

PORTFOLIO

SKGAL: Secretariat for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps

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HOCH DIE LAPPEN [RAISE THE RAGS]

Two-part installation project

Vorwärts-Haus Vienna and FLUC Vienna

In co-operation with the Association for the History of the Labor Movement (VGA)



Photo: Julia Gaisbacher



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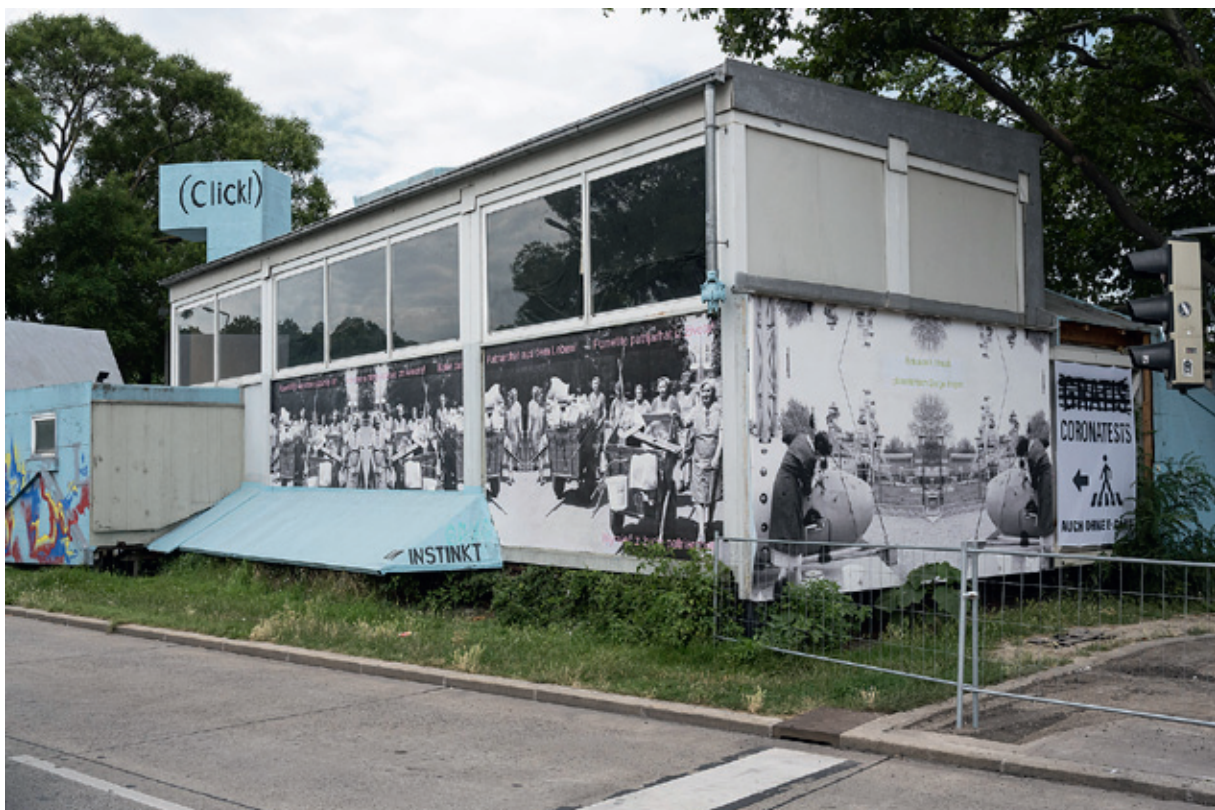


Photo: Julia Gaisbacher

HOCH DIE LAPPEN [RAISE THE RAGS]

The point of departure for the project is the photographs from the image archives of the Arbeiter-Zeitung (AZ) [Workers' Newspaper]. It is one of the most extensive image archives in Austria and is housed in the Vorwärts-Haus in Vienna. There, the Association for the History of the Labor Movement (VGA) takes care of them.

