

Press Kit

Peter Friedl
Rabih Mroué
Oraib Toukan

Content

Press Release

Peter Friedl
Report 1964-2022
Exhibition Text
Biography
Public Program

Preis für künstlerische Forschung der Schering Stiftung: Rabih Mroué
Under the Carpet
Exhibition Text
Biography
Public Program

Oraib Toukan
What Then
Exhibition Text
Biography
Public Program

Education and Art Mediation
General Information

For image requests and text material, please contact our press office via press@kw-berlin.de
As of: 18 February 22 / Subject to change

Press Release

Berlin, 18 February 22

KW Institute for Contemporary Art announce Spring Program 2022

KW Institute for Contemporary Art are pleased to announce the program for spring 2022, which reflects on the construction of history and reality by introducing new models of narration. **Peter Friedl, Rabih Mroué** as well as **Oraib Toukan** use theatrical and cinematic methods to create a critical intimacy that questions the mechanisms of how we see and speak.



Peter Friedl, *Snjókarl*, 1999 (detail). Color slides. Courtesy the artist.

Peter Friedl *Report 1964–2022*

19 February – 1 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 – 1 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 – 1 May 22

Co-Curators: Krist Gruijthuijsen and Léon Kruijswijk

KW Institute for Contemporary Art invites artist and scholar Oraib Toukan (b. 1977, US) 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.

A Year with...

BLESS N°72 BLESSlet

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*.

To visit *BLESS N°72 BLESSlet* please contact us in advance via reservation@kw-berlin.de

New Commission

Klaus Weber

Large Dark Wind Chime (Prototype), 2008/2022

powder-coated aluminum, stainless steel, high-polymer plastic
430 x 76 x 76 cm

Large Dark Wind Chime, a 4.3 m high wind chime in black tempered aluminium, is mounted on the façade of KW Institute for Contemporary Art. The chimes, each as large as church organ pipes, produce a deep bass, typically resonating for several minutes. Its vibrations enter the body, not just the ear. The tones seem to oscillate, like misregistered lines in a screen print.

The composition of *Large Dark Wind Chime* is based on the Tritone (tritonus)—the ‘diabolus’ in music, which is also known as the ‘devil’s interval’. *Diabolus in Musica* is Latin for the Devil in Music and was used to describe a musical interval consisting of three whole tones comparable to the augmented fourth or diminished fifth. It is often used as the main musical interval of dissonance in Western harmony.

In the Middle Ages, the Tritone was banned by the Church due to, as sources claim, the interval’s ability to evoke sexual desire and thus, arousing the Devil. Subsequently, the knowledge of the interval was clouded by considerable superstition and was, in conventional Western culture, associated with the wicked and the symbol of the ‘Other’.

Large Dark Wind Chime was initially developed for the 2008 Wiener Secession and installed in its iconic cupola of golden leaves to broadcast a kind of eeriness over the city Vienna. It is adapted for KW in 2022.

Klaus Weber (b. 1967 in Sigmaringen, DE) lives and works in Berlin. Working across a variety of media and spatial formats, Weber’s practice revolves around purposely manipulating everyday structures, the tracing of deviations, and the exploration of the impossible—attempting to undermine the metaphorical and actual power of a functionalist rationality.

Press Contact

Marie Kube
Tel. +49 30 243459 41
press@kw-berlin.de

KW Institute for Contemporary Art

Auguststraße 69
10117 Berlin
www.kw-berlin.de

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

The exhibitions and projects in the Program Spring 2022 take place in collaboration with and/or are supported by:



= Bundesministerium

Kunst, Kultur,
öffentlicher Dienst und Sport

österreichisches kulturforum^{ber}



kvadrat

In the interest of everyone's safety, we kindly ask you to inform yourselves about the current COVID-19 hygiene measures and precautions when visiting our exhibitions and events.

Peter Friedl

Report 1964–2022

19 February – 1 May 22

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 explore the construction of history and concepts within our political and aesthetical consciousness. His artistic practice is aimed at creating new modes of narration in which time, permanent displacement, and critical intimacy play a pivotal role. Friedl often refers to and employs theatrical representation and poetics in his work (e.g., scale models, tableaux vivants, props, puppet theatre, and restaging) to highlight hidden or overlooked mechanisms that are intrinsic to historiography, language, and cultural identities. Archival rigor is the key organisational strategy behind some of his long-term projects in which strict chronology or other ordering principles calls into question notions of visibility and context. Equally important in Friedl's oeuvre is the drawing as a lyrical voice, one that documents and comments on both personal and socio-political histories.

As a monographic exhibition, *Report 1964–2022* brings together works from more than five decades. Its title cites Friedl's eponymous video installation, created for documenta 14, which explores the permeability of language and the boundaries of identity, while the dates underline Friedl's interest in *real time*. Many of his aesthetic concepts originate in the context of theatre in which reality is distilled, framed, exposed, and transformed. The organisational strategy behind some of Friedl's works is both methodological as well as aesthetic. Longterm projects such as *Playgrounds* (1995–2021), *Theory of Justice* (1992–2010), *The Diaries* (1981–2022), but also his drawings, dating back to his childhood (1964–2022), exemplify an artistic commitment that represents and exhibits time in its purest form—time lived and lost. The way he often employs the perspective of children—as truly subaltern—can be taken as an opportunity to understand the so-called real time, not just intellectually but also formally—from innocence to manipulation. The exhibition at KW Institute for Contemporary Art combines earlier with more recent works in order to highlight thematic as well as formal continuities within Friedl's artistic practice.

