Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

kunst наlle wien





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Introduction

Kunsthalle Wien dedicates to Vienna-based artists* Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* and Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński two solo shows, which take place simultaneously in the upper hall of Kunsthalle Wien Museumsquartier from October 22, 2021, to February 6, 2022.

Introduction

Our invitation to Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* and Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński follows Kunsthalle Wien's commitment to showing artists* who question the legacies of imperialism, colonialism, and slavery and whose practices politically reframe racism and heteronormativity as political tools that were historically developed (and are used still today) to subjugate and exploit certain territories and certain bodies.

While the two solo shows take place simultaneously in the upper hall, they are accessible through two different entrances and separated by a divider wall. The location, architecture, and dramaturgy were developed to place full attention on each artistic practice while still offering the audience the ability to cross between these two universes, enabling chosen moments of encounter.

The invitation to both artists* to have solo shows at Kunsthalle Wien dates back to 2019, and the exhibitions were originally planned for the spring of 2020. But during the Covid-19 pandemic, the exhibitions were twice postponed. On the one hand, this long preparation time has allowed for new developments; on the other hand, the artists* were forced to cope with an unpredictable rhythm and (constant) recalibrating of the project. The final exhibitions are the outcome of an intensive dialogue, ongoing self-reflection, and, in some cases, compromise. They include existing works reimagined and adapted for Kunsthalle Wien's exhibition space as well as new works produced for the occasion.

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s works take the shape of multimedia installations mixing film, photography, objects, and text. She* looks closely 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 the exhibition, the artist* (re)tells the stories of queerness as a survival strategy, 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 attempts to figure out how a contemporary subject can dig up and appropriate hidden histories in order to escape cultural, social, and psychological assignations. In a self-reflexive movement, the artist* also questions the capacity of the art field itself to welcome, support, and stand for minoritarian alternatives and non-aligned thought, in an intensive investigation of the involvement of dirty capital in the financing of art institutions.

In her works, be they photographic series, films, or installations, Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński creates spaces for encounter, conversation, and sometimes confrontation between herself and the viewer, but first and foremost between herself and the people who populate her pieces, her memories, and her imagination: those who have been disappeared and who are gone, those who are here, and those who are to come. Intertwining critical Black feminist theory, conceptual visual strategies, and (science-)fictional narration, the artist explores diverse methods to communicate across time and space. While she critically investigates regimes of looking and decodes the racist cultural apparatus underlying the ongoing system of subjugation and exploitation of Black lives, she outreaches at the same time the violence contained in archives, in museums, and in books by opening pathways for exchanging, caring, and imagining. Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński's artworks always choose minimalism over opulence, dispersion over monumentality, evanescence over fixation, and openness over closure, and welcome blank spaces and voids. They are continuously in process, in self-reflection, "in the wake" (Christina Sharpe), seriously embracing their political task to set the conditions and to create spaces—real and imagined—for the processing of the past, invention of the future, and disintegration of the present as it is.

Being located in a country where (scientific) colonialism is rarely discussed, where "white innocence" (Gloria Wekker) is an unchallenged social paradigm, and where historical migration and cultural creolization are still disregarded in favor of a vision of a unique, sole anchorage in the West, we felt it was important to feature these two artists* who are both based in Vienna and work internationally. Each tirelessly investigates racist scopic regimes and practices of Othering and deploys aesthetic strategies of resistance. At the same time, each artist speaks from a differently situated perspective that hinges on dissimilar experiences, resulting in two distinct practices.

- Anne Faucheret Curator

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Video installation, color and sound, 16:9, 15 min 52 sec

What is left behind when transformation means erasing memories and streamlining behaviors? How might memory be queered in an act of resistance against the linearity of history writing? In After the Transformation (2013), Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* investigates these issues through reflection upon her* own bodily transformation, namely voice modifications, which have occurred after taking testosterone. The film is based on a vocal-training session between the trainer and the trainee (the artist* herself*), shot tight to both bodies and faces. With less emphasis on the materialization of a gender transformation through voice, the exchange enhances instead the materiality of sound, the incarnation of voice, and the technical performance behind the effects and variation it produces. In between filmed sequences, black frames feature a white text that reverses the position of the narrator: to be read is a descriptive monologue from the perspective of the trainer. The more the film goes on, the more the subject of the exchange seems to shift: from technical considerations linked to the mastery of the voice and its effects, the conversation, through the texts used to pose the voice, seems to move toward broader political shifts that happened in Europe after 1989. The artist*

brings together several scales and different histories, from the personal body to the political body, in a subtle and seamless manner. The image editing, as well as the work on sound and rhythm, create effects of dispersion and diffraction about who is the narrator and what is narrated, blurring the distance between "I" and "they", between individual and collective, between personal and political.





Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, After the Transformation (video stills), 2013

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Artwork descriptions

Photo collage, 14 inkjet prints on handmade paper, each 21 × 29.7 cm; 7 wooden plates, each 48 × 33.8 cm

The photo installation Future Anterior – Illustrations of War (2013) features a series of blackand-white photographic prints mounted on wooden boards. The photos are appropriated from a series by fashion photographer Steven Meisel, which was published in Vogue between 2000 and 2016 and depicts futuristic scenes of gendered (and seemingly institutional) violence. Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* recontextualizes the pictures in a minimalist layout that includes large blank spaces, punctuated with a text she* wrote and that reframes, fictionally and culturally, gendered violence between crime and weapon, between representation and reality. As the artist* describes it: "A new web journal illustrates the future anterior of the war. It transfers institutionalized violence to a stage setting, where the event of war has not yet taken place, but where it might happen in a similar way in the future. At that point, peacetime injury becomes a damage of war, and the scenario shows how it could have been while the image depicts neither war nor peace."

The (over)staged scenes of violence toward female fashion models by male police officers and soldiers in uniforms stand in sharp contrast to the installation's minimalist layout and the

dry analytical and theoretical tone of the short texts, tackling the inextricable connection between sexuality, violence, and gender as a basis for the systemic exploitation of female bodies in a heteropatriarchal system. Supposedly opposed regimes suddenly begin to collide. When it comes to gendered violence, fashion and news reporting, reality and representation, memory and fantasy, past and present, and even peace and war seem to overlap. Addressing the use of sexualized violence and its eroticization in visual culture, as well as the position of women, on the one hand, and employing a subtle interplay between photography and text on the other, the series places itself in the tradition of artist Sanja Iveković's conceptual feminist practice. The temporality of the "future anterior", as referenced in the work's title, refers to something that will have happened or will have been completed at some point in the future, and which is put in correlation with an event that will come after it. It is a verb tense that emphasizes the porosity between temporalities. Locating her* series in this "past of the future", Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* reconnects past and future in the act of looking, imbuing the latter with the potential for (reflective) transformation.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, Future Anterior - Illustrations of War (detail), 2013

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FIFTY-ONE PIECES - BELIEVING IN ART, 2016 Greenbox paint, wall text, dimensions variable

The mysterious disappearance of fifty-one artworks from the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) in Sarajevo during the Yugoslav Wars is the point of departure for this conceptual intervention interrogating the entanglement between art and politics, the refusal of cultural amnesia, and the magic of art. "During the war (1992-1995) fifty-one art works disappeared, under unexplained circumstances, from the collection of the art gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This probably happened at the beginning of the aggression, but it was confirmed in 1993 by the extraordinary control of [the gallery's inventory of art works. Interpol was informed. The art works are still missing" (B&H website).

Since 2016, Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* has been staging this work at many of the institutions she* has shown at, following a specific set of instructions that are adapted to each exhibition space: one wall is covered with green paint, and a text is displayed on an adjacent wall that contextualizes the colorful intervention. The fifty-one absent (stolen) works are thus given presence, as the presentation wall becomes at once a space for fantasy and for representation. The variation of the work's setting sadly

emphasizes the redundancy of the story it tells: artworks are constantly destroyed, stolen, and co-opted for political and economic reasons, often with the participation of cultural institutions. The wall is painted in the exact same green used on film sets to capture greenscreen scenes—as if the magic of the cinema could bring back the vanished artworks, as if art could bring things, whether the actual objects or their memories, back. Every institution shall have its green wall, to remind us of all those artworks reduced to commodities in any ideological, geopolitical, or economic game.

