

DESCRIPTIONS OF ALL WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Akram Zaatari: Hashem El Mandi: Studio Practices (2006)

76 silver prints

In 1996, **Akram Zaatari** and Walid Raad, along with other artists, formed the *Arab Image Foundation* in Beirut to preserve, catalogue and study photography collections of the Arabic world. **Hashem El Madani: Studio Practices** is part of a project by Akram Zaatari in which he carefully examines the photos taken by Hashem El Madani (*1928). The portraits were shot by Madani in his studio Shehrazade and in the surrounding urban area of Saida between 1953 and the 1970s. The studio situation gave Madani more leeway to catch people off guard in intimate moments, and to create something of a 'collective physiognomy' of the city of Saida.

Mathilde ter Heijne: Woman to Go (2005)

180 different postcards on postcard racks

The title of **Mathilde ter Heijne's** work **Woman to Go** can be taken quite literally: visitors can choose between 180 postcard photographs and go off with any number of women he or she selects. The front side of the card shows portraits of anonymous women who lived or were born between 1800 and 1900. On the back are brief biographies of women from the same epoch; lives which, considering the conditions of their upbringings, could be described as extraordinary. Through a loose and associative conjunction of meticulously researched biographies and anonymous photographs, the artist poses the question: why did these women, in spite of their great achievements, not claim their rightful place in history? The stories of these women are mostly fragmented and seldom completely documented.

Tanya Hamilton, Daniel F. Friedlaender, Michael W. Pollock: Gone 'a Country: The Story of Jamaica's Mobile Cinema Unit (2004-2007)

Archival materials, video installation, map

A conceptual interpretation of **Tanya Hamilton's** documentary feature **Gone 'a Country**, this exhibit, like the film, documents the little-known work of the *Mobile Cinema Unit (MCU)* of Jamaica, which began in the 1930's and brought the silver screen to the far reaches of the island. Initially established as an educational and marketing tool of the British Empire, the *MCU* of Jamaica was little more than a distribution entity, a fleet of Land Rover jeeps that introduced the medium of film to areas most detached from it. But by the early 1950's, the *MCU* had evolved into an autonomous organization, also known as the *Jamaica Film Unit*, and as it began to produce films of its own, it found a voice for social and political change that helped contribute

to the island's independence. **Gone 'a Country**, the exhibit, is a cinematic journey presenting the specific cinematic styles of the Jamaican filmmakers and reflects on how their work helped represent and foster the political and social change that led to Jamaica's independence. The ownership of many of these rarely presented and mostly unknown films now resides in an organization in Britain.

Brad Kahlhamer: Billy Jack, Jr. (2006)

Graphite, ink, gouache and water color on paper

The title of **Billy Jack, Jr.** by **Brad Kahlhamer** seemingly refers to the same titled cult film *Billy Jack* (1971). The film supported the civil-rights movement in America by shedding light on the discrimination of Native Americans. Its hero of Native American provenance escapes his half-white heritage, to protect the reservations. Kahlhamer depicts diversely coded references from popular culture: expressively painted Indians appear as comic strip figures, disguised relatives of the Death Metal scene, squaws, horses, buffalos, eagles, and totem animals and other iconic images as signs of specific Indian tribes.

Chen Chieh-Jen: Lingchi-Echoes of a Historical Photograph (2002)

Single-channel film projection (16 mm converted to DVD), b/w, silent

The film, **Lingchi-Echoes of a Historical Photograph** is based on a photograph (taken by a French soldier in 1905) of the last public, ritualistic execution practiced in China and known as *Lingchi*. The photograph became popularized when it was published by the French philosopher Georges Bataille in his book *Tears of Eros* in the early 1960s in the context of eroticism, religion, torture and aesthetics. **Chen Chieh-Jen** describes the actual shooting of the picture as an act of colonial appropriation.

Catherine Sullivan: Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land (2003)

5-channel film installation (16 mm converted to DVD) b/w, sound

Catherine Sullivan's Ice Floes of Franz Joseph Land is based on the attack by Chechens during a performance of the musical *North East* in the Moscow opera house in October 2002. The musical is an adaptation of the acclaimed Russian novel, *Two Captains* by Veniamin Kaverin, written in the late 1930s - bringing together historically distant events and the lives of two captains devoted to the discovery of the North. The patriotic novel describes the great achievements of the Russian people and their territorial expansions, thereby making it a very suitable symbolic target of the Chechens' resistance. Sullivan interprets this event as a conflict between the real and the ideal; the real comfort of the Russian ruling class against the raw idealism of the Chechens, who use the performance as a political platform to make their cause known to the world.

Amar Kanwar: A Night of Prophecy (2002)

Single-channel video projection, color, sound

Amar Kanwar's film **A Night of Prophecy** was shot in several regions of India (Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Kashmir) and features music and poetry of tragedy and protest performed by regional artists. The sources of anger and sorrow vary from inescapable, caste-bound poverty to the loss of loved ones as a result of tribal and religious fighting. Kanwar asks "if different poetic narratives could merge together, allowing us to see a more universal language of symbols and meanings... would there be a moment of prophecy?" (Amar Kanwar)

Sanja Iveković: Triangle (1979)

4 b/w photographs / 1 concept sheet

Sanja Iveković's action **Triangle** portrays the artist on the balcony of a housing block, in 1979, as Tito's state limousine pulls by on the occasion of a parade. At some point, in order to provoke the secret service posted on a nearby rooftop, Iveković pretends to masturbate. A policeman on the building reacts quickly: In no time, one of his colleagues is at her door with the order "*Persons and objects are to be removed from the balcony!*" The action shows how private space is kept under public observation, and how the state can interpret a private act as a threat to public wellbeing.

