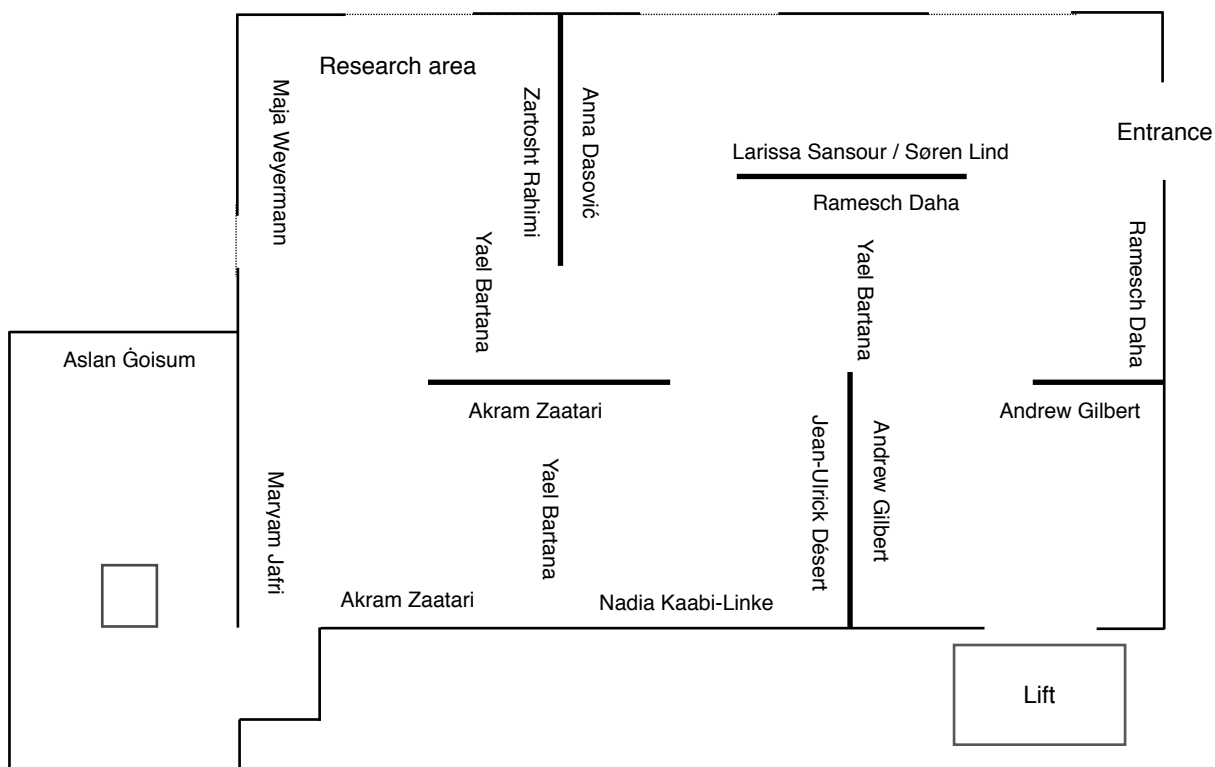


13 September 2020 – 21 February 2021

THE INVENTED HISTORY

**Yael Bartana, Ramesch Daha, Anna Dasović,
Jean-Ulrick Désert, Andrew Gilbert, Aslan Goisum,
Maryam Jafri, Nadia Kaabi-Linke, Zartosht Rahimi,
Larissa Sansour / Søren Lind, Maja Weyermann, Akram Zaatari**

Maschinenhaus M2



The group exhibition *The Invented History* in the Maschinenhaus M2 at the KINDL – Centre for Contemporary Art examines the need to critically question historical narratives. At the latest with the influence of globalisation, a re-evaluation of historiography has become necessary: it is no longer viewed as a simple collection of data and facts, a linear sequence of clearly defined events. Instead, there is a growing awareness that historiography must always also be interpreted under the political auspices of its “authors”.

Today there are increasing attempts to control the interpretation of history—first and foremost by anti-democratic forces around the world. The artists in the exhibition track down previously concealed or suppressed historical phenomena, view history through the filter of their own biography, and thus work on a critical historiography in contrast to existing systems of rule.

The exhibition is curated by Kathrin Becker.

