Kunsthalle Wien

Peter Friedl
Teatro

Museumsquartier #PeterFriedl
22/3 – 9/6 2019

Peter Friedl's practice eludes unequivocal media- and style-specific attributions. A recurring element in his oeuvre is a highly specific mode of approach. Rather than showing dedication to particular topics or stylistic principles, Friedl's works, which often touch on politically charged issues follow an aesthetic strategy of "radical neutrality", as art historian Hilde Van Gelder puts it. Instead of arguing for a certain reading or interpretation of a cultural or political artefact, Friedl explores the social and media-specific conditions under which these readings, interpretations, and meanings become established. In this sense, his works are not so much theses but rather exemplary models for the renegotiation of political and historical certainties.

The exhibition *Teatro* at Kunsthalle Wien focuses on a series of recurring themes in Friedl's oeuvre: model, language, history, translation, theatricality.

The centrepiece is the film installation *Report* (2016), which was first presented at documenta 14 (2017). Based on Kafka's short story "A Report to an Academy", Friedl develops a complex and cinematographically opulent reflection on the interplay between identity and language, as well as assimilation and autonomy, by addressing the self-representational musings of the protagonist ape named Red Peter and his integration into human society. The cast comprises more than twenty actors who recite excerpts from Kafka's text, either in their respective first languages or in languages of their choosing (Arabic, Dari, English, French, Greek, Kurdish, Russian, and Kiswahili). Only the original language, Kafka's Prague German, is missing. The empty stage of the National Theatre of Greece in Athens is the setting.

Works such as *The Dramatist (Black Hamlet, Crazy Henry, Giulia, Toussaint)* (2013) and *Teatro Popular* (2016–17) recall the topos of theatricality, but concentrate on the concept of the model. Drawing on traditional forms of puppet theatre, both *The Dramatist* and *Teatro Popular* may be read as model arrangements for potential counter-narratives to modernity.

This links them to *Rehousing*, a project Friedl started in 2012, which features a series of true-to-scale architectural models of historical structures, in some cases destroyed or never realised. The chosen houses represent living environments as diverse reflections on history, politics, biographies and ideologies; as "case studies for a kind of mental geography relating to an alternative strain of modernity" (Friedl). On occasion of the exhibition in Vienna, two new models were created: Winnie and Nelson Mandela's former home in Soweto, South Africa (*8115 Vilakazi Street*), which has since been transformed into a museum, and one of the container-like prefabricated houses that made up *Amona* – the Israeli outpost in Palestinian territories on the West Bank, which was cleared in 2017.

Besides current productions, *Teatro* also features older works such as *Dummy* (1997), a video work first shown at documenta X, or the long-term project *Theory of Justice* (1992–2010). Both focus on the problematisation of fictions of justice employing different formal strategies. In correspondence with more recent works, they not only provide insights into thematic as well as formal continuities and changes in Friedl's oeuvre, but also gain new, often daunting relevance in view of current struggles for distribution and recognition.

Peter Friedl (b. 1960 in Austria) is an artist based in Berlin. His work has been exhibited internationally, including at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; and Hamburger Kunsthalle. He has participated in documenta X, 12, and 14 (1997, 2007, 2017); the 48th and 56th Venice Biennale (1999, 2015); the 3rd Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art (2004); Manifesta 7, Trento (2008); the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008); the 28th Bienal de São Paulo (2008); La Triennale, Paris (2012); the Taipei Biennial (2012, 2016); the 10th Shanghai Biennale (2014); the 5th Thessaloniki Biennale (2015); and the 1st Anren Biennale (2017). He currently participates in Sharjah Biennial 14. Selected solo exhibitions include *OUT OF THE SHADOWS*, Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2004); *Work 1964–2006*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Miami Art Central; Musée d'art contemporain; Marseille (2006–07); *Blow Job*, Extra City Kunsthal, Antwerp (2008); *Working*, Kunsthalle Basel (2008); *Peter Friedl*, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2010); *The Dramatist*, Artspace, Auckland, (2014);

The Diaries, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (2016), and *Teatro Popular*, Lumiar Cité, Lisbon (2017).

Curators
Anne Faucheret, Vanessa Joan Müller

The exhibition will be on view at the Carré d'Art, Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes from 25/10 2019 – 1/3 2020.

Dummy, 1997
Video, colour, sound, 0:32 min., loop
Edition of 3
Collection Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona
Collection Video-Forum, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin

Produced for documenta X, *Dummy* was filmed in a pedestrian underpass in Kassel. A young man – the artist himself – walks down a flight of stairs, heads towards a cigarette machine, inserts money, but the machine refuses to comply. The man shakes the apparatus, finally kicks it, and walks away frustrated. When a junkie asks him for money, he shoves him away and in turn receives a kick.

The slapstick-like film, which lasts no more than thirty-two seconds, is based on a cartoon with six images from the Italian magazine *La Settimana Enigmistica*. Set up only for the shooting, the cigarette machine was removed immediately afterwards. During documenta, the film was shown in an endless loop on a monitor installed in a display case in the same pedestrian under-pass. The seemingly realistic film scenario thus turned into a reflection on a cinematographic dispositif that produces reality only as a reality effect according to the conditions of the apparatus: while the setting was real, the micro drama unfolding in its midst was a staged illusion.