Artwork descriptions



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, Speech Object #1 (installation view), 2018, exhibition The Bacha Posh Project, curated by Karolina Radenkovic, Galerie 5020, Salzburg, 2018. Photo: WEST. Fotostudio

In Freud Film (2017/2021), sequences filmed by the artist* during a walk through the former Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna serve as a background for various archival film and textual materials in superimposition. Dating back to the beginning of the twentieth century and mainly drawn from the Filmarchiv Austria [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 portraits of individuals such as a "Turkish beggar" and a group of "Jewish tinsmiths"—all from the perspective of the monarchy. These scenes insert the political history of World War I into the inner space of psychoanalysis, uncovering the repressed role of ethnographic exploration, such as these prejudiced representations of Bosnia, in the creation and development of the "collective unconscious" according to psychoanalytic theory. Subtly arranged by the artist*, the montage of film clips seems to outline the contours of the construction of a (Western) European identity versus an exoticized "Oriental" one. While the work's wider frame follows the official representation of Freud's universe, lingering on ancient objects from his

collection, the superimposed shots-almost obliterating the images behind them-seem to contradict this story and bring to the fore the unconscious of psychoanalysis itself: racial and patriarchal biases. The third layer in Freud Film consists of excerpts from Man Ray's Surrealist film Les Mystères du Château de Dé [The Mysteries of the Château of Dicel (1929) as well as overlays taken from the avant-garde magazine Zenit, a Yugoslav journal published in the 1920s-some spreads of which are also displayed in three vitrines nearby. Through these references, this section of the film examines the implementation of the unconscious in various historical avant-garde movements.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, Freud Film (video stills), 2017/2021

PRIVATE VIEW, 2018-2021 Work series

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s series *Private View* tackles shady investment in art institutions from the weapons industry, hedgefund companies, and investors of Nazi heritage. Each work in the series discloses and displays information and objects available on the internet, and thus accessible to everybody. The installation's starting point resembles Hans Haacke's The Chocolate Master (1982). In seven diptychs combining found images and text and confronting portraits of the boss and pictures of his employees at work, the artist disclosed how the business activities of the German collector in his chocolate conglomerate intersected with his art-collecting activities (e.g., tax avoidance through art donations) and how he treated the workers in his factories. Each item from Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* series is a case study of one specific and situated example of entanglement between capital and art. All items share a similar structure: two (cheap) shiny frames in the middle offer a comparative chronology of the two subjects (persons, companies, or institutions); acrylic plates feature quotes by the people involved; and finally, a selection of loosely related images and objects hang around the central items.

Private View – Special Gift (2019) and Private View – Silent Weapon (2018) respectively focus on the relationship between weapons industrialist Karl Diehl and the Diehl Foundation, and the parallel evolution between TBA21 and ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems through the figure of Francesca Habsburg, tackling how industrial capital is entangled in art investment.

Private View – Modern Members (2021) and Private View – Big Safari (2021), two newly created works in the series, respectively focus on the relationship between the Museum of Modern Art in New York and Larry Fink, CEO of BlackRock, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, also in New York, and Warren Kanders, CEO of Safariland. With these two new works, the artist* draws links between industrial capital and neoliberal economic empires, as well as the opaque structures of European and American arts funding.

The last work in the series, and the first to be seen in the exhibition space, *Private View – Blue Blood* (2021), showcases some results of the artist*'s research about the local history of entanglement between nationalist politics and art business through the relation between billionaire Heidi Goëss-Horten and art manager Agnes Husslein-Arco.

PRIVATE VIEW - BLUE BLOOD, 2021

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

2 prints, framed, each 40×60 cm; 4 prints, acrylic glass, each 30×40 cm; 2 prints, framed, each 21×29 cm; Horten tiles, earrings

The artistic research Private View - Blue Blood (2021) confronts two Viennese figures. Heidi Goëss-Horten is a billionaire, modern and contemporary art collector, and the widow of Helmut Horten, from whom she inherited her entire fortune. Helmut Horten was a German department store tycoon who got rich in the 1930s, buying Jewish businesses at low prices as part of the NS-Aryanization process. Heidi Goëss-Horten showed her private collection some years ago at the Leopold Museum—mainly consisting of artworks by prominent artists, from Marc Chagall to Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, which were stigmatized by the Nazi

regime as entartete Kunst-and is currently planning to open her own private museum in Vienna. Alongside her, the work features Agnes Husslein-Arco, former head of the Sotheby's auction house branch in Austria and Eastern Europe and former head of the Vienna Belvedere, Husslein-Arco-who is well-known for her proximity to (extreme) rightwing politicians, as well as for the court proceedings around her disputed breaches of duty as head of the Belvedere—is a Ionatime friend of Heidi Goëss-Horten, whom she advised in the 1990s. She is also the presumed new director of the Heidi Horten museum to come.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, *Private View – Silent Weapon* (installation view), 2018, photo: Georg Oberlechner

2 prints, framed, each 40 \times 60 cm; 4 prints, acrylic glass, each 30 \times 40 cm; 2 prints, framed, each 29 \times 21 cm; MoMA shop products, engraved acrylic blocks

Artwork descriptions

Larry Fink, a board member of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, is the object of inquiry of Private View - Modern Members. CEO of BlackRock, an American multinational investment management corporation, Larry Fink has also practiced investment consulting for several governments, relentlessly working toward the privatization and transformation of pension systems in investment funds. The artist* draws a parallel between the creation, exhibition politics, and extension of the MoMA and the expansion and diversification of the business activities of Larry Fink. The MoMA was established in 1929 by Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, wife of John D. Rockefeller Jr., in a wave of American institutions (including New York's Whitney Museum of American Art) that owed their creation to wealthy patrons, even if supported by city and federal governments. The creation of such institutions marked a shift from reliance on government funding to reliance on funding from ticket and membership sales, corporate sponsorships, and private donors. As institutions increasingly rely upon private funders, they also begin to accept significant funding from donors who do not align with the interests of artists

or with basic ethics; and so, it has become less clear whether institutions are really for the "public". Alongside the two central chronologies and the heavily neoliberal quotes by Larry Fink, the artist* chose to engrave into thick, heavy plexiglass plates the charts of some shares related to BlackRock-showing their extreme rentability (and volatility). Also, MoMA merchandise, based on the appropriation and repetition ad infinitum of Piet Mondrian's abstract geometric patterns, complete the selection of market products, material and immaterial, funny and dreadful, all financing one of the most famous museums in the world.

PRIVATE VIEW - BIG SAFARI, 2021

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

2 prints, framed, each 40 × 60 cm; 4 prints, acrylic glass, each 30 × 40 cm; 2 reprints, framed, each 21 × 29 cm; green plastic gloves, protection gear

Private View - Big Safari (2021) focuses on Warren Kanders, former vice-chairman of the Whitnev Museum of American Art in New York and CEO of Safariland, a company manufacturing military and police equipment. Warren Kanders stepped down as vice-chairman of the Whitney in 2019 after protests (and an occupation of the Whitney's lobby) over his company's sale of tear gas—tear gas used against protesters after the murders of Freddie Grav in Baltimore. Maryland, and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The protesters focused their attention on the trusteeship of patrons with political positions differing drastically from the institutions they contribute funding to, as well as on the necessity to cede board positions to artists within the communities in which the museum exists. The controversy surrounding Warren Kanders reveals the separation between public interests and the structure of the institution. Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, with her* installation-again, based on the same structure as the other items of the series: comparative chronologies framed in silver, quotes in capital letters on colored paper and underneath a plexiglass plate, anti-riot police protectors fixed on the wallvisualizes it. Founded in 1931 by

sculptor and patron Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, from whom the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York had turned down a proposal to donate American art she had collected in previous years, the Whitney is bound to a foundational nationalistic aspiration and to figures of (right-wing) neoliberalism, to which Warren Kanders perfectly belongs. The Whitney is part of a larger group of art institutions targeted for accepting "dirty money".



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"The Safariland Group, a company with a rich heritage in the law enforcement and sporting markets, encompasses a group of recognized and well-respected brands known for their innovation and quality, Our mission, Together, We Save Lives, is much more than a statement; it is a creed we live by.

Innovation. Performance. Excellence. Legacy. At The Safariland Group we live these values every day. We live them when we empower over two thousand people to design, engineer, research, and deliver our protective equipment products to those that keep us safe. We live them as we continuously seek new innovations to add to the premier group of Safariland product lines that protect law enforcement, military, and security professionals. We live them when we help save lives."

Safariland is founded in Sierra Madre, California, by Neale Perkins. He named his new company after the African safaris he and his father took together.

Over the course of about a decade Warren Kanders acquires 28 defense companies for an undisclosed sum, including Safariland. The defense companies were later named Armor Holdings. Before that Kanders spent four years patching together a chain of 205 eyewear stores, then sold it to Essilor of France for \$228 million.

Kanders joins the board of the Whitney Museum of American Art and has been donating more than \$10 million alongside his wife, Allison.

BAE Systems buys Armor Holdings for \$4.5 billion in cash, paying Armor stockholders \$88 per share. Kanders pocketed at least \$230 million (after taxes) from the Armor Holdings' sale. After the sale, Kanders focuses on growing his outdoors equipment business, Clarus Corporation, in which he had first invested several years earlier.

Kanders and his private investment firm-along with the Safariland management team-buy Safariland back from BAE Systems for \$124 million. The deal made Kanders the majority owner of Safari-

Kanders resigns as board member of the Whitney Museum of American Art after months of protests over his company's sale of tear gas. US Customs and Border Protection purchases tear gas from Safariland. It was used against the protests after the murders of Freddie Gray in Baltimore, and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; against water protectors at Standing Rock in North Dakota; against asylum-seekers, including children, at the US-Mexico border; and against protesters in Gaza.



