

SEKRETARIAT FÜR GEISTER, ARCHIVPOLITIKEN UND LÜCKEN
Nina Hoechtl & Julia Wieger

DARK ENERGY. Feminist Organizing, Working Collectively
Exhibition and program of events 2019

Like the universe, the realm of cultural production consists mostly of dark energy and matter.[1] These invisible masses and movements form from, among other things, spontaneous amateurish, autonomous, activist, self-organized, collective practices that play an important part for feminist cultural work. This is also a matter of the unpaid or underpaid work of those who deliberately shun visibility or have no choice but to remain invisible. It is the invisible dark energy that keeps the cultural scene operating.

The exhibition explores feminist forms of organization and knowledge production in the cultural sector. It gives center stage to the visual, material, and performative characteristics of feminist collective or collaborative practices and asks how these forms of organization and production are influenced by their general economic set-up and what begins to sway politically in this context. Which knowledge can be practiced, produced, and disseminated when, where, and how?

These issues are dealt with from feminist, queer, and decolonial perspectives in the works and approaches related to each other in the presentation: site-specific works on the new exhibitE space of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna in Eschenbachgasse, archival researches and works of art on the Kiila (Finnish for “wedge”) Association of Artists and Writers in Helsinki, the Women’s Art Library in London, the feminist art space La Centrale in Montréal, and the Austrian Association of Women Artists in Vienna, a long-term project on the subject of work at and with the Casco Art Institute in Utrecht, and two projected interventions into the structures of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

[1] Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter. Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 2011).

Concept and organization: Secretariate for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps with Andrea Haas and Veronique Boilard
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, xE – Exhibiton space, Vienna, 2019



Installation view: ff. Feministisches Fundbüro, Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski and Aida Wilde, image: Lisa Rastl



Installation view: Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski and Aida Wilde, Belinda Kazeem- Kamiński, Felicity Allen, image: Claudia Rohrauer



Installation view: Minna Henriksson, Annette Krauss and the shifting Casco Team, materials from the archive of La Centrale, image: Lisa Rastl



Installation view: Minna Henriksson, Secretariate for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps, Annette Krauss and the shifting Casco Team, Anne-Marie Proulx, image: Claudia Rohrauer

ARCHIVAL PRACTICES, IMAGINATIONS AND FUTURE HISTORIES

Gathering of presentations and conversations (concept and organization)

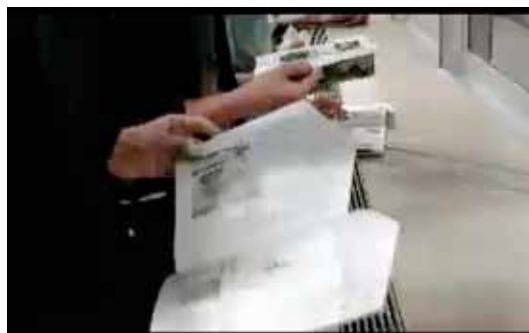
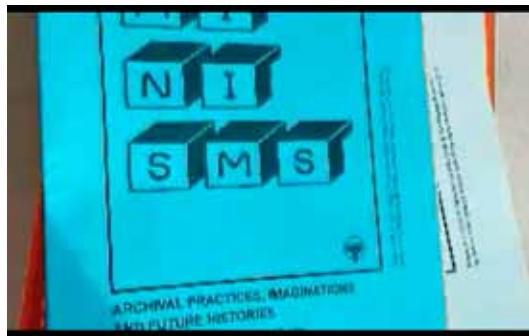
2018

The gathering assembled a group of international artists, archivists and scholars committed to finding disruptive and engendering modes of engaging with archives. They discuss the entangled, queer and messy ways we create meaning and images today by looking to the past and imagining the yet-to-come.

Over the past two decades, the archive has emerged as a crucial site of feminist knowledge production, activism and visual art practices. Feminist archives, special collections and informal repositories have been used to document art practices and activist movements. Through such archives previously obscured forms of knowledge and practice can become visible.

Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski (independent artist/designer, archivist and organizer, Minneapolis), Kathy Carbone (scholar and archivist, University of California, Los Angeles) and Roshini Kempadoo (photographer, media artist and scholar, University of Westminster, London) staged presentations and conversations that traverse transatlantic historical contexts. They explored a variety of archival materials from the Women's Art Library, the Women of Colour Index, the California Institute of the Arts, The Feminist Art Program, the National Archives of Trinidad and Tobago (1920s–1960s) and contemporary artworks from the diaspora and the Caribbean.

Concept and organization: Secretariate for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps
With: Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Kathy Carbone and Roshini Kempadoo
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, University Library, Vienna, 2018



Images: Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski

WHAT WHERE

Research, installation and lecture performance

2018

The project applies a reflexive approach to knowledge production to the rituals, ceremonies, specialties, and seasonal traditions of Styria. It explores the construction, maintenance and preservation of Trachten, the so-called traditional clothing or folk costumes of Austria, which today see a resurgence in popularity. The project comprises an installation including historical and contemporary visual documents along with a script and a questionnaire, as well as a lecture performance intervening in the closing discussion Conchita vs. Gabalier of steirischer herbst 2018.