The manufactured quality of the image corresponds to the role of the cigarette machine as the guiding instance that refuses to function as it should, thus triggering further reactions. Frustration leads to aggression which leads to more aggression. And yet, the film is not a moral judgement, but rather a dummy in the true sense: a placeholder for the test on how art and social reality may interrelate with one another beyond social

romanticism and paternalism; on how to respond to the expectations placed on art to successfully intervene in the social sphere without being indifferent towards social concerns. The artist as the film's protagonist is faced with the dilemma that the apparatus containing his money won't deliver the desired goods, thus causing him to shirk his supposed responsibility towards the other person.

The short film shows a chain reaction triggered by the cussedness of the inanimate object, a process that seems, but is not, mechanistic. This perplexing ambivalence, also frustrating to behold, exemplifies the conflict zone between art and its assigned functions, between reality and both its aesthetic and analytical representation – a topic which Peter Friedl continued to explore in later works. He has repeatedly described *Liberty City* (2007) as *Dummy*'s "dark twin". Both works comment on crises that are not only urban crises.

Peter Friedl, 1998
Garments, mixed media
Dimensions variable
Collection La Gaia – Busca, Italy

For a child, disguise and transformation are still the same. As a child, dressing up meant becoming someone else, betraying the still rudimentary self with relish – in favour of a new, more exciting, maybe even monstrous identity. The repertoire of possible transformations also includes animals. Becoming an animal promises the experience of the archaic and different: wildness and innocence, strength and vulnerability, security and fear; a juxtaposition of extremes, still directly accessible for a child's imagination, while only granted to the adult in the domesticated context of regulated cultural exceptions – a club night, carnival, art.

In 1997, during the preparations for his first retrospective at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Peter Friedl asked sixteen staff members, including the director, to name the animal they had once wanted to be. The statements and wishes were as charming as they were diverse: cat, unicorn, penguin, giraffe, crocodile, lion, "a transparent, round virus". Friedl had these animal costumes made, some in adults',

Dummy, 1997, installation view documenta X, Kassel, 1997, courtesy of the artist; Guido Costa Projects, Turin; Gallery Erna Hécey, Luxembourg; Nicolas Krupp Galerie, Basel; photo: Dieter Schwerdtle

Peter Friedl, 1998, installation view Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 2000, Collection La Gaia – Busca; photo: Jean-Claude Planchet

King Kong, 2001, video still, courtesy of the artist and Gallery Erna Hécey, Luxembourg

some in children's sizes, and arranged them in a colourful heap in one of the exhibition rooms. Visitors were free to decide whether they only wanted to look at the costumes or slip into the role of one the animals on display (many, also the employees of the Palais des Beaux-Arts, chose the latter option). Friedl took the genre of the retrospective literally: the game with the exhibits was in fact a reference to childhood, the most retrospective place of all.[1]

In subsequent presentations, *Peter Friedl* underwent a decisive change: the offer of participation, which had promised the prospect of a temporary return to the realm of infancy and fantasy, no longer exists. The once proffered props have become relics; documents of a bygone time.

King Kong, 2001
Video projection, colour, sound, 3:57 min., loop
Edition of 3
Collection Martin Z. Margulies, Miami
Collection Musée d'arts de Nantes, Nantes
Collection Walker Art Center, Minneapoli

The scene seems sparse: a park in the middle of a suburban nowhere, a few children, and from faraway, faint acapella singing. After a few seconds, however, the sparseness fills with indications. The one and only singer-songwriter legend Daniel Johnston enters the picture and performs his song "King Kong" from 1983. A sign in the background reveals the name of the place: Triomf, Afrikaans for "triumph". But with every movement of the camera, it becomes increasingly clear that this is no place of triumph, not exactly a place where success stories are born, rather a place where they end. A suspicion Johnston's song seems to confirm: we know that "King Kong" was a tragic hero.

In *King Kong* Peter Friedl explores the music video genre. While vaguely adhering to its basic parameters – four minutes, pop music, image – Friedl uses the format to contradict itself. Image and sound fail to blend. The construction of the set-up is too conspicuous – parts of the film equipment and at one point a camera operator – are visible, the movements of the camera are too lethargic, the sound and visuals too insubstantial.

While seemingly reduced on a formal level, *King Kong* overflows with references. To begin with, there is the eponymous Hollywood classic by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack from 1933: The story of the giant ape King Kong who is carried off into the modern world. The "King Kong" theme comprises a whole cosmos of racist and exotic projections. The giant ape is both the chimera and fantasy of a culture that simultaneously fears and modifies, abhors and desires foreignness. By eliminating and oppressing the "other", it establishes its consistency and identity.

In Johnston's melancholy adaptation of the subject, on the other hand, King Kong's perspective gains significance. The latter no longer represents the "other" but becomes human, not despite but because of his manifest deviance. In his song, Johnston indirectly pays tribute to the appeal for appreciation and individuality.

Triomf, Friedl's setting for Johnston's performance, exemplifies the volatile history of this demand. Until the 1950s, the thriving centre of black culture in the west of Johannesburg was called Sophiatown. After the forced relocation of its primarily black population, the district was renamed Triomf by the Apartheid regime. In 2006 it once again became Sophiatown. Nearby the benches, on which Johnston alternately sits, we see architectural relics of this time, such as the "Christ the King" church, one of the few buildings spared by the Apartheid regime's demolition programme. In 1959 a group of black and white artists paid musical homage to Sophiatown with the jazz opera *King Kong*, the story of the rise and fall of the legendary heavy-weight boxer Ezekiel "King Kong" Dhlamini.