Historical photographs have been recontextualized for the poster series and installation, and in doing so the SKGAL reflects on the relationship between reproductive activities and archives of labor. In its spatial montage, history and present can overlap materially and conceptually. Among its approximately 600,000 photographs, there are only a few that show nursing, cleaning, and care labor – a telling gap in contemporary perception as well as historical reappraisal.

In the selection and installation of photographs from the 1950s to the 1980s, HOCH DIE LAPPEN deals with the disproportion of cleanliness and dirt, and the labor incurred therein, flowing through the city and through collective life. The labor becomes visible only when it is not performed; when streets, homes, schools, parks and art spaces remain dirty. The SKGAL works with fabrics and colors that are used in the cleaning sector. In this way, the materiality and visuality of a seemingly invisible sphere are brought into the public eye. Concurrently, the project refers to the feminist magazine Die Unzufriedene (The Discontented), published by Vorwärts-Verlag from 1923 to 1934, and imagines how the discontented – the caregivers, cleaners, caretakers of children and the elderly, or those who take care of households – organize themselves.

UNZUFRIEDENE, facade and interior of the Vorwärts-Haus
WER PUTZT DIE STADT?, billboards of the Fluc

ENTRÜSTET EUCH! [DISARM YOURSELVES, BECOME OUTRAGED!]

Research and installation project

AGGRESSIVE PEACE, Kunstraum Memphis, Linz, 2022

In co-operation with STICHWORT, Archives of the Women's & Lesbians' Movement



Photo: Jakob Dietrich



Photo: Jakob Dietrich

ENTRÜSTET EUCH! [DISARM YOURSELVES, BECOME OUTRAGED!]



Photo: Jakob Dietrich



Photo: Jakob Dietrich

ENTRÜSTET EUCH! [DISARM YOURSELVES, BECOME OUTRAGED!]

ENTRÜSTET EUCH! works with flyers from STICHWORT, the Archives of the Women's and Lesbians' Movement which were produced for feminist peace actions. Flyers, ranging from 1979 to 1992, show how the work of feminist groups overlapped with various peace movements. From the North to the West, from the South to the East, from concerts to camps, from information evenings to demonstrations, from quizzes, peace songs, and regular gatherings to peace marches, they document an array of actions and strategies for demanding global peace. They point to the past and offer a glimpse into the future.

STICHWORT was founded in Vienna in 1983. At a time when the peace movement in Europe was remobilizing. The flyers from the archive demonstrate a diverse commitment to peace — the concerns, demands and means of protest, often transcending the borders of nation-states and language barriers. Likewise, the documents emphasize the importance of the STICHWORT archives themselves: Only if archives have collected documents and have made them accessible, are we able to engage with the hi/herstory/ies of resistance and protest.

At the Memphis art space the SKGAL mounted black-and-white copies of the flyers on the walls and windows. They convey the aesthetic and thematic diversity of various actions of the peace movement. The SKGAL worked with a group of archivists, theorists, artists, and activists with whom we have been in exchange for some time. Together, they delve deeply into a selection of documents: Color photographs of the flyers next to texts printed on colored paper reveal perspectives and questions for the present.

