

DNA

Evidence

November 27, 2015 - January 27, 2016
in the DNA Berlin, August Str. 20, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Curated by Seoyoung Kim

The exhibition *Evidence* is to understand those images in their own pictorial dignity, which can be described by a reflection from Paul Valéry on the specific abilities of images. He writes, “An image is more than an image and sometimes shows more than the object of which it is an image.” But, most of all, this exhibition aims to bring a range of artistic approaches and rethinking about the stories that have been overshadowed by social histories. These approaches are drawn from works of Jeamin Cha, Mariam Ghani, Clemens Krauss, Dinh Q. Lê, Mariana Vassileva and Jui-Chung Yao.

Jeamin Cha represented in “Autodidact” (2014) suspicious death of Won-Keun Hur during his military service in 1984. The unofficial forensic investigator, Youngchun Hur, who is the father of Won-Keun Hur, taught himself forensic medicine to reveal the truth, since his son’s death was not clear by an official investigation. The “Autodidact” (2014) shows magnified images of Mr. Hur’s investigative materials he studied and examined along with his handwritings. At the same time, two narrators, Mr. Hur and a man in his early twenties, tell a story which topic of conversation included politics, life and forensic. In her other video work “Hysterics” (2014) was inspired in part by Heinrich Heine’s poem “The Vale of Tears” in which a coroner reveals the cause of death of a miserable couple. She focused on the fact that the death of a couple is what is excluded in the situation, conceiving a relationship between hysteria and the agent that raises questions. This work attempts to stage ‘meaninglessness’ and a hysteric state as a theatrical situation where white papers and a specific kind of lighting interact with each other. It refers to the quote: “Pain makes people raise questions, and those who question become hysteric. Those who refuse to take plausible explanation and attempt to find the fundamental reason constantly raise questions.” The “Hysterics” (2014) has guided us those who are in this hysteric state, the ones that raise questions until the end discover other individuals who become victims.

Mariam Ghani found that the Friedricianum Museum in Kassel, Germany has architectural similarity to the palace Dar ul-Aman in Kabul, Afghanistan. The ruined Dar ul-Aman Palace, located on the periphery of the capital city of Afghanistan. The construction of Amanullah's new city of Dar ul-Aman represented a radical break with traditional building design, materials, and techniques. While many Germans collaborated on the project, it was funded entirely by Afghan resources, without international assistance, since Amnullah's reign represents the only period in Afghan history when the country subsisted without foreign aid. In "A Brief History of Collapse" (2012) she described these two buildings with two video channels in relation to architectural layout and details, but each represents its own narratives. Over the similarities and differences of architectural images, it can be shared with an aesthetic evidence of the collapse and restoration based on their historical, political and social stories.

Clemens Krauss found one of last living evidence of Adolf Hitler's regime. In "The Taster" (2013), an old lady, named Margot Wölk(b. 1917, Berlin) is shown without any explanation about her testimony. She is eating something with casual manners. The viewer cannot deduce what she was in the reality from these images, but actually, she was taster for Adolf Hitler at the end of World War II whose task was to prevent his death by poisoning. It seems to be obvious that many historically overshadowed things have often been forgotten and no one knows how they disappeared.

Dinh Q. Lê collected drawings by Vietcong artists. In 1978, when Dinh Q. Lê was ten years old, his family escaped from their town Ha Tien in Vietnam, where was under attack by the Khmer Rouge. After they have taken refuge in America, he had grown up with object that went back many generations inside the family. He thinks collecting objects, for him, is a way to connect to a longer history. This might explain why he collects many drawings of Vietcong artists. His work "Light and Belief" (2012) is a documentary Film about Vietcong artists who participated in the Vietnam War. This war was not just a war of liberation against a colonial power. Especially, the Second Indochina War was for people in North against the imperialist Americans and for people in South against North Vietnamese Communists. For this reason, in Vietnam, there were a lot of issues that they haven't been allowed to discuss since the end of the Vietnam War. On this way, he is trying to understand what happened between the First Indochina War and the Second Indochina War that led Vietnam into a civil war through his work, which is about, in part, to understand mindset of these drawing artists who participated in the war, on the Hanoi side, the Communist side. Through his "Light and Belief" (2012) we can understand how different they are experienced the Vietnam War.

Mariana Vassileva represented historical story of Kronstadt, which is St. Petersburg's main seaport and century-old army-town near the head of Gulf of Finland in Russia and a ballet dancer from the St. Petersburg Mariinski Ballet. The main part of the footage for “Kronstadt” (2014), has been combined with studio sequences of the ballet dancer and images found on the internet, television advertisement traversing the urban and natural landscapes of Kronstadt. As a historical site for political struggle, to which Kronstadt's famous fortifications unrelentingly attest, the performing ballet and its aesthetic expression controvert the shooting cannon in her video. However, what if we rethink about this that Russia's current cultural climate of censorship and infringement of freedom, or consider that we comfort to passively sit back and read in a narrative mode?

Jui-Chung Yao represented the politic of storytelling that comes from Hsinhai Revolution in Taiwan. “Long Live” (2011) shows Kinmen Island, which was the Nationalists' first line of defense against Communists during the Cold War in Taiwan. In view of the grim battlefield in Kinmen Island, the shout *Wansui!* (meaning “ten thousand years”) is being repeated and resonates through the loudspeakers. Beyond the speakers, the Generalissimo is also calling for *Wansui!* in reflection of the derelict hall Chieh-shou. Literally it refers to the long live for Chiang Kai-shek (the leader of Nationalists). It seems obvious that the propaganda for an eternal empire reflected an eternal repetition of history. As Hannah Arendt wrote: “storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining. It brings about consent and reconciliation with things as they really are.”

The exhibition will open on Thursday, 26th of November 2015 and run until Wednesday, 27th of January, 2016 at the *DNA Berlin*.

About the curator

Seoyoung Kim is curator and art historian based in Berlin, Germany and in Seoul, South Korea. After finishing her studies in Art History and East Asian Art History, she received degrees of History and Cultural Studies from Freie Universität Berlin. Her recent curatorial works include "Evidence" (2015), "Making Border: Afterimages and Projections" (2015), "Topological Constellation: Art and Architecture" (2014) and "Res(v)olution: Temporary Screening" (2013) at the DNA Berlin. Also, she organized "Protection and Preservation of Cultural Heritage on the Korean Peninsula" (2013) at the Asian Art Museum, National Museums in Berlin, while she is involved in the planning of the research project at the Freie Universität Berlin. She also participated in the curatorial workshop jointly organized by Tate London and Mori Art Museum Tokyo (2014). Currently she is project manager of Gyeonggi Bay Project and curator of Public Art at the Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation, Gyeonggi Creation-Center.

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