Innovation, not imitation

"As the preeminent institution devoted to the art of the United States, The Whitney Museum of American Art presents the full range of twentieth-century and contemporary American art, with a special focus on works by living artists. The Whitney is dedicated to collecting, preserving, interpreting, and exhibiting American art, and its collection-arguably the finest holdings of twentieth-century American art in the world—is the Museum's key resource. The Museum's flagship exhibition, the Blennial, is the country's leading survey of the most recent developments in American art.

Innovation has been a hallmark of the Whitney since 1929 its beginnings. It was the first museum dedicated to the work of living American artists and the first New York museum to present a major exhibition of a video artist (Nam June Paik, in 1982). Such important figures as Jasper Johns, Jay DeFeo, Glenn Ligon, Cindy Sherman, and Paul Thek, were given their first comprehensive museum surveys at the Whitney. The Museum has consistently purchased works within the year they were created, often well before the artists who created them became broadly recognized."

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney establishes the Whitney Studio in Greenwich Village, where she presents exhibitions by living American artists whose

work had been disregarded by the traditional academies. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney is the granddaughter of Cornelius Vanderbilt, who left school at age 11, and went on to build a shipping and railroad empire that, during the 19th century, would make him one of the wealthiest men in the world. Vanderbilt, based in New Jersey at the time, flouted the law of monopoly of trade, steaming in and out of the harbor under a flag that read, "New Jersey Must Be Free!" Vanderbilt established an early precedent for America's first laws of interstate commerce.

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney had assembled a collection of more than five hundred pieces. After her offer of this gift to the Metropolitan Museum of Art was declined, she set up her own institution, one with a distinctive mandate: to focus exclusively on the art and artists of the US.

The Whitney Museum of American Art is founded. The museum aims to embrace modernism, shifting away from the notion that American art was largely rural and narrow in scope.

Whitney dies. The Whitney Museum of American Art is cleared of the debt it owed her and granted \$2.5

"EVEN AS WE ARE IDEALISTIC AND MISSIONARY IN OUR BELIEF IN ARTISTS — AS ESTABLISHED BY OUR FOUNDER GERTRUDE VANDERBILT WHITNEY — THE WHITNEY IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A MUSEUM. IT CANNOT RIGHT ALL THE ILLS OF AN UNJUST WORLD, NOR IS THAT ITS ROLE. YET, I CONTEND THAT THE WHITNEY HAS A CRITICAL AND URGENT PART TO PLAY IN MAKING SURE THAT UNHEARD AND UNWANTED VOICES ARE RECOGNIZED."

"AS MEMBERS OF THE WHITNEY COMMUNITY, WE EACH HAVE OUR CRITICAL AND COMPLEMENTARY ROLES: TRUSTEES DO NOT HIRE STAFF, SELECT EXHIBITIONS, ORGANIZE PROGRAMS OR MAKE ACQUISITIONS, AND STAFF DO NOT APPOINT OR REMOVE BOARD MEMBERS. OUR TRULY EXTRAORDINARY ENVIRONMENT, WHICH LENDS SUCH HIGH EXPECTATIONS, IS SOMETHING WE MUST PRESERVE COLLECTIVELY. EVEN AS WE CONTEND WITH OFTEN PROFOUND CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN OUR CULTURE, WE MUST LIVE WITHIN THE LAWS OF SOCIETY AND OBSERVE THE "RULES" OF OUR MUSEUM-MUTUAL RESPECT, FAIRNESS, TOLERANCE AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, A COMMITMENT TO KINDNESS. IT IS SO EASY TO TEAR DOWN BUT SO MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO BUILD AND SUSTAIN."

"SAFARILAND'S ROLE AS A MANUFACTURER IS TO ENSURE THE PRODUCTS WORK, AS EXPECTED, WHEN NEEDED. SAFARI-LAND'S ROLE IS NOT TO DETERMINE WHEN AND HOW THEY ARE EMPLOYED. THE STAFF LETTER IMPLIES THAT I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECISION TO USE THESE PRODUCTS. I AM NOT. THAT IS NOT AN ABDICATION OF RESPONSIBILITY, IT IS AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REALITY. WE SELL PRODUCTS TO GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, DOMESTICALLY AND INTER-NATIONALLY, ALL OF WHICH MUST BE CERTIFIED TO PUR-CHASE AND USE THESE PRODUCTS, DOMESTIC BUYERS MUST BE BONA FIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES. IN THE CASE OF INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS, WE ARE REQUIRED TO OBTAIN EXPORT LICENSES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE FOR EVERY SHIPMENT. IN OTHER WORDS, OUR BUSINESS IS HIGHLY REGULATED TO ENSURE THAT OUR PRODUCTS ARE ONLY SOLD TO GOVERNMENT-APPROVED USERS."

"I AM PROUD THAT WE HAVE BROADENED THE WHITNEY'S ROLE AS THE PREEMINENT INSTITUTION DEVOTED TO THE ART OF THE UNITED STATES. WHILE MY COMPANY AND THE MUSEUM HAVE DISTINCT MISSIONS, BOTH ARE IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS TO OUR SOCIETY. THIS IS WHY I BELIEVE THAT THE POLITICIZATION OF EVERY ASPECT OF PUBLIC LIFE, INCLUDING COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, IS NOT PRODUCTIVE OR HEALTHY."

PRIVATE VIEW - SPECIAL GIFT, 2019

2 prints, framed, each 40×60 cm; 1 print, framed, 40×57 cm; 4 prints, acrylic glass, each 30×40 cm; found images, framed, each 21×29 cm; wall clock, angle meter, 2 coins

Private View - Special Gift (2019) focuses on Karl Diehl and the Diehl Foundation. The weapons producer was a collector of Albrecht Dürer's etchings. After Diehl's death, his collection, worth several million, was given to the city of Nuremberg as a present. The history of the company, especially its involvement in World War II as a German Nazi weapons manufacturer, is juxtaposed with the history of the original art gifts given to the collections in Nuremberg. The Diehl Foundation was founded in 1902 and has remained a patriarchal family business until today. The company started to produce watches and calculating machines in the postwar period, thus infiltrating private

households while simultaneously investing in new military technology, especially ammunition and aircraft defense. Because they delivered weapons directly to the German state, the Diehl Foundation has been in close contact with politicians such as Franz Josef Strauss. The installation also consists of quotes from a report about the company's tax fraud in which the Bayarian state was involved. Artifacts such as a commemoration coin of Karl Diehl, a Diehl wall clock, and a found image of a calculating machine are placed next to a copy of Albrecht Dürer's Draughtsman Making a Perspective Drawing of a Reclining Woman.

PRIVATE VIEW - SILENT WEAPON, 2018

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

2 prints, framed, each 40 × 60 cm; 4 prints, acrylic glass, each 30 × 40 cm; found images, framed, each 21 × 29 cm; book page, plastic submarine, straws

Private View - Silent Weapon (2018) recounts and juxtaposes the rise of contemporary art foundation and art collection TBA21 (Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary) with the simultaneous production of submarines by the German company ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems. The foundation emerged in 2002 and is a financial side project of a holding owned by Francesca Habsburg (born Thyssen-Bornemisza), who inherited the fortune built up by the Thyssen family through Thyssen AG, the parent company of Thyssen-Krupp Marine Systems. Full financial transparency about the holding or the foundation is not available to the general public, but traces of the opaque financial channels between TBA21 and ThyssenKrupp suggest a deep entanglement of war, wealth, and contemporarv art. Private View - Silent Weapon decodes the signs of this entanglement: the foundation's institutional collaborations are confronted with business data about the Type 214 Submarine, built by ThyssenKrupp and sold to Turkey, Greece, Portugal, and South Korea. Advertising slogans promoting the undetectability of the submarine accompany a list of exhibitions organized by ThyssenKrupp at international

military expos. Quotes from Francesca Habsburg about the newly established Ocean Space in Venice, as well as the foundation's engagement in climate issues, are also part of the installation, along with two found images from a home interior magazine, in which Habsburg presents works from her art collection. Crucially, the installation includes the first page of Elfriede Jelinek's play Rechnitz (Der Würgeengel) [Rechnitz (The Exterminating Angel)]. The play is based on the massacre of Jewish forced laborers in the Rechnitz Castle, in which Margit von Batthyány (born Thyssen-Bornemisza), the aunt of Francesca Habsburg, took part.