Ground Floor

Upon entering the exhibition, visitors are facing three custom-made showcases filled with stacks of diaries. *The Diaries* (1981–2022) contains thousands upon thousands of densely filled hand-written pages covering each day over a period of forty years and testifying the futility of capturing a life in words. By denying access to the contents of his enshrined, closed diaries, Friedl invites the viewer to contemplate how aesthetic experience and imagination work. Early photographic collages from 1971 can be seen as Friedl's first attempt at photography, in which he juxtaposes found imagery and text, in this case from the fantasy world of Native American people. The video *Untouched* (1995–1997) features Friedl's first son popping balloons that have the slogan “Nobody knows science” printed on them. The footage was taken in Berlin and Italy over a period of two years. In close proximity one finds a pink monochrome painting (1991), as an example of Friedl's exploration of colour as language and medium. *New Kurdish Flag* (1994–2001) uses colour as a means to reflect on a concrete object—the flag (and logo) of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)—and its

political history as a symbol of resistance. The flag's original red colour has been brightened to pink; the programmatic star in the center is cut out and missing.

Playgrounds (1995–2021) is one of Friedl's longterm projects showing documentary-style photos of play areas taken by the artist around the globe. The pictures play with the genre of conceptual photography and research underscoring urban typologies of modernist planning, which can be interpreted as a remnant of twentieth-century utopias. While place and time are stated, the distanced view (always through the same analogue camera), which favours aesthetics over functionality, emphasizes their apparent similarities and diversity. The work contains over 1,200 digitized color slides arranged alphabetically according to the location names.

For his first retrospective in 1998, Peter Friedl asked the entire staff of the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels what animal they had once in their life wanted to be. Then the costumes of all named animals were produced and laid out on the floor for visitors to be used. As a child, transformation and disguise are still the same. The wish of becoming an animal is one full of ferocity and excitement that is pervasive in a child's imagination. *Peter Friedl* (1998) is a retrospective in the most literal sense with its reference to early beginnings. This piece is put into dialogue with *King Kong* (2001), a multi-layered video installation contemplating the *King Kong* narrative. Staged as a music video of sorts, the work is situated in Sophiatown in Johannesburg, an important place within South Africa's Apartheid history, and also the location for the jazz musical *King Kong* (1959) based on the story of heavyweight boxing icon, Ezekiel "King Kong" Dhlamini. It is in Sophiatown where singer-songwriter Daniel Johnston recites his own *King Kong* song, a retelling of the legendary *King Kong* film, while children around him play and listen. Adjacent to this installation is *Index on Censorship I–V* (1998), enlarged doodles and 'fan' letters—photographed on differently coloured backgrounds—that the artist received from two Turkish girls in Berlin, who lived in the same building at the time.

The notion of scale and model play a pivotal role in Friedl's artistic practice. *Rehousing* (2012–2019) is presented in two rooms and consists of 12 true-to-scale models that reproduce historical, sometimes destroyed, or never realised housing structures. They are "case studies for the mental geography of an alternative modernity" (Friedl). The first model (*Gründbergstraße 22*, 2012) is the artist's childhood home in Austria; following models comprise of Ho Chi Minh's private residence, a traditional stilt house structure in Hanoi (*Uncle Ho*, 2012); a slave hut on the Evergreen plantation established in Louisiana in the eighteenth century (*Evergreen*, 2013); a never realized residential building in the *razionalismo* style designed by Luigi Piccinato for East Africa during the Fascist era (*Villa tropicale*, 2012–13); a replica of philosopher Martin Heidegger's cabin in the Black Forest (*Heidegger*, 2014); a reconstruction of a shack built by African refugees in Berlin and taken down by the police in 2014 (*Oranienplatz*, 2014); a so-called "nail house" or *dingzihu*—representing one of many local structures resisting the Chinese building boom (*Holdout*, 2016); and one of the few derelict buildings left from Van Molyvann's *100 Houses* project completed in 1967 for employees of National Bank of Cambodia in Phnom Penh (*101*, 2016). The dome construction is from *Drop City*, the short-lived hippie commune founded in Southern Colorado in 1965 and abandoned in the mid-1970s, which implemented Buckminster Fuller's geodesic design principles into DIY buildings (*Dome*, 2016); a container home comes from a refugee camp in Jordan (*Azraq*, 2016). The two most recent models show Winnie and Nelson Mandela's former home in Soweto, now transformed into a museum (*8115 Vilakazi Street*, 2018–2019) and one of the prefabricated container houses that made up Amona—the Israeli outpost in the Palestinian territories on the West Bank, which was cleared in 2017 (*Amona*, 2018–2019);