Yael Bartana

*1970 in Kfar Yehezkel / Israel, lives in Berlin and Amsterdam

R.I.P. UZI, 76 x 97 x 6 cm; *R.I.P. M16*, 62 x 118 x 7 cm; *R.I.P. Smith & W*, 42 x 65 x 10 cm, all 2019;
Pigmented relief casting ceramic powder
// Courtesy Capitain Petzel, Berlin

Yael Bartana often creates fictional realities that deal with processes of identity and memory in her video works, installations, photographs, and objects. She focuses in particular on political ceremonies and the staging of collective actions.

Bartana's 2019 video project *The Undertaker* takes the title of her performance *Bury Our Weapons, Not Our Bodies!* literally and depicts a funeral ceremony in a Philadelphia cemetery where weapons are solemnly carried to the grave. As is characteristic of her working method, the artist adds another temporal level to the works with the series *R.I.P.* in the form of objects: petrified rifles and machine guns exhibited in museum display cases like archaeological finds, as a vision of a distant future in which weapons are only fossils of a stage of civilisation that has since been transcended.

Ramesch Daha

*1971 in Teheran, lives in Vienna

Unlimited History – Sigmund Klein, 2017 – 2020

Paintings of the Archive, 2019, 54 paintings, Acrylic / canvas, 17 x 22 cm each;

Bookkeeping Pages of the Concentration Camps and *Letters from the Concentration Camps*, two original books, blueprint, charcoal, graphite, colour pencil / paper, 29,7 x 21 cm each;

Materials from the Archive, two boxes of tools;

Paintings of the Concentration Camps, 2017, (triptych), acrylic / canvas, 80 x 120 cm each;

Letters from the Concentration Camps, 2017 – 2020, blueprint / paper;

Audio work *Letters from the Concentration Camps*, read by Ramesch Daha, 2019, 76:10 min.

// Courtesy the artist

Ramesch Daha takes her family history and her own Iranian-Austrian roots as the starting point for her work. In 1978, shortly before the Iranian Revolution, she left Iran with her parents and brother. The family fled to Vienna, her mother's hometown. In her work, Daha draws on biographical aspects and researches in private and public archives. She deals with forms of collective memory and tracks down people whose fates have been suppressed or deliberately concealed from public consciousness.

This is also the case in her complex multimedia installation *Unlimited History – Sigmund Klein*. The focus of the work is Sigmund Klein, the father of Daha's step-grandfather, who as a Jew was kidnapped by the Nazis, imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp and later in Buchenwald, and finally murdered in Ravensbrück in 1942.

In her installation the artist reconstructs the fate of Sigmund Klein in paintings, works on paper, everyday objects, and archival materials from his estate. In addition to postcards and official documents, the letters he wrote to his wife Maria "Mizi" Klein and son Leopold from the Dachau concentration camp in the late 1930s are also included in her work.

Daha translates these letters into various media, including an audio work that can be accessed using the QR code below.



Anna Dasović

*1982 in Amsterdam, lives in Rotterdam

Concerning: Request for erased and 'blurry' photographs, 2015 – 2017

Three-channel video installation, curtain, lightbox, 119 x 176 cm

// Courtesy the artist

Anna Dasović's interdisciplinary work is based on intensive research in historical archives and libraries as well as field research and interviews. A central theme of her work in recent years is her engagement with the genocide in Srebrenica in the summer of 1995, in which Bosnian-Serb militias penetrated the UN safe area and murdered more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in front of Dutch UN Blue Helmets.

In her multimedia installation *Concerning: Request for erased and 'blurry' photographs*, Anna Dasović examines two rolls of film with photos taken by members of the Dutch UN battalion during the invasion of the UN safe area. One of the two rolls of film was destroyed due to the incorrect use of chemicals in a Dutch army photo lab, which aroused speculation. After an investigative committee examined the role of the Dutch Blue Helmets in Srebrenica, the Dutch government resigned in 2002.

The second roll of film was developed, but according to official information it only contained three "blurry photographs". The artist discovered that the pictures were not published. Dasović finally received the photographs from the Dutch Ministry of Defence in 2015 under the Dutch Freedom of Information Act and exhibited them publicly for the first time in an exhibition in Amsterdam. Subsequently, the photographs also circulated in the daily press and were used as evidence in the witness testimony of a former UN Blue Helmet before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

To this day, the three pictures are the only photographic evidence of the site of the massacre by Dutchbat soldiers. Dasović describes the subject of her project as dealing with forms of elimination: of the victims in Srebrenica and the traces of their extermination.

