

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

Lawrence Abu Hamdan ***Green Coconuts and Other Inadmissible Evidence*** December 8, 2020 – February 7, 2021 Galerie

In both his art and his audio investigations, Lawrence Abu Hamdan grapples with sound, speech, memory, and the quest for truth in the context of today's legal and humanitarian crises. A central concern that is woven through many of his works, including sound and video installations, objects, and research-based documentaries, is his engagement with questions around the relevance and critique of acoustic clues and the reports of earwitnesses as part of the gathering of evidence in legal proceedings. In his exhibition at the Secession, the artist takes these concerns a step further. He presents altogether four works from two series that probe questions related to the witness testimony. The display takes a stand for other forms of witnessing that break the juridical framework for eye- and earwitnesses' statements and perhaps pose a more general challenge to our notions of law and justice, of truth and how it is established.

The audiovisual installation *After SFX* (2018) developed out of an inquiry conducted in cooperation with Amnesty International and Forensic Architecture in 2016 into the Syrian torture prison Saydnaya. Abu Hamdan interviewed former inmates and worked with them to compile a sound archive of the prison that would allow for inferences concerning its architecture, the conditions of detention, the number of prisoners, etc.

This project fundamentally changed his understanding of the complexity of memory and witnessing and gave him the conceptual tools that allowed him to make his subsequent body of work dealing with the testimony of reincarnated subjects.

The first in this series is *Once Removed* (2019). The two-channel video installation shows the artist in conversation with the young historian Bassel Abi Chahine about the latter's extensive archive. His obsessive analysis and unprecedented research into the Lebanese People's Liberation Army was done in pursuit of material to reconstitute flashbacks and unexplainable memories from a previous life. In his past incarnation, he was Yousef Fouad Al Jawhary, a soldier who died during a combat mission at the age of sixteen in 1984. Though Bassel has many memories of his life as Yousef, he has no sense of what he looked like.

The related second piece, the video *A Speculative Portrait (for a boy who returned without his face)* (2020) illustrates an attempt at facial reconstruction: the production of an image based on a childhood photograph of what Al Jawhary might have looked like as a young adult. The technique is normally used to sketch the likely current appearance of people who have been missing for a long time.

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For the Otherwise Unaccounted (2020) is a series of prints from which Abu Hamdan drew on Dr. Ian Stevenson's 1997 book *Reincarnation and Biology: The Etiology of Birthmarks*, a collection of cases from all over the world in which birthmarks correspond to the ways in which subjects died in their previous lives. The raised ink renderings of these birthmarks highlight the ways in which testimony is stored in the body of people for whom injustices and violence have otherwise escaped the historical record due to colonial subjugation, corruption, rural lawlessness and legal amnesty.

The works in the exhibition propose a different perspective on the concepts of witnessing, evidence, and the production of truth, which requires a different kind of listening as well. The artist characterizes the presentation's intention as follows: "The exhibition as a whole is developing specific formal and aesthetic strategies to produce conditions for listening to new kinds of testimony. Testimony that sits awkwardly in the forums we conventionally designate for the production of truth and history."

Lawrence Abu Hamdan was born in Amman, Jordan, in 1985 and currently lives and works in Dubai (UAE).

The exhibition program is conceived by the board of the Secession.
Curator: Bettina Spörr

Lawrence Abu Hamdan's work is supported by Alserkal Arts Foundation.

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Artist's book

Lawrence Abu Hamdan

Format: 15 x 22 cm

Details: Soft cover, adhesive binding, 232 pages (including 58 foldouts)

Concept: Lawrence Abu Hamdan

Texts: excerpts from various sources

ca. 60 illustrations

Secession 2020

Distribution: Revolver Publishing

€ 26,40

The ninety-six objects in this inventory are sourced from earwitness interviews Lawrence Abu Hamdan conducted as well as from trial transcripts across the globe. *After SFX* explores the ways we remember sound and the ways in which cinematic sound effects have created a collective acoustic unconscious. What is revealed is our difficulty in describing these memories when precision is vital. The objects listed here stand in for a missing sonic vocabulary, a language we do not yet speak.

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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Lawrence Abu Hamdan. *Green Coconuts and Other Inadmissible Evidence* Galerie

Ausstellungsdauer	December 8, 2020 – February 7, 2021
Artist's book	<i>Lawrence Abu Hamdan</i> , 232 pages, € 26,40
Opening hours	Tuesday – Sunday 2 – 6 p.m.
Permanent Presentation	Gustav Klimt, <i>Beethoven Frieze</i> ; <i>Beethoven – Painting and Music</i> in cooperation with the Wiener Symphoniker
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,-
Youtube	www.youtube.com/channel/UCllinc_V3Uz4C5Ucrb4DtSw
Instagram	www.instagram.com/viennasecession/
Facebook	www.facebook.com/SecessionWien/
Press contact	Karin Jaschke T. +43 1 587 53 07-10 E-Mail: presse@secession.at
Press images	download at https://www.secession.at/en/presstype/preview/ and https://www.secession.at/en/presstype/aktuell/

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Biografie / Biography Lawrence Abu Hamdan

1985 geboren / born in Amman, Jordanien / Jordan, lebt / lives in Dubai.