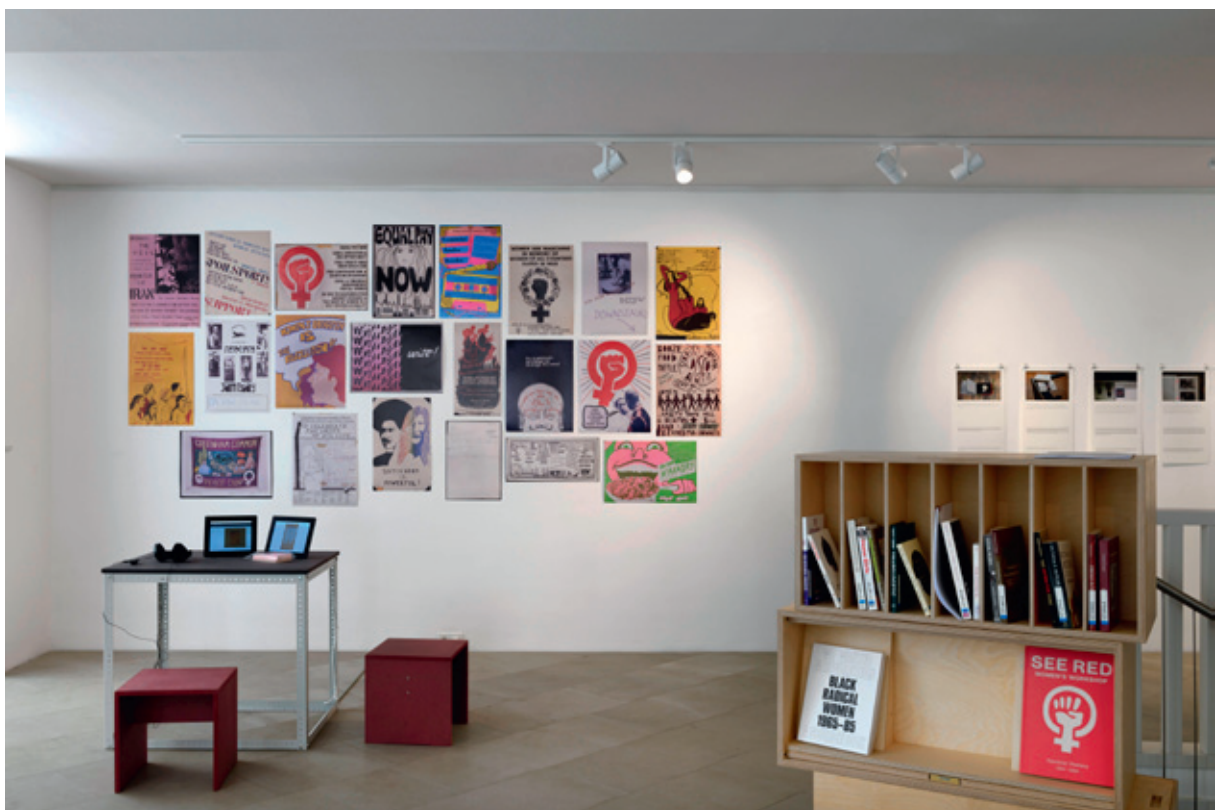
In collaboration with Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Lina Dokuzović, Margit Hauser,
Sassy Splitz

Photography for posters: Julia Gaisbacher

DARK ENERGY. Feminist Organizing, Working Collectively
Exhibition and event program of events (concept and organization)
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, xE – Exhibiton Space, 2019
In collaboration with Andrea Haas and Veronique Boilard



Exhibition view: ff. Feministisches Fundbüro, Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski and Aida Wilde, photo: Lisa Rastl



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

DUNKLE ENERGIE. Feministisch organisieren, kollektiv arbeiten



Exhibition view: Annette Krauss and the shifting Casco Team, Material from the archive of La Centrale, photo: Lisa Rastl



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

DARK ENERGY. Feminist Organizing, Working Collectively Exhibition (concept and organization)

Like the universe, the realm of cultural production consists mostly of dark energy and matter.⁽¹⁾ These invisible masses and movements form from 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 labor of those who deliberately shun visibility or have no choice but to remain invisible. It is the invisible dark matter that keeps the cultural sector going!

DARK ENERGY. Feminist Organizing, Working Collectively 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 collaborative practices. It asks how these forms of organization and production are influenced by their general economic setup and what begins to sway politically in this context. Which forms of creative dark matter and knowledge can be practiced, produced, and disseminated when, where, and how?

The exhibition brings together a diverse range of efforts that tackle these questions in different contexts and times. Through the work of the participating artists, archivists, designers, and activists the exhibition provides insights from feminist, queer, decolonizing perspectives into the forces that collide with(in) art institutions and organizations.

