

secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien
T. +43-1-587 53 07, F. +43-1-587 53 07-34
office@secession.at, www.secession.at

Press release

Emily Wardill

Night for Day

September 18 – November 8, 2020

Galerie

Press conference: Thursday, September 17, 2020, 11 a.m.

Please register at presse@secession.at

Open Day: Thursday, September 17, 2020, 2–8 p.m.

free admission

Emily Wardill's films, photographs, and objects probe the complexity of perception and communication, the question of how reality appears authentic to us, and the displacements of substance and form effected by the individual nature of the imagination. Her work has won acclaim for the sensual and psychologically fraught yet fractured narratives which she constructs. The films that she started making in the mid-2000s are typically defined by a narrative framework, but the plots as such tend to be secondary. The focus is on other aspects: the mechanics of storytelling, the relationship of imaginary space to language and the interplay between gesture and word.

In her exhibition at the Secession, Emily Wardill debuts her most recent film project, *Night for Day* (2020), an installation of film and sculptures that weave into one another, and the film *I gave my love a cherry that had no stone* (2016).

For *Night for Day* (2020), Wardill constructs a feigned mother-son relationship. Her source material is a series of extensive interviews with Isabel do Carmo, a revolutionary resistance fighter against the fascist regime in Portugal that fell in 1974, and two young men, Alexander Bridi and Djelal Osman, astrophysicists who run a startup in Lisbon that develops software enabling computers to recognize moving images. These different strands allow Wardill to, as she puts it, "think about what would happen if a communist revolutionary gave birth to a techno utopian, if gender as performativity was thought through the lens of women making the political decision to live clandestinely in Portugal for a large part of the twentieth century and if the 'Last Woman' were the fembot from *The Tales of Hoffman*."

How can utopian visions be articulated between the poles of modernity, nostalgia, and technology? How do ideologies consciously or unconsciously find expression in people's lives? How does the interaction

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between position, person, and body inform women's performance, and what sets the latter apart? These questions run through the film as a guiding thread; the narrative structure, by contrast, remains fragmentary. Wardill collages her filmic material in a form that undercuts illusion, deliberately generating discrepancies between image and sound and operating with blanks. Among the fragments she integrates into this narrative are diaristic moments, filmed sequences with props from her studio, 3D footage of ruins, found footage from films in which humans pretend to be machines or dress up as machines and pretend to be animals, and quotes that range from Hannah Arendt, who talked already in the 1950s about the undemocratic principles of tech, to more contemporary writers on the architectural underpinnings of narrative in Hollywood.

As a kind of imaginary home for her mother-and-son couple, Wardill chose the architect António Teixeira Guerra's family residence, which was completed just before 1974. She shot the material at the time he always chose to invite guests—the magic hour. The subtle play of the setting sun's rays, the breaking-down of delineations between objects and their shadows, and the way the architecture seems to blend in with its environment are difficult to capture with the camera, and so it often appears that the camera is searching for light and clarity. In the interplay with the narrative, the film thus repeatedly also draws attention to the recording technologies themselves and their own struggle to accurately render reality. For her installation at the Secession, Wardill weaves a sprawling web out of the video and the props she used in it: two suspended chairs, a witches ball that swings back and forth like a pendulum, cloths faded by sunlight, and a slide projector casting images of the moon into the room through the glass door. Roughly and perfunctorily painted walls underscore the impression of a sketch that is pretending to be a finished piece just as night was pretending to be day.

In the second film in the exhibition, *I gave my love a cherry that had no stone* (2016), a male dancer is seen wobbling and lurching through the twilight foyer of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon. His movements were shot by a camera person pretending to be a drone and a drone pretending to be immaterial. The camera glides through the modernist interior and takes on the nature of a figure in its own right. An empty white shirt appears as a third character, floating across the room and becoming embodied with air. The material and the invisible human presence or agency get mixed up in a space where time itself is able to make huge jumps backward and forward.

Emily Wardill was born in the UK and lives and works in Lisbon.

An artist's book by Emily Wardill will be released in conjunction with the exhibition.

The exhibition program is conceived by the board of the Secession.

Curator: Annette Südbeck

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Artist's book

Emily Wardill. *Night for Day*

Format: 13 x 19 cm

Details: Open thread binding, 168 pages, ca. 120 illustrations

Concept: Emily Wardill

Texts: Marta Kuzma, Kerstin Stakemeier

Text excerpts: Isabel do Carmo, Luigi Ghirri, Isabel Lindim, Sofia Ferreira, Alexander Kluge,

David Mourão-Ferreira, Hanna Proctor

Secession 2020

Distribution: Revolver Publishing

€ 33,-

A dummy for a book, faded on one side as though it were left outside for a summer and became two tone. *Night for Day*. As one state pretends to be another, and sketchbooks hold the energy of a human face gathering thoughts. Essays by Marta Kuzma on the outline of witches and Kerstin Stakemeier catching the speed of Ernst Mach who observes, "what we fear so much in death, the destruction of permanence, already occurs in life in abundance." (Emily Wardill)

Dialogue tour

Sunday, October 4, 4 p.m.

Dialogue tour through the exhibition by Emily Wardill with Annette Südbeck, curator, and Andreas Ungerböck, ray Filmmagazin (in German)

Press contact

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Press images

Installation views are available for download at <https://www.secession.at/en/presstype/aktuell/>

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Biografie / Biography Emily Wardill

Geboren in Großbritannien / born in the UK, lebt und arbeitet / lives and works in Lissabon / Lisbon.
2010 erhielt sie den Jarman Award / In 2010 she received the Jarman Award.

