

The background image is a photograph of a grand, ornate interior space, likely a museum or a historical building. It features a large, vaulted dome with intricate carvings and a series of classical columns. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, emphasizing the architectural details. The overall color palette is dominated by warm, earthy tones like gold, brown, and cream, with some cooler tones in the shadows.

MOMENTUM |

Fragments of Empires

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FONDS

Fragments of Empires

Curated by

David Elliott and Rachel Rits-Volloch

Featuring

Kader Attia, Lutz Becker, Theo Eshetu, Amir Fattal
Gülsün Karamustafa, Fiona Pardington, Sophia Pompéry

7th November 2014 – 1st February 2015

At MOMENTUM Berlin
Mariannenplatz 2, 10997, Berlin

Supported by





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Introduction

By David Elliott

Fragments of Empires is an exhibition of contemporary art that addresses issues of memory, identity and the impact of migration through the work of seven artists. Showing ten works in six different time-based media—sound, film, video, photography, installation and collage—*Fragments of Empires* examines the notion of ‘object memories’ to reveal how objects, their images and the associations related to them, have throughout history been repeatedly transferred and re-imprinted by processes of colonisation and migration. In this way they have moved from one culture to another and back again.

Although these fragments were originally circumscribed by imperial ambitions, the work made by the artists in the exhibition indicates different ways in which they have been woven into new lives or realities to establish other meanings and identities in the present. These works share a common concern to show how power—political, national, sexual, cultural and economic—is still expressed through fragments of ‘imperial’ motifs, institutions and thought processes. Although the vocabulary may have changed to describe a successively ‘colonial’, ‘post-colonial’ and

‘global’ world, in actuality the self-perpetuating mentality and reality of power has changed very little. As old walls have been torn down, new ones have swiftly been constructed. As empires and even nations have faded, they have been quickly replaced by neo-liberal structures of individualism run riot as well as by the opaque unaccountability of multinational corporations.

In 1885 Berlin hosted a congress of imperial nations at which Africa was arbitrarily partitioned according to the political and economic convenience of the most powerful present. National borders drawn on that day still largely define the nations of that continent, often to their detriment. In 1914 the imperial rivalries implicit in this ‘Scramble for Africa’ flared into a cataclysmic World War that heralded the first step in the end of the ‘Age of Empires’. The empires of those defeated, the Germans, Austro-Hungarians, Russians and Ottoman Turks, sought redemption through their own dismemberment and became republics. The victors carried on and grimly expanded. But in the ‘Age of Modernity’ that followed, nationalism and self-determination became the new order, both in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Near and Middle East and across Northern Africa.

For many centuries the huge size of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires had allowed, if not actively encouraged, ethnic and religious diversity. Only towards the end of the nineteenth century had the twin viruses of rabid nationalism and religious discrimination began to proliferate and poison the latitudes of tolerance that enabled them to work. Jews, Muslims, Greek and Armenian Orthodox Christians all suffered for their religions in different places. Ethnic origin also became confirmed as a step on an obscene ladder of racial hierarchy on which one’s position denoted cultural, mental and moral development. ‘Cosmopolitan’ became a dirty word.

Rising out of the ashes of the First World War, picking up on their way Rudyard Kipling’s ‘White Man’s Burden’ of racialist duty, Germany and its European allies, the new Republics of Austria and Italy, lost all moral sense in their yearning for an exclusive impossible empire. Under Hitler, Berlin became the capital of an inhuman and deathly Third Reich.

The smouldering ashes of Berlin in 1945 still scorch the memories of its older inhabitants, while their perfume still lingers in bomb sites and some of its streets. No longer a symbol of empire, the city, now like the rod for a ponderous Iron Curtain, became an emblem of ideological conflict and division, made concrete literally, in 1963, by the construction of a vast Great Chinese wall to divide the city, and the whole country, to include and exclude the ‘barbarians’. The definition of who was who was a matter of both perspective and ideology.

Since 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Empire with it, a new openness seemed to have dawned and young people from across the world flocked to the city. From that time Berlin has straddled the political, social and economic intersection of a fragmented but partly unified Europe of cultures and nations, much of its population immigrant, or ‘fragments of empires’ themselves. In recent years, Berlin has become increasingly known for attracting artists but, like many other European capitals, it is equally famous for the wealth of cultural artefacts housed in its many art museums: all beneficiaries and guardians of the spoils of empire.



A

The convergence, in this capital city, of indigenous historical and creative culture with migrant cultures from all over the world is now highly regarded as a contemporary phenomenon. But the significance of this has not yet been fully considered in terms of the bringing together of different colonial ‘stories’ from the many different populations that inhabit the city. Berlin, moreover, is only one former imperial capital among many and *Fragments of Empires* is also a timely reflection of the widespread hybridization of culture and its practices everywhere. Wherever we live, we have and need roots, dreams, stories, legacies and nightmares from somewhere else.

