

Spurned and trampled: Human rights in China

Panel discussion followed by a private screening of "The Dalai Lama: 50 Years After the Fall of Tibet"

Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 7pm
Stadtkino, Schwarzenbergplatz 7-8, 1030 Vienna
The panel discussion will be held in English
Free admission

Cornelia Vospernik, ORF correspondent in Beijing
Manfred Nowak, UN Commission on Human Rights, Special Rapporteur on Torture
Ming Shi, journalist, author and expert on China
Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam, Indian and exile-Tibetan filmmakers
Moderated by **Rubina Möhring**, president of the Austrian division of Reporters Without Borders
Introduction by **Francesca von Habsburg**, Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

The exhibition **A Question of Evidence** focuses on works that critically question politically precarious realities and reflect upon issues of identity and democratic reform in South-Eastern Asia. As part of the exhibition program, Reporters Without Borders Austria and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary present **Spurned and trampled: Human rights in China**, a panel discussion followed by a film screening at the Stadtkino in Vienna. China will serve as an example for the discussion on how artists and journalists negotiate violations of the right to free expression and speech in politically explosive and precarious situations.

Even though the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing drew global attention to issues of free speech and human rights in China, the latest annual worldwide press freedom index by Reporters Without Borders once again listed The People's Republic as one of the lowest ranking nations. Human rights activists are subject to persecution, abduction and torture; ethnic and religious minorities are violently oppressed by police and military forces, and, according to Amnesty International, China is the nation with the highest number of executed death penalties.

2009 has been a year of crisis for China in regard to human rights: it not only marks the twentieth anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Protests and their brutal squashing by the government, but also sees the fiftieth anniversary of the equally bloody crushing of Tibet's rebellion against the Chinese annexation of the region and the Dalai Lama's subsequent flight to India in 1959.

But it is also a year of global economic crisis, which has put an additional strain on the value of freedom of press, human rights and freedom of speech. Are these rights, globalized in the UN's International Bill of Human Rights, more than the crumbling foundations that they currently appear to be? What meaning and function do artistic practices focusing on knowledge production and activism or "the freedom of art" have in this global context?

A private screening of the new film by Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam, "The Dalai Lama: 50 Years After the Fall of Tibet" (India 2009, English (original version), 80 min, directed by Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam) will follow the panel discussion. The documentary is set against the backdrop of the fiftieth anniversary of the Tibetan uprising on March 10, 1959 and the Dalai Lama's subsequent flight to India. The filmmakers followed the Dalai Lama over the course of an eventful year, which included the 2008 protests, the international response to it, the Olympic Games in Beijing, and the breakdown in talks with the Chinese government. Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam are among the foremost filmmakers focusing on the Tibetan question in their films

and documentaries. Their projects have been shown and critically acclaimed at several film festivals (www.whitecranefilms.com)

Due to the limited number of seats in the cinema, we kindly ask you to reserve tickets at tba21@tba21.org.

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary

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A QUESTION OF EVIDENCE

Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary
Himmelpfortgasse 13, 2nd floor, 1010 Vienna
Duration: November 20, 2008 – May 31, 2009
Opening times: Tuesday – Sunday, 12 - 6pm
Free admission!

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