

# Press Release Berlin, 20 January 2022

## Press Contact

**KW Institute for Contemporary Art**

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### **KW Institute for Contemporary Art presents the annual program 2022**

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to announce its program for 2022, which includes survey exhibitions by **Peter Friedl**, **Rabih Mroué** and **Michel Majerus**, new commissions, projects and exhibitions by **Tobias Spichtig**, **BLESS**, **Oraib Toukan**, **Lydia Ourahmane**, **Christopher Kulendran Thomas**, **Rachel Rossin** and **Atiéna R. Kilfa** as well as the **12<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale** curated by artist **Kader Attia**.

### **A Year with BLESS**

19 January – December 22  
Curator: Anna Gritz  
Assistant curator: Léon Kruijswijk

Since 2017, KW Institute for Contemporary Art has been hosting the residency format *A Year with...*, a program that generates an in-depth engagement with an artistic practice through a variety of inward and outward facing formats over the course of one year. In 2022, the duo BLESS will take over the program. Ines Kaag and Desiree Heiss have been working together on numerous transdisciplinary projects since 1997. As self-proclaimed situation designers, their products blend fashion and art, design and architecture, business and social practice, with the aim of creating an equilibrium between mental and physical exercise. Motivated to make pieces fit for everyday use, BLESS understand their practice and products as a way of life—based on the firm belief that one can shape life today in a way that creates a future worth living in.

In 2022, BLESS will celebrate her 25th anniversary, which KW will take as an opportunity to put the focus on Desiree Heiss and Ines Kaag's visionary products and endeavors. *A Year with BLESS* will renegotiate many of the key issues that lie at the heart of her collaboration, creating an innovative format that seeks to connect life, work, leisure, and exercise. The duo will rethink existing processes and workflows and test them out artistically in different public areas. The one-year collaboration will unfold across three

key projects: *the BLESS N°72 BLESSlet* at KW; the Adretta-Reuter-intervention in the Ernst-Reuter-Siedlung, where the duo has her Berlin-based studio, and the release of the third book of her own publication series, BLESS III.

### **Pause: Tobias Spichtig**

#### ***Die Matratzen***

19 – 23 January 22

Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen

Curatorial assistant: Linda Franken

KW has invited the artist Tobias Spichtig (b.1982, CH) as part of *Pause* Series to present his installation *Die Matratzen*. As the name suggests, the exhibition consists of various second-hand and different-sized mattresses laid out across the entire floor of KW's main hall. They are covered with used bed sheets from the personal networks of the artist as well as the curator, functioning both as a support mechanism and as catalysts for stories. As such they are evocative of moments of intimacy. The gravel and color of the bed sheets make the installation resemble an abstract painting, which will be made to change dramatically the more the visitors engage with them. *Die Matratzen* will last for five days and, every evening, the audience is encouraged to gather on the eponymous mattresses to listen to readings of the various authors Spichtig has invited. Among those are Rosa Aiello, Eric D. Clark, Calla Henkel, Karl Holmqvist, Pablo Larios, Ariane Müller, Tomás Nervi, Theresa Patzschke, Kristian Vistrup-Madsen, and Pippin Wigglesworth-Weider. Like a bedtime story of sorts, Spichtig uses the readings to transform the room, giving the massive installation a more intimate setting.

Tobias Spichtig's practice deals with objects whose presence in our consumerist society is ubiquitous, albeit disavowed at times. Ranging from fridges to second-hand furniture or other vestiges of everyday life, these artefacts can also include materials and motifs recycled from advertising, fashion, art, or music. The objects he chooses often implicate intimate narratives that stem from their immediate connection to his social network but also from references to pop culture. Spichtig's work encompasses paintings, sculptures, installations, and performances that come together into a dramaturgy of constellations in the exhibition space.

The *Pause* series serves as a platform to disrupt the regular program of KW by presenting singular artworks for a short period of time that create connections between the past, present, and future.

### **Peter Friedl**

#### ***Report 1964 – 2022***

19 February – 01 May 22

Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen

Assistant curator: Léon Kruijswijk

*Report 1964–2022* is Peter Friedl's (b. 1960) most extensive institutional survey in Germany to date. Adopting a variety of genres, media, and forms of display, Friedl's works seek to explore the construction of history and the concepts within our political and aesthetical consciousness. His artistic practice is aimed at creating new models of narration in which time, permanent displacement, and critical intimacy all play a central

role. Friedl often refers to and employs theatrical representation and poetics in his works (e.g., scale models, tableaux vivants, props, puppet theatre, restaging) to highlight hidden or overlooked mechanisms intrinsic to historiography, language, and cultural identities. Archival rigor is the key organizational strategy behind some of his long-term projects, which have strict chronology and other principles of order call into question notions of visibility and context. Drawing as a lyrical voice, which documents and comments on both personal and socio-political histories, is equally important in Friedl's oeuvre.