NON-ALIGNED RELATIVES, 2016-2021 Work series

"Non-aligned" refers simultaneously to the political Non-Aligned Movement and to a political and cultural refusal to align to normative models and behaviors. Founded in 1961 at the Belgrade Conference in the spirit and continuity of the Bandung Conference of 1955, the Non-Aligned Movement brought together countries that did not wish to partake in the East-West confrontation but, on the contrary, wanted to promote the effective independence of countries in the Global South within the framework of decolonization. Twenty-five countries from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East participated in the movement's creation, along with Yugoslavia. As of 2016, there are 120 member countries, and while the group's political influence declined after the end of the Cold War, it continues to play an important role by, for example, rejecting the standard measures for resolving public debt advocated by the Washington Consensus. New movements that have emerged in the wake of the anti-globalization movement are taking inspiration from the Non-Aligned Movement's principles and the struggles it embodies, as they continue to advocate for a form of globalization that pays greater consideration to the interests of Global South countries.

In the series Non-aligned Relatives Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* questions the legacy of cultural politics of non-aligned countries, however not in a historical manner but rather to extend the notion of non-alignment to the politics of collections and collecting as a practice. What kind of artistic practice can arise from non-alignment if non-alignment is understood as a questioning of property relations, ownership, and inheritance? What kind of kinship formations arise out of non-alignment if non-alignment also means disentangling the heteronormative family from its constitutive rights to private property?

NON-ALIGNED RELATIVES, 2021

Video installation, color and sound, 16:9

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

Non-aligned Relatives is a new version of a performance by the artist*, shot in the actual exhibition space during setup, with the same props but in a slightly different setting. Appropriating stories, reenacting scenes, reproducing images, and reconfiguring objects from collective and personal memories, the artist* performs sequences where she* embodies the personae of her* queer family album, her* chosen non-aligned relatives, and activates her* collection of chosen avant-garde artists. Through her* manipulation of symbolic objects and through the songs

and poems that she* meticulously chants, she* pays extreme attention to the materiality and the physicality of the processes of remembering, of assembling, and of collecting. It is through materiality and embodiment that she* reassembles memories of the family and that she* establishes connections between her* imagined relatives and historical artists across space and time. In doing so, she* creates a lively archive of queer familiarity, a collection beyond heteronormativity and linearity, asking, finally, what constitutes a familial assemblage beyond reproduction.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, *Non-aligned Relatives* (performance documentation), 2019, exhibition *Queer Stories*, curated by Christiane Erharter, tranzit.sk, Bratislava, 2018. Photo: Judith Stehlik

SIMULTANEOUS CONTRAST, 2018

Various textiles, 160 × 220 cm

Simultaneous Contrast is a fragile textile patchwork piece sewn by hand by the artist* herself* from recuperated garment linings (made out of silk, velvet, or chiffon) and hung on the wall. The textiles, originally sewn inside clothes to soften their touch or to structure their shape, are delicately brought together as a blanket that presents itself as a painting, merging abstraction and applied arts. The pattern, the colors, and the title evoke the work of Ukranian French painter and fashion designer Sonia Delaunay (1885-1979), a representative of geometric abstraction and a key figure of the European avant-garde. Her approach was based on the notion of

"simultaneity", understanding colors as having independent lives acquired when liberated from subject matter or combined with other colors and inventing spaces where form, color, and rhythm communicate. Sonia Delaunay explored the possibilities of simultaneous contrast in a range of media, from painting, to costumes and fashion design, to bookbinding, domestic objects, and posters, creating a work that was simultaneously aesthetically engaging and philosophically utopian. Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* pays tribute to this major female artist and at the same time interrogates the place of women artists in the dominant narratives of the Western avant-garde.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, Non-aligned Relatives (performance documentation), 2019, exhibition Queer Stories. Photo: Judith Stehlik

THE QUEER FAMILY ALBUM - NON-ALIGNED RELATIVES, 2018

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

C-print and silver gelatin prints in 2 boxes, each 29.7 × 21 cm

Two black rectangular frames lined with black mats. Arranged in the middle, three pictures in each frame. This is the formal structure of The Queer Family Album (2018), an ongoing photographic series that brings together portraits from various contexts and puts them in a queer and deliberately chosen familial relation. The work emphasizes kinship over genealogy, multipolar families over a heterosexual-couple nucleus, and self-determination over filiation. The Queer Family Album -Non-aligned Relatives roots Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s practice in a queer and politically engaged artistic tradition, one critical of all hegemonic models forged by the West and expanded throughout the world, whether they be social, cultural, or economic.

The first image one might identify is the iconic portrait of the Afghan refugee girl, Sharbat Gula, who made the cover of National Geographic in 1985, and then the cover of Deborah Ellis's best-seller book, The Breadwinner (2000). The other images are portraits of people performing diverse forms of gender identity: a bacha posh (a young Afghan woman who lives as a boy, mainly to escape patriarchal oppression) and Swiss writer Annemarie Schwarzenbach, who passed as a man

during a drive from Geneva to Kabul in 1939. On the far-left side of the diptych is a portrait of the artist*'s grandmother, in her house in Southern Serbia, which she built herself in the 1960s. Born in 1927, she survived World War II and the wars in the 1990s, experiencing various political systems, from a monarchy to socialism, as well as the governments of the first and second Yugoslavia. Mixing familial lineage and chosen kinship, merging individual psyches and collective memories, and interlinking inherited structures and tactics of flight. Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* makes inquiries into her* own self, as both a product of, and a person in constant resistance to, heteropatriarchal regimes. Additionally, conceiving of all the pictured people as her* "non-aligned relatives" is a way to reactivate cultural proximities and historical attachments that were born as part of a utopian vision for an alternative geopolitical scenario for the world (albeit one that failed in the face of the hegemonic force of international capitalism) and to refuse the mystification of a Western-conceived, monolithic Europe.



DISAVOWALS OR CANCELLED CONFESSIONS, 2016 5 frames with silver gelatin prints on Baryta paper, each 60 × 40 cm

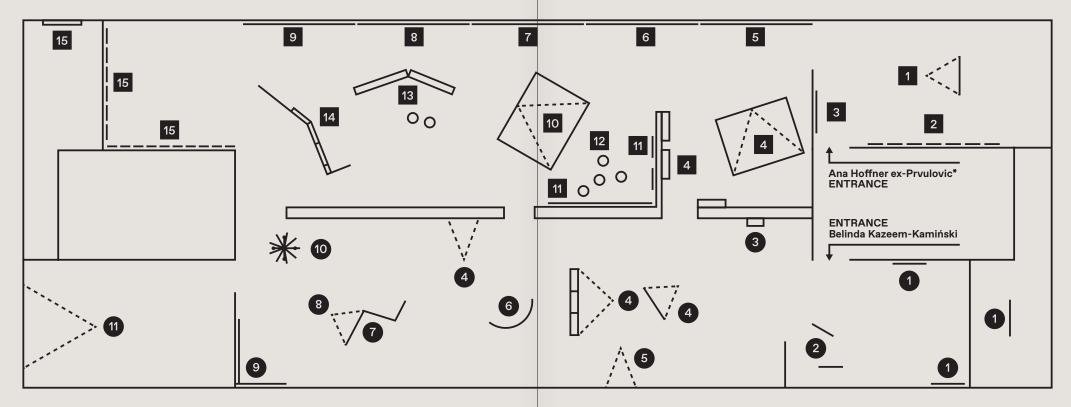
Disavowals or Cancelled Confessions (original title Aveux non avenus, 1930) is the English translation of a book by artist, poet, performer, photographer, and resistance fighter Claude Cahun (1894-1954, born Lucy Schwob). The book is an antirealist autobiography, a sort of antimémoire consisting of a collection of poems, aphoristic philosophical fragments, and recollected dreams. It is illustrated with Surrealist photomontages—self-portraits, bodily displacements and rearrangements, object assemblages-made by Claude Cahun (often together with her lifelong partner and collaborator Marcel Moore, born Suzanne Malherbe). In the pictures, as in the texts. Claude Cahun tackles common representations of identity, gender, and subjectivity and presents the self as an accumulation of selves or as a shifting set of social relations to be played with. "Shuffle the cards. Masculine? Feminine? It depends on the situation. Neuter is the only gender that suits me." The five items of Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s series. bearing the same title as Claude Cahun's book, recreate with two models some of the most famous photographic portraits of/by Claude Cahun, where gender appears as contingent and mutable and where playfulness, irony, and camp merge. An homage to Claude Cahun, one of the

members of the artist*'s chosen family who inspired her* personally and politically -Claude Cahun's continuous radical leftist political commitment, which ended in her imprisonment in 1944, always had an explicitly feminist queer subtext—Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s Disavowals or Cancelled Confessions (2016) also brings up another layer, through the omnipresent figure of the double: duality and ambivalence. In the genius force deployed to resist any aesthetic, social, or moral assignations. Claude Cahun-for whom the figure of the double, through the mirror, the splitting of the body, and the repetition in time were crucial—forgot her own double, Marcel Moore, Never having been credited as co-author, even though Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore both created major parts of Claude Cahun's Surrealist self-portraits, Marcel Moore remained unremembered, Claude Cahun's forgotten double.





Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, *Disavowals or Cancelled Confessions* (details), 2016, photo: WEST. Fotostudio



Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński (Further information on these works: see exhibition guide "Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński")

- In Search of Red, Black, and Green, 2021
- To let them know what we think about them, 2021
- 3 Schebestas Schatten, 2017/2021
- 4 Fleshbacks, 2021
- 5 The Letter, 2019
- 6 In Remembrance to the Man Who Became Etched into History as "Der Aschanti an der Akademie", 2021

- In Remembrance to the Man Who Became Known as Angelo Soliman, (Ante Mortem) I & (Post Mortem) II, 2015
- 8 You are awaited, but never as equals, 2021
- 9 Ashantee, edited & annotated, 2021
- Strike a Pose, 2017–2021 & In Remembrance to Ella Williams, 2021
- 11 Unearthing. In Conversation, 2017

Outside the exhibition space:

Ashantee, edited, 2017–2021 (Kunsthalle Wien Shop)

Yaarborley Domeïs Brief, 2021 (in the newspaper *Der Standard*)

- Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*
- 1 After the Transformation, 2013, pp. 6-7
- Future Anterior Illustrations of War, 2013, pp. 8–9
- Fifty-One Pieces
 Believing in Art, 2016,
 p. 10
- Freud Film, 2017/2021, pp. 12-13
- Private View
 Blue Blood, 2021,
 p. 15
- Private View
 Modern Members,
 2021, p. 16

- 7 Private View Big Safari, 2021, pp. 17–21
- 8 Private View Special Gift, 2019, p. 22
- 9 Private View Silent Weapon, 2018, p. 23
- Non-aligned Relatives, 2021, p. 25
- 11 (from left to right)
 Simultaneous Contrast,
 2018, p. 26
 The Queer Family Album,
 2018, pp. 27–29
 Disavowals or Cancelled
 Confessions, 2016,
 pp. 30–31
 Double Still Lives, 2016,
 pp. 34–35

- 12 Speech Objects #1, #2, #3, and #4, 2018-2021, pp. 34-35
- 13 Духовна Деколонизација (Spiritual Decolonization) – Part I, 2021, p. 36
- 14 The Bacha Posh Project, 2016/2021, pp. 37-43
- Active Intolerance
 Part II, 2021, pp. 44-47

Outside the exhibition space:

Active Intolerance – Part I, 2021, pp. 44–45 (Museumsquartier, entrance Halle E+G) 3 frames with silver gelatin prints on Baryta paper, each 50 × 40 cm

SPEECH OBJECT #1, 2018

Feathers, pen nibs, branches, dimensions variable

SPEECH OBJECT #2, 2018

Bell jars, reception bells, dimensions variable

SPEECH OBJECT #3, 2018

Magnifying lens, convex mirror, wire, dimensions variable

SPEECH OBJECT #4, 2021

2 urinals, dimensions variable

In Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s work, the double is omnipresent. A crucial figure in the psychoanalytical and artistic exploration of the unconscious in avantgarde movements like Surrealism and Dada, the double questions not only the split between conscious and unconscious but also the relationship between being and speech, between being and thought, between projection and recognition and also between creation and recreation. And so, in the three frames of Double Still Lives (2016), as well as in the four Speech Objects (2018/2021), the double is the central figure on a compositional and symbolic level. The black-and-white Double Still Lives series subtly evokes the aesthetics of avant-garde object photography and plays with repetition, variation, indexation, and scale. The Speech Objects function on similar binary composition. They subtly quote, again, some assemblages by Claude Cahun but also by other avant-garde

artists like Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, who made the first readymade, which was wrongly assigned to Marcel Duchamp. Speech Object #2 is composed of six bell jars covering six silver reception bells and plays with homonymies. So does Speech Object #1, with its pen nibs attached to branches anchored or planted in little feather hills. But the wordplay works only in German (Daunenfedern and Schreibfedern). Speech Object #3, made of two convex objects—one round mirror and one magnifying lens—questions the relationship between reflection and absorption. Speech Objects decline some figures or avatars of the double (complementary double, dialectical double, bipolar double . . .) to fuel questions about alterity and identity, language and performativity. Finally, Speech Object #4 consists of two pissoirs.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, *Double Still Lives* (detail), 2016, photo: WEST. Fotostudio.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, Speech Object #2 (installation view), 2018, photo: WEST. Fotostudio

Духовна Деколонизација (Spiritual Decolonization) -Part I (2021) is an homage to the few women from Yugoslavia who took part in the non-aligned exhibitions and, at the same time, a more general reflection on the position of women artists in utopian artistic or political movements of the twentieth century. In the non-aligned movement, culture and art played a great role, as the acknowledgment of cultural equality, the struggle against cultural imperialism, and the claim of a cultural heritage different from the classic Western modernity were strong principles from the beginning. Still, the invisibility of women artists in the archive shows how gender equality was still looked down on, albeit the importance of women in the independence struggles was encouraged by the non-aligned movement.

Only seven women from Yugoslavia took part in the exhibitions of the non-aligned organized during the whole period of activity of the movement. The drawings of Духовна Деколонизација (Spiritual Decolonization) – Part I are made after the works of three of them: Ankica Oprešnik (1919–2005), Zdenka Golob (1928–2019), and Tinca Stegovec (1927–2019). The artist*

found archival material depicting the works and made copies in her* studio, without trying to reproduce, exactly, the original technique, style, or format but rather putting herself* in the situation of exercising or of learning from another tradition than the one she* had been learning in and from in her* own art education. In doing so, she* questions the dominant Western art system (including the art education system) and its ignorance toward histories and practices that decenter or even bypass Western-centric art history. Also, she* pays homage to women artists, who, in art histories, have been marginalized or considered unimportant within the contemporary art world. The hanging sculptures, made of wire and wool thread, at once delicate and fuzzy, are produced from recuperated material-industrially produced, but linked to domestic work, to reparation. or to maintenance, like wire or rubber rings. Approximately reenacting modernist shapes and cultivating a DIY trashy aspect, they float between assignations and genres.

THE BACHA POSH PROJECT, 2016/2021

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

12 prints on archival boxes, each $20.4 \times 25.4 \times 3$ cm; 2 canvases, each 100×180 cm, with green-screen fabric; 2 translucent glass plates with photographs, each 60×40 cm; glass plates; dimensions variable

"Bacha posh" is the English transliteration of a Dari term referring to a cultural practice in Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan whereby some families that have no sons pick a daughter to live and behave as a boy-thus enabling the child to attend school, to walk alone in public, and to generally live more freely. The custom has been documented for at least a century, but is likely much older than that and is still practiced today. The Bacha Posh Project (2016/2021) arises out of Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s investigation into different forms of queerness, in different times, in different spaces, and with different social functions attached to them. With this work-anchored in a space between history and the present, fiction and investigation—the artist* proposes a rethinking of the present-day status of queerness from the perspective of social survival, expanded potential, and cultural proximities beyond geopolitical separations.

The following "Bacha Texts" are experiments of such writings of history and fiction, written by the artist* herself*.

BACHA TEXTS

Recently, the Austrian government passed a law that punishes those who wear the burka in public space. The covered, uncovered, or discovered body is used to draw a line between public acceptance and public disappearance. This is done by transforming every piece of cloth into a potential sign of queer life: the burka turns into forbidden drag, allowing the state to distinguish seamlessly between terror and liberation, attack and demonstration, public viewing and public punishment.

However, interest in drag as a form of resistance has expanded, since the global politics of war are asking for more innovative, more extraordinary tactics of resistance, too. These tactics suggest that, if drag has established itself as a way of camouflaging (indeed, a very warlike practice) and passing (indeed, a very smart way to throw someone off the scent), why could it not serve to play a trick on ISIS or the Taliban? Giving central attention to drag, as well as other forms of queerness, in the vocabularies of resistance has rendered many gender-variant practices visible, by giving recognition to what was formerly dismissed as the disguising of individuals in segregated societies. The neo-orientalism that has established itself since 9/11 relies heavily on the image of a gender warrior who can defeat authoritarian regimes through their own means-by turning their symbols against them. One of these is the figure of "bacha posh" which means "dressed like a boy" in Dari. The term is used to describe girls who grow up as boys in Afghanistan. A traditional cultural practice has made its way into the channels of mainstream information distribution-more than anything else, bacha posh has turned into a phenomenon through an increasing body of reports, documentaries, and images. But what is the actual history of bacha posh, and how does it relate to its contemporary interpretations?

BAMIYAN OIL PAINTING

Two giant Buddha statues stood in the Afghan province of Bamiyan until recently. They were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001. The demolition of the statues also opened up two holes in the mountains that had sheltered them since the sixth century, reminding painfully of the statue's absence. It

is exactly in these holes, these newly created caves that the first oil paintings of the world have been found. They prove that painting with oil was practiced in Afghanistan long before the first oil paintings emerged in Europe in the fifteenth century.