The installation and the lecture performance emerge from the discovery of a travelling slide show of 1959, aimed at promoting and reigniting interest in women's Dirndl throughout Styria. They highlight the Dirndl's re-introduction as a pillar of Austrian identity, its relation to National Socialism, the structural hierarchies it had helped to establish between the countryside and the city, as well as its role in the construction of gender identities.

The installation, the questionnaire and the lecture performance seek to further understand and reflect upon ambient culture, questioning how it is constructed, consumed, advanced, practiced and preserved, and how in doing so, it can evade extinction, intentionally or not.

In collaboration with the Department of Ultimology

Volksfronten, Grazer Kunstverein, steirischer herbst, Graz, 2018

WHAT WHERE

Research, installation and lecture performance

2018

The project applies a reflexive approach to knowledge production to the rituals, ceremonies, specialties, and seasonal traditions of Styria. It explores the construction, maintenance and preservation of Trachten, the so-called traditional clothing or folk costumes of Austria, which today see a resurgence in popularity. The project comprises an installation including historical and contemporary visual documents along with a script and a questionnaire, as well as a lecture performance intervening in the closing discussion Conchita vs. Gabalier of steirischer herbst 2018.

The installation and the lecture performance emerge from the discovery of a travelling slide show of 1959, aimed at promoting and reigniting interest in women's Dirndl throughout Styria. They highlight the Dirndl's re-introduction as a pillar of Austrian identity, its relation to National Socialism, the structural hierarchies it had helped to establish between the countryside and the city, as well as its role in the construction of gender identities.

The questionnaire invited the audience to "choose a specific tradition, ritual or speciality that you consider unique to your environment, region or calendar" and to reflect upon ambient culture, questioning how it is constructed, consumed, advanced, practiced and preserved, and how in doing so, it can evade extinction, intentionally or not.

Concept and organization: Department of Ultimology and Secretariate for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps

Volksfronten, Grazer Kunstverein, steirischer herbst, Graz, 2018





Images: Liz Eve



Images: steirischer herbst



Installation view, WHAT WHERE, 2018, steirischer herbst, Graz, 2018, photo: Liz Eve

GELBE FAHNEN (1913) & CONGRESO FEMINISTA (1916)

Research and poster installation

2018 / 2021

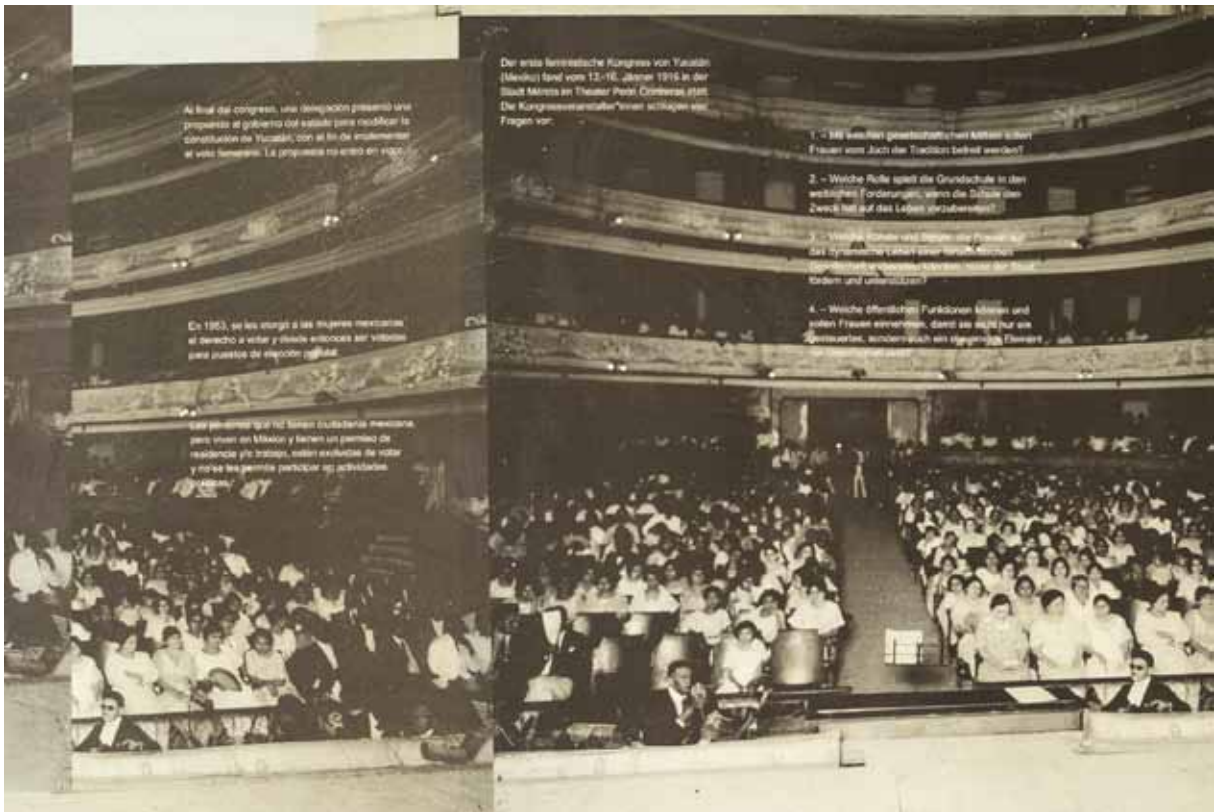
On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in Austria, the SKGAL investigated two conferences at the beginning of the 20th century as early efforts that eventually led to women's suffrage in Austria and Mexico: the International Women's Suffrage Conference in 1912 in Vienna and the First Feminist Congress in 1916 in Yucatan. The poster installation brings together archival materials from both events and shares their different efforts:

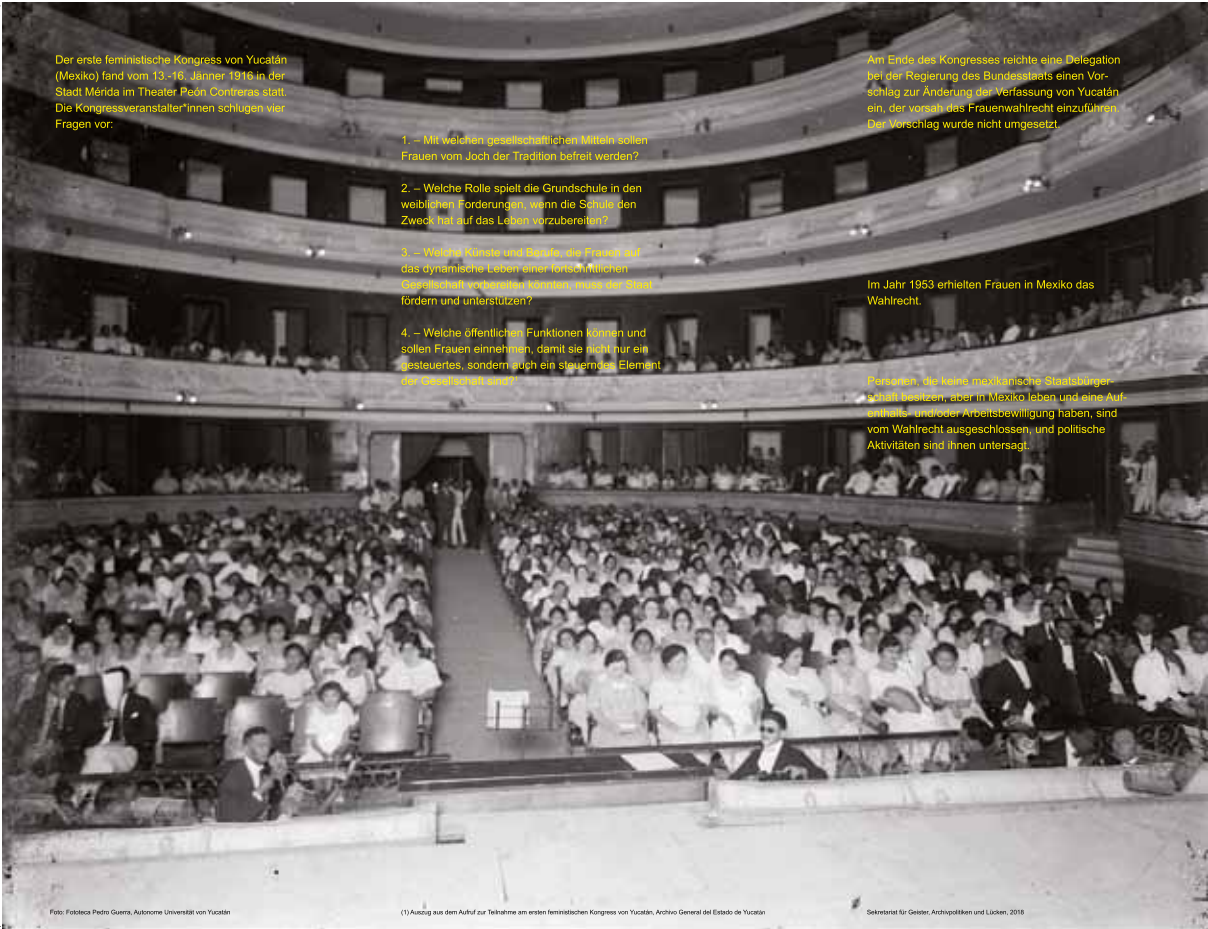
In Vienna, the conference's organizers called for a demonstration, which was attended by more than 120 cars and carriages that carried yellow flags with the word FRAUENSTIMMRECHT—"WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE". In 1918 women gained the right to vote in Austria.

In Yucatan, at the end of the congress, the delegates submitted a proposal to modify the Yucatan Constitution to allow women's suffrage. The proposal was not implemented. In 1953 women gained the right to vote in Mexico.