2019 Preisträger des Turner-Preises / Winner of the Turner Prize 2019 gemeinsam mit / with Helen Cammock, Oscar Murillo und / and Tai Shani

Einzelausstellungen (Auswahl) / Solo exhibitions (selection)

- 2020 Maureen Paley, London
This whole time there were no landmines, Towner Eastbourne, Eastbourne, UK
- 2019 Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai, UAE
The Voice Before the Law, Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin
Earwitness Theatre, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri, USA;
Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, Australia
- 2018 *Walled Unwalled*, Tate Tanks, Tate Modern, London
Hammer Projects: Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles
- 2016 *Contra-diction: Speech Against Itself*, Maureen Paley, London
Contra-Diction: Speech Against Itself (performance), Le Centre Pompidou, Paris
Earshot, Portikus, Frankfurt
- 2015 *Taqiyya*, Kunsthalle St. Gallen
- 2014 *Tape Echo*, part of Positions, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Niederlande / The Netherlands
- 2013 *Tape Echo*, Beirut in Cairo, Cairo / Kairo
- 2012 *Aural Contract: The Whole Truth*, Casco Utrecht, Niederlande / The Netherlands
Aural Contract: The Freedom of Speech Itself, the Showroom, London

Gruppenausstellungen (Auswahl) / Solo exhibitions (selection)

- 2020 *Art in the Age of Anxiety*, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
We Never Sleep, The Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt
NIRIN, The 22nd Biennale of Sydney (2020), Sydney
Paranoia TV, Steirischer Herbst, Graz
Biennale of Sydney, Sydney
- 2019 *Tell me about yesterday tomorrow*, NS-Dokumentationszentrum München, München / Munich
Turner Prize 2019, Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK
May You Live in Interesting Times, 58th Venice Biennale, Venedig / Venice
Making New Time, Sharjah Biennial 14: *Leaving the Echo Chamber*, Sharjah, UAE
- 2018 Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement 2018: *The Sound of Screens Imploding*, Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, Genf / Geneva
Public Art Munich 2018, München / Munich

- 74 million million million tons* (curated by Ruba Katrib and Lawrence Abu Hamdan),
SculptureCenter, New York
- 2017 *From Ear to Ear to Eye: Sounds and Stories from Across the Arab World*, Nottingham
Contemporary, Nottingham, UK
Manipulate the World, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden
Forensic Architecture – Towards an Investigative Aesthetic, MACBA, Barcelona
Tamawuj, Sharjah Biennial 13, Sharjah, UAE
We Are Everywhere, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago
- 2016 *The Eighth Climate (What Does Art Do?)*, Gwangju Biennial, Südkorea / South Korea
9th Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool, UK
Imperfect Chronology, Whitechapel Gallery, London
- 2015 *Political Populism*, Kunsthalle Wien, Wien / Vienna
Surround Audience, New Museum Triennial, New York
- 2014 *Social Factory*, 10th Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China
Transfigurations: Curatorial and Artistic Research in an Age of Migrations, MACBA, Barcelona
Ten Thousand Wiles and Tricks, Meeting Point 7, Beirut Art Center, Beirut, Libanon / Lebanon
- 2013 *Power*, Tate Modern, London
- 2012 Taipei Biennial, Taipei, Taiwan

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EXHIBITION PROGRAM 2021

February 19 – April 11, 2021

Tess Jaray, Hauptraum

b. Vienna, 1937; lives in London

February 19 – April 11, 2021

František Lesák, Galerie

b. Prague, 1943; lives in Vienna

February 19 – June 20, 2021

Yuji Agematsu, Grafisches Kabinett

b. Kanagawa, Japan, 1956; lives in New York

April 23 – September 5, 2021

Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel, Galerie

D. Dewar b. Forest of Dean, UK, 1976, lives in Brussels
G. Gicquel b. Saint-Brieuc, FR, 1975, lives in Plévenon, FR

May 13 – June 20, 2021

Maria Hassabi, Hauptraum

b. Nicosia, Cyprus, 1973; lives in New York and Athens

A joint project of the Vienna Secession and the Wiener Festwochen

July 2 – September 5, 2021

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Hauptraum

b. Strasbourg, 1965; lives in Paris

July 2 – September 5, 2021

Karimah Ashadu, Grafisches Kabinett

b. London, 1985; lives in Hamburg and Lagos

September 17 – beginning of November 2021

Danh Vo, Hauptraum

b. Bà Rịa, Vietnam, 1975; lives in Berlin and Mexico City

September 17 – beginning of November 2021

Carlos Bunga, Galerie

b. Porto, Portugal, 1976; lives in Barcelona

September 17 – beginning of November 2021

Rana Hamadeh, Grafisches Kabinett

b. Beirut, Lebanon, 1983; lives in Rotterdam

Mid-November 2021 – end of January 2022

Nairy Baghramian, Hauptraum

b. Isfahan, Iran, 1971; lives in Berlin

Mid-November 2021 – end of January 2022

Sarah Rapson, Galerie

b. London, 1959; lives in Bridport, UK

Mid-November 2021 – end of January 2022

Nora Turato, Grafisches Kabinett

b. Zagreb, 1991; lives in Amsterdam

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Permanent Presentation

Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*
Beethoven – Painting and Music in cooperation with Wiener Symphoniker

Admission

Beethoven Frieze & Contemporary Art Exhibitions
Adults € 9,50
Pupils, students and senior citizens € 6,-

Guided tours

Every Saturday at 2 p.m. in German
€ 3,- per person plus admission (without registration)

Press contact

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