

(In)Visibility of Violence

23.08. – 02.11.2025

In Cooperation with the Research Center
„Transformations Of Political Violence“ (Trace)

KUNSTHALLE
GIESSEN

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Curated by

Theresa Deichert, Dr. Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann und Dr. Nadia Ismail

With

Mansoor Adayfi, Hiba Alansari, Moath Al-Alwi, Sami Al Haj, Lucinda Devlin, Johanna-Maria Fritz, Mohammed el Gharani, Roopa Gogineni, Johannah Herr, Jonas Höschl, Šejla Kamerić, Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif, Rabih Mroué, Kresiah Mukwazhi, Jean Gabriel Périot, Thomson & Craighead, Total Refusal, Helena Uambembe and Emmanuel Van der Auwera

Opening

Friday, 22.08.2025, 7 pm

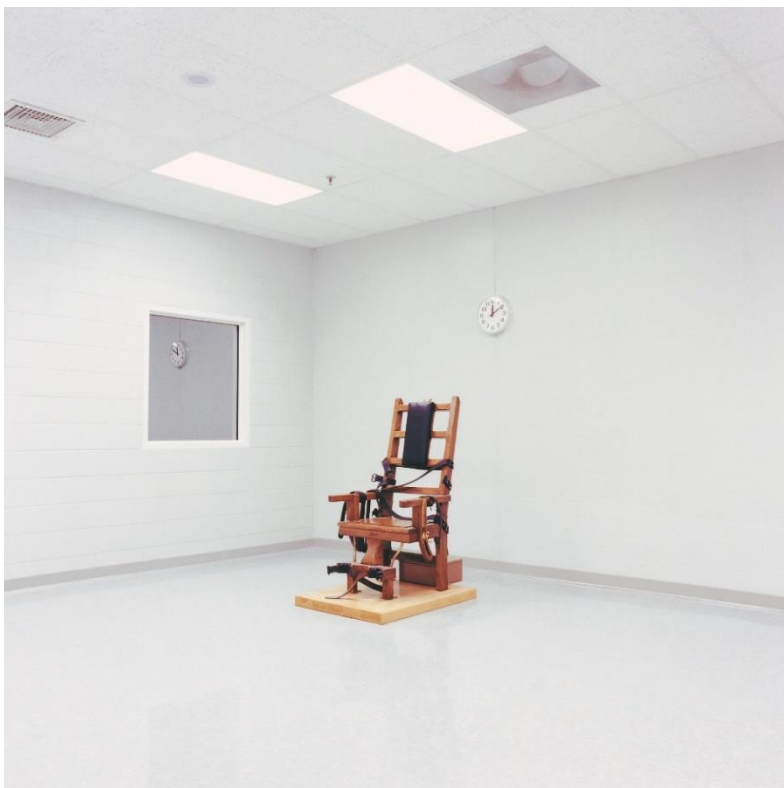


Fig: Lucinda Devlin, The Omega Suites, Electric Chair, Greensville Correctional Facility, Jarratt, Virginia, 1991, C-Print. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie m, Duisburg

Press Preview:

Wednesday, 20.08.2025, 11 am

In the summer of 2025, KUNSTHALLE GIESSEN is dedicating the exhibition *(In)Visibility of Violence*, to the question of how art confronts violence. This multi-genre group exhibition brings together international positions that make various forms and mechanisms of violence tangible, document them, or pose critical reflections of them. Acts of war—omnipresent in the media and seemingly endless—shape our visual habits and dominate public perception. In addition to visibly manifest violence, such as the brutal destruction of buildings and cultural heritage, the sight of civilian victims, or images of displaced persons and refugees, the exhibition particularly focuses on the often invisible dimensions of violence. Structural, psychological, or gender-based violence, especially against women and minorities, as well as the resulting traumas and emotional suffering, often remain hidden. Ideological and religious hatred, passed down through generations and disproportionately affecting women, is often unseen or deliberately repressed. Shame and societal stigmatization often protect the perpetrators, while the consequences for those affected are profound and long-lasting.

(In)Visibility of Violence seeks to explore these unequal power structures and the visual regimes that shape the perception of violence: What societal, political, and media mechanisms make violence visible or invisible? How is violence documented, instrumentalized, or censored? What creative and artistic approaches can render violence perceptible? How do artists employ strategies such as alienation, censorship, documentation, or spectacularization to depict or obscure violence?