Participants: Felicity Allen; Anti*Colonial Fantasies – Imayna Caceres, Sunanda Mesquita, Sophie Utikal; Chantal DuPont; ff. Feministisches Fundbüro; Martha Fleming und Lyne Lapointe; Vera Frenkel; Anne Golden; Althea Greenan; Minna Henriksson; Belinda Kazeem-Kaminski; Annette Krauss and the shifting team at the Casco Art Institute; lamathilde; Tanya Mars; Diane Poitras; Anne-Marie Proulx; Martha Rosler; Ego Ahaïwe Sowinski; Sekretariat für Geister, Archivpolitiken und Lücken; Vidéographe; Joyce Wieland; Aida Wilde

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

ARCHIVAL PRACTICES, IMAGINATIONS AND FUTURE HISTORIES

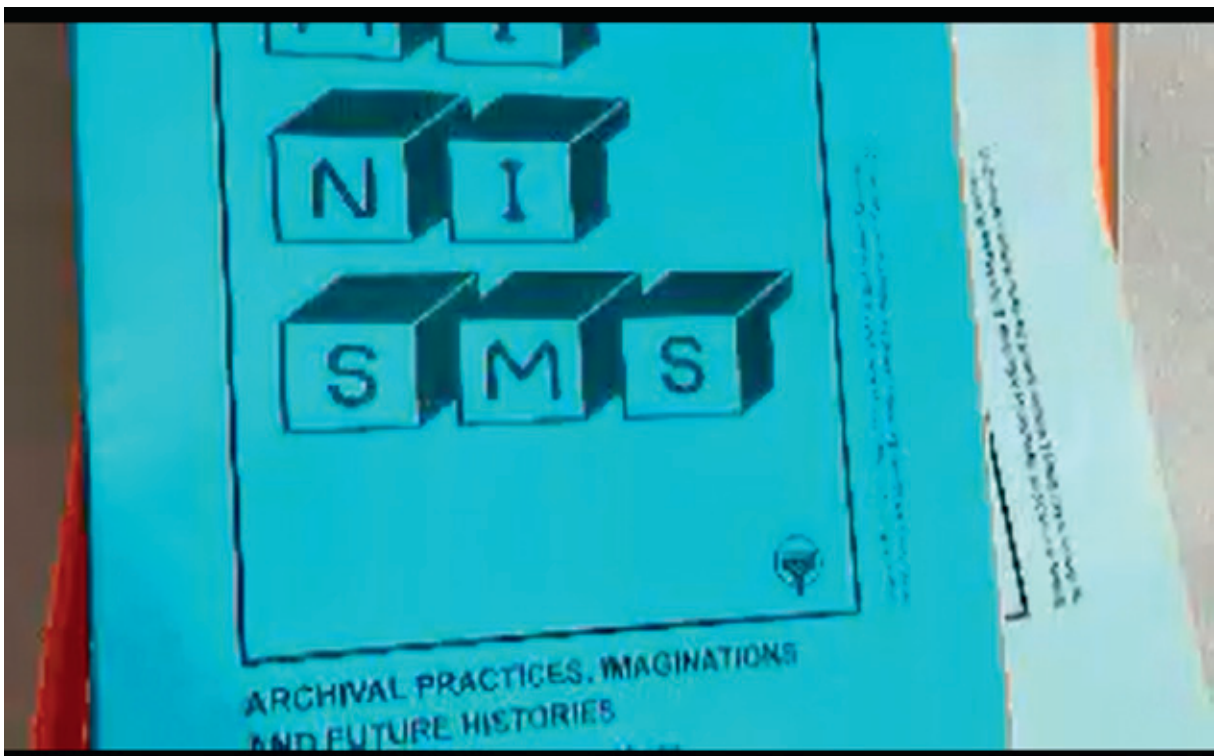
Gathering with presentations and conversations (concept and organization)

Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, University Library, 2018

Pre-program of DARK ENERGY. Feminist Organizing, Working Collectively



Presentation by Roshini Kempadoo, University Library of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna



Folder for the gathering, photo: Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski

ARCHIVAL PRACTICES, IMAGINATIONS AND FUTURE HISTORIES

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.

With: Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Kathy Carbone and Roshini Kempadoo

WHAT WHERE

Artistic research, installation and lecture performance

Volksfronten, Grazer Kunstverein, steirischer herbst, Graz, 2018

In collaboration with the Department of Ultimology



Installation view, Grazer Kunstverein, 2018, photo: Liz Eve



Installation view, Grazer Kunstverein, 2018, photo: Liz Eve

WHAT WHERE



Installation view, Grazer Kunstverein, 2018, photo: Liz Eve



Lecture performance, Orpheum Graz, 2018, photo: steirischer herbst

WHAT WHERE

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 traveling 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.