In The Bacha Posh Project (2016/2021), I'm trying to arrange, organize and present the photographic and performative archive of the Afghan Surrealist artist Aziza Mehran Ahmad. Ahmad has remained a little-known artist of the Afghan avant-garde in Europe until today—just like the oil paintings waiting behind the Bamiyan statues for their historical recognition for centuries. Ahmad worked about the surrealist artist Claude Cahun in the 1960s, long before she became popular in Europe in the 1990s. Ahmad also worked about Sonia Delaunay and Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. She restaged some of Cahun's photographs, remade Delaunay's baby blanket, and doubled Freytag-Loringhoven's urinal—which was stolen by Duchamp and wrongly assigned to him as the first readymade. While for the colonial West this seems to be all about forceful reversals, from the perspective of countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, the preservation of Surrealist art practice was a vital element of cultural policy. Establishing decolonial archives meant uniting anti-fascist voices and giving them a special status within the emerging art world of the Non-Aligned. It is only by chance that Surrealist practices were developed in Afghanistan—that is, it could have happened in any other Non-Aligned country. As rich collections of artworks from the 1960s show, efforts to fight imperialism were put into artistic practice, not just into new economic relations.

The Bacha Posh Project is a photographic and performative archive on drag in times of war. It is evolving from the construction of the Surrealist artist Aziza Mehran Ahmad and her work. Ahmad's long-term research on bacha posh (girls who grow up as boys) appears through portraits, still lifes, documents, comments, and shiny surfaces. The Bacha Posh archive sheds light on Ahmad's life and work as one of the main figures of early modern drag.

In *The Bacha Posh Project* I'm trying to organize, categorize and arrange the work of Aziza Mehran Ahmad, who grew up as a bacha posh and documented a community of what today we would call genderqueer people in Afghanistan

before the Soviet invasion in 1979. Ahmad's artistic work sheds light on a main figure of early modern drag, and through this forces us to think about drag and war through a dimension that has been overlooked until today—that of the historical avant-garde.

Where does Ahmad's archive come from? It is almost impossible to travel to Afghanistan. While writing this text, I am listening to news about a bomb attack in Kabul, which caused more than 60 deaths. Activists are warning that Afghanistan is not a safe country, but still deportations of Afghan people are taking place, and many of those being deported are queer people. Instead of conducting research from the country itself, I have to rely on bits and pieces of information, some of which come through friends and colleagues who have made their way to Europe, and others that reach me through social media. It is thus difficult to say anything reliable about the work of Ahmad, as his photographs appear only as negatives, carried from one country to another for many years.

FAMILY ALBUM

When I constructed Aziza, I felt the need for disguise. This need was twofold. First, I wanted to hide that I had an interest in bacha posh, as I understood from the first moment that these girls reminded me of something deeply buried in the history of the Balkans—a region I didn't want to deal with again. I was fed up with my own Eastern European history, I wanted to hide it. For that, I had to pretend that nothing I saw in Afghanistan was familiar to me, although this has never been the case. In fact, this region of war felt so close to me that I couldn't deal with the proximity. Unveiling my Eastern background would just bring me closer to another East ... "And what if there is nothing to say about it? What if my feeling of closeness is just an empty signifier, a loose memory without origins, one that could refer to anything?" I was convinced that there can never be a relation between one East and another East, that I had to invent an Afghan boygirl to speak instead of me, while in fact it was me speaking, moving back and forth on the shifting line of legitimized speech reserved for those outside the Western canon. It was a recovery of a past that I was not allowed to have: a past of the Non-Aligned countries, their relationships and art practices. Aziza was born in Yugoslavia with me, she was born before me to take part in the first Non-Aligned exhibitions, she has always already been there. She didn't arrive with the Afghan refugees in Belgrade in 2015. She is the outcome of a history that we both were taken away from. It might be that I don't need to speak of Aziza anymore, but how could I stop mentioning her name? It seems like making her disappear would mean destroying a queer person once again, destroying a part of myself. I can't do that.

mother, she was born in 1927, and when she died last year, she was almost 90. She lived in the first and the second Yugoslavia. She survived World War II and the wars in the 1990s, she went through three different political systems: the kingdom, socialism, and capitalism. In this picture, she is in her house in Southern Serbia, she built it in the 1960s by herself. While trying to understand what Aziza was doing, I thought of my grandmother's stories about her sister from Macedonia, who was a sworn virgin. She lived as a man and attracted a lot of attention from Westerners who couldn't believe that there is anything other than a binary gender system in a society that for them was only traditional. But what could I say about the sworn virgins to those Westerners? I have the same longing for a kinship with nonbinary gender, the sworn virgin attracts me as much as the Afghan bacha posh. I like to think of them as my Non-Aligned relatives, as a late outcome of the Non-Aligned Movement of the 1960s, in which countries like Yugoslavia and Afghanistan were close to each other. Isn't this a sweet little boygirl next to my grandmother? Isn't Annemarie Schwarzenbach really well dressed in this image, which was taken when she drove to Kabul in 1939? And Claude Cahun, who took her name from her uncle, who was a French Orientalist? Aziza loved Cahun, like everyone does, I believe.

This is my grand-

3

Double Still Lives

"Little is known about the still lives of Aziza Mehran Ahmad. They include collections of plants, puppets and textiles that might have been gathered from her travels, bought in Paris or came as gifts from his friends. They possibly were made out of memories of forgotten places, producing shadows that render the quest for their origin as obsolete as it would be to try and define the identity of their maker."

Documents, Comments

On her journey, Aziza Mehran Ahmad had her first encounter with writing on bacha posh. He produced more than 836 pages consisting of selected excerpts from books written around the time of his arrival in Kabul. His comments show his ambivalent relationship with interpretations of gender structures in Afghanistan. While some of the comments reveal frustration about rejections by Western travelers, others remain speechless. I have tried to assemble those comments with selected pages from Jenny Nordberg's The Underground Girls of Kabul: In Search of a Hidden Resistance in Afghanistan, a contemporary travel guide and instruction manual on how to discover the bacha posh.

Aziza Mehran Ahmad once had contact with soldiers from the future in a dream. They told him that they would write down some messages about their experiences of the war from the barracks of Afghanistan. Ahmad put those messages on the back sides of shiny surfaces all over European cities. They can be found behind almost every mirror still today.

"Smile. "

"IED. Buca."
"We the unwilling
Led by the unknowing
All doing the impossible
For the ungrateful"

"Ah-yah hah-goy toe-pock leh-ree?"
"Do they have guns?"
"Deh-hah-goy hah-daff tseh-dah?"

"Where are they hiding?"

Aziza was born 1942 into an Afghan working-class family, as the eldest of five children. She spent her childhood being the representative son for her family, under the name Mehran, among her four sisters. This experience shaped her whole life: she refused to get married and became a student of archaeology in Kabul. Her interest in politics led her to join the official delegation for the first summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 in Belgrade. After the conference, Aziza spent several years traveling throughout Europe. She lived in London and Paris before returning to Kabul in 1979, unfortunately only a few months before the Soviet invasion made it impossible to leave the country. As a feminist, artist, and activist, Aziza fought against the Taliban and US occupation, mostly by supporting queer people in underground networks. She left Kabul in 2015 at the age of 73; she was last seen in a Belgrade squat and has since disappeared.

[&]quot;They'll stop missing sooner or later."

[&]quot;I'm all by myself, but not alone!!!"

[&]quot;This is who we are, this is what we do."

[&]quot;When you'r pushed, killing is as easy as breathing,"

ACTIVE INTOLERANCE, 2021

Two-part installation

PART I

9 brass plates, each 90 × 60 cm, dimensions variable (outside exhibition space, located in Museumsquartier at the entrance to Hall E+G)

PART II

6 AO posters, each 118.2 × 168 cm; 10 Fine Art prints on Hahnemühle paper; video, color, 16:9, 11 min 50 sec

In Active Intolerance (2021). Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s research tackles diverse forms of exploitation of (cheap) labor in enclosed environments, namely the factory and the prison, and uncovers the regime of invisibility that workers and prisoners are subjected to. This issue is related to the artist*'s overall investigation of the Western capitalist and imperialist political project and its relentless construction of, on the one hand, working, consuming, complying, and reproducing bodies and, on the other, of "Others", both without and within (national) societies, who are to be exploited and "brought into line".

The second part of the work, Active Intolerance – Part II, is made up of three components. A series of six posters feature, in blue text on a red background, sentences selected from the manifesto of the Prisons Information Group, such as: "Let what is intolerable—imposed, as it is, by force and by silence—cease to be accepted" and "Let us become people intolerant of prisons, the legal system, the hospital system, psychiatric

practice, military service, etc." Established in 1970 by philosopher Michel Foucault in collaboration with writer Jean-Marie Domenach and historian Pierre Vidal-Naguet (and later on joined by fellow intellectuals Gilles Deleuze, Jean Genet, and Jean-Paul Sartre), the Prisons Information Group aimed to disseminate information about the conditions of French prisons in order to trigger a public response against the intolerable conditions in which prisoners were forced to live (and work) and, ultimately, calling for change. The group undertook intensive field research by interviewing prisoners, their wives, and prisons guards, and they then distributed the information they had gathered via samizdat pamphlets.