Archival materials: Fototeca Pedro Guerra, Autonomous University of Yucatán; General Archive of the State of Yucatan, Archive of the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ)

100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht, 50 Jahre 68er-Bewegung, Kunsthalle Graz,
Graz, 2018





Der erste feministische Kongress von Yucatán (Mexiko) fand vom 13.-16. Jänner 1916 in der Stadt Mérida im Theater Peón Contreras statt. Die Kongressveranstalter*innen schlugen vier Fragen vor:

1. – Mit welchen gesellschaftlichen Mitteln sollen Frauen vom Joch der Tradition befreit werden?
2. – Welche Rolle spielt die Grundschule in den weiblichen Forderungen, wenn die Schule den Zweck hat auf das Leben vorzubereiten?
3. – Welche Kräfte und Kräfte, die Frauen auf das dynamische Leben einer fortschrittlichen Gesellschaft vorbereiten können, muss der Staat fördern und unterstützen?
4. – Welche öffentlichen Funktionen können und sollen Frauen einnehmen, damit sie nicht nur ein gesteuertes, sondern auch ein steuerndes Element der Demokratie sind?

Am Ende des Kongresses reichte eine Delegation bei der Regierung des Bundesstaats einen Vorschlag zur Änderung der Verfassung von Yucatán ein, der vorsah das Frauenwahlrecht einzuführen. Der Vorschlag wurde nicht umgesetzt.

Im Jahr 1953 erhielten Frauen in Mexiko das Wahlrecht.

Personen, die keine mexikanische Staatsbürgerin sind, aber in Mexiko leben und eine Aufenthalts- und/oder Arbeitsbewilligung haben, sind vom Wahlrecht ausgeschlossen, und politische Aktivitäten sind ihnen untersagt.

Foto: Fototeca Pedro Guerra, Autonome Universität von Yucatán

(1) Auszug aus dem Aufzug zur Telebrücke am ersten feministischen Kongress von Yucatán, Archivo General del Estado de Yucatán

Sekretariat für Gender, Antidiskriminierung und Lücken, 2018

Am 11. und 12. Juni 1913 fand in Wien die Internationale Frauenstimmrechtskonferenz statt.

Am 12. Juni organisierten die Konferenzveranstalter*innen eine Demonstrationsrundfahrt, an der über 120 Autos und Kutschen teilnahmen. Die Wagen trugen gelbe Fahnen, auf denen das Wort FRAUENSTIMMRECHT stand.

Im Jahr 1918 erhielten Frauen in Österreich das Wahlrecht.

Personen, die keine österreichische Staatsbürgerin sind, aber in Österreich leben und eine Aufenthalts- und/oder Arbeitsbewilligung haben, sind vom Wahlrecht ausgeschlossen. Es ist ihnen aber erlaubt sich politisch zu engagieren.

Sekretariat für Gender, Antidiskriminierung und Lücken, 2018

GEGEN DEN FASCHISMUS / AGAINST FASCISM

Research and poster banner

2018

With the FPÖ, a party founded by former National Socialists, back in Austria's government, the SKGAL followed an invitation to express current concerns and demands in form of protest banners in an exhibition in Vienna. The SKGAL researched into the archive of the Association of the History of the Workers' Movement in Vienna looking for images of protest against fascist practices in the 1930s.

On its protest banner, the SKGAL shows a fragment of a photo of the 1933 Workers May Day march in Aš in Czechoslovakia. Across the border, in the same year in Austria, the Workers May Day marches had been banned by its Austrofascist government. Instead, the Viennese workers went for walks in the main streets of their districts and similar walks took place in other Austrian cities, too. On May 21, 1933, the photo of the march in Aš was printed in the Kuckuck—a weekly magazine by the Social Democratic publishing house Vorwärts.

Photo credit: Association for the History of the Workers' Movement (VGA), Vienna, 2018

Current signs, das weisse haus, Vienna, 2018



Image: Lorenz Seidler



HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE!

Research, performative screenings and film

2017

Ghosts shadow the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ)—its rooms, archive and its her/history/ies! The VBKÖ was founded in 1910 and it was one of the first organizations in Europe to represent the artistic and economic interests of women artists and to help women artists to participate in exhibitions, educations and discussions. Twenty-eight years later, in 1938, the association decided to meet the requirements of the National Socialist regime, to expel its Jewish members, and to align its program with the ideologies of the regime.

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE! attempts a long, fragmentary cut through the her/history/ies of the VBKÖ in order to show contradictions and continuities. Here, ghosts of national socialist ideologies encounter ghosts of colonial fantasies, and share the scene with old and new ghosts of feminist agency. The archival materials are haunted, exposed and associated. The ghosts appear in places, images and objects; for example in a group photo, a farewell letter or a travel journey. HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE! attempts to face different ghosts, to walk with them, to remember them, or to contradict them. To learn to live with ghosts.