Jean-Ulrick Désert

*1965 in Port-au-Prince, lives in Berlin

Negerhosen2000 / The Travel Album, 2003 / 2007

Twelve Works out of a series of 50 imaginary postcards, Collage and digital prints with pigmented inks / archival papers, six works à 43 x 53 cm

// Courtesy the artist and espace d'art contemporain 14°N 61°W, Martinique

Jean-Ulrick Désert deals with the topic of visibility and the complex of the perception of the self and others, and critically examines constructions of "race" and gender. His multimedia approach includes actions, photographs, collages, paintings, site-specific installations, and video works, which are often influenced by experiences in the various places he has lived: Haiti, New York, and Berlin. His artistic activity often aims to make rigid constructions of identity visible and to break them down.

For his series *Negerhosen2000 / The Travel Album*, Jean-Ulrick Désert travelled through Europe dressed in traditional Bavarian costume, with an alpine hat, jacket, half stockings, and lederhosen. The lederhosen were not made of the traditional brown or black leather; instead, their colour reflected the skin tone of a white person of European descent. In this costume, the artist visited various places and tourist attractions such as the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, and the English Garden in Munich. The hybridity of his appearance caused a sensation: passers-by took photos of Désert, and in some cases they themselves became the subject of the work. A handwritten note on the works, which are reminiscent of postcards, offers information about the respective location and how the pictures were taken.

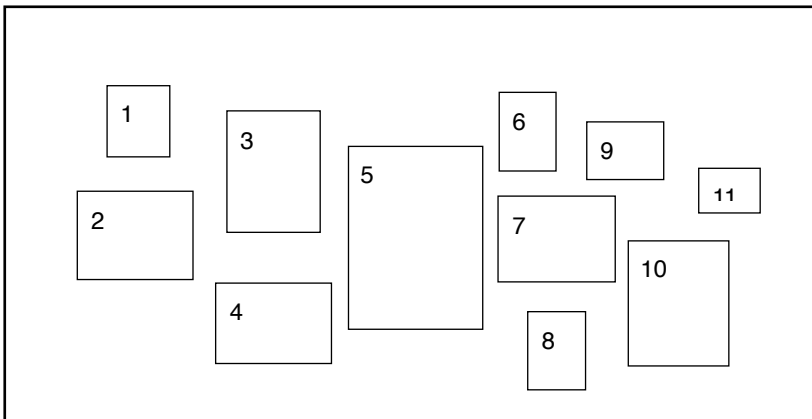
Andrew Gilbert

*1980 in Edinburgh, lives in Berlin

In his works on paper, sculptures, and installations Andrew Gilbert addresses the forms and consequences of colonialism, in particular the horrors of the British Empire in the former colonies. His surreal figures and scenes, often featuring graphic depictions of battles, torture, and mutilation, refer to concrete historical events that are excluded from the collective memory of the (former) colonial powers.

In the work *Emperor Andrew exchanges a Bible for yet another Exotic Kingdom*, for example, a figure identifiable as Queen Victoria exchanges a Bible for a territory—symbolically represented in the motif of a cup of coffee. A painting in the background embeds the scene in the historical context: it refers to the Battle of Ulundi, the final battle of the Anglo-Zulu War on 4 July 1879, in which the British defeated the Zulu people in a campaign led by unequal forces, thus marking the end of a nation.

With his works, Andrew Gilbert raises questions about the admission of guilt, the willingness to pay reparations, and the fact that entire regions still have not been granted sovereignty. In addition, he raises awareness that Western prosperity is based on colonialism and slavery and that racism also continues in the form of structural inequality.



