



BIENNALE FÜR FREIBURG 2 – DAS LIED DER STRASSE EXHIBITION BOOKLET



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# DAS LIED DER STRASSE

Whether individual or collective, voices are rising in the streets. A song sounds. This song is an instrument that makes itself heard and interrupts the usual course of events. In these voices, we hear the will for self-determination. Energy is released. Unforeseen encounters intensify the potentiality of public space: Confrontations are triggered, cohesion arises spontaneously.

As we listen, the song tells us of political oppressions and repressive regimes, socio-economic power relations and stagnations, but also of those who resist the status quo. The song of the street continually urges us to become aware of our own position.

Both stage and witness to our present, the street is a constant site of divided attentions and conflicting interests. It is all too easy to fall into exaggeration and polarization, to push for a simplistic consensus: All or nothing, now or never, unconditional acquiescence or vehement refusal. This space fosters an understanding of tipping points and upheavals; speculation on past and future aspirations, declarations of conflict, and compromises. Insurmountable differences go hand in hand with solidarity.

A song is fleeting and yet it resonates. Walking through the streets, motifs and melodies of past rebellion and social negotiation are evoked. Not every song can become an anthem. And yet individual voices come together. Sometimes a melody emerges, manifested within everyday life; it develops independence and continues beyond its origin.

The location, course, and shape of a street immediately reveal (geo)political, economic, and social conditions. A street can draw borders or create connections. It is a strategic means of mapping territory and power, and thus, the will of higher authorities made manifest. Normative forces materialize in its infrastructure and

become entrenched in learned and codified behaviors. Everyday actions on the street are thus as much a part of this order as the spatial basis on which they take place. Deviations that fall beyond the scope of social conformity are excluded.

As soon as the song sounds, it becomes the counter-melody to a normative setting. It surges into the street, demands attention, and will be heard. It moves us and sweeps us along. Finding your voice means finding the song—formulating an intention and breaking new ground.

Paula Kommoss

## LOCATIONS AND OPENING HOURS

KUNSTVEREIN FREIBURG  
Dreisamstraße 21, 79098 Freiburg  
Wed–Fri 3–7 p.m.,  
Sat–Sun 12–6 p.m.

MUSEUM FÜR NEUE KUNST  
Schau\_Raum  
Marienstraße 10A, 79098 Freiburg  
Tue–Sun 10 a.m.–5 p.m.,  
Thu 10 a.m.–7 p.m.

KAISERWACHE  
Kaiserbrücke/Schreiberstraße,  
79098 Freiburg  
Thu–Sun 2–8 p.m.

KOMMUNALES KINO  
Urachstraße 40, 79102 Freiburg  
Tue–Fri 12–8 p.m.,  
Sat 9 a.m.–8 p.m., Sun 2–8 p.m.

PFÖRTNERHAUS  
Fabrikstraße 15, 79102 Freiburg  
Thu–Sun 2–8 p.m.

SCHWABENTORBRÜCKE STATION  
79098 Freiburg  
Tram no. 1, direction: Littenweiler  
Open throughout

STADTBIBLIOTHEK FREIBURG  
Münsterplatz 17, 79098 Freiburg  
Tue–Fri, 10 a.m.–7 p.m., Sat 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

STADTGARTEN  
Musikpavillon  
Jacob-Burckhardt-Straße/Leopoldring,  
79098 Freiburg  
Open throughout

DELPHI\_space/außenstelle  
Unterlinden 10, 79098 Freiburg  
Thu–Sun 2–8 p.m.

KLARASTRASSE 62, 70, 76, 80  
79106 Freiburg  
Open throughout  
Interior spaces varying opening hours

FERDINAND-WEISS-STR. STATION  
79106 Freiburg  
Bus no. 14, direction: Hauptbahnhof  
On view July 21–31, 2023  
Open throughout

SEEPARK  
79110 Freiburg  
Townhouse, Lawn/Viewing Platform,  
Forrester's Lodge, Peninsula  
Open throughout

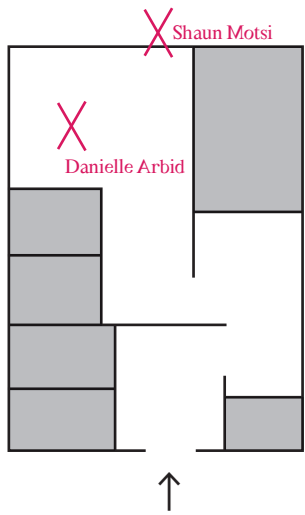
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At the corner of Kaiserbrücke and Schreiberstraße stands the Kaiserwache. This is the name of the public toilet that was rebuilt during the reconstruction of the Kaiserbrücke around 1910. Its name, meaning “emperor’s guard,” is more colloquial than official: Inspired by the four emperor sculptures that “guarded” the Kaiserbrücke at the time, the name has its origins in and is established throughout urban society. Like many other public toilets, the Kaiserwache became a popular cruising spot in the 1950s and ‘60s, during the criminalization of homosexuality.

