

**PRESS**

## Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic\* & Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński 22/10 2021 – 6/2 2022

Kunsthalle Wien dedicates to Vienna-based artists Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic\* and Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński two solo shows, which will take place simultaneously in the upper hall of Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier. The exhibitions include existing works reimagined for the exhibition space as well as new works produced for the occasion.

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic\* takes a close look at the fabrication of history, memory, and subjectivity – insisting on the unconscious at work in these processes. Along which lines of domination and exclusion do these processes occur? Which stories and practices are swept away and erased? How might we disarm the misogynist and racist prejudices embedded in (Western) official histories and representations? In multimedia installations mixing film, photography, objects, and text, the artist\* tells the stories of queerness as a survival strategy (in the Omarska detention camp in Bosnia, and in Afghanistan), of non-alignment as ethics (and not only as geopolitics), and of family as a space for chosen kinship. She\* stages moments of subversion, crisis, and resistance and in this way tries to figure out how a contemporary subject can dig up and appropriate hidden histories in order to escape cultural, social, and psychic assignations.

In *Freud Film* (2019–2021), sequences filmed by the artist\* in Vienna's Sigmund Freud Museum before its conversion serve as a backdrop for various archival film and text materials in superimposition. Dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century and mainly drawn from the Austrian Film Archive, the found footage depicts busy streets in Sarajevo, the march of an infantry regiment, the announcement of the assassination of the Archduke of Austria, and the portraits of "Jewish tinsmiths" and "a Turkish beggar" – all portrayed from the perspective of the monarchy. Subtly arranged by the artist\*, the compiled materials seem to outline the contours of the construction of a (Western) European identity versus an exoticized "Oriental" other. While the film's wider frame follows the official representation of Freud's world through the museum's display's, the superimposed shots – which almost obliterate the images in the background – seem

to contradict this story and bring to the fore the unconscious of psychoanalysis itself: racial and patriarchal biases.

\* On the crossroads of those who were born 1980 in Paraćin (Yugoslavia), who were moved in 1989, and received capitalist citizenship (Austria) with a new name in 2002.

**Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński** challenges the ways Black people's history is represented and musealized, tackling the blindness that occurred (and still occurs) regarding the ongoing consequences of enslavement and colonization. Intertwining critical theory and artistic practice, she invents methods and rituals for looking at and dealing with the traces of the oppressive colonial past that are inherent to archival material, attempting to give a voice to the overlooked and the repressed.

Working primarily in film, photography, and installation, **Kazeem-Kamiński** always incorporates a performative act of transformation and reconfiguration into her works, as one of the foundations of her practice. In the video projection *Unearthing. In Conversations* (2017), the artist performs on stage, in front of an empty auditorium. Sitting at a desk, she takes some photographs out of cardboard boxes. These are portraits featuring the Austrian Czech colonialist ethnographer **Paul Schebesta** posing with people from the former Belgian Congo (today the Democratic Republic of the Congo), taken at the beginning of the twentieth century. The pictures are not in their original state: the artist has applied various visual strategies to circumvent their violence and, at the same time, to prevent the voyeuristic gaze. While manipulating the photographs, **Kazeem-Kamiński** speaks to the depicted people, trying to find ways to communicate beyond the racist lens of the colonial archive, but she also addresses us, the absent and accomplice audience. She interrogates several layers of the colonial legacy at once: in the making of history and in the constitution of the gaze. As the artist states in the first line of her video work, "This is in remembrance of those to come." Looking at the past is a way to search for another future and dream about another present, which becomes productively "haunted" by the failures of the past.

**Curator:** Anne Faucheret