1 *The Eternal Propaganda*, 2014, 40 x 30 cm

2 *Emperor Andrew exchanges a Bible for yet another Exotic Kingdom*, 2019, 48 x 62 cm

3 *Daddy what did you do in the Great War*, 2014, 62 x 48 cm

4 *The Beast of Brexit*, 2018, 48 x 62 cm

5 *The Peace Treaty – Give us your Weapons and We take your Land*, 2019, 100 x 70 cm

6 *There is always time... for an Emperor Andrew Instant Coffee*, 2019, 40 x 30 cm

7 *The Fate of Empires*, 2014, 48 x 64 cm

8 *Emperor Andrew Instant Coffee – Serve Hot*, 2019, 40 x 30 cm

9 *Death to the Foreign Invader – the Ethiopian army advances at Adwa, 1896*, 2018, 30 x 40 cm

10 *European Tribal War, 1914 – 18*, 2014, 62 x 48 cm

11 *Sketch of Andrew's Award winning Monument to the Victims of American Terror*, 2019, 24 x 30 cm

All works fineliner, acrylic and watercolour / paper

Monument to Major General Andrew Gilbert calling a Drone Strike on his Leek Phone at the Battle of Magersfontein, 11th December, 1899, South Africa, 2020

Mixed media, approx. 60 x 60 x 200 cm

//Courtesy the artist and Sperling, Munich

Aslan Ğoisum

*1991 in Grosny, lives there

People of No Consequence, 2016

HD-video, colour, sound, 8:34 min.

// Courtesy the artist and Emalin, London

In his work, Aslan Ğoisum deals with the history of what is now the Russian republic of Chechnya as well as with processes of memory and (politically deliberate) forgetting. He focuses on the processing of knowledge about historical events in connection with the oppression and expulsion of the local population to Central Asia. Their deportation by the Soviet power began already during World War II, following the accusation of collaboration with the German aggressors.

The video work *People of No Consequence* first shows the interior of an unadorned cultural venue in Grozny filled with rows of chairs. Gradually, elderly men and women enter the scene, take a seat on the chairs, and without a word expose themselves to the gaze of the camera. The protagonists are 119 Chechen survivors of deportation in World War II, aged 73 to 105, contemporary witnesses of a suppressed chapter of Soviet expansionist policy.

Maryam Jafri

*1972 in Karachi, lives in Copenhagen and New York

Getty Vs. Ghana, 2012

Eight photographs and four framed text panels, dimensions variable

// Courtesy the artist

In her work, Maryam Jafri questions representations of history, politics, and economics. Her works are based on extensive research and draw on literary sources, elements of popular culture, and conceptual art.

Cultural memory and copyright are the central themes of the photo installation *Getty Vs. Ghana*. This work was sparked by a finding in the Getty Images database: while browsing the website, the artist came across historical photographs from Ghana that were copyrighted by Getty Images. However, she had previously seen the same images in the archive of the Ghanaian Ministry of Information. According to Maryam Jafri, these are “not just any images but rather Ghana independence photos from 6 March 1957—documents of the first instance of liberation of sub-Saharan Africa from Western rule.” She realised that not only had incorrect image data and captions been created, but that the images had also been manipulated—whether by accident or deliberately.

The installation *Ghetty Vs. Ghana* juxtaposes the images from the two databases—not to speculate about the past, but as an artistic contribution to current debates about copyright, digitisation, and ownership of national heritage.

Nadia Kaabi-Linke

*1978 in Tunis, lives in Berlin

The Altarpiece, 2015

Triptych, transfer prints, ink and acrylic / paper / canvas, wood and gold, 250 x 450,4 x 6,3 cm

// Burger Collection, Hong Kong

Nadia Kaabi-Linke has also spent part of her life in Kiev, Dubai, and Paris. The experiences the artist had there form the basis of the main theme of her art: the search for traces of history in different cities.

The Altarpiece deals with the eventful history of a large above-ground bunker from World War II in the Mitte district of Berlin. The central motif of the work comes from a transfer print of the west wall of the bunker, which is marked by bullet holes. The imprint of the surface structure preserves indications of its

multiple functions: Built in 1943 by forced laborers, the bunker initially served to protect up to 2,500 civilians during the bombing of Berlin. Subsequently it was occupied by the Red Army and used as a remand prison by the Soviet secret police NKVD. During the GDR era, the so-called banana bunker was used to store textiles and fruit, and the legendary techno club Bunker was located there in the early 1990s. Today it is home to Karen and Christian Boros's extensive collection of contemporary art.

Nadia Kaabi-Linke takes up the traditional functions of an altar such as remembrance and visualisation. As usual with a winged altarpiece, the side wings close onto the middle part. The gilding on the outside creates a contrast between the interior and exterior, which stands for the transformation of the building —from war to captivity to the profane and finally into a sanctuary for art.

