

Hito Steyerl
Factory of the Sun, 2015
© Hito Steyerl

**Jasmina Metwaly / Philip Rizk
Olaf Nicolai
Hito Steyerl
Tobias Zielony**

FABRIK
31.03.17 – 08.05.17

FABRIK

Curated by Florian Ebner

In partnership with the Sursock Museum, the Goethe-Institut, and ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)

Opening on Thursday 30 March, 18:00 to 21:00

On view until 8 May 2017

Sursock Museum, Special Exhibitions Hall, Level -2

"Fabrik" is the German word for "factory," recalling that a Fabrik has much to do with the social fabric. *FABRIK* (Factory) presents the work of five international artists reflecting on notions of "work," "migration," and "revolt." This constellation transforms the exhibition space into a factory: a place where ideas and images are produced – images that are no longer understood as a medium for the reproduction of reality, but as indicators of its changeability.

Visualizing the metamorphoses of contemporary images also implies visualizing the flaws in our interconnected and globalized world. In completely different ways, the works presented here are concerned with the circulation and migration of people and images. They search for other forms of participation and mine the cultural depth of certain iconographies that have come to dominate our mediated world. They analyze the role of light as a carrier of the latest data transmission and deconstruct the promises of a transparent digital culture.

FABRIK can be read as a parable for the metamorphosis of visual media, from pictures as classical recordings to the generating, processing, and projection of images. It can also be seen as a statement about the changing use of images, blurring the boundaries between document, testimony, and fiction.

FABRIK is a touring presentation of the German Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015. The Sursock Museum is its point of departure.

Exhibiton curator:

Florian Ebner

Participating artists:

Jasmina Metwaly and Philip Rizk, Olaf Nicolai, Hito Steyerl, and Tobias Zielony

Exhibition partners:

Sursock Museum, the Goethe-Institut, and ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), www.ifade.de

Press preview:

Wednesday 29 March, from 12:00 to 13:30

Opening reception:

Thursday 30 March, from 18:00 to 21:00

Olaf Nicolai

b. 1962, Halle (Salle), Germany – Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Exhibited works

GIRO (Tableaux), 2015

Wallpaper, prints, texts from various sources

GIRO / Somewhere in halted time, the spectacle of rotating wings..., 2015/2016

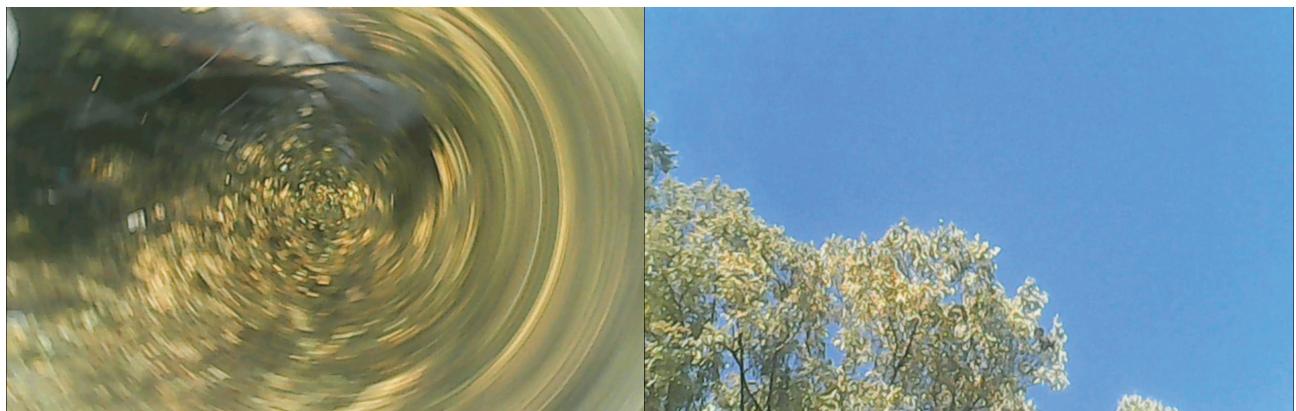
Projection of two videos, recordings from cameras mounted on boomerangs from the roof of the German Pavilion of the 56th Venice Biennale, continuous loops (sky 2'09" / earth 1'30")

Olaf Nicolai's presentation retraces and concretizes the collected documents of his durational piece GIRO, performed on the rooftop of the German Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale. The starting point of his approach was a body of visual research on the iconography of the rooftop – understood as a dialectical space of freedom as well as threat. This comprehensive compilation of images includes contemporary media footage as well as historic images. His montage weaves together different themes of escape; as liberation, ascension, flight, but also as retreat, defense, and punishment.