The former promenade area around the Dreisam has now been taken over by traffic, an in-between space that is cut across. The toilet block as public, urban infrastructure—open to all in principle—is no longer existent. Temporarily, it is opened with a new purpose: The Kaiserwache is an “off-space” initiated by the Biennale für Freiburg and now run by young artists in Freiburg.





ATMs are ‘fluid’ places—embedded in flows of capital, consumption, and everyday life, they form part of interconnected economies. At the same time, they represent a position of superior power in which access, capital, and knowledge converge. They mark the presence of precisely these economic hierarchies in urban space.

Shaun Motsi’s FREI (2023) exposes the false promise of a theoretically unlimited supply of cash. Although the sculpture’s shell resembles a silver ATM, the screen shows neither an account balance nor operating instructions. Instead, Motsi shows a montage of video sequences that he recorded in Freiburg’s urban space. From different perspectives, these show snippets of lettering containing the word “free.” The shots come together to form a collage of signs, extracting the word from regulatory and infrastructural language.

In parallel with the massive growth of credit and capital markets, ATMs—the first publicly accessible computer terminals—have been steadily spreading across Western metropolitan districts and into rural areas since the early 1970s. Based on a constructed information and value system, they shape everyday processes and mark spaces of socio-economic power. Their proliferation came to its peak in the 2000s—followed by a rapid collapse during the financial crisis. Physical infrastructures crack as capital flows shift into digital spaces and the world becomes financialized at an accelerating rate.

Motsi’s bulky ATM thus becomes a testament to that particular time and perspective. Through its physical presence, it marks a location yet simultaneously refers to the continuities of socio-economic power, its perpetuations, and liquefactions.

Shaun Motsi’s (1989, Harare, ZW) work explores visual codes and how they relate to cultural narratives, knowledge systems, and identities. Motsi is interested in the lines of continuity surrounding abstract power structures that are perpetuated over time and space; that are inherited, but also reappropriated and revalued; that materialize in concrete products, design, and art objects. Between use and signification, these objects are always more than they seem.

Motsi studied at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main. His works have been shown in group and solo exhibitions, including shows at the following institutions: Elvira, Frankfurt am Main (2021), Shedhalle Zürich, CH (2020), Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (2020), Page NYC, New York, US (2019, solo), PSM, Berlin (2017, solo) and the 9th Berlin Biennale (2016). In 2022 he won the ars viva prize, and in 2023/24 Motsi was awarded the Hessische Kulturstiftung travel scholarship.

If one card falls in a house of cards, the entire laboriously assembled structure collapses. A similar thing happens when money transfers are delayed within a multi-level debt relationship, when creditors are also debtors and cannot repay loans on time.

In *ÂLLO CHÉRIE* (2016), a woman drives through Beirut in a car and talks on the phone. As the city panorama passes between asphalt and coastline, we hear her voice, the crackle of the phone. She calls her bank. She talks to debtors and creditors, people with whom she once had trusting relationships—but her persistent questions about payments and agreements come to nothing. The drive becomes an existential chase through Beirut's center—the driver desperately pursues the debts owed to her, which, in this heavily indebted country, are no longer redeemable. The streets of the Lebanese capital are overlaid with a diffuse network of money transfers.

While trying to put out one fire after another, it becomes apparent that the protagonist—the artist's mother—has long since become entangled in a hopeless state of affairs. As she increasingly loses control of her situation, a balanced but fragile system collapses, setting off a chain reaction that sweeps more and more people along with it.

The work of Danielle Arbid (1970, Beirut, LB) is the result of deep engagement with the lived realities of people in the streets, complex political conditions, and her own history. Arbid fled Lebanon during the civil war in 1987 and studied literature at the Sorbonne Université in Paris, FR. Themes of freedom, self-realization, and equality during times of war are central to her film works, alongside social and socioeconomic conflicts.

As a director and screenwriter, Arbid has been making short and feature-length films, video essays, and documentaries since 1997. Most recently, her work has been exhibited and screened at the following institutions: Fondation Boghossian, Brussels, BE (2023), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, FR (2022), Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rennes, FR (2020), and Musée d'Art contemporain du Val-de-Marne, Vitry-sur-Seine, FR (2019). In addition, her works have been part of numerous film festivals, including Festival de Cannes, FR, Toronto International Film Festival, CA, Zurich Film Festival, CH, Busan International Film Festival, KR, and Festival Lumière in Lyon, FR. In 2022, Arbid represented the Lebanese pavilion together with artist Ayman Baalbaki at the 59th Biennale di Venezia, IT.

## COLOPHON

Biennale für Freiburg 2  
Das Lied der Straße  
June 16–July 30, 2023

Exhibition Booklet

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