By bringing together artists who, in different ways, have dissected historical legacies from their own multiple cultures to integrate them into contemporary statements, this exhibition indicates how, through a continuing process of rejection and absorption, culture has defied those established limits, borders and concepts of nationhood that, urged by romantic ideals of *Volk*, religion and race, have often been drawn and re-drawn by force.

Such concerns also illuminate MOMENTUM’s engagement with time-based practices in art as, in this exhibition, time becomes a material, to be moulded, fashioned and replicated like any other artistic medium.

In Berlin, the exhibition begins with Lutz Becker’s sound piece *After the Wall* (1999/2014). Its production, for an exhibition of the same title, coincided with the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, and its re-production here marks the passing of twenty-five years since the Wall fell. Becker, Berlin-born but living for over forty years in London, recorded five different soundscapes of tapping and hammering as the wall was slowly demolished across Berlin. In the process it was transformed from a monumental symbol of oppression into a commodity to be sold in small plastic packs and a destination for tourism. Both the heroism of hope and the banality of commerce can be heard in this beating against the wall as solidarity syncopates into nothingness and the sound of freedom resounds in a void.



B

In an ironical paradigm of modern architecture, the multiple images and loose grid of Kader Attia’s collage *Modern Architecture Genealogy* (2014) presents an array of different human heads as an object history of empire in the present. Of Algerian heritage, the artist was brought up in Paris. In a related text (p.15), he explains how the fragments of classical sculpture we see in museums, on which Western ideals of beauty are based, are actually an amalgam of wounds and repairs in which very little is original. In this larger story the wound is both actual and symbolic. The heads we see are not only marble but also real, showing the severe head wounds of combatants in the First World War. Such photographs were published in Berlin in ‘War Against War!’ (1924), a pacifist book subsequently banned and then displayed in the Anti-War Museum which was closed down by the Nazis in 1933. In this collision of ideal, wound and deformation,

Attia presents a rival genealogy for modernity that traces how contemporary mentality has been both formed and deformed through history in a forensic display of fragments that ‘prove’ hurt, psychosis and the corruption of power.

In *ROMA* (2010), a three-channel video projection of almost an hour long, Theo Eshetu presents a kaleidoscopic view of the former Roman imperial capital that displays its grandiosity, street life, ritual, theatricality, modernity and sleaziness. Partly in homage to Federico Fellini, the film cuts restlessly between the intimate and the monumental, silence and noise, the banal and the baroque, as different fragments of being imply the paradox of an almost inhumanly overwhelming force. The sensuality of the body is a recurring motif: its sexuality, movement, and discrepancies with the idealised form of ancient Roman power. An epigraph quoting Carl Gustav Jung’s fear of visiting the city strikes a note of neurotic unpredictability. But this is overlaid by a vision of the city as *Wunderkammer*, an impression mirrored in the eyes of its visitors (or the viewers of this film), as they are induced to marvel, and at times smile, at the absurdity of the range and grandeur of its image.



C

Israeli artist Amir Fattal’s single-channel video *From the End to the Beginning* (2014) is based on a live performance of Richard Wagner’s *Vorspiel und Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde* (premiered in 1865). The notes, however, are played in reverse order, disrupting the drama while retaining the music’s lush chromaticism. Through this strategy the artist creates another kind of sense, reversing time, perhaps to start anew by bringing the dead back to life. The piece extends into a consideration of the relationship between the national histories of Germany and Israel, the latter in a sense growing out of the Holocaust. Wagner’s music is still never played there. Fattal implies, as do other artists shown here, that modernity has its own conflicted histories in which conformity has often been enforced under the pretext of freedom.

Gülsün Karamustafa’s three works present fragments of empire by juxtaposing objects or documented facts with personal, intimate, emotional reactions that may or may not be consonant with them. *Personal Time Quartet* (2000), a four-channel video installation, re-enacts the artist’s childhood through the eyes of a young girl as she discovers the glassware

and elegantly embroidered table linen and bed sheets that once belonged to the artist’s grandparents, or skips crazily amongst the ancient furniture in the family dining room, folds laundry in the kitchen, or, like her alter ego — the artist — once did, paints her nails, obviously for the first time. Through this surrogate family history of memory, furniture and objects stretching back over a century, the artist also refers to times of displacement, migration and unhappiness that have followed her family from the time of the Ottoman Empire to the present.