Einzelausstellungen (Auswahl) / Solo exhibitions (selection)

- 2019 *Emily Wardill: Bi*, Kohta, Helsinki
- 2017 *Matt Black and Rat*, Bergen Kunsthall, Bergen, Norway; The Calouste Gulbenkian Museum project space, Lissabon / Lisbon
- 2016 *When you fall into a trance*, Cinema Dynamo, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Genf / Geneva
- 2015 Bergen Kunsthalle, Bergen, Norwegen / Norway
The Palace, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg
- 2014 *When you fall into a trance*, Index Gallery, Stockholm; The Collection Museum, Lincoln, UK
- 2012 National Gallery of Denmark, Kopenhagen / Copenhagen
Full Firearms, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe; Serpentine Gallery, London;
Altman Siegel Gallery, San Francisco
Found himself in a walled garden on the top of a high mountain, and in the middle of it a tree with great birds on the branches, and fruit out of which, if you held a fruit to your ear, came the sound of fighting, Statens Museum for Kunst, Kopenhagen / Copenhagen
- 2011 *Sick Serena and Dregs and Wreck and Wreck*, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis
- 2010 *windows broken, break, broke together*, de Appel, Amsterdam
Game Keepers without Game, MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge;
Showroom, London; STANDARD, Oslo
- 2007 *Sick Serena and Dregs and Wreck and Wreck*, ICA, London

Gruppenausstellungen (Auswahl) / Group exhibitions (selection)

- 2018 *Everything is going to be fine*, Hessel Museum, CCS Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY
- 2017 The Biennale of Moving Images, Centre d'art contemporain, Genf / Geneva
Ur minnet, Lund Konsthalle, Lund, Schweden / Sweden
- 2016 *The Secret Life of Images*, Kunstverein Freiburg
- 2014 *You Imagine What you Desire*, 19th Biennale of Sydney, Sydney
Exhibition of Permanent Collection, Tate Britain, London
- 2013 *and materials and money and crisis*, MUMOK, Wien / Vienna
Assembly: A Survey of Recent Artists' Film and Video in Britain 2008-2013, Tate Modern, London
- 2011 ILLUMInations, 54. Biennale Venedig / Venice Biennale, Venedig / Venice
- 2009 *Beating the Bounds*, Tate Britain, London
- 2008 *Word Event*, Kunsthalle Basel
Whose History?, Oberhausen Film Festival, Oberhausen
- 2007 *Sick Serena and Dregs and Wreck and Wreck*, ICA, London
Depiction Perversion Repulsion Obsession Subversion, Witte de With, Rotterdam

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Werkliste / List of works Emily Wardill

Erster Raum / First Room

***Night for Day*, 2020**

Sound & Vision

Dauer / duration: 48 min.

***One*, 2020**

Stahl Stab, rosa Seil /

Steel bar, pink rope

Zweiter Raum / Second Room

***Triangle in the Round*, 2020**

Seil, Leinwand, Holz, verspiegelte Kugel, Kabel /

Rope, canvass, wood, mirrored sphere, wire

***Felt*, 2020**

Von der Sonne gebleichtes Billardtuch, Aluminium-Keilrahmen /

Snooker felt left out in the sun for 6 months, aluminium frame

***Half Life*, 2020**

Diaprojektor, Folie zum Abdunkeln des Fensters /

Slide projector, film to darken windows

Dritter Raum / Third Room

***I gave my love a cherry that had no stone*, 2016**

Sound & Vision

Dauer / duration: 8 min.

Courtesy die Künstlerin und / The artist and Carlier Gebauer, Berlin;
Altman Siegel, San Francisco; STANDARD Oslo

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Exhibitions

Hauptraum

Edi Hila. *The Sound of the Tuba*

September 18 – November 8, 2020

Galerie

Emily Wardill. *Night for Day*

September 18 – November 8, 2020

Grafisches Kabinett

Suellen Rocca

July 3 – November 8, 2020

Artist's books

Edi Hila. Maquettes, 144 pages, ca. 140 illustrations, € 33,-

Emily Wardill. Night for Day, 168 pages, ca. 120 illustrations, € 33,-

Permanent Presentation

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

Beethoven – Painting and Music in cooperation with Wiener Symphoniker

Opening hours

Tuesday – Sunday 2–6 p.m.

Beethoven Special

Saturday, October 3, 4 and 5 p.m.

Tours in German in cooperation with ORF Museumszeit,
please register at kunstvermittlung@secession.at

Dialogue tour

Sunday, October 4, 4 p.m.

Tour through the exhibition of Emily Wardill with Annette Südbeck and
Andreas Ungerböck, ray Filmmagazin (in German)

Curators' guided tour

Friday, October 16., 3 p.m.

Tour through the exhibitions by Edi Hila and Suellen Rocca with
Bettina Spörr and Jeanette Pacher

Nearly missed it?

Sunday, November 8, 5 p.m.

Last-minute guided tour through the exhibitions

Guided tours

Every Saturday at 2 p.m. in German, free of charge, without registration

Admission

Adults € 9,50 / Pupils, students and senior citizens € 6,-

Press images

download at <https://www.secession.at/en/presstype/aktuell/>

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