Directed by Nina Hoechtl and Julia Wieger / Secretariate for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE! (70 min, 2017)

<https://vimeo.com/208006274/ea7f977910>

2018 WOMEN'S VOICE NOW BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Official selection:

MICGénero Mexico and Argentina, 2017

London Feminist Film Festival, 2017

Twisted Oyster Film Festival 2017 Chicago, 2017

2018 Women's Voices Now Online Film Festival, 2018

Performative screenings:

das weisse haus, Vienna, 2016

Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck, 2016

5020, Salzburg, 2016

esc medien kunst labor, Graz, 2016







Image: Maryam Mohammadi

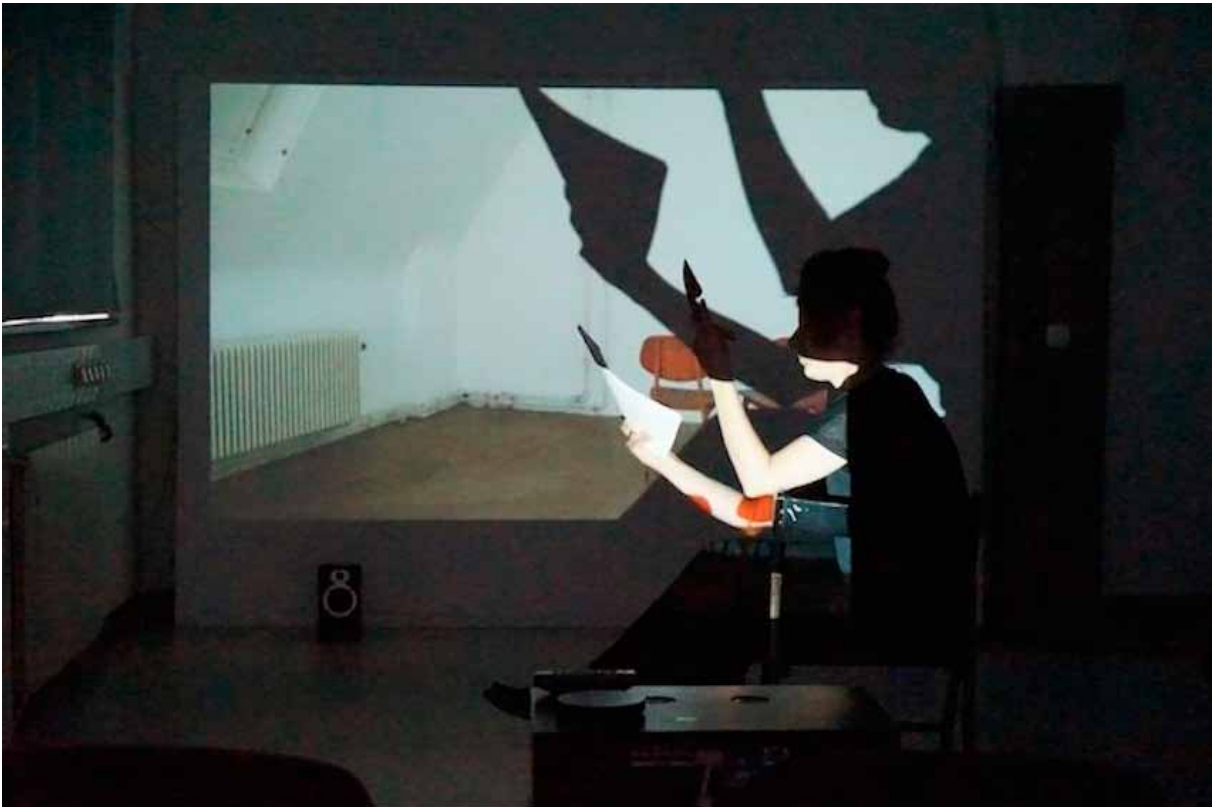


Image: Isabell Rauchenbichler



Film still HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE!, 2017



Performative screening HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE!

Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck, 2016, photo: Maryam Mohammadi

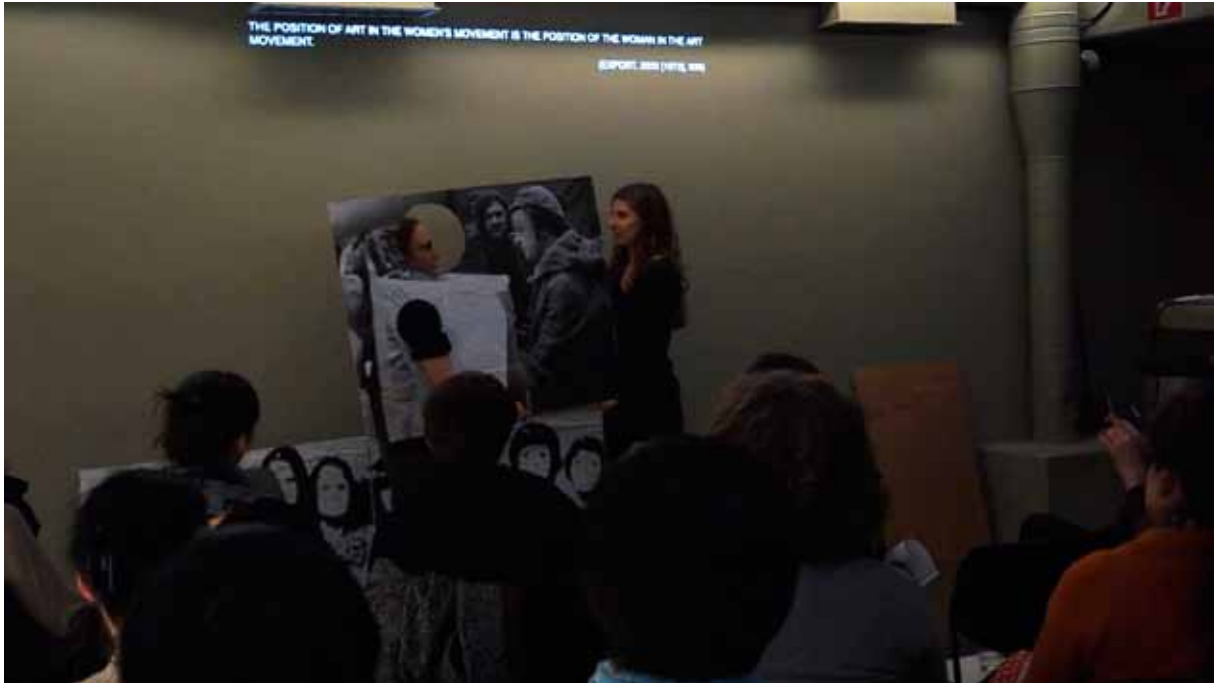
THE ARCHIVE AS A SITE OF POLITICAL CONFRONTATION. OR HOW TO SING OUT OF TUNE? (Französischer Saal)