Rehousing is installed close to two videos: *Dummy* (1997) and *Liberty City* (2007), each of them offering a different perspective on socio-political realities. *Dummy* (produced for documenta X) portrays a scene in which the protagonist – the artist himself –, frustratedly and fruitlessly, kicks a cigarette machine in a pedestrian underpass in Kassel. When leaving

he is stopped by a begger asking him for money. As he refuses the person kicks the protagonist. In *Liberty City* (2007), Friedl addresses a historical scene from 1979 when black motorcyclist Arthur McDuffie was stopped by white police officers and beaten to death. When the accused policemen were acquitted five months later, riots broke out in Liberty City. Friedl inverts the dramatic structure by restaging the scene, filmed on site, in which the white cop is being beaten up. The uncut sequence is shot from the perspective of a possible eyewitness in the streets of the *Liberty Square Housing Project*, a residential complex built during the Roosevelt era in the 1930s for African American residents. To keep the black and white communities separated, a wall was erected on the eastern boundary of Liberty Square, the remains of which can still be seen today.

Main Hall

Walking down into KW's main hall, the visitor encounters four delicately handcrafted marionettes standing on the ground and hanging on their strings from the gallery ceiling. *The Dramatist (Black Hamlet, Crazy Henry, Giulia, Toussaint)* (2013) embodies the figures of Toussaint Louverture, the multi-faceted leader of the Haitian Revolution in 1791, who helped shape the first independent nation in the Caribbean; Henry Ford, the automobile magnate from Detroit, who perfected mass production; Giulia Schucht, the wife of Antonio Gramsci; and John Chavafambira, a Manyika *nganga* who moved from his home in Zimbabwe to Johannesburg in the late 1920s and became the subject of the novelistic narrative *Black Hamlet* (1937) by South African psychoanalyst Wulf Sachs. By bringing these four characters together, Friedl opens new possibilities for reflection on how historiography is being constructed. On the opposite walls, there is a selection of more than 150 drawings created by the artist between 1964 (when Friedl was four years old) and late 2021. The long timeline that binds them together doesn't feign any chronology.

The central space of the main hall hosts two of Friedl's most prominent works: *Theory of Justice* (1992–2010) and *Report* (2016). The title *Theory of Justice* refers to the attempt at renewing social contract theory undertaken in the early 1970s by US philosopher John Rawls (1921–2002). Friedl adheres to a rigid system of newspaper and magazine clippings collected over the course of roughly two decades and displayed in specifically designed showcases following solely the chronology of the documented, depicted events. By omitting any further information on context and time, Friedl creates a new narrative—of protest and resistance—that is based purely on imagery and selection. Cinematographically, *Report* (2016) is perhaps the most complex of Friedl's film installations. The source text is *A Report to an Academy* (1917), Franz Kafka's short story about Red Peter, an ape who reports on his experience of becoming human. Set in the National Theatre in Athens, twenty-four performers—mostly amateur actors—appear on stage and recite extracts from Kafka's monological text, either in their own first languages or in languages of their choice, including Arabic, Dari, English, French, Greek, Kurdish, Russian, and Kiswahili. German, the text's original language, and subtitles are deliberately left out. What unites the people on stage are their physical presence, gestures, speech, and the fact that many of them came to Greece in the wake of recent immigration movements.

No prey, no pay (2018–19) is a continuation of Friedl's long-standing interest in looking at outcast and marginalised positions differently and within. As a starting point, the theatrical installation refers to the heyday of piracy between the 1650s and the 1730s. *No prey, no pay* consists of a cast of distinctive fringe characters whose fascinating biographies are situated somewhere between reality, fiction, and legend. To each of these characters, Friedl dedicates a colourful plinth or pedestal like those used in a circus, beneath an apocryphal Jolly Roger (entitled *King Death*), with pirate costumes lying around. The pedestals are both sculptures and tiny stages, reminiscent of *Speakers' Corners*, waiting to be activated.

Pogo Bar

For *Study for Social Dreaming* (2014–2017), Friedl arranged two public *Social Dreaming* sessions—loosely based on W.Gordon Lawrence's method—in a small theatre in Rome as part of his workshop on *Exercises in Imagination*. Struck by Charlotte Beradt's anthology *The Third Reich of Dreams* (a record, first published in 1966, of dreams dreamed between 1933 and 1939), which highlighted the social dimension of dreams and the role they can play as documents within political and historical anthropology, Lawrence started hosting weekly *Social Dreaming Sessions* together with a psychoanalyst in London in 1982. Following Friedl's invitation, the participants were supervised and guided by two psychologists, sharing and telling each other their dreams without any prior instructions. *Study for Social Dreaming* uses the original footage filmed by several cameras during the two sessions. The fragmented montage blurs the actual chronology and creates a mockumentary of sorts.

Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen

Assistant Curator: Léon Kruiswijk

Kindly supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin, the Austrian Ministry for Art, Culture, Public Service and Sports, and the Austrian Cultural Forum.