In Friedl's video, the location, the performance and the abundance of the implied narratives form a literal connection with the resonance that seems to swell and reverberate with each passage. With *King Kong* Friedl follows a simple intuition: the (hi)stories of those without official (hi)stories are not situated in historical

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1. At the time, the seemingly playful and cheerful aspect of this gesture became infiltrated by an ominous element. Due to Marc Dutroux's crimes (until the mid-1990s, Dutroux had sexually abused several children and adolescents and was pronounced guilty of triple murder in 2004), "childhood" increasingly became a synonym for a state of radical defence-lessness in the public discourse in Belgium in the late 1990s.

centres but in the periphery. Rather than in zones of semantic density, the archaeology of these stories breaks ground in areas of apparent sparsity. *King Kong* is a potential model for such an archaeology.

Liberty City, 2007

Liberty City, 2007
Video, colour, sound, 1:11 min, loop
Edition of 3
Collection Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), Barcelona

Is it a testimony of resistance against the racist status quo? A group of black people opposing the system's privileged enforcer and defender, the white cop? Or is it the white supremacist's chimera – the white police officer who has unwittingly become the victim of a group of brutal "black gangsters"? As an isolated document, the uncut video sequence could be coopted by either side. However, *Liberty City* is not a document but staged theatre, or, more precisely: "epic theatre in the style of a documentary" (Friedl).

The reference is historical. On the night of December 17, 1979, the black motorcyclist Arthur McDuffie was stopped by white police officers on the corner of North Miami Avenue and 38th Street. He was abused so severely that he died from his injuries a few days later. When the accused policemen were acquitted in the trial five months after the incident, protests and then riots erupted in the streets of Miami. The unrest led to eighteen deaths, altogether 350 injuries, and was only contained on the third day of revolt after a curfew was imposed. One of the hotspots was Liberty City.

Friedl's video was shot in the streets of the Liberty Square Housing Project. The residential complex built during the Roosevelt era in the 1930s for African American residents exemplifies the effects of segregation in urban planning. Remnants of a wall, which was built along the eastern fringe of Liberty Square to separate black and white people, are still visible today.

In view of Michael Brown's death in Ferguson in 2014, and Freddy Gray's demise in Baltimore in 2015, both victims of racist police violence – not to mention the open and structural discriminations people of colour are subjected to in both the USA and Europe on a day-to-day basis – *Liberty City* seems more topical than ever. It is the reversal of a standard scene.

In Friedl's video, centuries of racist violence are met by a minute of counterviolence. However, the satisfaction the viewer might feel while witnessing this scene fails to manifest itself. Perhaps that is why *Liberty City* is so disturbing: the negative image reverses but cannot overcome the existing order.

Theory of Justice, 1992–2010

Theory of Justice, 1992–2010
Newspaper clippings
16 display cases, stainless steel, Plexiglas, painted plywood
Each 100 x 160 x 75 cm
Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid

Archives are ambivalent places. While accumulating materials for the possible (albeit makeshift and fragmentary) reconstruction and visualisation of historical events, they also generate invisibility: sometimes the most illuminating sources turn out to be those that never entered distinguished archives, that were not deemed worthy of serving posterity as historical documents.

Friedl's long-term project *Theory of Justice* is a collection of these blind spots in our visual memory. Without claim to totality or objectivity, the pictures in *Theory of Justice* are dedicated solely to the chronology of the documented, depicted events and otherwise are motivated by a poetic, and anti-archival drive. Rather than mere confirmations of existing knowledge, the images are supposed to serve as trails to the "optical unconscious" (Walter Benjamin). The spectrum ranges from strikingly iconic pictures of protest to intimate portraits whose political significance and momentousness only become apparent on second glance. Friedl's source material derives from an array of different newspapers and magazines.

A continuous process of critical examination accompanied the work for *Theory of Justice*. After adding new photographs, Friedl would weed out the same number of older clippings until the collection finally started to "shrink" – this too is contrary to the logic of the archive. With ongoing digitalisation, the compilation became historical in two senses: not only

Liberty City, 2007, video still, courtesy of the artist; Gallery Erna Hécey, Luxembourg; Guido Costa Projects, Turin; and Nicolas Krupp Galerie, Basel

Theory of Justice, 1992–2010, detail, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid, installation view Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), 2006; photo: Tony Coll

The Dramatist (Black Hamlet, Crazy Henry, Giulia, Toussaint), 2013, Carré d'Art – Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes, Courtesy of the artist and Guido Costa Projects, Turin; photo: Maria Bruni

the reproduced events were transformed into history, but also the medium in *Theory of Justice* – the printed newspaper image – developed an increasingly anachronistic character. This made (and makes) an underlying question in Friedl's project especially compelling: What is a historical image?

The title of the collection refers to *A Theory of Justice*, a publication from 1971 by the American philosopher John Rawls who developed a comprehensive theory of distributive justice. According to his main thesis, social and political processes function due to the willingness to balance interests and reach a consensus. However, the images in *Theory of Justice* show that consensus has progressively been replaced by conflict, expressly in the age of global neoliberalism. Contrary to what Rawls might have believed, the practice of politics is not defined by fair and transparent distribution of opportunities and goods but rather by mechanisms of exploitation and exclusion.

The title, however, is not just a laconic comment on Rawls' theory – it is also programmatic: as a reference to the need for a new theory of justice which critically absorbs the evidence of injustice in the world instead of bypassing it. *Theory of Justice* can also be interpreted as a model of "pictorial justice". The selected images in their function as newspaper images merely fulfil the purpose of illustrating textual information (or perpetuating ideologies, as some of the examples in Friedl's collection show). In *Theory of Justice*, on the other hand, they are granted "a new chance on another time level" (Friedl). Freed from their contexts of employment and appeal, and arranged in a precise time grid, the images begin to convey the basics about the structure of political protest and resistance; thus isolated, each picture is made available for a broad range of possible interpretations and meanings. The political artefact becomes an aesthetic artefact. *Theory of Justice* also provides a proliferation of reflections on the borders and intersections between art and politics.

