

For their first collaborative exhibition, Yazan Khalili and Jonas Staal coined the term ‘state-traps.’ This term addresses more than a decade of artistic, legal and political tactical and strategic engagements through which both artists confront the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the nation-state. Positioning censorship as intrinsic to the freedom of speech, Staal and Khalili expose in their work the limits and falsity of a human right often perceived as the pillar of democracy.

Khalili and Staal suggest that when the law of the state opposes social justice, state-traps are creative, non-lethal assaults triggering the state to over-act. Through minimal means, artistic capabilities are provoking the nation-state to overreact as it is caught off-guard. State-traps make visible the unjust over-powering of the nation-state, thus subversively activate and challenge its legal systems.

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