Biography

Peter Friedl (b. 1960) is an artist based in Berlin. His work has been exhibited internationally, including at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Moscow Museum of Modern Art; Museo Tamayo Arte contemporáneo, México, D.F.; Hamburger Kunsthalle. He has participated in documenta 10, 12, and 14 (1997, 2007, 2017); the 48th and 56th Venice Biennale (1999, 2015); 3rd Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art (2004); Manifesta 7, Trento (2008); the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008); the 28th Bienal de São Paulo (2008); *La Triennale*, Paris (2012); the Taipei Biennial (2012, 2016); the 10th Shanghai Biennale (2014); the 1st Anren Biennale (2017), and Sharjah Biennial 14 (2019).

Selected solo exhibitions include *King Kong*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2001); *luttesdesclasses*, Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne (2002); *OUT OF THE SHADOWS*, Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2004); *Work 1964–2006*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Miami Art Central, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille (2006–07); *Blow Job*, Kunsthall Extra City, Antwerp (2008); *Working*, Kunsthalle Basel (2008); *Peter Friedl*, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2010); *The Dramatist*, Artspace, Auckland, (2014); *The Diaries*, Centre d'art contemporain – La synagogue de Delme (2014); *The Diaries*, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (2016); *Teatro Popular*, Lumiar Cité, Lisbon (2017); *Teatro*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2019); *Teatro*, Carré d'Art – Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes (2019).

Since the 1980s, Peter Friedl has published numerous essays (e.g., in *Theater heute*, *springerin*, *e-flux journal*, *South Magazine-documenta 14*) and book projects such as *Kromme Elleboog* (2001), *Four or Five Roses* (2004), *Theory of Justice 1992–2006* (2006), *Working at Copan* (2007), *Playgrounds* (2008), *Secret Modernity: Selected Writings and Interviews 1981–2009* (2010), *Images at War* (2015), *Rehousing* (2019).

Public Program

Lecture by Dr. Mischa Twitchin

Sprechen Sie Löwe? Addressing imitations of the foreign by the familiar

23 February 22, 7 pm

In English

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Walk-through with Ana Teixeira Pinto:

The Reliable Narrator

27 February 22, 2 pm

In English

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Walk-through with Raimar Stange

zur minor art

24 March 22, 6 pm

In German

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Lecture by Mieke Bal

To be or not to be: No Con-Cept

28 March 22, 7 pm

In English

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Focus tour

with Raoul Zoellner

I wish they'd never told me that my playground was just a parking lot

6 April 22, 5 pm

In English

Registration via mediation@kw-berlin.de

Lecture by Hilde van Gelder

Radical Neutrality

13 April 22, 7 pm

In English

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Focus tour

with Barbara Campaner

Mit Wörtern gehen. Offener Schreibworkshop

27 April 22, 5 pm

In German

Registration via mediation@kw-berlin.de

Walk-through with Krist Gruijthuijsen

28 April 22, 6 pm

In English

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Schering Stiftung Award for Artistic Research 2020: Rabih Mroué *Under the Carpet* 1 February – 1 May 22

Rabih Mroué (b. 1967, LB) is the 2020 recipient of the Schering Stiftung Award for Artistic Research, which is supported by the State of Berlin. Over the past three decades, Mroué has developed an acclaimed body of work spanning theatre, the visual arts and literature, in the roles of theatre director, actor, visual artist, and playwright. Working at the intersection of personal and political history as well as media criticism and concepts of authorship, his complex and engaging practice has secured Mroué's position as a key figure in both contemporary Lebanese art and the global conceptual artist community.

According to Mroué, his work deals with issues and perspectives in contemporary Lebanese and Middle Eastern politics, which have been, and still are, neglected and disregarded. In an attempt to reflect this neglect, Mroué ceaselessly points to the power of images, exploring their precarious relationship with both truth-telling and deception as well as that between fact and fiction. Between what pictures can tell us, without talking, and what speech, in turn, provides in between the lines, the exhibition *Under the Carpet* at KW Institute for Contemporary Art constitutes a survey of Mroué's work to date abiding artistic concerns while debuting a suite of newly commissioned works.

The artist's personal and professional biography is closely intertwined with Lebanon's political history. Growing up during the country's extensive civil war, marked by exhausting guerilla warfare and abominable carnage, he observed how the accelerated circulation of media images was turned into imperative (political) tools used for rendering the conflict, shaping its narratives and controlling collective memory, affecting not only for the artist but also the people in the region.

In 1989, Mroué received a degree in theatre from the Lebanese University in Beirut. Here, he met his partner, Lina Majdalanie, who also became his trusted collaborator. Staging critical inquiries by using theater and performance strategies, Mroué and Majdalanie were pushing the boundaries of Lebanese theatre, taking it beyond its traditional spaces and towards more conceptual expression—staging performances in unconventional venues like provisional storage houses and domestic homes. With a disregard for the dualism of non-mediated and mediated reality, Mroué later took his inquiries into the becoming of the image and its political power to the medium of video performance, further probing image production in the age of digital technology.