The Dramatist (Black Hamlet, Crazy Henry, Giulia, Toussaint), 2013
Wood, metal, fabric, leather, glass, hair, straw, oil paint, nylon strings
Dimensions variable

Collection Carré d'Art, Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes

The dramatist mentioned in the title remains unnamed, but the protagonists of his (as yet) unwritten play are ready: Black Hamlet, Crazy Henry, Giulia and Toussaint. Modelled after historical personages, the group of handmade marionettes initiate reflections on historiography as a narrative of time- and space-bound events. The *dramatis personae* are Julia Schucht, Antonio Gramsci's wife; Toussaint Louverture, the leader of the Haitian revolution who died as a prisoner in the French Jura in 1803; John Chavafambria, the "Black Hamlet" who became known through the Johannesburg-based doctor and psychoanalyst Wulf Sachs' notes published in 1937; and Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company.

The four marionettes stand side by side, their hands partly set in animated gestures, their feet on the ground. Departing from different times and places, they hang from thin threads, caught between past and future. By activating them, chronologically unconnected events would be able to be freed from the isolation of recorded history; an abstracted performance could address the social, political and economic attributions condensed in these protagonists. The four characters still looking for an author to arrange their biographies in a fictional order are just puppets in the spotlight. Yet their unidirectional gazes oppose the immobility of their current presence: as the desire that the loose ends of the transitional processes of their times, in which they were involved in very different ways, might be captured, continued, and woven into a storyline.

***Report,* 2016**
Single channel HD video installation
Colour, sound, 32:03 min., loop, aspect ratio 16:9
Edition of 4

After "A Report for an Academy" by Franz Kafka (1917)

Artist and Director: Peter Friedl
Camera: Giorgos Karvelas
Sound: Vasilis Gerodimos
Executive Producer: Karinia Stylou

In Franz Kafka's short story "A Report to an Academy" from 1917, an ape reflects on his successful humanisation and integration into society in front of the "esteemed gentlemen" of an academy. Presented in the form of a monologue, the text introduces a subject both human and non-human, who, in less than five years, "has acquired the average education of a European" and actively participates in the scientific discourse, offering himself as a case study. The ape Red Peter from Africa is one of the few relatively successful heroes in Kafka's oeuvre. According to interpretation, "A Report to an Academy" can be read as a story of forced adaptation, as a parable on the assimilation of the Jewish population, a sceptical allegory on modernity and as a satire on the educational system.[2] Peter Friedl presents Kafka's text as a performance staged for a film that seems to follow the conditions of classic dramatic theory – unity of place, time, and action: as a play with speaking parts for twenty-four actors.

People from different backgrounds perform and recite Kafka's text by heart in the film installation *Report*. Alone or in pairs, they successively appear on the empty stage stripped down to the firewalls that belongs to the National Theatre in Athens, designed by German architect Ernst Ziller in late nineteenth century. The protagonists recite passages, either in their respective first languages or in languages of their choice: Arabic, Dari (Farsi), English, French, Greek, Kurdish, Russian and Koswahili. Some appear several times over the course of the play. The language in which Kafka's text was written (his Prague minoritarian German) is missing, as are homogenising subtitles which would replace the linguistic plurality with a unifying translation. On the contrary: the English and French passages derive from translations clearly varying in style.

Precise in its montage, *Report* remains, with some omissions and variations, faithful to Kafka's narrative throughout the fragmented polyphony of languages, voices and gestures. The speeches of the actors condense their personal (and political) bearing, coexisting in both a complex and suggestive scenario carried by the performers' physical presence on the empty, black stage. The juxtaposition of close-ups and individual figure shots unfold a substantially elaborate and cinematographically opulent reflection on the relation of identity, language, adjustment and autonomy that intensifies in the larger-than-life video projection through the subtle, rhythmic montage of shots without zoom. Cast over a longer period in Athens, almost all of the performers are amateur actors and actresses; many of them came to

2 At one point, the animal trader, zoo and circus director Carl Hagenbeck is mentioned whose autobiography *Von Tieren und Menschen* (Of Animals and Humans) was published in 1908. He made a living by exhibiting people from Africa and Southeast Asia in his colonial "human zoos".

Report, 2016, video still, courtesy of the artist; Gallery Erna Hécey, Luxembourg; Guido Costa Projects, Turin; and Nicolas Krupp Galerie, Basel

Teatro (Report), 2016–18, installation view, courtesy of the artist and Guido Costa Projects, Turin; photo: Cristina Leoncini

Greece in the wake of recent immigration movements. The Greek actress Maria Kallimani is however also part of the ensemble.

Produced for documenta 14, which took place in Athens and Kassel in 2017, *Report* interweaves past politics of expansion and colonialism – metaphorically condensed in the representational sphere of European theatre history – with the global effects of these politics in the twenty-first century. Current forms of migration and diaspora are mirrored in Kafka's self-reflexive parable.

Teatro (Report), 2016–18
Oak, MDF, plywood, brass, Plexiglas, polyurethane resin, polystyrene, PVC, stainless steel, digital print, neodymium magnets, acrylic paint
185 x 119 x 84 cm

Teatro (Report) is a model sculpture of the National Theatre in Athens where the scenes for *Report* were shot in June 2016. However, the model is not just a mimesis of the existing structure – which was commissioned by King George I, built by the German architect Ernst Ziller and opened in 1901. It represents theatre as a sphere of knowledge and memory theatre (*ars memoriae*) as imagined by Giulio Camillo, the author of *L'idea del theatro* (1550), in the renaissance, or by the English philosopher and theosophist Robert Fludd in the early seventeenth century – a mnemotechnical system which connects ideas, images and concepts through time and space.