As a monographic exhibition, *Report 1964–2022* brings together works from five decades. Its title stems from an eponymous video installation that Friedl created for documenta 14, which explores the permeability of language and the boundaries of identity. The exhibition is accompanied by a publication containing existing as well as newly commissioned essays on the artist's work written over the past twenty years.

**Schering Stiftung Award for Artistic Research 2020: Rabih Mroué**  
***Under the Carpet***

19 February – 01 May 22

Curator: Nadim Samman

Assistant curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

Rabih Mroué (b. 1967, LB) is the 2020 recipient of the Schering Stiftung Award for Artistic Research. Mroué's acclaimed body of work that span theatre, visual arts, and literature. Working at the intersection of personal and political history, media criticism, and concepts of authorship, his oeuvre is an interrogation of the ways we see and speak. *Under the Carpet* features eight newly commissioned pieces that are set within a constellation of works that spans 20 years.

The Award for Artistic Research has grown out of the Schering Stiftung Art Award, which was awarded biannually to international artists between 2005 and 2018. In 2019, the award was redesigned together with the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe. The 2020 edition of the Award for Artistic Research is the sixth time that Schering Stiftung has collaborated with KW Institute for Contemporary Art.

**Oraib Toukan**

***What Then***

19 February – 01 May 22

Co-Curators: Krist Gruijthuijsen and Léon Kruijswijk

KW Institute for Contemporary Art invites artist and scholar Oraib Toukan (b. 1977, USA) to present two new films stemming from her long-standing research on "Cruel Images". Her research-practice has been committed to exploring the line between looking at and looking away from mediated images of violence.

Using post-production as a medium, Toukan works with photography, film, text, and speech to study the complexity of representing encounters with violence. By pitting images of the tender and the mundane against the horrific in one work, or re-editing discovered & restored archival images of bodies in struggle, she asks: what lies outside the frame of suffering?

The title of the exhibition is borrowed from Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's verse *What Then, What do we do with our Love* (1974), and honors the condition of being distant in space, and distant in time, to calamity. Her works depart the much-cited dichotomy of outcry and indifference back to the function of looking. Toukan proposes instead more relational readings—from other situatedness' of observing violence.

## **12<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art**

11 June – 18 September 22

Curator: Kader Attia

Kader Attia (b. 1970, FR) looks back on more than two decades of decolonial engagement. As an artist, thinker, and activist, he has been particularly engaged with the notion of repair—first of objects and physical injuries, and then of individual and societal traumas. Throughout his practice, repair has emerged as a mode of cultural resistance, a form of agency that finds expression in diverse practices and fields of knowledge. In his role as curator of the 12th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art, Attia makes this form of agency the starting point of a program that involves contributors and audiences in a critical conversation, in order to find ways together to care for the now.

With exhibitions, interventions, and events, the 12th Berlin Biennale will span diverse venues in the city, offering a discursive space that bridges different fields of knowledge production. From June 11 to September 18, 2022 a polyphonic debate unfolds, convening artists, scholars, and activists to map the world with its ruptures and contradictions, create counter-trajectories to the colonial narrative, and collaboratively shape new forms of agency for the future.

For more information visit [12.berlinbiennale.de](https://12.berlinbiennale.de)

## **KW Digital: Rachel Rossin**

Digital Commission

Date: 14 – 18 September 22

Curator: Nadim Samman

Rachel Rossin's (b. 1987, US) newest work, commissioned in collaboration with a KW partner institution, will employ novel technologies that the artist herself has created. They are the result of her research into embodiment in virtual reality, neural networks and DNA as code. With exhibits in Berlin and New York, the piece will consist of a multi-platform installation that seeks to bring together the physical and the digital domain.

## **Pause: Lydia Ourahmane**

From 1 October 22 – onwards

Curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

In fall 2022, Lydia Ourahmane (b. 1992, DZ) will create a site-specific, permanent installation at KW Institute for Contemporary Art. This new commission is a continuation of the artist's ongoing engagement with the emotional, psychological, and political correlations between material, body, and place. Comprising sculpture and performance, the work engages her relation to her own mortality, the act of ritual, and the notion of

permanence, situated in her interest of remains and relics. KW's invitation poses a challenge for Ourahmane to reflect on the transcendence of matter and the many deceptions of eternity.

## **Michel Majerus**

### ***Early Works***

22 October 22 – 15 January 23

Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen

Assistant curator: Léon Kruijswijk

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to take part in a major tribute to artist Michel Majerus (b. 1967 – dec. 2002, LUX) with a multifaceted program all over the city of Berlin as well as Germany that demonstrate the late artist's influence on his peers as well as the following generations.

