

A Collective Memory

Installation, screening, talk and a newspaper intervention

Azin Feizabadi

Azin Feizabadi visited *Beirut* in February 2013. His presence is marked by different moments of public-ness and new reiterations of his ongoing project

A Collective Memory: Flags over *Beirut* (over Cairo), a lecture (or performance), a film evening with discussion, and an intervention in the weekly newspaper Egypt Independent. All of these take us through undefined time frames, where aesthetic-symbolic manifestations will address the ruptures of time embedded in revolutionary moments (through love or hypnosis).

The ongoing research project, A Collective Memory, was launched by Azin Feizabadi in 2009 as a response towards the socio-political transformations in Iran and further in the Middle East. The project is characterized by a poetic grammar that combats the three-act-narrative structure of history and story telling, capturing and collecting dreams, subjective histories and subconscious facts from the past, present and future historical events. Swaying between fiction and reality, aesthetics and politics, his films, installations or lecture-performances narratively connect between various transitional moments in recent history, spaces of political imagination and participation, to look for alternative ways of historiography that are based on notions of 'projection', 'specters' and 'time travel' rather than merely foreseeing the 'past'.

Physical Principles For The Choice Of Red, Green & Blue

This installation consisted originally of seven flags with cutout circles in their center, six colored ones and one white one. Reminiscent of revolutionary moments in history when symbols of a former regime were removed, sometimes directly cut out, from national flags, they indicated a cut through time in an undefined moment, a time in-between, when past and present change their meaning. The flags carried quotes from various political and cultural pamphlets of the past 105 years, printed on single color fabric. The different elements of the work were divided between Berlin and Cairo; the color cutouts and the plain white flag were installed in the Galerie im Koernerpark in Berlin; the colored flags and the white circle traveled with the artist to Cairo. An unknown incident took place over the first night after Azin's arrival in Cairo, causing all colors and text-fragments to disappear and resulting in six blank flags.

A Collective Memory: Poetics, Politics & Love Letters

This lecture-performance narratively links and thinks about what has taken place in Tunis 2011, Bucharest 1989, Quezon City 1986, or in Tehran 2009 – all as a result of *La Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon* at Le Salon Indien du Grand Café in Paris 1895. The evening includes film screenings of *La Jetee* by Chris Marker, *Iran – A Revolution Betrayed* by Ahsan Adib & Edward Mortimer, and *First Case, Second Case* by Abbas Kiarostami.

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See Indent section.

Azin Feizabadi (b. 1982, Teheran) is a Berlin based filmmaker and visual artist. His visit was made possible with support by ifa.

Film synopses

La Jetee, FR, 28min, 1965 by **Chris Marker**

Time travel, still images, a past, present and future and the aftermath of World War III. The tale of a man, a slave, sent back and forth, in and out of time, to find a solution to the world's fate. To replenish its decreasing stocks of food, medicine and energies, and in doing so, resulting in a perpetual memory of a lone female, life, death and past events that are recreated on an airport's jetée.

Iran–A Revolution Betrayed, IR/GB, 60min, 1983 by **A. Adib & E. Mortimer**

A Documentary, incorporating footage shot during the revolution in Iran by Ashan Adib, smuggled out of the country few years after, scripted and narrated by Edward Mortimer, looking at the history of the four and half years following the overthrow of the Shah.

First Case, Second Case, IR, 45min, 1979-1982 by **Abbas Kiarostami**

The opening scene sketches two cases of a situation, hence the title, and calls for taking a moral position on either side. What follows is a series of interviews and conversations with various people who have contrary opinions about the situation, their responses being mostly evasive and defensive

at first. As the film moves on, the responses become more decisive when the question is extended to a variety of public figures, many of them well-known today as some grew to build a career within the Islamic republic or were taken to the courts and put to death due to their political positions. Kiarostami's film stays unbiased when depicting the mindset of a group of people from various sects of Iran's political spectrum, challenging the interviewees as well as the spectators to project themselves into the situation and the consequences their decision would have. The film was banned by the Iranian authorities shortly after its premiere and considered lost for almost 30 years until it reappeared online in June 2009 at a time when the Iranian Green Movement was on the rise.

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