Theatre models are paradoxical representations of architecture. The focus is on the interior: the stage is carved out of the real volume of the building, while the comparatively large space for the audience is usually omitted. Friedl's stage is populated by miniature figurines of the actors from his film. Some do not appear in the final version as their scenes fell victim to editing. The size of the people, however, does not quite coincide with the setting. They are slightly too large to convincingly uphold the true-to-scale illusion of the model.

Teatro (Report) is an ambiguous, enchanted work: a performative sculpture in ongoing dialogue with its own compositional elements.

Study for Social Dreaming, 2014–17
HD video, colour, sound, 28:50 min., loop
Edition of 4

Study for Social Dreaming begins with a long traveling shot. Closely framed faces pass by, set against a dark background, while a female voice recalls a dream. The minimal mise-en-scène and a precise reproduction of sound evoke a concentrated atmosphere: a stream of whispered words; chair creaks; a camera tightly framing individual faces, alternately focusing on the speaker and the listeners; a dark black background and chiaroscuro lighting.

As part of his workshop on "Exercises in Imagination", Peter Friedl organised two freely accessible "Social Dreaming" sessions, loosely based on W. Gordon Lawrence's eponymous method, in a small theatre in Rome in spring 2014. *Study for Social Dreaming* is the cinematic documentation of these two sessions, each with different participants.

For psychoanalysis (which arose at the same time as cinema) the dream is a language requiring decoding, and thus, as with every interpretation, reduces that which is interpreted. For the surrealists there was barely a difference between dream and dream-text. In "Dream Kitsch", his first comment on Surrealism published in 1925, Walter Benjamin declared that dreaming "has a share in history", clairvoyantly describing the path that would lead to the dreaming collective. It was Charlotte Beradt's *The Third Reich of Dreams* (an anthology of dreams collected between 1933 and 1939), which highlighted the social dimension of dreams and their potential as documents for a political and historical anthropology. Struck by Beradt's collection, Lawrence, who worked as a social scientist and researcher in London, began to hold weekly "Social Dreaming Sessions" together with a psychoanalyst in 1982. During the workshop initiated by Friedl, two psychologists from Turin supervised and guided the sessions, in which the participants (without prior instruction) recounted their dreams to one another.

Study for Social Dreaming uses the original footage filmed during the sessions by several cameras, but the material was edited heavily. The resulting mock-documentary style, however, is very much

in line with the associative storytelling of the participants who extensively fabulate on their dreams. The psychologists become invisible and silenced; recalled dreams seem to chain one another. Dramaturgy and temporality are blurred in order to focus on the narrative structures that cover banal, associative stories. The participants' gestures, their facial expressions and language speak of the representation of self, of the fiction of self, but also of the competition that guides their recollection of those images they claim to have seen while sleeping. *Study for Social Dreaming* could be regarded as the psychotherapeutic version of the common artistic fiction that narration may change the world – in this case, through sharing and telling dreams.

Teatro Popular, 2016–17
4 "barracas": wood, aluminium, fabric, 22 puppets, mixed media
190 x 100 x 100 cm (2 x); 180 x 90 x 90 cm; 180 x 100 x 100 cm

Originally conceived for a solo exhibition in Lisbon, *Teatro Popular* is Peter Friedl's reminiscence of the Portuguese street theatre Dom Roberto, which can be traced back to the early eighteenth century. At stake is, as the title implies, a historical idea or fiction of theatre as "folk art".

The setting is both economic and indicative: a minimalist construction covered with cloth, no more than two metres high, mobile and easy to set up and dismantle. The so-called *barraca* is a stage and hiding place in one. While above raucous buffoonery holds the audience's attention, the puppeteer down below remains invisible (but always clearly audible). The model arrangement alludes to the primal scene of the popular: individuals gathered around a mystical spectacle experiencing their "common identity as a people". Access to the inner workings of the *barraca*, however, is denied. The conscious mind, which steers both the puppets and the gazes, remains undetected.

Teatro Popular doesn't aim at any "authentic" reconstruction or revival of a genre. Hence, the fabric used for one of the sets was not made in Portugal but in Brazil – a reference to the two countries' colonial involvement (and to *Mamulengo*, the Brazilian

version of puppet theatre). We experience the *barracas* as isolated artefacts and prototypes, part stage, part aesthetic object. At any time, this mobile theatre may start to perform and yet it remains silent and still. The plot and action are omitted. The twenty-two handmade puppets that make up the "stage personnel" lie motionless on the ground or peek out of the four *barracas*. Friedl presents us with an idiosyncratic selection of historical personages from different centuries, continents and contexts. Their common frame of reference is an extended Lusophone universe reflected through the ages.

One of them is the Sephardic Jew Abraham Zacuto (originally Abraham ben Samuel Zacut, 1452 – c. 1515) who fled Spain in 1492 and then advanced to the position of Royal Astronomer at the court of King Dom João II until he was forced to leave Portugal due to the incipient persecution of Jews. For a long time, his Almanach perpetuum was one of the most important theoretical works on ocean navigation and counted among the first books in Portugal printed according to the Gutenberg method. As a matter of course, Friedl lets Zacuto encounter Queen Nzinga of Ndongo and Matamba (1583 – 1663) who, born over one hundred years later, was famous for her diplomatic skills and persistence in the resistance against Portuguese invaders.