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE!

Research, performative screenings and film, 2015-2017

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE! (70 min, 2017)

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



Film still, 2017



Film still, 2017

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE!

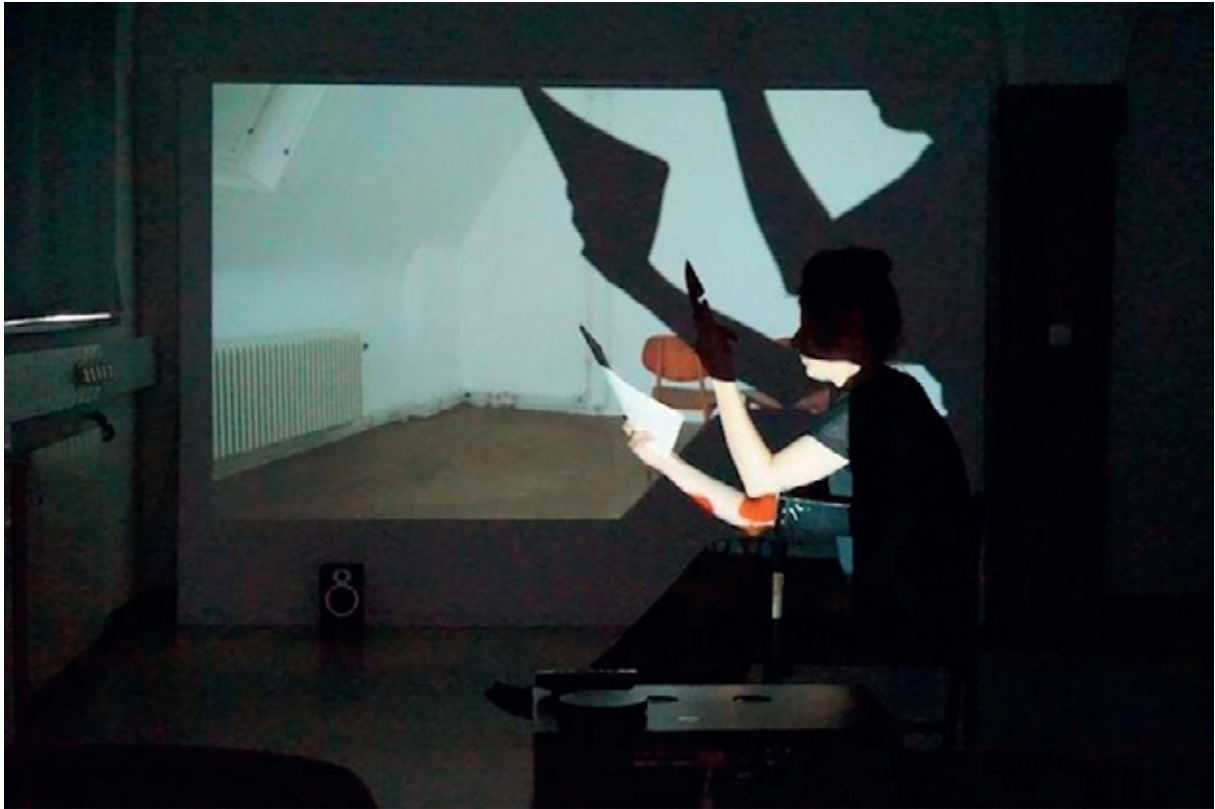


Film still, 2017



Film still, 2017

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE!



Performative screening, Galerie 5020, Salzburg, 2016, photo: Isabell Rauchenbichler



Performative screening, Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck, photo: Maryam Mohammadi, 2016

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE!

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.