Alongside the six posters, a photographic series by Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* documents the abandoned state of factories and institutions in her* hometown of Paraćin, Serbia. The overexposed edges appearing on some pictures and characteristic of analog technique, as well as the play

with superimpositions, transparencies, and reflections, and the intense printed colors, prevent the series from falling into pure nostalgia. Once a dynamic socialist city with its four factories (for glass, textile, sugar, and cement production) and its social and cultural institutions. Paraćin now has only one remaining factory. The surviving factory, the cement one, cooperates with Strabag—an Austrian construction company massively investing in Southeast Europe and exploiting its local labor force through prison labor. This is the link to the last part of the work, a video without sound, which merges two types of imagery. One layer shows contemporary corporate sequences by Strabag, from general communications to a specific advertisement for one of its development/gentrification projects, Belgrade Waterfront. This imagery is interlaced with muted video clips of EKV (for Ekatarina Velika, Catherine the Great), a famous alternative punk rock band from Belgrade. By interweaving these images, the artist* shows the discrepancy between the socialist model of self-organized (art) production and neoliberal, imperialist forms of production. Finally, a line of text that runs at the bottom of the screen throughout the video features a translated and slightly shortened version of an investigative article on the illegal and inhumane use of prison workers on highway

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

construction sites, among other illegal entanglements. Active Intolerance - Part I is displayed outside the exhibition space, at the entrance to Halle E+G in Museumsquartier. The installation deals more specifically with the local situation of prison workers in Austria, Many everyday products are made by inmates, who receive low wages and have no possibility to organize in trade unions. As such, they remain unbearably invisible. Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* tackles this invisibility by disclosing the full list of Austrian companies using prison labor, as revealed in a 2018 document published by the Ministry of Justice. Just months later, the list was withdrawn from the ministry's website. An outdoor installation consisting of nine printed brass plates placed at the entrance to Kunsthalle Wien, the work can be seen as an (anti-)monument, in negative, reminding viewers of the silenced and extensive use of prison labor.

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* in Conversation with Anne **Faucheret**

Interview

TRANSFORMATION AND INTERRUPTION

Your exhibition opens on a black-cube space with three artworks on display. They provide insight into the topics that span the rest of the show. After the Transformation (2013) is a video in which you investigate, in a voice-training session, the potentiality of voice beyond binary assignations. Besides, you interlace this personal (albeit fragmentary) narrative with the historical process of transition in Eastern Europe in the 1990s. Future Anterior - Illustrations of War (2013) is about the continuity of gendered violence, represented or performed, in times of war and peace. Fifty-One Pieces – Believing in Art (2016) is a minimalist monument in remembrance of the disappearance of 51 artworks from the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Yugoslav Wars, and hence a statement against cultural amnesia but also a call for institutional responsibility toward history. How do you articulate these three stances, and how are they made graspable through other artworks in the show?

> After the Transformation was the first work I did in 2013, when I started to explore queerness as a signifier of memory. Since I was taking testosterone for about a year, I have a deeper, more masculine voice, which gives the impression to some that I grew up as a boy. The voice refers to a past that, from the perspective of gender development norms, I haven't necessarily experienced in that way. But this reference is also not simply wrong. It is more about the fact that I can claim a history of masculinity that, in the eyes of heteronormativity, does not get any recognition. This is a typical problem for



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, After the Transformation (video still), 2013

queer people, who are constantly accused of erasing history and not acting according to the assigned logic of gender. The claim on history without direct referentiality—in fact, without a recognized bodily experience—made me think further about how queerness can indeed be a tool to have a different take on history and memory. I got interested in concepts that claim memory without direct experience, memories that are transferred otherwise or even created otherwise. Through Future Anterior - Illustrations of War. I then explored how a specific temporality (the "future anterior" tense) can help to shift notions of true and false history. And Fifty-One Pieces was made when I started extending, or one could even say applying, the queerness of memory to institutions that seem to preserve, but in fact govern, memory. This work is a lot about the politics of collections and collecting as a practice, which then returns in other works in the exhibition.

TRAUMA—AS REARTICULATION OF SUPPRESSED **NARRATIVES**

In your work, you reconsider the way in which history is written, alongside the fragmented narratives of traumatic experiences.

What does a traumatic experience narrate beyond the post-trauma pathology, beyond the individual psyche? Can you elaborate on how you thematize in your work the productive effect of trauma in questioning the normalized and naturalized histories of a society?

Interview

Trauma as a popular discourse is incredibly boring. Everybody speaks of it, everybody is sooner or later traumatized by something, and then takes this as a legitimizing ground to claim anything whatsoever. What is indeed interesting is the historical development of trauma. The concept of "trauma" emerged in Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer's work on hysteria as a result of the influence of Jean-Martin Charcot and his research on neuropathology at the Salpêtrière clinic in Paris. Freud and Breuer regarded the symptoms of hysteria to be a result of traumata. One can say that much of Freud's later work was influenced by his thinking about trauma in terms of gender division. While female hysteria was understood as being about repressed fantasies, male war neurosis was considered to be about repressed memories. There is a crucial gap between fantasy and memory that was always gendered, and this gap is what I am trying to grasp through the notion of queerness. It is about reattaching "trauma" to a bodily experience (that of gueer people but not exclusively), but in fact also about changing the understanding of experience itself. It is to me a consequent next step in articulating trauma through a disentanglement of origin and effect, and the crucial category of belatedness.

HISTORY AND POST-MEMORY

With the term "post-memory", literary scholar Marianne Hirsch describes the relationship that the "generations after" have to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before, whereby they bear experiences they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences are transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Post-memory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. In your work, you decidedly interlace memory and fantasy, in order to open up a space for forgotten historical connections, unseen cultural links, and also to decode amnesia and the repressed. Can you give us some examples and tell us why it is

so important to trigger fantasy and fiction to reinvent memory culture (Erinnerungskultur)?

There are two series in the exhibition that are highly connected and difficult to show, which highlights the problem you describe: Non-aligned Relatives (2016-2021) and The Bacha Posh Project (2016/2021). For The Bacha Posh Project, I was trying to create a fictional persona; I named her Aziza Mehran Ahmad and decided that she was a Surrealist artist from Afghanistan, with a migration history to Europe, and a genderqueer. Only because of Aziza's existence was I able to recreate a collection of works by Claude Cahun, Sonia Delaunay, and Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, which I then attributed to Aziza. Creating this collection was a way to create kinship where I myself wished to have found it. The collection speaks more about my longing for a past of politically engaged queer figures to whom I could belong than of existent relations. Since I don't have such a history, I had to find ways to fabricate it. The Bacha Posh Project is an exploration of framing and naming, and that's why it consists almost only of display elements, whereas Non-aligned Relatives hovers in the space between physical work (photographs, sculptures, etc.) and its representational navigation through a performance video. But, in fact, these two belong together.

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, Non-aligned Relatives (performance documentation), 2019, exhibition Queer Stories. Photo: Judith Stehlik



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

NON-ALIGNMENT AND QUEERNESS

Non-alignment as a geopolitical reality (or, rather, utopia) and as a concept—a political and cultural refusal to align to certain normative models and behaviors—recurs often in your work. Non-aligned Relatives is a work constellation in which you investigate diverse aspects of non-alignment, on political, cultural, and psychological levels. Can you speak about the relation you weave between non-alignment and queerness and explain how these—at once realities and concepts—are tools for reinventing our relations to the past and to the future?

The Gallery of Art of the Non-Aligned Countries, which was established in Yugoslavia in 1984, operated on the principal of the gift. Artworks were given to the gallery as presents, based on the idea of egalitarian relations between nations. As much as we have abandoned the modernist ideas that were inherent to national liberation, one has to consider what is still so special about non-alignment today; objects were not transferred from colonial or looted collections into museums, they were not subject to financial speculation or bought because of private investment interests. Today we are so far away from establishing an institution that would work like the Gallery of Art of the Non-Aligned Countries that it is necessary to develop everything that stems from that concept further. I repeatedly try to apply the idea of non-alignment to existing collections, and not just to the historical avantgarde, like I did for Non-aligned Relatives, but as a method of producing queer kinship. Maybe because non-alignment was about creating bonds between nations that refused racial hierarchy, imperial rule, and colonial exploitation, it seems so close to me to present-day formations of queer kinship.