Besides figures of the Early Modern Age, there are also characters from the nineteenth and twentieth century, such as the Armenian art collector and philanthropist Calouste Gulbenkian, who died in Lisbon in 1955, allegedly as the richest man in the world due to an unparalleled career in the oil industry. He established the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, the foundation behind the Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, which opened in Lisbon in 1969. In the present, we meet the entrepreneur Isabel dos Santos who (born in 1973) became Africa's first female billionaire. Next to her is her father Eduardo dos Santos, president of Angola from 1979 to 2017, and for many years, chairman of the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, one of the three most important Angolan liberation movements against colonial Portugal in the 1960s and 1970s.

But there are also fictional characters, such as Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman), the female protagonist in Michael Curtiz's classic *Casablanca* (1942). Exiled in

Study for Social Dreaming, 2014–2017, HD-video still, courtesy of the artist; Gallery Erna Hécey, Luxembourg; Guido Costa Projects, Turin; and Nicolas Krupp, Basel

Teatro Popular, 2016–17, detail, courtesy of the artist and Lumiar Cité, Lisbon; photo: Daniel Malhão

Morocco during her flight from the Nazis, she hopes to obtain an exit visa for safe passage from Lisbon to the United States. Many more names could be mentioned whose stories and biographies are equally powerful and intertwined. Besides the connection with Portugal, they all share the experience of colonialism, racism and imperial expansion – albeit from very different perspectives. What they stand for, remains radically open.

Friedl's figures constitute the personnel of an anachronistic-utopian folk theatre that revises itself. Contrary to the phantasm of a reconciled cultural unity and identity – the underlying narrative of populism – Zacuto, Nzinga, Gulbenkian, Lund and company – represent the right to be disparate and non-identical with their manifold contradictory, fragmented, heroic and nonheroic biographies.

Rehousing, 2012–19

Gründbergstraße 22, 2012
MDF, wood, brass, Plexiglas, polyurethane resin, PVC, acrylic paint
23.7 x 36.5 x 21.5 cm
Collection Marco Rossi – Torino

Uncle Ho, 2012
Wood, polyurethane resin, PVC, acrylic paint
20.4 x 32 x 24.5 cm
Collection Marco Rossi – Torino

Villa tropicale, 2012–13
MDF, brass, Plexiglas, PVC, acrylic paint
14 x 26.7 x 21.4 cm
Collection Marco Rossi – Torino

Evergreen, 2013
Wood, polyurethane resin, acrylic paint
23.2 x 30.5 x 23.2 cm
Collection Marco Rossi – Torino

Heidegger, 2014
MDF, wood, brass, PVC, polyurethane resin, acrylic paint
22.5 x 26 x 36 cm
Collection Marco Rossi – Torino

Oranienplatz, 2014
MDF, wood, polypropylene, PVC, acrylic paint
19 x 22 x 30 cm
Collection Marco Rossi – Torino

101, 2016
ABS, wood, polyurethane resin, PVC, steel, acrylic paint
21 x 30 x 24 cm

Azraq, 2016
MDF, wood, Plexiglas, polystyrene, polyurethane resin, PVC, acrylic paint
16 x 31 x 22 cm

Dome, 2016
MDF, wood, Plexiglas, polyurethane resin, PVC, acrylic paint
18 x 45.5 x 45.5 cm

Holdout, 2016
MDF, Plexiglas, polystyrene, polyurethane resin, PVC, acrylic paint, water colour
27.5 x 13 x 30 cm

Amona, 2018–19
MDF, Plexiglas, polystyrene, polyurethane resin, PVC, steel, acrylic paint
11.3 x 33.3 x 10.5 cm

8115 Vilakazi Street, 2018–19
Formica, MDF, wood, brass, Plexiglas, polyurethane resin, PVC, acrylic paint
11.5 x 34.4 x 26 cm

Tables: steel, plywood, acrylic paint
Each 100 x 60 x 60 cm

The concept of the model as a concentrated form that depicts (future) reality generally plays an important role in Peter Friedl's oeuvre. *Rehousing*, a series started in 2012, consists of true-to-scale models that reproduce historical, partly destroyed or never realised structures presented on table stands. As constructed living environments, the selected houses reflect history, politics, biographies and ideologies in very different ways; they are "case studies for the mental geography of an alternative modernity" (Friedl). The idea of an international Modernism designed by renowned architects is juxtaposed with anonymous, in some cases, bricolage-like dwellings in which the complex repercussions of this expansive project "modernity" can be traced to the present. Thus, the politically motivated need for representation is confronted with evidence of displacement and colonisation, individual concepts with standardised forms, and local

building traditions with universalistic aesthetics. Each model stands alone. However, as with all models, the possibility of comparison is vital to aesthetics.

The laconic title of the series is reminiscent of the "Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Programme" introduced by the American "Department of Housing and Urban Development" in 2009, and similar initiatives aimed at combating homelessness with social and urban prevention strategies. In view of the unemployment figures after the financial crisis in 2008, the programme's political significance outweighed the lasting practical effects. Nonetheless, it shows how political agency manifests itself in questions of living.