Walid Raad: Let's Be Honest. The Weather Helped (2006)

7 digital prints

The collection of documents archived by **Walid Raad** and **The Atlas Group** is a mixture of uncovered and constructed evidence whose authenticity, authorship and even dates are constantly subject to doubt. In blurring the line between historical facts and constructed narratives, Raad investigates how the history of Lebanon – and specifically the long violent period of the Civil Wars – is written and represented. In **Let's Be Honest. The Weather Helped** Raad records the locations of bullet holes with colored dots on a series of black and white photographs. The colors of the dots correspond to the colors of the bullets' tips, which he later learned are color-codes devised by manufacturing countries to mark their cartridges.

Sean Snyder: Casio, Seiko, Sheraton, Toyota, Mars (2005)

Single-channel video projection, color, sound

In his work **Sean Snyder** questions the correlation between factual evidence in the form of

images rehashed through the media and the actual pictures of reality as such. Which kind of image, what kind of aesthetics determines our perception about specific people, places and situations? How are viewers influenced by this conceived image? Using footage from amateur-videos and material from media agencies - in **Casio, Seiko, Sheraton, Toyota, Mars** Snyder analyses the conventions and complications that arise in the production of an iconic image of war. At the same time, Snyder focuses on the international acceptance of consumer goods, extending beyond all ideological boundaries; he provides the viewer with a sobering look at the globalization of the market economy.

Rags Media Collective: The KD Vyas Correspondence Vol.1 (2006)

Media installation

The KD Vyas Correspondence Vol. 1 is a collection of a set of eighteen 'letters', a correspondence between **Rags Media Collective** and a person or entity identified as KD Vyas, occasional editor of the *Mahabharata*. The installation puzzles over eighteen video riddles, which although much briefer and more contemporary, bear a great resemblance to the eighteen cantos of the *Mahabharata* - one of Hinduism's most significant mythological writings. The work is dense with encrypted messages, notes on the letters themselves, or memories of places and times where they may have been read. The eighteen floating fragments that constitute the installation serve as clues connected to Raqs' investigation-in-progress on the theme of the "regression of time" based on the protocols of the production and transmission of narratives and irritating questions as to provability.

Ritu Sarin / Tenzing Sonam: Some Questions on the Nature of Your Existence (2007)

Single-channel video projection, color, sound

Some Questions on the Nature of Your Existence focuses on the processes and rituals of Buddhist Tibetan debate, a complex tool to gain knowledge of the most fundamental concepts of Buddhism, which are based on set rules of syllogisms. **Ritu Sarin** and **Tenzing Sonam** present to a broad audience this complex system of learning based upon conveying wisdom and values through traditional rituals.

Kristina Leko: Zagreb Milkmaids at your Right Hand Side (2002–2003)

Single-channel video projection, color, sound

One inevitable side effect of the process of globalization and standardization in Europe seems to be the assimilation and disappearance of certain local characteristics and cultural particularities. In **Zagreb Milkmaids at your Right Hand Side** the artist **Kristina Leko** investigates the disappearance of the Zagreb milkmaids and their traditional trade.

Želimir Žilnik: Seven Hungarian Ballads (1978)

Single-channel film (16mm converted to DVD), color, sound

In **Seven Hungarian Ballads** filmmaker **Želimir Žilnik** searches for the traces of a disappearing heritage. Ballads, sung mostly by rural people while sharing their chores, are not documented in writing and are only passed on by the tradition of singing. In 1978, Žilnik recorded seven of these Hungarian ballads, aware of just how fragile the chain of tradition really is and uncertain if these songs would fade or have a future.

Ai Weiwei: Colored Vases (2006)

10 Neolithic vases (3500–5000 B.C.), industrial paint

Ai Weiwei covers valuable ancient vases in flashy paint so that the **Colored Vases** can be exhibited “in contemporary museums where the lighting is so much better.” Ai works with pottery from the Neolithic Era and transforms these touchstones of Chinese heritage, into an ironic exploration of contemporary accountability issues and cultural values. In **Colored Vases** the detour itself is simultaneously provocative and meaningful: archeological vessels and artifacts freed from their context are nothing more than abstract surfaces. The subject of authenticity crops up as well as the question as to the (added) value of the vases: is it higher before or after it has undergone an artistic process?

Kutlug Ataman: Turkish Delight (2006)

Single-channel video projection, color, sound

Turkish Delight is a new film by **Kutlug Ataman** in which, for the first time, he turns the camera on himself and creates a semi-fictitious portrait of his role as an artist and a belly dancer. This portrait also touches on stereotypical notions of how the West views Turkey and how this in turn influences and determines him personally as a “Turkish” artist.

Anetta Mona Chisa / Lucia Tkáčová: Capital: magical recipes for love, happiness and health (2006)

Single-channel video, color, sound

Capital: magical recipes for love, happiness and health is a video by the artist duo **Anetta Mona Chisa** and **Lucia Tkáčová** in which they find new uses for Karl Marx’s *Das Kapital*, a book tainted with a controversial past – a product of a materialistic ideology as well as the cornerstone of communist regimes. The book becomes an instrument of prophecy. In their work, Chisa and Tkáčová deal with the basic and desperate desire of people to look into the future and recycle the ideologies of the past.

Anetta Mona Chisa / Lucia Tkáčová: Uncomfortable Heritage (2005)

Performance

The immediate unease which sets in during **Anetta Mona Chisa's** and **Lucia Tkáčová's** performance *Uncomfortable Heritage* is due to the mechanisms that deal with the inhibition of prejudices. The confrontation of different worlds provides an opening for interaction between the representation of traditions and contemporary society. The performance is scheduled to be shown during the opening of the exhibition.