In 2004, Mroué started his ongoing series of 'non-academic lectures'—performative talks integrating sourced visual material, moving images, documentary, and fiction—which took their cues from the recent political turmoil in Lebanon and the surrounding regions, including the July War in Lebanon (2006), the Arab Spring (2010–2011) and the Syrian civil war (since 2011). Throughout this practice, Mroué has repeatedly sought to deconstruct the image, often by searching for, appropriating, and reenacting its flaws. His critical inquiries into images of conflict and protest can be seen in the non-academic lectures *On Three Posters* (2004), *Make Me Stop Smoking* (2006), *The Inhabitants of Images* (2009), *Sand in the Eyes*

(2018), as well as in his groundbreaking work, *The Fall of a Hair, Part 1: The Pixelated Revolution* (2011–2012), which elaborates on the democratic potential of mobile phones during the protests in Syria. In his trademark lectures, Mroué pixelates the narrative of the image, disrupting its integrity as a historical document by using strategies of essayistic montage.

In his more subtle works on paper as well as collages and sound pieces, poetic contemplation abounds as Mroué traverses his personal archive, family misfortune, and the dialectical nature of memory. Employing other montage strategies like repetition and reenactment, Mroué instead offers a place to the forgotten, the blanks, and that which evades documentation altogether, as seen in the works *The Ideas Under Construction* (1997–2021), *I Swear with Fire and Iron* (2013) and the monumental work *Diary of a Leap Year* (2006–2016).

For his exhibition at KW, Mroué accomplished major new productions, including the two large-scale cinematic pieces *Images Mon Amour* (2021) and *The Other, the Unknown Other and Other Stories* (2021), as well as re-stagings of his ongoing series of so-called non-academic lectures for video, which will be seen for the first time in recorded form. Arranged across two floors, his new material is set within various constellations of works drawn from the last twenty years. While KW's first floor is dedicated to moving images, which are on display without verbal explanation, the second floor stages an abundance of formats, including speech, text, and documentary material, conveying the intense polyvocality of the artist's approach to narrative.

Published together with the exhibition is a new anthology of interviews with Mroué, framing the last twenty years of his practice (2001–2021). Thematically, too, throughout twenty conversations, the publication revolves around ways of speaking (in scripted conversations, confessions, reports, questions). Alongside historical documents, it features a collection of newly commissioned interviews with Lisa Deml, Maria Hlavajova, Charlotte Klonk, Lina Majdalanie, and Nadim Samman, as well as an introductory essay by the latter, who is also the curator of the exhibition *Under the Carpet*. The interviews contribute to creating even more tentative versions of Rabih Mroué, in his own words.

Curator: Nadim Samman

Assistant Curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

The exhibition is part of the Schering Stiftung Award for Artistic Research 2020 and realised with financial support from the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin.

KW Biography

Rabih Mroué (b. 1967, LB) lives and works in Berlin. Mroué is an actor, director, playwright, visual artist, and a contributing editor for *The Drama Review* (TDR), New York.

He has had solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Mainz (2016); MoMA New York (2015); Kunsthalle Mulhouse (2015); SALT, Istanbul (2014); Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid (2013); Documenta, Kassel (2012); Kunstverein Stuttgart (2011); and BAK, Utrecht (2010). He has participated in major group exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art Boston (2018); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2017); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2016); MACBA, Barcelona (2015); Performa 09, New York (2009); 11th International Istanbul Biennial (2009); Queens Museum of Art, New York (2009); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2008); and Tate Modern, London (2007).

His works are in the collections of the MoMA New York, Centre Pompidou Paris, SFMOMA San Francisco, the Art Institute of Chicago, CA2M Madrid, MACBA Barcelona, and the Van Abbe Museum Rotterdam, among others. Mroué is a co-founder of the Beirut Art Center and a long time collaborator with Ashkal Alwan, who have produced many of his performances.

Public Program

Curator's tour with Nadim Samman

6 March 22, 2 pm

In English

Admission: Free during Museum Sunday Berlin

Focus tour

with Jeanne-Ange Wagne

16 March 22, 5 pm

In english

Registration via mediation@kw-berlin.de

Non-academic lecture

Rabih Mroué

Before Falling Seek the Assistance of Your Cane

30 April 22, 8:30 pm

In English

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Curator's tour with Sofie Krogh Christensen

1 May 22, 2 pm

In German

Admission: Free during Museum Sunday Berlin

Oraib Toukan

What Then

19 February – 1 May 22

1.

Krist Gruijthuijsen & Léon Kruijswijk: The exhibition *What Then* stems from your long-standing research on the afterlife of ‘cruel images’, or mediated images of encounters with violence. Your research explores the line between looking at and looking away from such images. Your practice proposes to move beyond the dichotomy of outcry and indifference and return to *seeing*. What is your motivation to do so?

Oraib Toukan: Sometimes one is frequented by an image that feels like spotting a lone particle of glitter on one’s skin. You do not know where it came from and why it is sitting on the fleshy web space between your thumb and index finger, but it is there now and has your attention. For me, this particle was a frame by the late photographer and cinematographer, Hani Jawharieh, which he captured in the aftermath of the 1967 war with Israel. It was possibly one of the earliest depictions of the dead Palestinian body on 16mm film, recorded by a fellow Palestinian. Not unlike Audre Lorde’s line in the poem *Afterimages*—‘however the image enters its force remains within my eyes’—, this figure became what Ariella Aïsha Azoulay would call a ‘companion’ for me to explore the afterlife of degrading, and degraded, images.