Research and lecture performance
2015

The former Französischer Saal of the Vienna Künstlerhaus, which today is part of the performance space brut, serves as the point of departure as well as the site for the lecture performance: It was at the Französischer Saal where the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ) organized its exhibitions until the 1970s.

Focusing on the activities of the VBKÖ from the time of National Socialism until the 1980s, using props and projected documents, the lecture performance explores following questions: What kind of exhibitions were organized, and what kind of art did the organization show? Who were the members of the association, and what kind of art did they make? Was the role of the VBKÖ during National Socialism discussed after 1945? During the 1970s, were the members of the association in touch with local feminist art movements?

brut, Vienna, 2015



Images: Nick Prokesch, Liesa Kovacs

WALKING THROUGH THE VBKÖ ARCHIVE

Research and performative tour

2015

The performative tour through the premises of the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ) questions the relationship between its archive and the spaces it is situated in.

Underpinned with archival materials and visiting each of the associations rooms, the public tour deals with the following questions: What role does the structure of these premises play in the her/history/ies of the VBKÖ? Is it significant that the association has been located in the top floor of a bourgeois building since more than 100 years? That it is located in front of the Vienna State Opera? That today tourists pass by the front door of the building? That its real estate value has risen immensely in recent years? What scope of agency grants an upper middle-class apartment? What forms of visibility and hiding do these spaces allow? To which power relations, subjugations, solidarities and cooperation have they contributed?

The performative tour was conceived in a workshop and presented as part of the Vienna Art Week 2015.

With: Maren Blume, Andrea Haas, İpek Hamzaoğlu, Ruth Lang, Jule Saupe

VBKÖ, Vienna Art Week, Vienna, 2015



Images: Nick Prokesch, Liesa Kovacs

WIDERSTÄNDIGE ARCHIVE / ARCHIVING AS RESISTANCE / DİRENİŞİN ARŞİVLENMESİ

Event of presentations and discussion (concept and organization)
2015

Through presentations, discussions, and a small workshop, the event addresses three archives: the self-organized media project for women/media/culture bildwechsel, the working group Archiv der Migration (Archive of Migration), and the archive of the women's and lesbian movement Stichwort.

Together with the audience and the guests the following connections and relations between these archives were discussed: WHAT CONSTITUTES A RESISTING ARCHIVE? Is it the documented realities – events, experiences, feelings? Is it the relations to hegemonic institutions and dominant narratives? HOW CAN ARCHIVING BECOME RESISTANCE? Is it about claims and demands? About making marginalized histories visible? Is it about practices of archiving? Is it about the contextualization of an archive, or the production of a space? About access or the creation of a public? CAN RESISTANCE BE ARCHIVED? What are the ways to capture it? In which language? How can one read it? And where are the limits of archiving? What cannot be kept in an archive? Can an atmosphere or attitude be saved?

The event was conceived in a seminar led by Julia Wieger with the project group: Maren Luise Blume, Andrea Haas, İpek Hamzaoğlu, Franziska Kabisch, Ruth Lang, Juliane Saupe, Katharina Swoboda

With: *durbahn (bildwechsel / Hamburg), Arif Akkılıç (Archiv der Migration / Wien), Sissi Kata (Stichwort / Wien)

VBKÖ, Vienna, 2015



Images: İpek Hamzaoğlu

HAUNTED MATERIAL

Research, installation and workshop
2016

On a table, the SKGAL assembles archival materials from two rather different archives—the archive of the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ) and the University Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Taking the year 1941 as a point of departure, the installation-in-process sets out to challenge normative and linear historical narratives in order to direct our attention to the traces of National Socialism and colonialism in both archives.