D

The two-channel projection *Memory of a Square* (2005) follows a similar vision but remains rooted in the same spot: Taksim Square, the focal point of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, of Kemal Ataturk’s memory and the symbolic site of the many demonstrations and coups that have been enacted there. The two screens switch between historical documentary footage of the square and silent, emotional tableaux of family interaction that could be taking place in any city at any time. The concurrence and discrepancy between the two provide a platform for the viewpoint of the observer as no comment is made. A musical soundtrack reminiscent of the live accompaniments to silent cinema completes the work by creating a sense of distance.

Unawarded Performances (2005), a single-channel work, refers to the new map of Europe that emerged after the fall of the Berlin Wall and how this has affected Istanbul, the artist’s home. Before 1989, hardly anyone knew about the small Turkish-speaking, Christian Orthodox Gagauz community that lived in Southern Moldova. There was little work there for either women or men, but in Istanbul there was a need for housemaids and carers for the well-off elderly. The Gagauz women were a reliable and inexpensive alternative to Turkish labour and travelled there as illegal workers. Karamustafa interviews them about their working conditions,

hopes and life back home and, in the process, conjures a meeting of two worlds, religions, economies and empires that nonetheless share both their language and ethnicity.

Sophia Pompéry, a Hungarian artist born in Berlin, comes from a family split between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires. When she first visited Istanbul on a DAAD residency she discovered in a courtyard a strange, closeted stucco workshop that the same Armenian-Turkish family had used ever since the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. *Atelier* (2013), her work shown here, is set in the darkened space of this workshop where a single moving flashlight settles on individual decorative motifs that reflect in miniature the different taste and styles that consumed Istanbul after it had first begun to modernise. A similar medley of impressions is derived from the soundtrack, a montage of recordings made on site: footsteps, traffic, the call of a muezzin, a telephone ringing—and from the ballet school in the same courtyard the muffled sound of a piano playing Mozart’s *Rondo ‘Alla Turca’* (ca. 1780).



E

The idea of empire implies a distinction between those colonised and those who were governed by them, yet human nature is such that bloodlines quickly become blurred. The Scottish and Māori heritage of New Zealand artist Fiona Pardington is typical of this blurring. In her case, complex genealogy on both sides encompasses the stories and lineages of both victors and victims of empire which she refashions through art into a new and masterful hybridity. *Young Hawk, Hag Stone and Paper Nautilus, Ripiro Beach* (2014) is one of a series of still lifes she has recently made that are symbolic laments about how nature and history are being deformed. Reminiscent of eighteenth century Dutch still lifes, these painterly photographs with their careful inflections of strong colour (in this case blood red), are, at a time of natural pollution and global warming, hymns to

fragility and balance as well as, more starkly *memento mori*. A similar tenderness imbues her installation *Lux et Tenebris* (2014), the first she has made, that uses the old sink of the former hospital room in which the exhibition is situated as a receptacle for highly reflective crystal vessels and several small antelope skulls she found in Berlin. The idea of the vessel is extended into a void or portal in the ominous forms of galvanised bathtubs, relics from Hitler’s public health campaigns, that, one lying, one standing, appear like coffins in the shadows. The dark water in one parses the reflection of a small spotlight. High in the corner of the room, the work is completed by a barely visible photograph. Taken around 1900, it shows a wooden carving of a critical moment in an ancient Māori myth: trickster Māui attempts to attain eternal life by climbing into the vagina of Hine-nui-te-pō, the goddess of night and death, but the sound of a bird wakes her and the unfortunate boy is crushed by her obsidian *vagina dentata*.

This cautionary tale of empire, power and desire floods across the works shown in this exhibition. Hamlet, as ever, hits on the point: “There are more things in heaven and earth ... than are dreamt of in [y]our philosophy”¹. If the ‘devil is in the detail’, then truth can be found in the fragments. This much is clear.

David Elliott, 2014

1. Hamlet to Horatio in: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ca. 1600, Act 1, Scene 5.

A. Peter Homann, *10. November 1989 – Nach der Öffnung der Grenzen klettern Ost – und Westberliner auf die Mauer am Brandenburger Tor*.