Rehousing comprises twelve models: the artist's childhood home in Austria (*Gründbergstraße 22*); Ho Chi Minh's private residence, a traditional stilt house structure in Hanoi (*Uncle Ho*); a slave hut on the Evergreen plantation established in Louisiana in the eighteenth century (*Evergreen*); a never realised residential building in the *razionalismo* style designed by Luigi Piccinato for East Africa during the Fascist era (*Villa tropicale*); a replica of the philosopher Martin Heidegger's cabin in the Black Forest (*Heidegger*) as well as the reconstruction of a shack built by African refugees in Berlin and taken down by the police in 2014 (*Oranienplatz*). The series also includes a residential building from Vann Molyvann's project of 100 identical houses built for employees of the National Bank of Cambodia in Tuk Thia, Phnom Penh in 1965–67 (*101*), a container house from a refugee camp in Jordan (*Azraq*), a domed structure inspired by Buckminster Fuller's geodesic construction principles from the hippie commune Drop City which was founded in South Colorado in 1965 and abandoned in the mid-1970s (*Dome*) as well as a so-called "nail house" or *dingzihu* — one of the resistant local structures which defy the Chinese building boom (*Holdout*).

Friedl created two new models for the exhibition in Vienna: Winnie and Nelson Mandela's former home in Soweto, South Africa, now transformed into a museum (*8115 Vilakazi Street*) as well as a model of one of the prefabricated container houses that made up *Amona* – the Israeli outpost in the Palestinian territories on the West Bank which was cleared in 2017.

Although some of the models are highly charged with political significance, they are all presented equally in Friedl's "radically neutral approach" (Hilde Van Gelder). Released from their multiple inscriptions, they allude on a secondary level to their specific circumstances. Beyond any local context, they exemplify ideas of dwelling and living driven by ideologies, rarely by utopias – and in the present often only as ruins of failure or manifestation of highly asymmetrical distribution of power.

German Village, 2014–15
MDF, Plexiglas, PVC, polyurethane resin, wood, acrylic paint
34.5 x 90.5 x 57.5 cm

Table: steel, plywood, acrylic paint
100 x 120 x 70 cm

German Village presents scaled-down, two-storey German-style residential buildings built wall to wall. German architects who had emigrated from Nazi Germany, such as Erich Mendelsohn and Konrad Wachsmann, were involved in the planning as consultants.

The simulation of German living was built in 1943 at an army base in Utah, in the middle of the desert, in order to test possible uses of the incendiary bombs intended for Allied air raids against civilian targets. The original "German Village" combined Rhenish residential architecture with that of Berlin apartment blocks. Detailed interiors were created by designers from Hollywood studios. The fictional village was also partly built by convicts from the state prison of Utah. Architecture as a stage and setting becomes a test case for its future destruction, which the model in turn suspends.

Tripoli, 2015
MDF, Plexiglas, PVC, wood, acrylic paint
48 x 104 x 32.2 cm

Table: steel, plywood, acrylic paint
100 x 120 x 70 cm

Tripoli realises as a model the sketch for a branch of the car producer Fiat in Tripoli, Libya. Conceived in 1931 by Carlo Enrico Rava and Sebastiano Larco, the building

Rehousing, 2012–19, installation view Taipei Biennial, 2016

Rehousing, 2012–19, installation view Venice Biennale, 2015: centre: *Tripoli*, 2015, right: *German Village*, 2014–15, courtesy of the artist and Guido Costa Projects, Turin; photo: Alessandra Chemollo, Courtesy la Biennale di Venezia

is representative of Italian modernist *razionalismo* that characterises many colonial buildings in North and East Africa and demonstrates the spirit of Italian Fascism. The discussion about this type of Italian colonial architecture was dominated by Carlo Enrico Rava, together with Luigi Piccinato, through their publications in the periodical *Domus* founded by Gio Ponti. Rava, like Giuseppe Terragni and Adalberto Libera, was a member of Gruppo 7 and author of the essay "Costruire in colonia" (Colonial Building), where he propagated a modernist aesthetic paired with a precise knowledge of local conditions. Among his projects for Tripoli, which sought to express the idea of a genuine "Italian colonial architecture" (often in collaboration with Sebastiano Larco), is the design of the Piazza della Cattedrale, the church of Suani ben Aden (1930), a triumphal arch built on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Piedmont in 1931, as well as the unrealised plans for the colonial headquarters of the Fabbrica Italiana Automobili Torino – merging the local preference of cubic construction with a modernist design idiom.

If not stated otherwise, works courtesy of the artist; Guido Costa Projects, Turin; Galerie Erna Hécey, Luxembourg; and Nicolas Krupp Galerie, Basel

Pay as You Wish!
Each Sunday, you decide on the admission fee and pay as much as you want for your exhibition visit.

Program

Opening
Thu 21/3 2019, 7 pm
With Peter Friedl

Artist Talk
Thu 11/4 2019, 7 pm
An Unanswered Question
With Peter Friedl, Anne Faucheret & Vanessa Joan Müller

Charles Ives' composition *The Unanswered Question*, written in 1906, revised in 1930–35 and premiered in 1946, places a string quartet, brass and a solo trumpet in a question-and-answer situation and serves as inspiration for an unusual artist's talk.
    People who have worked with Peter Friedl in the past have been asked to submit questions that they have not dared to ask until now, which did not arise until after the end of the exhibition or for which there was never a real opportunity.
    Peter Friedl will answer these questions on April 11.

Tours
All tours are free with admission!

Curators' Tours
The curators of the exhibition, Anne Faucheret and Vanessa Joan Müller, discuss topics addressed by the presented works of Peter Friedl and elaborate on their background.

