



Press Release

Zurich, 22th of September 2010

Dear ladies and gentlemen

We are pleased to invite you to our upcoming exhibition:

Crossfades. Reconstructing the Future.

9th of October – 23th of December 2010

Opening: Friday, 8th of October 2010, 7 pm

Zbyněk Baladrán (CZ), Rossella Biscotti (I/NL), Daniela Comani (I/D), Christoph Draeger (CH/USA), Karen Geyer (D/CH), Hofmann&Lindholm (D), Knowbotic Research (A/D/CH), Uriel Orlow (CH/UK), Suzanne Treister (PL/UK), Sarah Vanagt (B), Miriam Visaczki (D)

Curators: Anke Hoffmann and Yvonne Volkart

Assistant curator: Angela Wittwer

Lately, history and the past have become topics in art to an ever greater extent. In contrast to the science of history, art not only places special emphasis on the questions of memory and retrospection and the investigation of new narratives. It also explores the very processes that turn some event into "history" and investigates how and by which means certain narrations and views of history become prevalent as opposed to others. With newly revived self-confidence, art considers itself part of the historical discourse and as one form of historiography.

History always is historiography, the verbal rendering, verbal representation of something past, a subsequent construction, a reconstruction of some real event. History is the representation of something past, maybe even something forgotten or something repressed. And history, or historiography, like anything else written or conceived, always is something influenced by interests, no matter if we consider it a branch of science, or the culture of memory as a live, everyday experience. In short, the concept of history as the one big truth in a linear stream of groundbreaking events not only has been questioned (as ideological) but seems outlived, in particular if one takes the networked media into account too. Just as the science of history has faced up to these challenges and overhauled its premises art, increasingly, takes part in the debate and continues to write or even rewrites history, clearly comprising the present debates in the theory of history, which, among others, today even deems subjective narratives and biographical research valid topics.

Art has become an area and an agent re-actualising history and trying out subjective forms of historiography. We perceive art, and in particular politically engaged art, as extraordinarily apt, ideally suited for this new approach in historiography since art always has been a field developing aesthetical procedures and strategies in opposition to the prevailing culture and its potential predomination. This seems especially important in present times, since historical knowledge is no longer solely generated by textbooks and patriarchal teachers but increasingly by Hollywood block busters or social platforms in the internet, times that, furthermore, confront us not with a lack but a superabundance of information.

Contemporary art, the digital art media, and documentary-experimental film have developed diverse approaches setting the gaps and losses that are necessarily involved in history, too, against the spectacle and the accumulation. Numerous projects seek for appropriate contemporary forms of tradition and the representation of times past and in doing so, at the same time, exceed the concepts of history used in science or historiography, the mass media and digital memories.

The title “Cross-fades” refers to an artistic strategy which we would like to put emphasis on. It means that we, today, put the past into a perspective that may possibly lead to a “film” of the future. The interest in history, thus, not only leads to new approaches to the past in order to judge it differently, but also to new concepts of agency for the future, to new possibilities for the audience “to inscribe” themselves.

The exhibition project “Cross-fades” – which encompasses events, too – will search for such “different” forms of historical representation in contemporary art, explore them, and embed them into the present discourses in arts and science. We will focus on the following questions: Which art-specific means are being used, which are the specific aesthetic approaches developed by art, and which insights are thus gained that could not be gained by any other area of knowledge.

Film and Talk with Sarah Vanagt: Friday, 12th of November, 7-9 pm

The artist and filmmaker Sarah Vanagt from Brussels is (hi)story-teller. Her films reflect the barbarous colonial history of Belgium in Central Africa, history lessons in Ruanda and tell world history from a perspective of immigrants. Excerpts and screening of “Begin, Began, Begun”, 2004 and “Boulevard d'Ypres / Ieperlaan”, 2010. (screening time around 100 min.)

Cross-Talk “Art, Science, History”: Saturday, 13th of November, 4-8.30 pm

The historian Beat Näf (University Zurich), the art theorist Ute Vorkoeper (Hamburg), der curators Raffael Döring and Katharina Dunst (shift-Festival, Basel), the Shedhalle – curators Anke Hoffmann and Yvonne Volkart as well as the artist of the exhibition Suzanne Treister, Christoph Draeger, Sarah Vanagt and Miriam Visaczki will explain their individual approaches and discuss their differences in methods. Noticable is, e.g, that the exhibited artistic positions present historic events - in opposition to historical science – often obscure, superimposed or even absent.

For further information and press material regarding the artists, please contact:
Angela Wittwer, assistant curator: aw@shedhalle, ++41/44 481 59 50.

We are looking forward to your visit and thank you for your acknowledgement.

With kind regards,
Team Shedhalle

Anke Hoffmann and Yvonne Volkart, curators