HAUNTINGS IN THE ARCHIVE! (70 min, 2017)

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

2018 WOMEN'S VOICE NOW BEST DOCUMENTARY FEATURE

Official Selection at MICGénero Mexico and Argentina, London Feminist Film Festival, Twisted Oyster Film Festival 2017 Chicago, 2018 Women's Voices Now Online Film Festival

Performative screenings:

das weisse Haus, Vienna

Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Innsbruck

5020, Salzburg

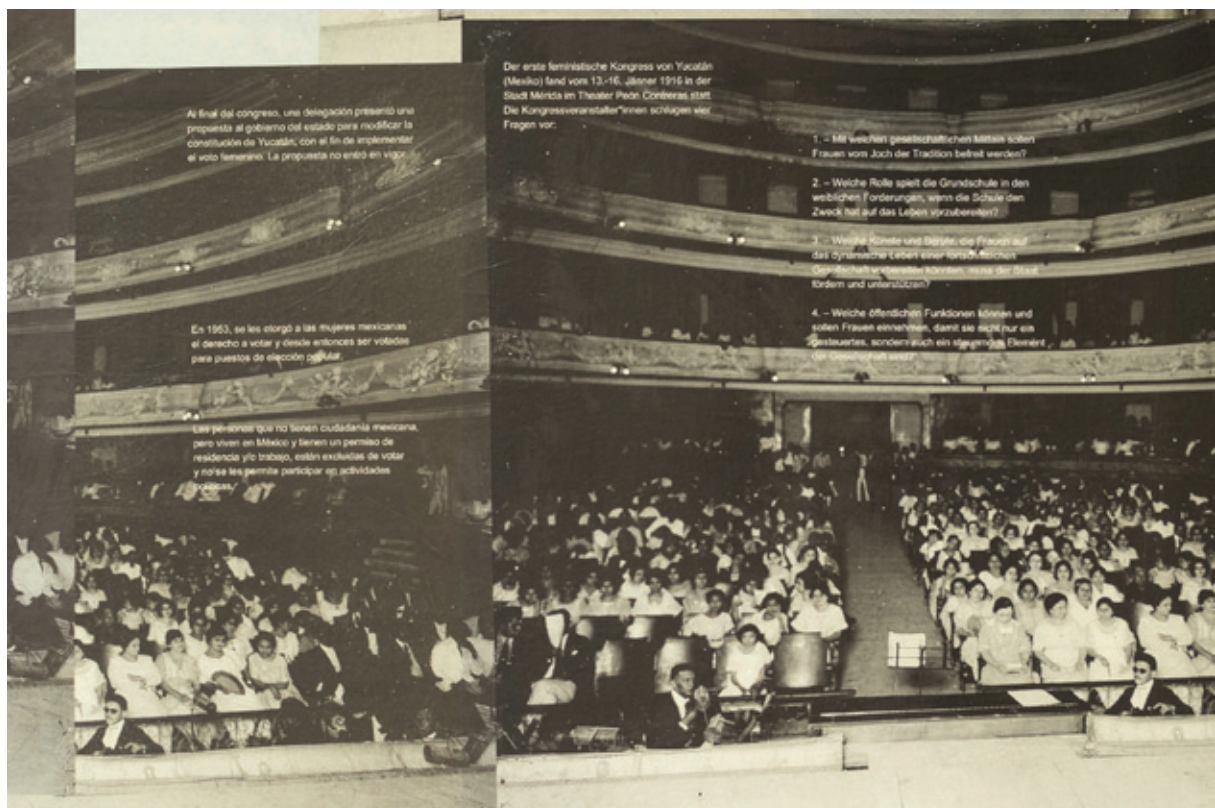
esc medien kunst labor, Graz

GELBE FAHNEN (1913) & CONGRESO FEMINISTA (1916)

Research and poster installation

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

Eine Heimsuchung aus der Zukunft, Kunstraum Innsbruck, 2020



GELBE FAHNEN (1913) & CONGRESO FEMINISTA (1916)

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)

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

Research and lecture performance

brut Wien, 2015 (Französischer Saal)