2.

KG & LK: In your practice, you use post-production as a medium with which you study the complexity of representations of violence in photography, film, text, and speech. By pitting images of the tender and the mundane against imaginations of the horrific in one work, or re-editing discovered and restored archival images of bodies in struggle in another, you ask: What lies outside the frame of suffering? Abstraction and close-up studies of the image are essential to your work, sometimes almost to the level of the pixel grain, sometimes made opaque. What do you seek and find at this level, being so close to the material?

OT: Besides being seen, images truly need to be handled. It is during the intimate tactile phase of post-production that we might fathom something about them, simply based on where we are standing, inside the blur, the grain, or the pixel. I insist on filming and editing myself, in impromptu productions, because that is where I discover the most. It is after the blur, after the indefinite, where we tend to meet what feels definite. But it is also from deep inside of images, in thinking of them as containers, that we realize just how much we may have been devoured by the rigidity of the frame—made captives inside a hermetic square, with many more frames still inside it. Abstraction is key to decoloniality—key to understanding beyond a single ‘point of view’. In a way it is not unlike the claim behind a child’s painting: ‘It’s a tree, because I say it’s a tree.’

3.

KG & LK: In *Via Dolorosa*, you worked with the early cinematography of the late Hani Jawharieh, which he captured between 1967–69. You found it hidden in piles of friendship and solidarity films from former Soviet cultural centers in Amman, Jordan, which had been thrown away. You slowed down, zoomed into, and re-assembled this material. The video is accompanied by commentary from the literary and film scholar Nadia Yaqub. Exploring the tactile, relational space of the frame of suffering, *Via*

Dolorosa (Latin translation of the Arabic ‘Way of Suffering’) is itself a processional route that Jawharieh filmed in the city of his birth, Jerusalem. What did you see in these close studies of archival footage?

OT: Jawharieh and his colleagues dedicated themselves to showing the crimes committed against their communities. But before the unsteady, precarious, and pursuing shots of his militant years, to me, he was somewhat a formalist with enormous care and attention to detail. Jawharieh belonged to Jerusalem’s pluralist, secular communities, which had various rituals and ceremonies of public grieving. What arrangements, icons and signs drew him in? Elsewhere, from a tilt and a pan, I found that he must have also emancipated himself—from seeing the refugee as a victim of humiliating conditions to seeing the refugee as a radical political being. After all, he too was a refugee—but not a camp-dweller. I also saw many who looked straight back at him, some appearing uneasy with being filmed. In his processing of the effects of the war for the Jordanian Ministry of Information and Culture, I saw that he, too, might have been negotiating with “unshowable” images. However, like a planet changing orbits, Jawharieh’s gaze was transformed after the war. By leaping into these frames, and slowly treading across them, I was able to reframe the relations and situations I found in them. But it is only from the writings of one of his childhood friends, the artist Vladimir Tamari, who was exiled in Tokyo, that I understood just how funny and playful he also was and how revolutionary narratives can obscure that. My own free, naïve, and somewhat voyeuristic associations of color, sounds, and textures, that I found in the pile of Soviet propaganda was perhaps in this vein.

4.

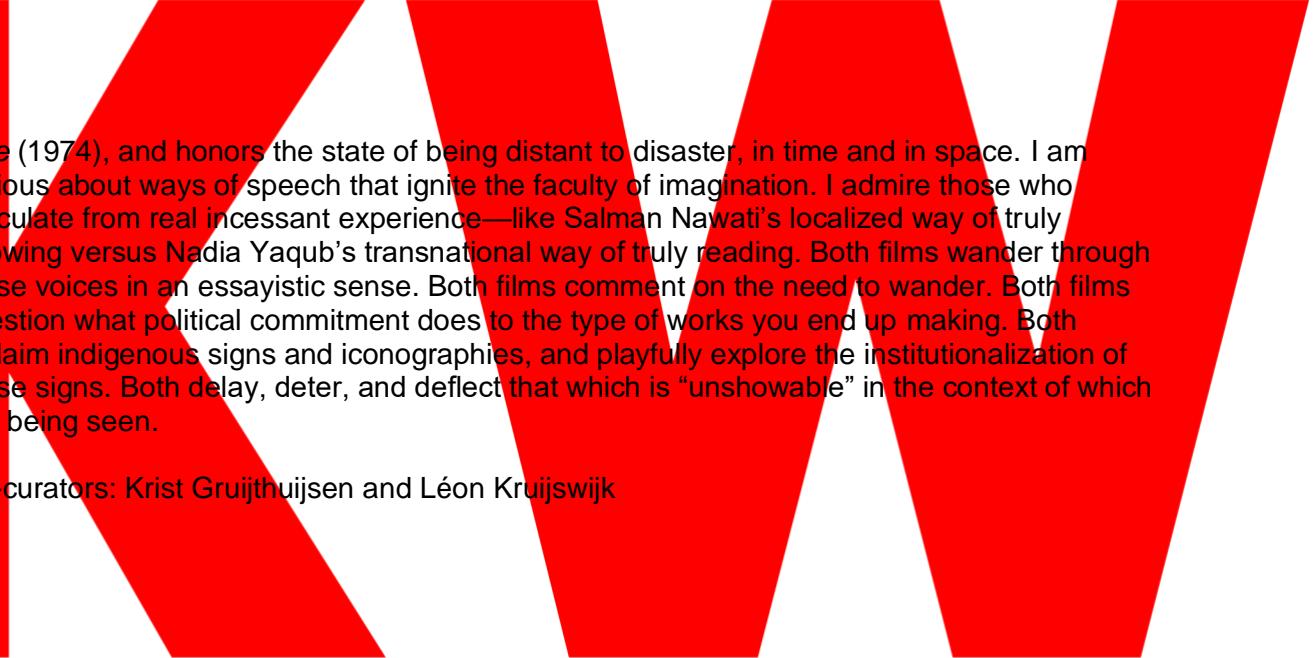
KG & LK: In *The Offing*, you re-center relationality as a way into the ‘unrenderable essence’ of sound and subjectivity. Taking the spoken (online) voice of artist Salman Nawati inside Gaza and setting it against footage shot by you outside Gaza, the film departs from the 2021 war on Gaza. Nawati and you convene online on a weekly basis with other Gaza-based artists and writers to read key Arabic literary works and Arabic-translations of texts like Susan Sontag’s *Regarding the Pain of Others*. How would you describe relationality here?