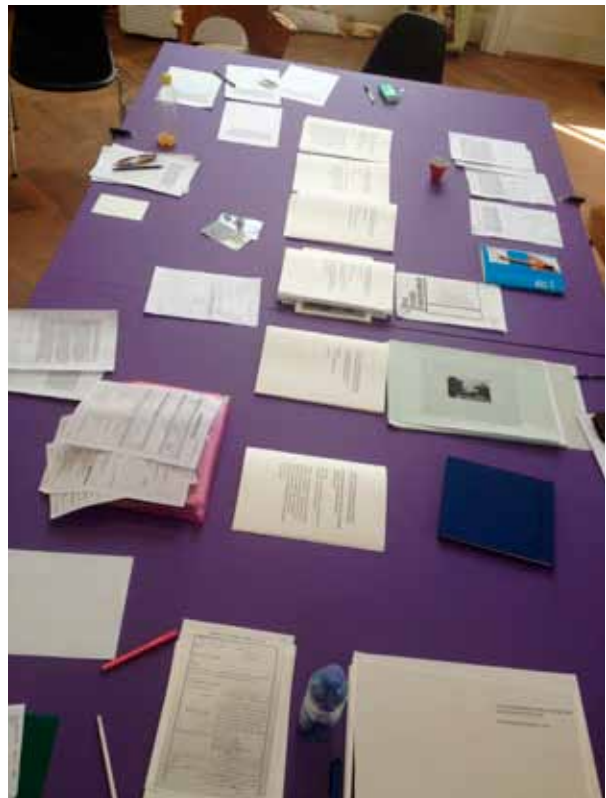
The archival materials—reproductions of documents like minutes, correspondences, participant lists, and newspaper clips, as well as art works and catalogues—were the source material for a workshop that was held in the course of the exhibition. As a result, the site of the archives as well as their materials—their position in time, space, as well as their form—was placed in question. The materials themselves were rearranged, complemented and/or intervened in by the workshop's participants. This way the actual process of archiving turned into its own mode of performance.

Archival materials: University Archives of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna,
Archive of the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ)

Concept and organization: Secretariate for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps
Uncanny Materials. Founding Moments of Art Education, xhibit, Academy of Fine
Arts Vienna, 2016



Image: Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien



THE VBKÖ'S ARCHIVE AS A SITE OF POLITICAL CONFRONTATION OR HOW TO SING OUT OF TUNE? (1970s)

Research and lecture performance

2014

The performance lecture focuses on the 1970s activities of an all women art space in Vienna, which was founded in 1910 and is still active today: The Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs (Austrian Association of Women Artists, VBKÖ). The VBKÖ initially campaigned for the artistic, economic and educational interests of women in the arts and rented a space in the center of Vienna, where it still is today. Despite its progressive beginnings, the association decided to collaborate with the Nazi regime in 1938.

From the perspective of the nascent Viennese Feminist Art Movements in the 1970s, the association had fallen into oblivion. Nevertheless, it was active in the 1970s, it is just not clear what these activities were about: Who were the members? Did internal discussions about a post-Nazi position take place? Was there any contact to local Feminist Artist Movements?

Fourth Biennial Conference of the European Network for Avant-garde and Modernism Studies UTOPIA EAM 2014, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, 2014



WOMEN ARTISTS' LETTERS

Online publication

2014

Throughout 2014, in an effort to make material from the VBKÖ archive available online, the SKGAL published 56 letters that the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ) received in its founding year. These transcribed letters show the association's network of friendship around 1910. They also raise following questions: How far does friendship go? How is it built up and maintained? How much commitment, support and togetherness does friendship contain? Who wanted to participate in the network of friendship of the VBKÖ? And if so, how?

<http://www.skgal.org/kunstlerinnenbriefe>

SEKRETARIAT FÜR GEISTER ARCHIV-POLITIKEN UND LÜCKEN

Statement
Links
Contact

PROJECT ROOM

DEPARTMENT OF
ULTIMOLOGY: WAS
WO/WHAT WHERE,
steirischerherbst'18
Volksfronten

KÜNSTLERINNENBRIEF NR. 87

[Künstlerinnenbrief Nr. 85](#)

[Künstlerinnenbrief Nr. 83](#)

[Künstlerinnenbrief Nr. 82](#)

[Künstlerinnenbrief Nr. 81](#)

[Künstlerinnenbrief Nr. 79](#)

KÜNSTLERINNENBRIEF NR. 87



18 Ann Street,

Hilfhead, Glasgow.

Mrs. Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh dankt das Komite der Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs für die Ehre welche Sie hatten ihr gemacht durch Ihrer Einladung ein correspondieren Mitglied zu werden und sie hat viele Vergnügen die Einladung anzunehmen.

