

THE OTHER IS ONESELF

Reflections on an alternative model of society

The initiative, The Other is Oneself, founded by artist Sébastien de Ganay, sees itself as a non-material, cognitive community for cultural exchange that addresses flight, expulsion, exile and the accompanying psychosocial consequences and changing identity constructions, in cooperation with artists, filmmakers, philosophers, scientists, Hilfswerk International - an austrian NGO, and society, by organizing an art exhibition and auction, film programme, publication, and an international conference.

'What is proper to a culture is not to be identical to itself', wrote Derrida in *The Other Heading* (1990). In his opinion there can be no cultural identity, self-identification or self-image without a cultivation of the other or, rather, the self as an other. Identity is constantly created in the charged interaction between differentiation and adaptation, personal and external perception, introspection and display. In Derrida's view, we need all the differentiation offered by the identification of the other, the alien, in order for the self to even exist. It is only the reflection of the counterpart that I perceive as the other, or the alien, that enables me to complete the image of myself.

This idea provides the exhibition with its starting point. It is about finding community in dichotomy, respecting oneself and others, and acting with, rather than against, one another. It is about building bridges – *in varietate concordia*, united in diversity. The exhibition space at Franz Josefs Kai 3, which covers three levels and is around 600 square metres, plays host to a collective dialogue amongst works by twenty-six international artists from the Middle East, North Africa, the USA, South America, and Europe. The assembled media range from film and photography, installation and objects to paintings, text-based paper works, and drawings. Many of the artists featured in the exhibition have a migrant background and have been forced to flee their homeland at different times for different reasons including war, discrimination, political or religious persecution, and poverty. But even if the exhibition addresses subjects such as expulsion and exile, it focuses less on current struggles, armed conflicts, and the life-threatening act of escape than on the psychosocial consequences and cognitive dissonances that migration can trigger. Because feelings such as hope, fear, and insecurity affect people on both sides: those who have lost their homeland and families and whose dreams of a better world often founder on the threshold of Fortress Europe and those who find themselves faced with a multitude of traumatised refugees in their own homeland and whose emotional reaction can range from unconditional assistance to rejection and hatred.

The exhibition attempts a spatial choreography rather than a thematic structure. In the same way that fleeing people find themselves permanently on the move or in transitional spaces, the staging of the exhibition and dialogic relationship between the works is based on the idea of a journey, a passage that can equally begin at the front of the building or in the street behind. One is welcomed by Martin Walde's participative installation and the neon works of Franco-Turkish artist Nil Yalter, which reflect such socio-political subjects as labour migration, cultural identity, and gender roles, and one passes the photographic work of neo-conceptual artist Thomas Locher, who opens a dialogue regarding the inconsistency of the idealistic aspiration to universality of the Declaration of Human Rights, before one arrives at the central space of the exhibition which holds Syrian-born, Berlin-based artist Khaled Barakeh's installation symbolising the union of opposites, the act of approximation, and the place of meeting. The journey continues on the lower level with a poetic film by Argentinian artist Mirta Kupferminc, which deals with the loss of cultural identity, and ends with three landscapes by Austro-Iranian artist Ramesch Daha, landscapes imbued with a sense of longing and connected by a shared horizon. En route, the visitors encounter works that are as diverse, in form and content, as our identities. They stretch out a common network of associations that make it clear that the dignity, freedom and diversity of mankind is to be defended at all costs. Art may not be a direct determining factor in the socio-political arena; however, its strength lies in its ability to ask questions and address things in unconventional contexts. In such a way it can open up spiritual and non-material spaces in which it appears possible to arrive at a consensus about future coexistence.

participating artists:

Iris Andraschek, Babi Badalov, Khaled Barakeh, Elisabetta Benassi, Nisrine Boukhari, Bernhard Cella, Adriana Czernin, Ramesh Daha, Sébastien de Ganay, Raffaella della Olga, Sylvia Eckermann, Simone Fattal, Anna Jermolaewa, Mirta Kupferminc, Thomas Locher, Jonathan Monk, Klaus Mosettig, Rudolph Polanszky, Hans Schabus, Slavs&Tatars, Gerold Tagwerker, Florian Unterberger, Martin Walde, Lawrence Weiner, Nil Yalter and Samia Ziadi.

Curator: Fiona Liewehr

Opening

Tuesday, 5 th November 7-9 pm

Duration

6th November till 14th December

Mon, Tue, Thur, Fri, 12 am – 5 pm

Wed, 12 am – 5 pm

Franz Josefs Kai 3, 1010 Wien

www.franzjosefskai3.com

Free entry

Curators Tour & Bookpresentation

Wed, 20th November, 6 pm

Franz Josefs Kai 3, 1010 Wien

Fiona Liewehr is guiding through the exhibition,

bookpresentation THE OTHER IS ONESELF

Auction

Friday, 22nd November, Dorotheum, Dorotheergasse 17, 1010 Wien, www.dorotheum.at

Auction for Hilfswerk International for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

www.hilfswerk.at

Film Programme

Saturdays, 3 pm, Stadtkino im Künstlerhaus

Sat., 9th November, 3 pm

Amar Chebib - *Wajd – Songs of Separation*

Dokumentarfilm, CAN, 2018, Farbe, DCP,

OFeUT, 87 Min.

Sat., 16th November, 3 pm

Sara Fattahi - *Chaos*

Spielfilm, AT/SY/LB/QA, 2018, Farbe, DCP, OFdUT, 95 Min.

Im Anschluss an den Film:

Sara Fattahi im Gespräch mit Claudia Slanar (in englischer Sprache).

Sat., 23rd November, 3 pm

Alfoz Tanjour - *A Memory in Khaki*

Spieldokumentarfilm,, SY/QA/AT, 2016, Farbe, DCP, OFeUT, 108 Min.

Im Anschluss an den Film:

Alfoz Tajour im Gespräch mit Michelle Koch (in englischer Sprache).

Sat., 30th November, 3 pm

Ziad Kalthoum - *Taste of Cement*,

Dokumentarfilm,, DE/LB/SY/AE/QA, 2017, Farbe, DCP, OFeUT, 85 Min.

Stadtkino im Künstlerhaus

Akademiestraße 13, 1010 Wien,

www.stadtkinowien.at

Conference**Fri., 13rd December, 2 – 7 pm**

Barbara Coudenhove-Kalergi (Journalist),

Samar Yazbek (Author), Isin Ömol (Arthistorian, curator), Özge Ejder (Philosoph)

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Sat., 14th December, 10.30 am- 4 pm

Lewis Johnson (Philosoph), Nil Yalter

(artist), Khaled Barakeh (artist), Ramesch Daha (Künstlerin), Fiona Liewehr (Arthistorian, curator) a.o