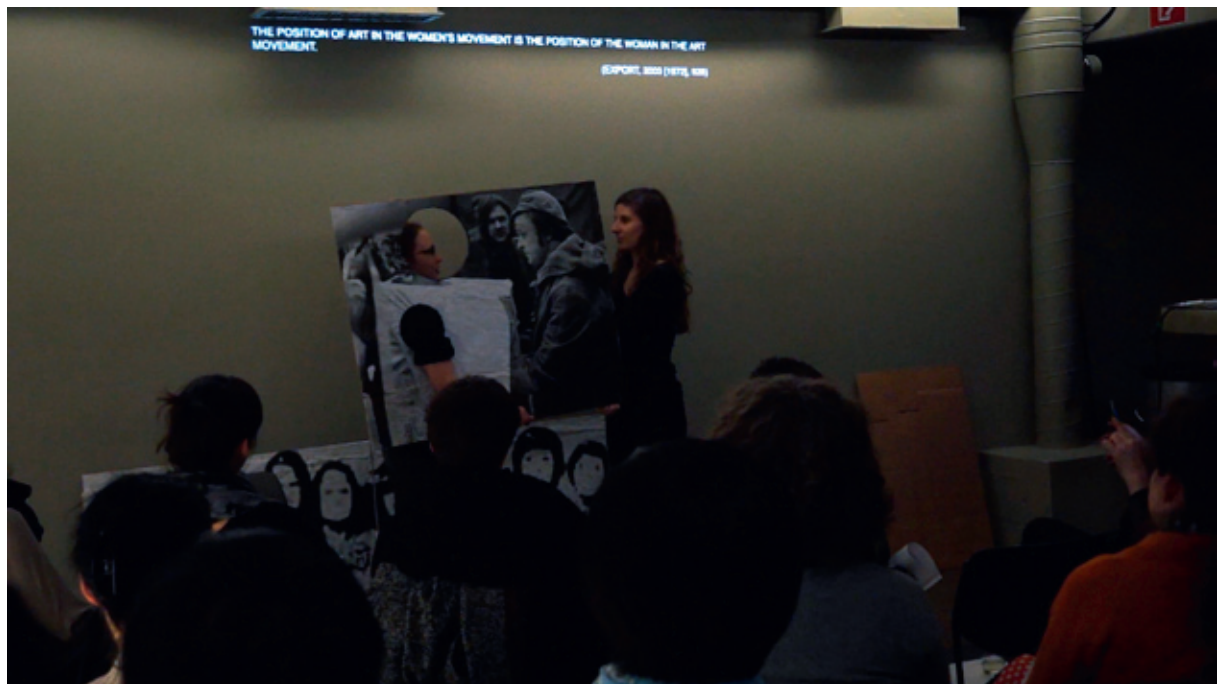


Photo: Nick Prokesch



Photo: Nick Prokesch

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

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?

WALKING THROUGH THE VBKÖ ARCHIVE

Research and performative tour (60 min)

VBKÖ / Vienna Art Week, 2015



Photo: Nick Prokesch, Liesa Kovacs



Photo: Nick Prokesch, Liesa Kovacs

WALKING THROUGH THE VBKÖ ARCHIVE

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 association's 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

WIDERSTÄNDIGE ARCHIVE / ARCHIVING AS RESISTANCE /
DİRENİŞİN ARŞİVLENMESİ

Event of presentations and discussion (concept and organization)
VBKÖ, 2015



Presentation *durbahn (bildwechsel / Hamburg), photo: İpek Hamzaoğlu



Workshop Sissi Kata (Stichwort / Vienna), photo: İpek Hamzaoğlu

WIDERSTÄNDIGE ARCHIVE / ARCHIVING AS RESISTANCE / DİRENİŞİN ARŞİVLENMESİ

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)

HAUNTED MATERIAL

Research, installation and workshop

Uncanny Materials. Founding Moments of Art Education
Exhibit, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, 2016



Photo: Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, 2016



HAUNTED MATERIAL

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 re-arranged, 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)

THE MANY ARCHIVES!

Research, intervention, exhibition and poster

VBKÖ / WIENWOCHE, 2012



THE MANY ARCHIVES!



THE MANY ARCHIVES!



THE MANY ARCHIVES!

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.