The wall mural is framed by large projections of video footage recorded by flying boomerangs during his durational piece on the rooftop. Nicolai's installation sums up the central motifs of this exhibition: the rooftop as a political sphere, and the global circulation of images, people, and things.

About the artist

Olaf Nicolai has developed a range of interdisciplinary projects that question the elemental experience of space, time, and physicality. Whether it's through a science-fiction novel, a piece of music, or the processes of industrial arts and crafts, Nicolai acts as a go-between, mediating between a given space and conceptual forms to tackle questions of social behavior in the zone of tension between concrete experience and abstract contextualization. By working with repetition and sequencing, he develops his own representational critique and gives visibility to unfamiliar contexts.



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Jasmina Metwaly / Philip Rizk

Jasmina Metwaly: b. 1982, Warsaw, Poland – Lives and works in Cairo, Egypt

Philip Rizk: b. 1982, Limassol, Cyprus – Lives and works in Cairo, Egypt

Exhibited work

Out on the Street, 2015

Installation: HD video single-channel projection, 72', sound, cellphone footage on a screen, concrete tiles from an Egyptian rooftop, wooden crates, drawings, and 5 photographs folded as a map

Courtesy of the artists and Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut / Hamburg

Jasmina Metwaly and Philip Rizk's video installation *Out on the Street* is a work of fiction. The strategy that the Cairo-based artist duo take against neoliberal processes in Egypt is not a documentation of the state of things. Instead, they stage a form of radical theatre, an enactment based on the experiences of the collective and the power of the imagination.

On the rooftop terrace of an apartment block in central Cairo, the artists invited a group of workers, both employed and unemployed, to enact the privatization of a public factory, interspersed with experiences from the actors' own lives. They worked together to produce scenes that express the mechanisms of power in Egypt and the everyday humiliation experienced at the hands of superiors. The video weaves together fictional performances, personal testimonies, and mobile phone footage, linking these personal narratives to broader social struggles.

While the video is the main feature of the installation, it includes additional documents retracing the different layers of this theatrical experiment: photographs and concrete tiles from the now abandoned workshop setting on the rooftop are accompanied by the cellphone records of an old worker documenting the destruction of his former factory.

About the artists

Jasmina Metwaly is the cofounder of the Mosireen media collective, which was formed during the 2011 revolution in Egypt in order to establish a platform for citizen journalism and an archive of the revolution. Since 2010, she has collaborated on a regular basis with Philip Rizk. Their joint work is concerned with new ways for people to participate as subjects of their (hi)stories and with new forms of filmic and political representation.

Philip Rizk is a filmmaker and writer. Together with Jasmina Metwaly, he formed the video collective "intifadat intifadat" in 2011, producing the series of videos *Remarking January 25*. Since 2011, Rizk has been a member of the Mosireen media collective. His texts have appeared in various readers, the *Journal of Human Geography*, and on the websites jadaliyya.com and roarmag.org. Since 2010, he has regularly worked on projects with Jasmina Metwaly.



© Jasmina Metwaly & Philip Rizk
Courtesy of Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut/Hamburg

Tobias Zielony

b. 1973, Wuppertal, Germany – Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Exhibited work

The Citizen, 2015

Layout of 7 color photographs, various sizes, on 3 large-scale pigmented inkjet prints, mounted on alu-dibond

