

Yael Bartana
Midnight

19.10.24
-18.1.25



47m Contemporary is pleased to present *Midnight*, a solo exhibition by artist Yael Bartana. This marks Bartana's first solo exhibition in the city of Leipzig.

Bartana's body of work engages with a broad spectrum of socio-political themes, exploring individual and collective identities, historiography, and the construction of national narratives. Through video, photography, installations, and performance, she critically examines power structures and propaganda, using realms of possibility, potentiality, and imagined futures as tools to interrogate the present. A key concept in her practice is the so-called *pre-enactment*. In contrast to the term *re-enactment*, which revisits historical events, a *pre-enactment* is a methodology that commingles fact and fiction, prophecies and histories and has the potential to create an alternative reality through a critical yet optimistic approach.

The exhibition title *Midnight* also evokes a temporal dimension, symbolizing the present moment in an era marked by multiple crises. As the doomsday clock strikes midnight, it raises urgent questions about potential actions and strategies to manage these immediate threats and to realign the future.

Midnight at Kunstverein 47m Contemporary features works that navigate feminist, Jewish, and diasporic experiences. Bartana again uses imagined futures as a focal point: In her 2021 video work *Two Minutes to Midnight*, she poses the question: *What if women ruled the world?*

Similarly, her latest video work, *Mir Zaynen Do! (We Are Here!)* (2024), delves into speculative futures and deals with collective bodies of knowledge beyond fixed identity labels. This piece brings together two distinct diasporic communities, united through collective musical and choreographic practices. Employing language, rhythm, and cultural codes, the work reflects on the ways these groups form alliances across their shared, yet distinct, experiences. The neon work *Utopia Now!* (2024), prominently displayed in the exhibition space, serves as a direct and immediate invitation to reflect on the concept of utopia in the present, highlighting the contrast and tension between hope and disillusionment that permeates the entire show.

The exhibition's themes of emancipation and collective action are deeply intertwined with Leipzig's history, as *Midnight* unfolds on ground rich with historical resonance. Leipzig has been a significant site for emancipatory movements, including the "Women's Battle" of the late 19th century, where women's alliances played a pivotal role in shaping the feminist movement. The city's identity is deeply intertwined with queer, diasporic, and Jewish histories, serving as a foundation for many of today's progressive achievements while also inspiring new visions for emancipatory futures.

On the occasion of the exhibition and with Bartana's works as an immediate starting point, a comprehensive accompanying and educational program will be realized at Kunstverein 47m Contemporary, which is interactively dedicated to the (queer) feminist and Jewish history of the city.

The exhibition is curated in collaboration by curator Janika Jähnisch and Leipzig historian Tom Schremmer.

About 47m Contemporary

47m Contemporary is a Kunstverein dedicated to the exhibition and mediation of international

contemporary art founded in 2024 and situated in the center of Leipzig. With a focus on media art, sculpture, installation, performance and conceptual art, as well as an interdisciplinary approach, its profile corresponds to a place of international dialogue, exchange and diversity. Three annual exhibitions are complemented by a program of lectures, readings, symposia, video screenings, and publications.

47m Team: Matthias Brühl, Anica Kehr, Janika Jähnisch, Paula Rüscher, Miriam Schmidt, Tom Schremmer, Erik Swars, Hanna Thuma, Steffen Woyth

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