The exhibition brings together works by contemporary international artists who explore violence in its many forms, represent and document it in multimedia formats: from psychological and physical trauma to structural and institutionalized violence, to its aestheticization and mediation through media. Starting from themes such as trauma and psychological violence, (sexual) violence against women*, violence against minorities, and the (political) instrumentalization of violence, the exhibition unfolds a network of injustice and resistance that reveals how closely these forms of violence can be interwoven.

(In)Visibility of Violence consciously zooms in on existing works of art. Through these works it becomes apparent that conflict zones which already came into focus in media and artistic discourses in the early 2000s not only still exist, but in many cases have aggravated to this day. The exhibition shows how oppression, abuse of power, and other forms of violence draw on historical patterns and continually take on new forms. These developments are often reinforced by social, technological, and political changes. The exhibition invites viewers to consider violence not merely as a time- and place-bound phenomenon, but as a recurring narrative deeply rooted in global power structures that have existed from the colonial era to the present.

As such *(In)Visibility of Violence* is an invitation to reflect on the mechanisms of violence in our society, to consider not only on what is shown, but also on what remains hidden. It calls on us not to consume violence as spectacle or, in the face of global events and media overload, fall into desensitization, but rather to actively engage with the power structures and (in)justice systems that enable it. A curated film program accompanies the exhibition and deepens its thematic areas.

There is a collaboration with the Research Center „Transformations of Political Violence“ (TraCe), which began in 2024 with the dialogue panel “Depictions of Excessive Use of Force – Between Disturbance and Attraction” at the Kunsthalle. A journal will be published alongside the exhibition, jointly produced by KUNSTHALLE GIESSEN and researchers from the TraCe research center.



Fig.: Thomson&Craighead, A Short Film About War, 2009/2010, Film still, Courtesy of the artists.

Participants:

Mansoor Adayfi (1982, Yemen) was detained in Guantánamo for 14 years and, after his release in 2016, published accounts of daily life in the camp. He is the author of the memoir *Don't Forget Us Here: Lost and Found at Guantánamo*. Today, he works as an artist and activist for prisoners' rights and serves as the Guantánamo Project Coordinator at CAGE International.

Hiba Alansari (1983, Libya) is a multidisciplinary artist based in Berlin. Born in Libya and raised in Syria, her work explores political violence, trauma, and memory through sculptures, performances, and installations.

Moath al-Alwi (1977, Yemen) was detained at Guantánamo Bay from 2002 until January 2025. During his imprisonment, he created detailed ship models and reliefs from recycled materials such as wooden sticks, cardboard, and fabric, which serve as expressions of hope and resilience in the face of state violence.



Fig.: Kresiah Mukwazhi, *the high priestess*, 2024, Bra straps on canvas, 120x140 cm, Courtesy of the artist and Jan Kaps, Cologne, Photo: Simon Vogel.

Sami Al Haj (1969, Sudan) was a journalist and cameraman for Al Jazeera when he was detained in Guantánamo from 2002 to 2008 without charge. After his release he became head of the human rights program at Al Jazeera and has since worked for press freedom and prisoners' rights.

Lucinda Devlin (1947, USA) is an American photographer known for her sober, detached color photographs documenting institutional spaces. Her series *The Omega Suites* depicts execution chambers in the United States. Devlin's work is included in major museum collections such as MoMA and the Whitney Museum.

Johanna-Maria Fritz (1994, Germany) combines documentary and artistic approaches in a powerful way. As a photographer and journalist, she travels to conflict zones and areas of crisis to document the lives of affected individuals and communities.

Mohammed el Gharani (1986, Saudi Arabia) was arrested in Pakistan at age 14 and was one of the youngest detainees in Guantánamo. Following his release to Chad in 2009, he spoke out publicly against US detention policy.

Roopa Gogineni (USA) is a documentary filmmaker and photographer. Her work explores historical memory and life in East African conflict zones. Her short films highlight revolutionary protest movements in Sudan and are marked by close collaboration with local communities.

Johannah Herr (1987, USA) is an American artist who explores themes such as consumerism, capitalism, nationalism, imperialism, and state violence. Using textiles, installations, and mixed-media works, she critically questions societal structures.