Feb. 8. 1911

Margaret Macdonald-Mackintosh, 1911

EVENT ROOM

Gathering: ARCHIVAL PRACTICES, IMAGINATIONS AND FUTURE HISTORIES, Dec 7, 10am University Library

AUSSTELLUNG:

Current signs, das weisse haus

PERFORMATIVE

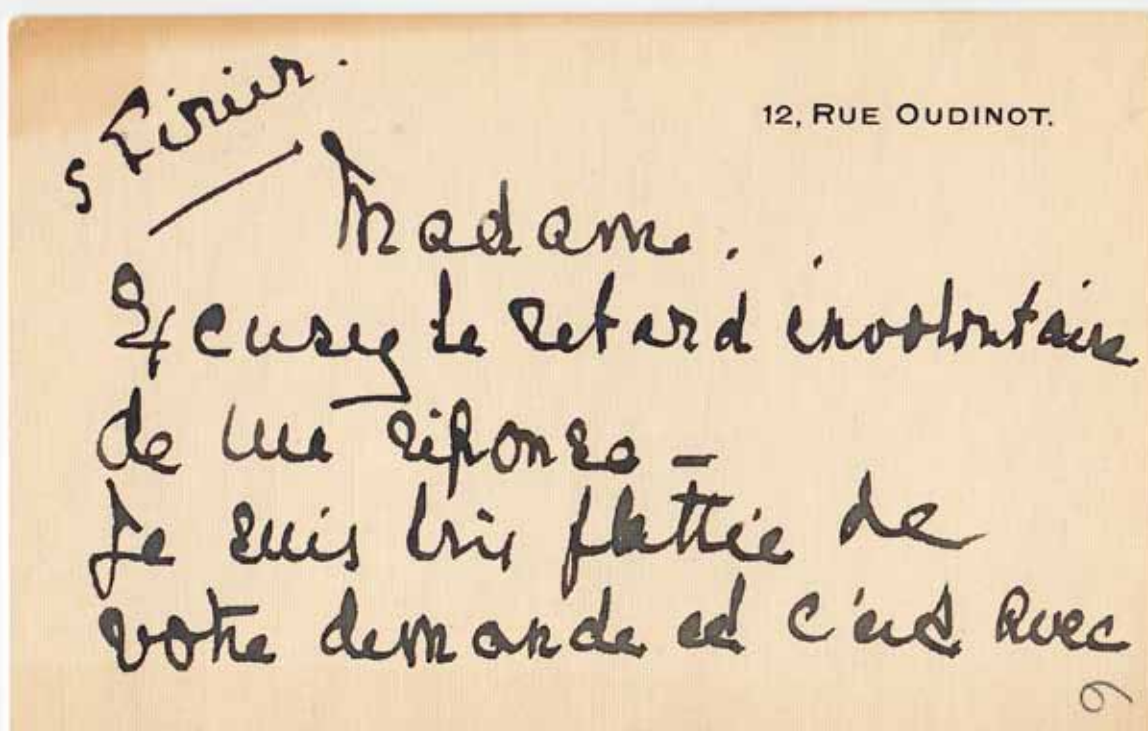
SCREENINGS: SPUKEN IM ARCHIV! im Juli 2016

WORKSHOP: An

Unpleasant Evening of Singing Out of Tune, April 22, 5pm, VBKÖ

5 - UHR - TEE:

AN.SPRECHEN an.schläge - das feministische Magazin und VBKÖ im Gespräch, 13. April, VBKÖ



IN BETWEEN SPACES – THE ARCHIVE AND ITS GHOSTS INSIST

Research and lecture performance

2013

The lecture performance takes as a point of departure the only existing group photo of the members of the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ) during the 1930s: In a two-channel projection a sequence of cut-outs of this photo are shown highlighting details and close-ups of hands holding bags, people looking at each other or into the camera, or a blurred background of trees. While the images are changing the SKGAL presents a dialogue about the association's history, the history of its archive and how we relate to both.

Among the twenty women artists on the photo only two persons are known: One being the then president of the association, who had to flee the country soon after the picture was taken as she was Jewish; the other being and a former president and the then secretary of the VBKÖ, who played a major role in the the association's collaboration with the Nazi regime.

At times the images and the text correspond directly to each other, at times they foster associations that leave obvious gaps in order to open up space for speculation.

OUT OF THE BOX. 10 (Lecture-) Performances on Undisciplined Knowledge Production, MAK, Vienna, 2013



Images: Clemens Stachel

DIE VIELEN ARCHIVE! / THE MANY ARCHIVES!

Research, intervention, exhibition and poster

In 2012, 102 years after being founded, we intervened in the Austrian Association of Women Artists (VBKÖ) by opening the Secretariat for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps (SKGAL). As a first step, the SKGAL installed an archive room in order to enable a constant analysis and examination of the association's history. The objective was to discuss, through different means, the role of the VBKÖ during the course of Austrofascism and National Socialism, along with the association's class-specific and colonial entanglements.

During the Vienna-based cultural festival WIENWOCHE the SKGAL organized its first program THE MANY ARCHIVES!. It consisted of two exhibitions, a discussion round, a movie night, several workshops and texts in order to reflect the broad spectrum of practices and debates in feminist archival practices and history writing. From different point of views, each one of them examined feminist archival politics in the fields of arts, science and activism. Moreover, a blog <http://www.skgal.org/> was set up, and a poster distributed to invite people to research into the association's history.

WIENWOCHE, Vienna, 2012





