

Overexposure

Peripheral Stories (2005, 28min) Hala Elkoussy, *Egypt 1974

The point of departure of my work is how identity is constructed, transformed and expressed through the making, coding and consumption of an image. Within the parameters of a visual culture which is trying to come to terms with an inherited discouragement of figurative representation, there is a continuous feeding-off, assimilation, recycling and adaptation of western popular and mass media imagery.

Control of the content of news, literature, and art production manifests itself officially through stringent censorship laws, and unofficially through conservative currents that direct public life and foster self-censorship. Existing within a cultural system in which the photographic, except in the context of family photography and advertising, is viewed with skepticism, even feared, my practice attempts to coin a personal/public language.

I take my cue from the codes of mainstream modes of visual expression, such as advertising, and proceed to push the boundaries of the "photographable" and the "photogenic". Meanwhile, I attempt to break down and question socially transfixed roles and the process of social integration/marginalization of difference.

My work is largely framed in the "art world" according to my place of origin and background as a Middle-Eastern woman. I am quite aware of the inevitability of such classifications in the absence of local informed critical readings. "Peripheral" art history is still authored in the "centre". The "unknown" tends to be read as a collective to simplify the process of assimilation and the processing of information about the unknown "other".

In my work, I build-in mechanisms which work against readings that reinforce and perpetuate preconceived reductionist ideas about my concerns as an individual. I attempt to broaden the viewer's experience of an artwork from the "periphery" as more than just a product of geography and politics, but as a fluid space for the interplay of personal, societal, conceptual and aesthetic concerns.

Ode to Joy (2005, 2min 26sec) Katarina Zdjelar, *Serbia 1979

The Ode to Joy is an ode written in 1785 by the German poet and historian Friedrich Schiller, and known especially for its musical setting in the fourth and final movement of Ludwig van Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The Ode to Joy was adopted as Europe's anthem by the Council of Europe in 1972, with an official arrangement for orchestra written by the Austrian conductor Herbert von Karajan in 2003. The EU chose Beethoven's music for the poem as the EU anthem, without German lyrics, because of the many different official languages used within the European Union. Therefore, the EU anthem is in effect the Beethoven theme (or melody) rather than Schiller's poem, although its connection with the ideal of human brotherhood in the text is understood. This ideal is stated in much more universal terms in Beethoven's adaptation „all human beings become brothers“ than in Schiller's original, which states that „beggars become the brothers of princes.“

My special interest with this project starts with the European Union as a binary model; not only because of non-EU coexistence and inhabitation of the cultural, social and geopolitical borders of the EU, but more with its a-priori established dualism through intergovernmental organization of the EU and its constant re-mapping. EU is a trans-national society, a meeting and melting point of similar and dissimilar cultural characteristics and, more importantly, it is a generator. By constitution of EU each member state's profile is modified/compromised/supplemented; physiognomy, language and sense of nationality are hybridized. But it is not finished; the process won't stop. The European Union has yet to grow.

In such a dualistic structure, where interior and exterior are interwoven and create shared history, the most important point that I work on within this project is the progressive potential of hybridization in terms of dramaturgy of that history (as the carrier of a identity) and the place where the performance can happen. Since history is a time-based chain of acts, I am seduced by the speculation of simultaneity in the historical acts of establishing and witnessing European identity and place.

Jap (2003, 9min 30sec) Meiro Koizumi, *Japan 1976

Whether or not to sing the national anthem at public ceremonies is a very hot issue in Japan today. Our national anthem is contaminated with the dirty history of WWII. Some nationalistic politicians are trying to make people sing it 'from the bottom of our hearts'. Some left wing minded people are refusing to sing it. But what would happen if someone sang it oddly or too loudly?

Freedom Border (2003) Yael Bartana, *Israel 1970

By manipulating form, sound, and movement, I create work to trigger personal resonance as I seek to answer the question "What is this place where I grew up?" Through personal, intimate reactions, I aim to provoke honest responses to replace the predictable, controlled reactions encouraged by the state.

Diary (2001, Book) Wartan Arror Jiftjian, *Libanon 1974

Deportation (1989, 12min) Avi Mograbi, *Israel 1956