Twenty years after his sudden death, the tribute will commemorate Majerus by showing both his reflections on painting as a medium as well as his groundbreaking vision. One of a world in which popular culture, advertisement, and the virtual realms of TV, videogames and computers have infiltrated the very essence of everyday life, a process that is only intensified by the developments in the digital realm. Referencing the work of distinguished artists of previous generations, their reflections and strategies, Majerus was continuously shifting back and forth between historical, mundane, and contemporary imagery. By sampling fragments, creating series, embodying speed, and referring to the challenging statements made by his predecessors, Majerus' practice is characterized by continuous and unmitigated observations of surface and space—both physical and virtual—which he used to reflect on the meaning and power of visual culture at large.

The exhibition at KW Institute for Contemporary Art will present the earlier paintings of Michel Majerus produced between 1988–1995, an attempt to uncover the very first stratum of his artistic force. Simultaneously, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, neugerriemschneider, Michel Majerus Estate, and Kunstverein Hamburg will present exhibitions by the artist. Several renowned art institutions across Germany will also present Majerus works from their collections, including Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Kunsthalle Mannheim, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Neues Museum Nürnberg, Museum Ludwig, Saarlandmuseum – Moderne Galerie and Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus and Kunstbau. The many collaborations with institutions across Germany will strengthen the visibility of Majerus' artistic influence and demonstrate the rootedness of his practice in the country's art discourse.

## **Christopher Kulendran Thomas**

in collaboration with Annika Kuhlmann

22 October 22 – 15 January 23

Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen

Assistant curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

Over the past decade, British-Tamil artist Christopher Kulendran Thomas (b.1979, GB) has been addressing the way contemporary art produces realities as well as negotiating the social and cultural interwovenness between the East and the West. He has been particularly invested in examining the relationships between technology, imperialism,

citizenship, and the political economy, as seen through the prism of the cultural scene of his native homeland, Tamil Eelam, a scene that was quasi extinguished when the de-facto Tamil state in the north and east of today's Sri Lanka was wiped out in 2009.

At KW, Kulendran Thomas will continue this investigation with his new film *The Finesse*. Made in collaboration with Annika Kuhlmann, this commission explores the short-lived history of Eelam as a self-governing state. It features interviews with the visionary Tamil architect Manmahal (மஹா) who, in the early years of the World Wide Web in the 1990s, saw the potential in using the internet to coordinate a globally-decentralized parallel economic system. Told as a meandering story of colonial imposition of democracy and the subsequent struggle for self-determination, the film installation looks at how a lost history could inform a radically different idea of the future.

*The Finesse* is an extension of the experiments in spatial projection previously developed in Kulendran Thomas' *Being Human* from 2019. A multidimensional video installation that will also be shown at KW and was equally a product of the collaboration with Kuhlmann. Narrated in part by an algorithmically synthesized avatar of a well-known pop star, *Being Human* explores the interrelationship between contemporary art and human rights in an era of globally uneven technological acceleration—and reflects upon issues of individual authenticity, collective sovereignty, and the increasing imbalance between humans and machines.

The exhibition is made possible through a collaboration with Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, V–A–C Foundation, Moscow and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich.

### **Atiéna R. Kilfa**

22 October 22 – 15 January 23

Curator: Anna Gritz

Assistant curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

The exhibition at KW is the first institutional solo exhibition of Atiéna R. Kilfa (b. 1990, FR). Using installation, sculpture, photography, and film, Kilfa reflects on the role of artists in the production of contemporary subjectivity at a time when available models are rapidly collapsing.

At her KW exhibition, Kilfa will be presenting a newly commissioned body of work centering in on the notion of the “model”, a term not only used to describe mannequins and maquettes but also standardized fictional and social roles. Through a variety of guises, Kilfa questions the model's take on reality and challenges the persistent influence it has on constructing identity. The inherent qualities of the technical apparatuses that facilitate her art's images and sounds are interwoven with the narrative of what they represent in their roles as active protagonists and mediators—colliding ideas of subject and objecthood.

The exhibition by Atiéna R. Kilfa is co-produced in partnership with Camden Art Centre in London, where a new iteration of the exhibition will be staged from January to March 2023.

**BPA// Exhibition 2022**

3 December 22 – 15 January 23

Curator: Léon Kruijswijk

KW and *BPA// Berlin program for artists* founded their partnership in 2020. *BPA//* is a mentoring program that fosters exchange between emerging and established Berlin artists. Founded in 2016 by Angela Bulloch, Simon Denny, and Willem de Rooij, *BPA//* organizes studio visits, public lectures, and group exhibitions. KW serves as the venue for the *BPA//* exhibition, an annual exhibition of work produced over the course of the current *BPA//* program.

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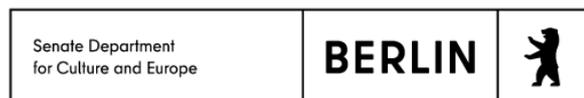
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The exhibitions and projects within the program of 2022 are in collaboration with and/or supported by:

**KW****Michel Majerus Estate**

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*Titles and exhibition dates are subject to change*  
*As of, 20 January, 2022*