

<sup>2</sup> Truth regime is an expression coined by Michel Foucault: Each society creates a 'regime of truth' according to its beliefs, values, and mores. Foucault identifies the creation of truth in contemporary western society with five traits: the centring of truth on scientific discourse, accountability of truth to economic and political forces, the 'diffusion and consumption' of truth via societal apparatuses, the control of the distribution of truth by "political and economic apparatuses", and the fact that it is "the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation". Individuals would do well to recognize that ultimate truth, 'Truth', is the construct of the political and economic forces that command the majority of the power within the societal web. There is no truly universal truth at all; therefore, the intellectual cannot convey universal truth. The intellectual must specialize, specify, so that he /she can be connected to one of the truth-generating apparatuses of the society.

# KUNSTHALLE EXNERGASSE | WUK

Währinger Straße 59/2/1  
1090 Wien / Vienna  
www.kunsthalleexnergasse.wuk.at  
kunsthalle.exnergasse@wuk.at  
+43 1 4012141/42  
Di–Fr 13–18 Uhr, Sa 11–14 Uhr  
Tue–Fri 1pm–6pm, Sat 11am–2pm

Leitung / Director: Andrea Löbel  
Medien & Ausstellungen / Media & exhibitions: Klaus Schafler  
Ausstellungen / Exhibitions: Christina Nägele  
Technik / Technics: Ernst Muck mit / with Philipp Weikersdorfer u.a.

A further version of the exhibition will be shown at the Digital Art Lab in Holon, Israel, in 2012.  
A previous version was shown at the White Space, Zurich, in February 2011.

Dank an / We would like to thank Tal Adler, Amit Bernstein, Elisheva Levy, Ido Michaeli, the Secession, Monya Pletsch

© COVER: Thomas Galler, *Jets over pyramids* aus / from *Bright Star*, 2010  
© bei den KünstlerInnen und AutorInnen



bm:uk

TELEKOPIE®

schweizer kulturstiftung

prohelvetia