OT: Right before the war, we were actually reading Virginia Woolf’s *Death of a Moth*. By minutely observing the will of a moth to live, Woolf speaks about death without necessarily showing it. She relates to struggle, first and foremost, as a desire to live. The problem is that cruel images shut down the faculty of language altogether—you cannot formulate words about the cruelty being seen. That is the point: to incapacitate voices and bodies from speaking and mobilizing. Cruel images eclipse the life that sites of struggle seek, and their strategies for survival, which are often based on love of life. Cruel images instead dehumanize these sites as uninhabitable and unbearable—their communities as accustomed to violence. What narratives escape that frame—and that do so all the more buoyantly? And how exactly do these subjectivities ‘sound out’? Solidarity, like sound frequencies, travels in fragile waves. We seem to increasingly tune in and tune out of calamity. Judith Butler’s ideas around relationality are central here to understanding the “I” with which the film begins—and binding it to the “us” and “they” the film ends with. Just like Nawati’s horizon, the line at which the sky and the earth appear to touch each other, subjectivities meet, collude, and collide toward lives we can project with others.

5.

KG & LK: The two videos have different distances in time and space to the moments that they depict. In *Via Dolorosa* you work with archival footage against 1980s Soviet and Maoist friendship or solidarity films, while *The Offing* is an account of the immediate aftermath of the 2021 war on Gaza. What did you learn from working with these different positions in time and space to the materials and occurrences? And how would you relate these different videos to each other?

OT: With a question perhaps: Can treating the historic image of suffering help us understand the contemporary condition of scrolling through others’ encounters with violence? The title of the exhibition borrows from Jabra Ibrahim Jabra’s verse *What then, What do we do with our*



love (1974), and honors the state of being distant to disaster, in time and in space. I am curious about ways of speech that ignite the faculty of imagination. I admire those who articulate from real incessant experience—like Salman Nawati's localized way of truly knowing versus Nadia Yaqub's transnational way of truly reading. Both films wander through these voices in an essayistic sense. Both films comment on the need to wander. Both films question what political commitment does to the type of works you end up making. Both reclaim indigenous signs and iconographies, and playfully explore the institutionalization of those signs. Both delay, deter, and deflect that which is "unshowable" in the context of which it is being seen.

Co-curators: Krist Gruijthuijsen and Léon Kruiswijk

Biography

Oraib Toukan (b. 1977, US) is an artist and scholar affiliated with EUME at the Forum Transregionale Studien. Until 2015 she was head of the Arts Division and Media Studies program, Bard College/ Al Quds University, and visiting tutor at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford where she completed her PhD in 2019. Exhibition venues include Akademie der Künste Berlin, CCA Glasgow, Mori Art Museum, Asia Pacific Triennial, Istanbul Biennale, Heidelberger Kunstverein Biennale für aktuelle Fotografie, Qalandia International, Ural Industrial Biennial, Kyiv Biennial, and Images Festival Toronto. Toukan is also author of *Sundry Modernism: Materials for a Study of Palestinian Modernism* (Sternberg Press, 2017) among other publications.

Public Program

Collective Poetry Reading

with Sana Tannoury-Karam, Sara Mourad and

Oraib Toukan

16 March 22, 7 pm

In English

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Curator's tour with Léon Kruijswijk

3 April 22, 2 pm

In German

Admission: free during Museum Sunday Berlin

Artist talk with Oraib Toukan

What Then,

What do we do with our love?

6 April 22, 6 pm

In English

In cooperation with Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe (EUME), a research program at the Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin

Registration via reservation@kw-berlin.de

Education and Art Mediation

KW Institute for Contemporary Art's education and art mediation program takes up themes and questions from the institution's wide-ranging artistic exhibition and event program and develops them further together with visitors, trying to expand in its own formats on themes sparked within the program.