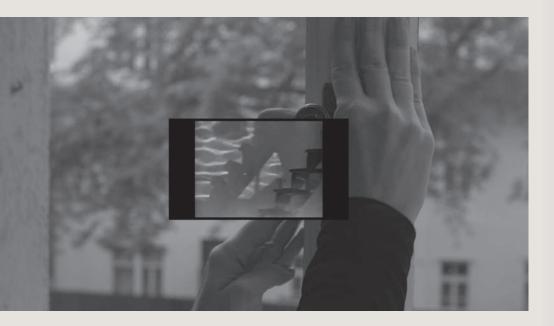
INTERVENTION AND SELF-REFLECTION

You anchor your practice in the field of artistic research, which you regard as intervention and self-reflection at the same time. Each of your works is the result of long-term (and sometimes consciously drifting) research into a specific topic, and thereafter a rearticulation of knowledge and an intervention into the social-political reality. At the same time, you also constantly consider your own positionality, question your own perspective as an artist, as part of the museal complex. Both are processes that can never be completed and that are rather in constant redefinition and reconfiguration. Could you perhaps contextualize The Bacha Posh Project in that frame?

I think we don't have the luxury of separating intervention and self-reflection like previous generations. Rather, we have to do everything at the same time. In the case of The Bacha Posh Project, I definitely wanted to relate one notion of "East" to another. That was the idea behind relating the Balkans to Afghanistan: both are subjected to similar mechanisms of oppression as "Eastern". The Balkans had very little to no connection to Afghanistan for decades, and then they turned out to be connected by nothing other than a "route". Could this have been different? We are constantly taught to keep whiteness and Western domination at focus, to relate to power, instead of establishing relations among each other. People from the Balkans had no chance to establish a relation to Afghanistan (and vice versa) before global warfare brought them together. This separation, a result of global racism, made me think that for instance, with the fall of socialism I have also lost the possibility to relate to decolonized countries through the Non-Aligned Movement. So, at that point, the project turned into a reflection of actually having been forced to grow up in Austria and having no clue about countries like Afghanistan, which I might have had through a Non-Aligned connection, if it had survived—if Yugoslavia and Afghanistan had made it. I felt that there was a moment of potential that was lost, and the frustration of having missed it, individually and as a society, is something I experience still as quite painful. It made sense to me to take those feelings of loss and anger seriously and to put them into the work. This is maybe a good example of how I imagine artistic research to work.

SPEECH, LANGUAGE, AND PERFORMANCE

Psychoanalysis and the unconscious at work in the processes of history making, of memory and of subjectivation, is very important in your work. In Freud Film (2017/2021), you deal with the unconscious within the development of Freud's psychoanalytical theory and tackle the racialized and heteropatriarchal dimension of its concept of "alterity", which is foundational to the constitution of a modern "European identity"—based, actually, on the exclusion of others. Still, you use it as a self-reflexive and critical methodology to observe historical, political, and personal processes around the notions of disavowal, fetishism, violence, suppression, and trauma. You also emphasize the performativity of language, and hence its ability to not only describe things but to create things. Can you say something about your use of language and its performativity in your works?



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, Freud Film (video still), 2017/2021

Freud Film is a tour of the Sigmund Freud Museum in Vienna in which I insert several historical films. First there is the shooting of Franz Ferdinand, which was filmed by the first Bosnian filmmaker, Antun Valić. This footage is available in the Filmarchiv Austria, but without Antun Valić's name. He sold the material to a film company and was erased from film history. On top of Antun Valić's work appear quotes from Freud's letters written after he visited Slovenia and Bosnia. They reveal Freud's underlying racism and the limits of psychoanalysis. The second historical film in this work is Der Kilometerfresser a popular film from 1925 that literally reassembles the so-called Crown lands of the Habsburg monarchy in a nostalgic manner using ethnographic means. Freud Film is silent, it gives space to the internal voice of the reader, like in After the Transformation, where large parts of the text are given to the audience to read. Seeing a text and hearing one's own voice performs, for me, the gap between embodiment and history, between presence and the loss of the past. It also crucially desynchronizes the belonging of body and voice. Desynchronization is in general a major methodology I try to develop in all my work.

ACTIVISM AND PRODUCTIVE LOOKING

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*

Quite a specific issue is highlighted in the exhibition: the exploitation of (cheap) labor in (Austrian) prisons. Many everyday products are made by prison inmates who receive low wages and have no possibility to organize in trade unions. So, they remain unbearably invisible. The two-part work Active Intolerance (2021) is about this issue. The first part of the installation is an outdoor installation consisting of printed brass plates listing the Austrian companies who use or have used prison labor. The second part is a poster series featuring, in blue on a red background, sentences from philosopher Michel Foucault and historian Pierre Vidal-Naguet's radical activist Prisons Information Group alongside a photographic series documenting factories and institutions in your hometown of Paraćin in Serbia. For Active Intolerance, you set up different disclosure strategies, and your exhibition is very much about strategies of making things visible. Can you elaborate on this interventionist and activist dimension of your work and other strategies you might use to that same end?

I'm constantly occupied with the question of how to show things. Which does not mean how to create a platform for visibility. On the contrary, I mean how to rearrange, combine, and create a new setting across existing social, political, and other divisions. As we know, these divisions take shape through aesthetics, so a formal rearrangement can propose a change in the very structure of things. I think that is the true activist dimension of art: How can we solve the problem of separation and then undo it again? In Private View, for instance, I have assembled exclusively material that is available online, I copy-pasted information that is already circulating. But I hope that the installation allows viewers to see the devastating situation of contemporary art institutions today in its full dimensions. This is of course about work on material too-again, it is about framing and naming and creating a readibility that is otherwise maybe foreclosed.

Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* is an artist*, researcher* and writer*. She* works within and about contemporary art, art history, cultural studies, and critical theory. She* is interested in queerness, displays of global capital, coloniality and the East, forms of escape, early psychoanalysis, and politics of memory and war. Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic* works with video, photography, installation, and performance. She* employs means of appropriation such as restaging photographs, interviews, and reports and searches for ways to desynchronize normative belongings of body and voice, sound, and image. She* works explicitly against the current domination of corporate aesthetics, images of disgust and horror, and the right-winged establishment by insisting on analysis, contextualization, and reflection.

* 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.



Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*, *Non-aligned Relatives* (performance documentation), 2019, exhibition *Queer Stories*. Photo: Judith Stehlik

PUBLIC AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The following offers an overview of the public program accompanying both Ana Hoffner ex-Prvulovic*'s and Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński's exhibitions. More will be confirmed soon. We warmly invite you to visit www.kunsthallewien.at, as well as our social media channels, for regular updates and further details about our public program.

OPENING Thu 21/10 2021, 6 pm **kunsthalle wien** museumsquartier

TOURS All tours are free with an admission ticket.

CURATOR'S TOURS Curator's tours give an overview of the exhibitions or focus on specific topics raised by the artists* involved, as well as provide insight into the working process of the exhibitions, from concep-

Dates will be announced at: www.kunsthallewien.at

tualization to presentation.

SUNDAY TOURS Sun 7/11, 21/11, 5/12, 19/12 2021, 2/1, 16/1, 6/2, 20/2, 6/3 2022, 3pm With Wolfgang Brunner, Carola Fuchs, Andrea Hubin, Michaela Schmidlechner, Michael Simku

Every second Sunday at 3 pm you can discover the exhibitions together with our art educators and discuss the context and background of the exhibited works. (guided tour in German)

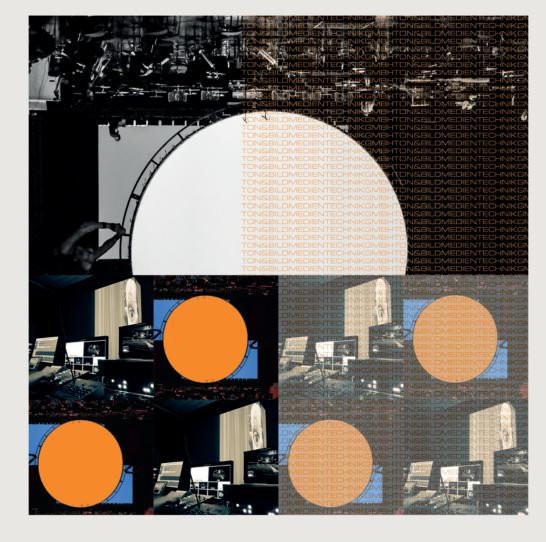
ACCOMPANYING PROGRAM

Several performative and discursive events will take place in the framework of the exhibitions. Listening sessions, performative readings, panel discussions, and workshops will bring guest artists, writers, activists, or scholars, offering different perspectives on the topics raised by the exhibitions. Screenings and talks will take place in cooperation with mumok kino and the film festival this human world.

You can find further details and regular updates on our website www.kunsthallewien.at as well as on our social media channels.

PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS

The Kunsthalle Wien offers an extensive program for schools. Information and registration at vermittlung@kunsthallewien.at.





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Free admission every Thursday 5-9 PM

FOR PROGRAM UPDATES: www.kunsthallewien.at **f** ③ **y** /kunsthallewien

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