



To the press

Lawrence Abu Hamdan

«تقييه» (Taqiyya) – The Right to Duplicity»

11 July – 13 September 2015

Press preview: Friday, 10 July 2015, 11 a.m.

Opening: Friday, 10 July 2015, 6 p.m.

The works of Lawrence Abu Hamdan (*1985 in Amman/JOR, lives and works in London and Beirut) often explore the contemporary politics of listening and have taken the form of audiovisual installations, performances, graphic works, photography, islamic sermons, cassette tape compositions, texts, forensic audio analysis, advocacy, expert testimony, and most recently potato chip packets.

In his largest solo exhibition so far «تقييه» (Taqiyya) – The Right to Duplicity» at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, Lawrence Abu Hamdan examines the voice as a fundamental political instrument, the ways in which it constitutes truth and the place of lying in today's all-hearing all-speaking world. A new two channel video installation *Contra Diction (Speech Against Itself)* becomes the centre piece of this show and uses the theological, legal, linguistic and philosophical concept of *Taqiyya* as the thread that ties together the diverse range of works presented here. *Taqiyya* is an obscure component of Islamic jurisprudence practised by esoteric Islamic minorities and particularly by the religious community of the Druze in Palestine, Syria and Israel. The principle of *Taqiyya*, which is approximately comparable to the western concept of diplomatic immunity, allows members of a community to deny their faith or even to commit other illegal acts while subject to persecution or statelessness. Statements made under *Taqiyya* find themselves within and outside the law at the same time. Between truth and falsehood *Taqiyya* thus installs itself as the legal principle that allows to inhabit those spaces inbetween.

Abu Hamdan's work shown in his St. Gallen exhibition incorporates a wider range of strategies to lay bare the fact, that although freedom of speech may persist, the conventions of listening have certainly shifted. The all-hearing state apparatus, which forms the basis of Abu Hamdan's deliberations, promotes a policy of total transparency which perceives secrecy as the greatest threat to democracy. While radical freedom of speech has come to be a guarantee of a just society, individuals seem to be permanently urged to confess themselves and to bear witness. Between the right to speak and claim for silence Abu Hamdan examines a policy of audibility which increasingly demands new concepts of speech.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan unfolds the underlying concept of *Taqiyya* in a variety of contexts and aesthetic practises whether through the work *Conflicted Phonemes* (2012) – a cartography of accents that exposes the practices of asylum policies, that rely on the enunciation of a single syllable as proof of origin and citizenship – or by exhibiting a private collection of dissimulating colonial paintings in his installation *Double-Take: ~~Officer~~ Leader of the Chasseurs Syrian Revolution Commanding a Charge* (2014). Abu Hamdan seeks to disclose the inherently unfaithful nature of testimony and the impossibility of Western truth production.

Duplicity is the motif Lawrence Abu Hamdan brings us to see and hear in multifaceted ways between documentary and staging, between traditional speech acts and the most recent voice analysis technologies. In terms of *Taqiyya* he opens up a new understanding of speech, of the unfaithful nature of the voice and its relationship to truth – and in the process questions the fundamental conditions under which we speak, lie or remain silent.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan (*1985 in Amman/JOR) lives and works in London and Beirut. In 2015 he was the Armory Show commissioned artist. His works are part of collections at MoMA New York, Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven and Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE. In 2013 Abu Hamdan's audio documentary *The Freedom of Speech Itself* was submitted as evidence at the UK asylum tribunal. His forensic audio investigations are part of the research for Forensic Architecture, Goldsmiths College London, where he is a PhD candidate and associate lecturer. Solo exhibitions (selection): Beirut in Cairo (2013); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2014); Casco, Utrecht (2012); Showroom, London (2012). Group exhibitions and performances (selection): New Museum Triennial, New York (2015); 44th International Film Festival Rotterdam; The Shanghai Biennial (2014); The Whitechapel Gallery, London; MACBA, Barcelona; Tate Modern, London; M HKA, Antwerpen (2012). www.lawrenceabuhamdan.com

Events and Educational Program:

Opening

Friday, 10 July 2015, 6 p.m.

Artist Talk

Saturday, 11 July 2015, 12 noon

Art Snack – Short guided tour and a snack

Wednesday, 22 July 2015, 12.30 p.m.

Admission: CHF 10/members CHF 7; no registration required

Guided Tours

Tuesday, 18 August 2015, 6 p.m.

Sunday, 13 September 2015, 3 p.m.

Art Lunch – Guided tour followed by lunch

Thursday, 20 August 2015, 12 noon

Guest cooks: Barbara Affolter and Kristin Schmidt, Culture Department, St. Gallen

Admission: CHF 25/members CHF 22; registration at info@k9000.ch

Workshop for Families

Sunday, 30 August 2015, 2 – 3.30 p.m.

Admission: CHF 18 (adults)/CHF 9 (children from 6 to 16)/ free entrance for children from 4 to 6; registration until 25 August: beck-woerner@k9000.ch

Drawing Afternoon

Wednesday, 2 September 2015, 2 – 3.30 p.m.

For children from 4 to 8 years-old; Admission: CHF 5; registration until the previous day at: info@k9000.ch

Museum Night

Saturday, 5 September 2015, 6 p.m.

Workshops for School Classes

From 10 August on we are offering workshops at the exhibition.

More information: www.k9000.ch (Art Education/Workshops for Schools)

High-resolution images can be found in the press kit on our website (Information/Press). For further questions please contact Giovanni Carmine (carmine@k9000.ch) or Maren Brauner (brauner@k9000.ch).

The Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen is supported by St. Gallen City Council, Kulturförderung Kanton St.Gallen, Swisslos, Migros-Kulturprozent, Martel AG, St. Galler Tagblatt. The educational programme is made possible by Raiffeisen and Kulturförderung Appenzell Ausserrhoden.

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Opening times:
Tues to Fri 12 noon–6 p.m.
Sat & Sun 11 a.m.–5 p.m.