Jonas Höschl (1995, Germany) is a German conceptual artist and photographer whose work investigates political themes through media such as printmaking, video, and installation. He has been awarded the Bavarian Art Promotion Prize.

Šejla Kamerić (1976, Bosnia and Herzegovina) is a Bosnian artist whose multidisciplinary work addresses war trauma, identity, and social justice. She is known for her work *Bosnian Girl*, which is based on her experiences during the Bosnian War.

Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif (1976–2012, Yemen) was a Yemeni citizen detained in Guantánamo for over ten years without charge. Despite multiple acquittals, he was not released and died under unclear circumstances in the camp.

Rabih Mroué (1967, Lebanon) is a Lebanese artist, director, and actor living in Berlin. His work combines theater, video, and performance to reflect on political and social issues. His piece *The Pixelated Revolution* was shown at *DOCUMENTA (13)* in 2012.

Kresiah Mukwazhi (1992, Zimbabwe) is a Zimbabwean artist whose practice engages with (post-) colonial and feminist themes and the visibility of women in patriarchal societies. She works with installations, performances, and textile art.

Jean-Gabriel Périot (1974, France) is a film director and editor known for his experimental use of found footage and archive material. His works address violence, politics and collective memory in creative aesthetic and montage-based ways.

Thomson & Craighead (Jon Thomson, 1969, and Alison Craighead, 1971, UK) are a British artist duo who have been working together since 1993. They use digital media, video, and internet art to explore contemporary issues such as surveillance and data culture.

Total Refusal (Austria) is a collective of artists, researchers and filmmakers active since 2018. The group repurposes mainstream video games to create pseudo-Marxist, politically critical narratives in the form of video art, interventions, performances and short films.

Helena Uambembe (1994, South Africa) is a South African artist whose work engages with the history of the 32nd Battalion of the South African army, to which her father belonged. She works with textiles, printmaking, and performance to explore personal and collective memory.

Emmanuel Van der Auwera (1982, Belgium) is a Belgian artist working with video, sculpture, and printmaking. His work investigates the role of images in today's media society and how visual media shape the construction of reality.

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Fig.: Johanna Maria Fritz, Butscha, Ukraine, 2022, C-Print. Courtesy of ARTCO Berlin und the artist.

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ARTCO, Berlin; Beth Jacob; Galerie m, Duisburg; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin; Gaa Gallery, Cologne; Harlan Levey Projects, Brussels; Jahmek, Luanda; Jan Kaps, Cologne; New Media Scotland, Alt-w. Script & Steve Rushton; Sfeir- Semler, Hamburg; VFMK Verlag für Moderne Kunst, Vienna
As well as to all lenders, artists and cooperation partners

Accompanying Programme

Guided Tour by the curators (in German)

Dr. Nadia Ismail, Sun. 31.08., 3 pm

Theresa Deichert: Sun. 14.09., 3 pm

Dr. Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann: Sun. 12.10., 3 pm

Art Buzz – Short guided tours & drinks for young culture fans (in English & German)

Thurs. 18.09., 6 pm

Art & Coffee

Wed. 24.09., 3 pm

Registration by: 22.09.

via kunsthalle@giessen.de, +49 641 306 1041

Participation fee 2,50 €

Film screening & talk

Laura Poitras, Death of a Prisoner, 2013 + Dr. Larissa-Diana Fuhrmann in conversation with Dr. Sebastian Köthe

Wed. 01.10., 6 pm

Art education in individual conversation (English on request)

Every Saturday 2 – 4 pm

Closing

Panel discussion + Q&A with artists, scholars, and curators

Sun. 02.11., 5 pm

Changing film programme in the video cabinet

Sat. 23.08. – Tue. 09.09. Roopa Gogineni, Suddenly TV, 2022, 19 min

Wed. 10.09. – Sat. 27.09. Rabih Mroué, The Pixelated Revolution, 2012, 21:58 min

Sun. 28.09. – Wed. 15.10. Jean-Gabriel Periot, EVEN IF SHE HAD BEEN A CRIMINAL..., 2006, 10 min

Thurs. 16.10. – Sun. 02.11. Total Refusal, How to Disappear, 2020, 21:06 min

All films will be shown during the opening on the 22.08.

All information about the opening, our accompanying programme with event dates and access information online at:

www.kunsthalle-giessen.de | www.giessen.de