Newspapers in a display

4 showcases with 30 prints

Newspaper, 16 pages, tabloid format, for visitors to take with them

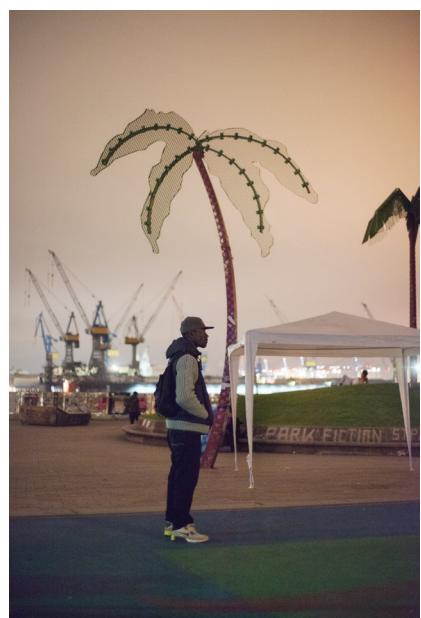
Tobias Zielony's series *The Citizen* is concerned with the representation of refugees in European media as well as with exploring their self-perception. Although the migratory movements of our time are often reduced to the tragedies that occur at the external frontiers of "fortress Europe," Zielony's view is directed towards the self-portrayal of migrants, their personal stories, and their right to be taken seriously as political subjects in Germany. They protest against the restrictions placed on their freedom of movement, against the prohibition to work or to study.

Zielony highlights this new self-confidence in his photographs, which he presents in showcases and large wall pieces reminiscent of the layout of the pages in a newspaper – the only thing missing is the columns of text between the photographs. The empty spaces point towards the ruptures in the biographies of the individuals, along with all the details that are left out of public media debates. In return, Zielony has asked African authors and journalists to comment on his photographs. The results, in the form of newspaper articles, are on display in one large showcase.

A third element of this installation is a pile of newspapers containing information provided by the subjects of Zielony's photographs. These are available for visitors to take home.

About the artist

Tobias Zielony studied Documentary Photography at the University of Wales, Newport. The starting point for his work is the observation of a global youth culture – often in the abandoned spaces of post-industrial structures and shrinking cities. In recent years, his photographs and films have focused on marginalized groups in capitalist societies. His work has been part of the following exhibitions: *Dream Lovers: The Films 2008-2014*, KOW, Berlin / Galleria Lia Rumma, Naples (2015); *Vele*, Esker Foundation, Calgary (2014); *Lichtwark revisited*, Hamburger Kunsthalle (2014); and *Jenny Jenny*, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (2013).



Hito Steyerl

b. 1966, Munich, Germany – Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Exhibited work

Factory of the Sun, 2015

Single-channel video, HD video pro rez.MOV file, 23'

Blue illuminated grid on the floor

Free-standing projection architecture, sunloungers, and beach chairs

In her video installation *Factory of the Sun*, Hito Steyerl makes use of the emphatic notion of sunlight, that old symbol of progress, leading us in a dialectic fashion, which is both critical and playful, to the very heart of debates about our digital present.

Factory of the Sun slips into the form of a computer game, so as to draw on the narrative structure of popular entertainment and establish a more favorable position from which to wage battles against contemporary evils. For the struggle is about nothing less than sounding out the remaining freedom of action that political individuals and subjects have in the face of the inextricable interlacing of digital streams of information, economic interests, and social and cultural distortions.

Like the diverse modes of a computer game, the film switches between different levels of reality. The narrator is Yulia, who is also the programmer of the game. The game's protagonists are initially introduced to us as slave laborers in a motion capture studio – the technical dispositif that transforms the movements of a figure into light impulses, the basis of all the virtual reality in a computer game. In a frantic montage, the dance scenes act as the motor producing an incessant stream of changing images. At the same time, the act of dancing represents the most playful form of resistance for the young protagonists in their struggle against the supremacy of their invisible opponents.

About the artist

Hito Steyerl's films and essays take the digital image as a point of departure for entering a world in which a politics of dazzle manifests as collective desire. Steyerl's works have been shown around the world in numerous exhibitions and at a range of film festivals, most recently in the Artists Space, New York (2015), the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), London (2014), the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2014), the Art Institute of Chicago (2013), and the Biennale di Venezia (2013). In 2007, she took part in documenta 12.



© Hito Steyerl

Parallel Events

TOUR

Curator's Tour with Florian Ebner

Saturday 1 April, 16:00 to 17:00 + 17:00 to 18:00

On Saturday 1 April, curator Florian Ebner will give two consecutive tours of the exhibition FABRIK.

The first will take place from 16:00 to 17:00 (in French); the second from 17:00 to 18:00 (in English).

Participating artist Olaf Nicolai will also join the tour.

FAMILY PROGRAM

Gamemasters: Build-a-Game Workshop with Junk Munkez

Saturday 22 April, 10:00 to 13:00 | In English and Arabic

Ages 6-12. Children must be accompanied.