Thu 4/4 2019, 6 pm
With Anne Faucheret

Thu 16/5 2019, 6 pm
With Vanessa Joan Müller

Sunday Tours
Every Sunday at 3 pm you can join our art educators on a guided tour to explore the exhibition. The tours focus on the presentation and different aspects of the work of Peter Friedl. (Guided tours in German).
    With: Wolfgang Brunner, Carola Fuchs, Michaela Schmidlechner and Michael Simku.

Sun 24/3, 21/4, 12/5 2019, 3 pm
Case studies for a mental geography

Sun 31/3, 2/6, 9/6 2019, 3 pm
The story of justice

Sun 7/4, 28/4, 26/5 2019, 3 pm
Stages as playrooms. Models of reality

Sun 14/4, 5/5, 19/5 2019, 3 pm
Exact misunderstandings (and precise incompleteness)

Tour in sign language
Sun 5/5 2019, 3 pm
Exact misunderstandings (and precise incompleteness)

As part of *Integration Week 2019*, the Sunday Tour on May 5, will be translated into Austrian sign language by the sign language interpreter Eva Böhm. The subject of the translation – which is also an aspect in Peter Friedl's body of work – becomes even more visible in this art education process.

Children's Workshop
Sat 25/5 2019, 11 am – 1 pm and 2 – 4 pm
I make the world...
Children's Workshop in cooperation as part of *MQ-KinderKulturParcours* and WienXtra
For children from 6 to 12

We will build our own hand puppets, from plaster bandages, colourful fabrics and other materials, we bring known people to life – politicians, a character from your favourite movie, the girl next door or a museum director. What do your characters tell us and what is their story?

Children: 2 EUR / with Kinderaktivcard free of charge
Adults: Pay as You Wish
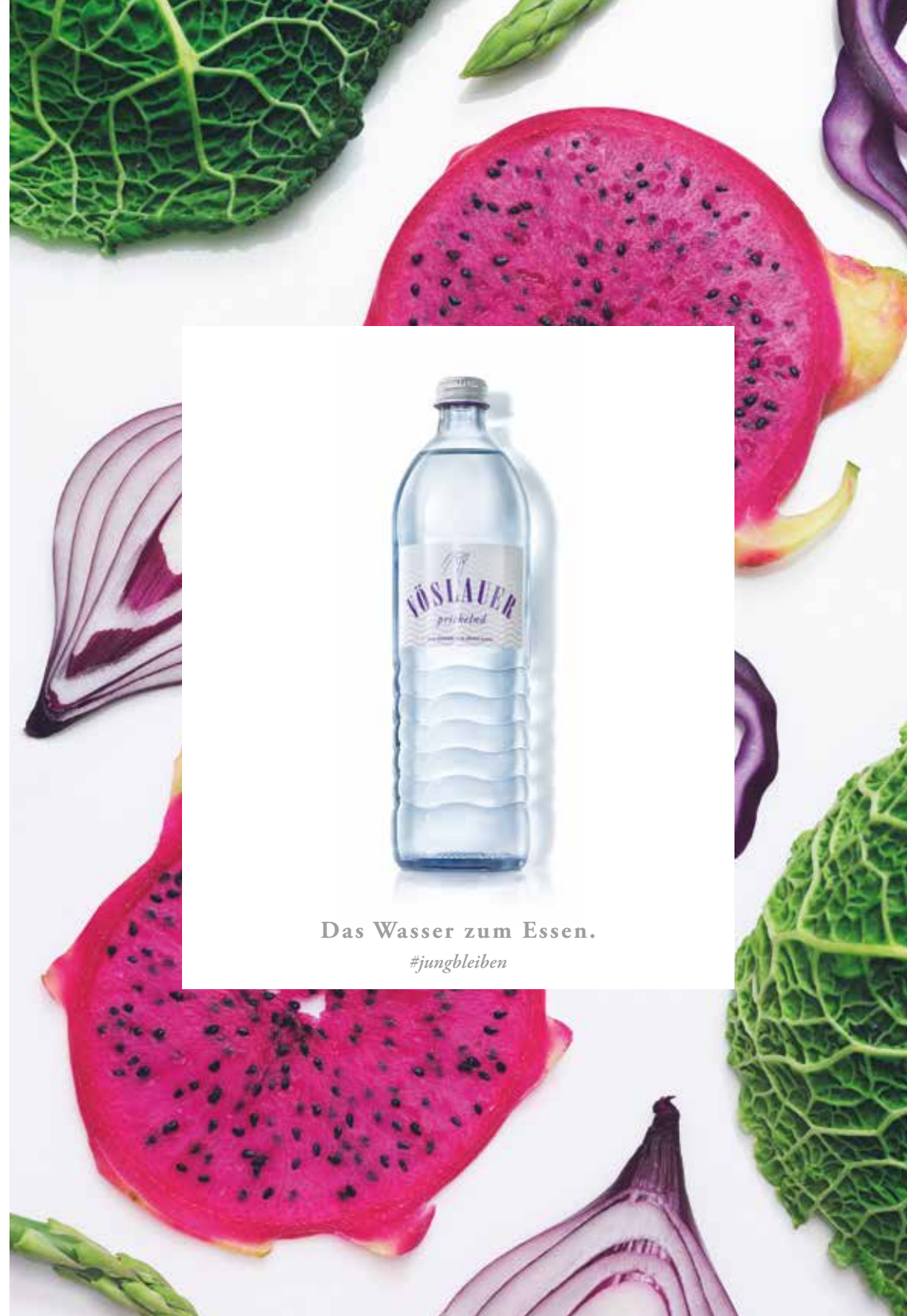
Das Wasser zum Essen.
#jungbleiben

Alexandra Bachzetsis (CH)

Private Song

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