Zartosht Rahimi

*1989 in Esfahan, lives in Tehran

New Imaginary Map, 2020

Acrylic / paper, 210 x 300 cm

// Courtesy the artist

Zartosht Rahimi's paintings, installations, and drawings are based on concrete observations of the self-image of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its perception from the outside. Representing a young generation of artists who were born after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Rahimi describes history as a continuity of breaks.

With his work *New Imaginary Map*, a political world map, Rahimi presents a picture of a fragmented world. As the title suggests, it is an imaginary map on which the artist situates and relates figures, symbols, and objects. Rahimi combines historical personalities such as the Egyptian diva Umm Kulthum and Malcolm X, who still have a special significance in the minds of the young generation, with current political events and symbolic images such as the depiction of a crowded refugee boat off the Australian coast and the American President Trump wearing a Ku Klux Klan hood. He also puts himself in the picture: at Lenin's side, with arms raised and a frightened expression on his face, he attracts the attention of the viewers.

Larissa Sansour / Søren Lind

*1973 in East Jerusalem / *1970 in Denmark, both live in London

In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain, 2016

HD-Video, colour, sound, 29:00 min.

// Courtesy the artists

Larissa Sansour is a visual artist, and her works deal with social and political issues from the Middle East, especially from Palestine. She contrasts the conflict-laden and unstable situation with the lightness and one-dimensionality of television entertainment formats. Lind is an author and wrote the script for the video work *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*.

In a combination of real film, computer animation, and historical photographs, the work exists at the intersection of science fiction, archaeological documentation, and political essay. Following *A Space Exodus* (2008) and *Nation Estate* (2012), *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* is the final part of Larissa Sansour's sci-fi trilogy. In the film, a fictional resistance group buries porcelain objects, thus fabricating the supposed traces of a past civilisation. Their aim is to shift historiography toward a new narrative in which facts and fictions merge. Sansour and Lind thus shed light on the influence of myths on the transmission of historical facts and national identity and point to the constructed nature of history.

Maja Weyermann

*1962 in Huttwil / Switzerland, †2016 in Berlin

Uzaktan Mektuplar – Letters from Abroad, 2015

HD-Video, colour, sound, 37:06 min.

// Courtesy Sven Flechsenhar, Berlin

For her video work *Uzaktan Mektuplar – Letters from Abroad*, the artist Maja Weyermann researched the tradition of Anatolian carpet knotting and its importance for the cultural memory of the region. She discovered the key role that Armenian carpet knotting played in carpet production in Turkey before 1915, in the period before the systematic genocide against the Armenians. In her video work, Weyermann connects the Armenian art of carpet knotting and the expropriation, confiscation of property, and finally the extermination of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire. The result is a kind of experimental documentation in which Weyermann uses artistic means in the form of real film and 3D animations to stimulate a discussion about how we deal with the past and questions about processes of cultural appropriation and suppression.

Akram Zaatari

*1966 in Sidon / Lebanon, lives in Beirut

Iraqi Ruins, 2017, Inkjet prints mounted / paper folder, 32 x 65 cm each;

Faces to Faces, 2017, Backlit UV print / cloth, 100 x 150 x 10 cm each;

// Courtesy the artist and Sfeir-Semler Gallery Beirut / Hamburg

Akram Zaatari is an artist, filmmaker, and curator, and founded the Arab Image Foundation (AIF) in 1997 together with Fouad Elkoury and Samer Mohdas. The aim of the foundation is to collect, research, and archive materials related to the history of photography in the Arab world. In the sense of an “image archaeology”, Zaatari’s internationally renowned work reflects and documents the production, collection, and circulation of images—also against the background of the current political changes in the Middle East.

In the series of light boxes *Faces to Faces*, Zaatari uses accidentally stuck-together glass negatives from the 1940s and selects the ones that combine images of French soldiers and civilians in Lebanon. Zaatari thus refers to the problematic role of France as a former mandated power in Lebanon.

The *Iraqi Ruins* objects come from the photo archive of the Iraqi architect Rifaat Chadirji and his father Kamil, which was evacuated from Baghdad and left with the Arab Image Foundation in Beirut in 2012 with the aim of digitising and documenting the collection of over 80,000 negatives and prints. After the AIF was unable to raise the necessary funds for the project, Chadirji withdrew his collection from Beirut and left it with the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT in the United States in November 2016. The empty binders in the series with their pale photographic traces represent this short passage of the Chadirji collection at the Arab Image Foundation.

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