Workshop fees: LBP 10,000 for one child and one adult. LBP 5,000 per additional child.

Tickets can be booked on www.sursock.museum

Build and play your own interactive 3D-board game! In this participatory workshop led by designers Lea Kirdikian and Xavier Baghadi, children will adventure through a make-believe environment, "The Sleepy Dragon Inn," to make it through hidden traps and pass eccentric guards. Merging the art of gaming and shadow puppetry, children will make and play an interactive analogue video game, in which chance and decision-making change the course of each player's fate.

At the end of the workshop, each participant will take their crafted modular room and figurine home.

Lea Kirdikian is a product designer with an avid interest in recycled materials. Xavier Baghadi is an imaginative animator/illustrator. They teamed up to collaborate on an upcycling initiative called Junk Munkez, joining forces to conquer the local trash heaps through colourful eco-friendly products with eco-conscious ethics.

With the support of the Goethe-Institut.

FAMILY PROGRAM

Capturing the Sun: A Green Screen Workshop with m22

Saturday 6 May, 10:00 to 13:00 | In English and Arabic

Ages 6-12. Children must be accompanied.

Workshop fees: LBP 10,000 for one child and one adult. LBP 5,000 per additional child.

Tickets can be booked on www.sursock.museum

Produce and film scenes inspired by science-fiction using green screen technology! In this role-playing workshop, children will create a short film using a green screen, a technique used to create special effects in film. Led by artist-filmmakers Panos Aprahamian and Mohamed Berro, children will be guided through a journey set in a fantasy universe, where alien forces have exploited the sun and heroes help find a solution.

Taking on various roles involved in filmmaking, children will collaborate in small groups to write a short script, play with costumes and props, and film scenes using the green screen. You will also be able to take your short video home!

Panos Aprahamian and Mohamed Berro are Lebanese artist-filmmakers who live and work in and around Beirut and often collaborate as the m22 media collective.

With the support of the Goethe-Institut.

Exhibition Curator: Florian Ebner

Florian Ebner is the Head of the Photographic Collection at Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany.

EXHIBITION PARTNERS

Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach.

The Goethe-Institut Lebanon organizes and supports a broad spectrum of cultural events that present German culture and promote international cultural exchange. The work of our language department concentrates on German language courses, training workshops and seminars for teachers of German as a foreign language. It also offers a comprehensive examination program.

The library and information service of the Goethe-Institut Beirut aims to provide an accurate, pluralistic view of German culture, politics and society. Moreover, we offer the public a multifaceted collection of books, audio-visual materials, newspapers and journals in various languages for everyone, who takes an interest in Germany or is learning or teaching the German language.

<https://www.goethe.de/ins/lb/en/index.html>

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)

The ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) promotes cultural exchange to assist peoples, nations and religions in learning from one another and living together peacefully. Cultures are changeable, movable and permeable, yet they are also conservative and restrictive. They can cause conflicts, but they can also transform and resolve conflicts.

Cultural exchange means commitment to peace. We are committed to achieving peace and justice, protecting human livelihoods and cultures and attaining a united Europe. Human rights, freedom of expression and freedom of information are objectives and cornerstones of our work.

Dialogue reveals cultural diversity as a valuable asset. Dialogue involves all people equally in shaping our future – in a process that is both open and meaningful. That is why we strive to bring people closer together.

<http://www.ifa.de/>

Sursock Museum

The Nicolas Ibrahim Sursock Museum is a modern and contemporary art museum in the center of Beirut first opened in 1961, with a mission to collect, preserve, and exhibit local and international art.

Through our collection, archives, exhibitions, and public programs, we aim to produce knowledge on art practices in the region and explore work that reflects on our contemporary moment. Our goal is to support local art production, to provide a platform for encounter and experimentation with art and ideas, and to inform and challenge different audiences in new and unexpected ways.

Open daily from 10:00 to 18:00

Late opening on Thursdays from 12:00 to 21:00

Closed on Tuesdays

Admission to the Sursock Museum is free of charge.

<https://sursock.museum/>

Sursock Museum

Greek Orthodox Archbishopric Street
Ashrafieh 2071 5509
Beirut, Lebanon
T +961 1 20 20 01
www.sursock.museum
info@sursock.museum

Press contact

Muriel N. Kahwagi, Head of Communications
muriel.kahwagi@sursock.museum