This approach is applied in workshops, guided tours, and long-term cooperations with multiple groups. We work with high schools, universities, artists, art mediators, researchers and different communities from Berlin in various formats throughout the year.

Guided Tours

Short tours with KW Guides

Our KW Guides are in the exhibitions during regular opening hours and offer free guided one-on-one tours for individuals. Our KW Guides can be contacted at any time for individual tours or if you have any questions. The short tours are free of charge.

Public guided tours on weekends

KW offers free public guided tours in the current exhibitions. Each guided tour lasts 60 minutes. You can register in advance via the Museumsdienst Berlin website or on the day prior to the tour at our counter desk. Please note, that you also need to buy a time-slot ticket for the exhibitions at KW or book a time slot for the Museum Sunday Berlin.

Peter Friedl: Report 1964–2022

Saturday, in English: 19 February 22, 12 March 22, 2+23 April 22, at 4 pm
Sunday, in German: 20 February 22, 13 March 22, 3 April 22 (Museum Sunday Berlin), 24 April 22, at 4 pm
Sunday, in English: 6 March 22, at 4 pm (Museum Sunday Berlin)

Rabih Mroué: Under the Carpet

Saturday, in English: 26 February 22, 19 March 22, 9+30 April 22, at 4 pm
Sunday, in German: 27 February 22, 20 March 22, 3 April 22 (Museum Sunday Berlin), 10 April 22, 1 May 22 (Museum Sunday Berlin), at 4 pm

Oraib Toukan: What Then

Saturday, in English: 5+26 March 22, 16 April 22, at 4 pm
Sunday, in German: 6 March 22 (Museum Sunday Berlin), 27 March 22, 17 April 22, at 4 pm
Sunday, in English: 1 May 22 (Museum Sunday Berlin), at 4 pm

Guided tours for private groups

For groups in German and English, further languages upon request

60 Minutes

Price: 70 € / reduced 55 € + reduced admission fee (Free admission to visitors up to and including 18)

For inquiries regarding the booking of private group tours, please contact Museumsdienst Berlin.

Museumsdienst Berlin

Tel.: +49 (0)30 247 49 888

Mon–Fri: 9 am–4 pm, Sat–Sun: 9 am–1 pm

E-Mail: museumsdienst@kulturprojekte.berlin

Guided tours in German Sign Language

For selected exhibitions, KW produces virtual guided tours in German Sign Language.

Upcoming dates and past virtual tours will be available shortly via KW's website.

Prior registration via mediation@kw-berlin.de

Upcoming Exhibitions

12th Berlin Biennale
11 June – 18 September 22
Curator: Kader Attia

KW Digital:
Rachel Rossin
Digital Commission
14 – 18 September 22
Curator: Nadim Samman

Pause: Lydia Ourahmene
1 October 22 – onwards
Curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

Michel Majerus
Early Works
22 October 22 – 22 January 23
Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen
Assistant curator: Leon Kruijswijk

Christopher Kulendran Thomas
in collaboration with Annika Kuhlmann
22 October 22 – 22 January 23
Curator: Krist Gruijthuijsen
Assistant curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

Atiéna R. Kilfa
22 October 22 – 22 January 23
Curator: Anna Gritz
Assistant curator: Sofie Krogh Christensen

BPA // Berlin program for artists exhibition
3 December 22 – 22 January 23
Curator: Leon Kruijswijk

*Titles and exhibition dates are subject to change
As of: 18 February 22*

General Information

KW Institute for Contemporary Art
KUNST-WERKE BERLIN e. V.

Auguststraße 69
10117 Berlin
Tel. +49 30 243459-0
info@kw-berlin.de
kw-berlin.de

Opening Hours

Wednesday–Monday 11 am–7 pm

Thursday 11 am–9 pm

Closed on Tuesday

Modified opening hours during Gallery Weekend on Friday, 29 April 22, 11 am–9 pm

Admission

8 € / reduced 6 €

berlinpass holders 4 €

Reduction is valid for students, those in community service, BBK members, unemployed, and disabled persons (at least 50 % “GdB”) upon presentation of relevant identification.

Free admission to people up to and including 18, Friends of KW and Berlin Biennale, KW Lover*, on Thursday evenings from 6–9 pm, during Museum Sunday Berlin and during Gallery Weekend, 29 April 22, 6–9 pm

Accessibility

The courtyard of KW is paved with cobblestones.

Please ring the designated doorbell at the main entrance gate (underneath the doorbell panel), our staff members will assist you while entering the building as well as Café Bravo. Please find more information on accessibility [here](#).

For further information, please contact our staff at +49 30 243459-69.

Hygiene measures

In accordance with the applicable standards of the State of Berlin, comprehensive hygiene measures have been taken to protect visitors and staff. The total number of visitors permitted into each floor of the exhibition is limited and depends on the current regulations. Updated information will be available on our website. Wearing a FFP2 mask is obligatory during your stay at KW.

We look forward to your visit!