B. Detail of Kader Attia, *Modern Architecture Genealogy*, 2014

C. Still from Theo Eshetu, *ROMA*, 2010

D. Exhibition photo of Gülsün Karamustafa, *Personal Time Quartet*, 2000

E. Detail of Fiona Pardington, *Lux et Tenebris*, 2014

Kader Attia

Modern Architecture Genealogy, 2014

Collage from an ongoing series (10/10 to date)

Cardboard, silver prints, photocopies, engravings from vintage books (69×50 cm)

Kader Attia was born in 1970 in Dugny (SeineSaint-Denis) and grew up in Paris and Algeria. He now lives and works in Berlin. Born into an Algerian family in France, he spent his childhood going back and forth between the Christian Occident and the Islamic Maghreb, which had a profound impact on his work. He tackles the relations between Western thought and ‘extra-Occidental’ cultures, particularly through architecture, the human body, history, nature, culture and religions. Using his multiple cul-

tural identities as a starting point, he examines the increasingly difficult relationship between Europe and its immigrants, particularly those from North Africa. Attia has been exploring cultural reappropriation through a variety of practices, and regards this as an endless exercise of exchange among cultures—one that can only take place when there has initially been a ‘dispossession’. Attia aims to foreground this dispossession as a catalyst for cultural exchange in post-colonial legacies worldwide.

‘Since Antiquity, human kind thinks it invents, when it only repairs. The privilege of being an artist is to be able to create elliptical connections through inference. Being able, like Lautréamont, to find a connection between a sewing machine and an operating table (Surrealism). And yet Repair has invited itself into my work in a more continuous way. It is this that both binds and separates Abstract Thought until it takes concrete form.

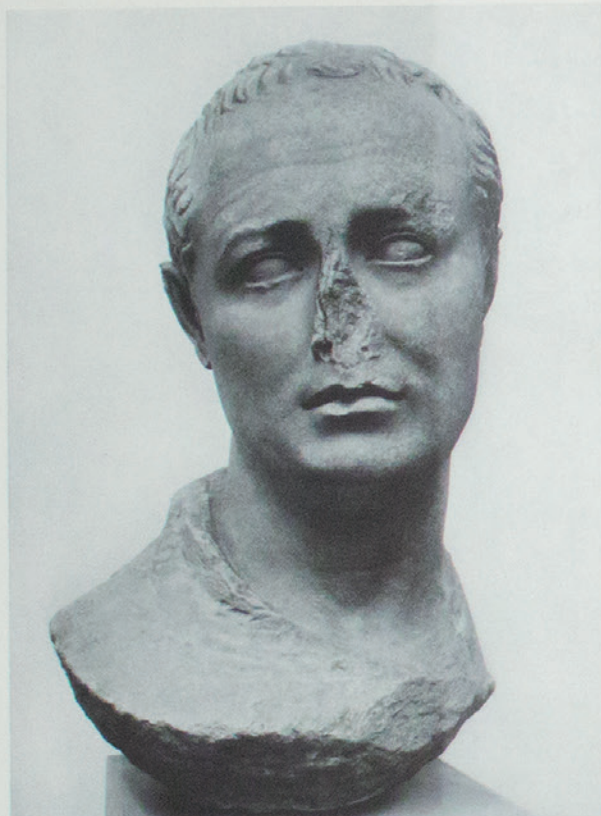
The first steps of modern reconstructive surgery are a radical but perfect example of what kind of illusions modern Western Thought creates. Repairing in the West means going back to the original state: the Myth of the Perfect. That is why the Broken Faces used to suffer so much from the look of others, because the idea of the Perfect is a myth, a dogma of which no Western society has been able to rid itself.

Another striking example, even if an inanimate one, is antique Greco-Roman statuary. One day, a sociologist friend had to curate an exhibition in a Parisian ethnographic museum. He wanted to borrow three Greek statues from the Louvre. But, to his surprise, he was told that there are no more antique Greek statues in the Louvre. All the Greek statues of the Louvre, the Pergamon, the Metropolitan, the British Museum have been broken and repaired, first by the Romans, then the faces were destroyed by iconoclast Muslims, or Protestants; maybe they were repaired during the Renaissance, then broken again during the Classical era, and so on, only to be finally restored in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. In a nutshell, the statues have barely any original parts left: they are all repairs. Like the Broken Faces in the collage, they embody what modernity has been chasing forever: its obsession for progress. An obsession that impresses us with its proximity to history, but that in the end keeps us indefinitely away from it.

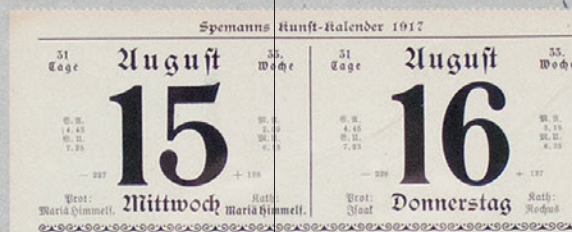
There is repair because there is injury: they cannot exist independently. We have to learn to see again what was destroyed by the arrival of Western Modernity and its indestructible link with colonization: what traditional extra-Occidental cultures always preserved.’

Kader Attia, 2014

On the following spread
Modern Architecture Genealogy, 2014



Bildnis eines Unbekannten aus Rhodos
1. Viertel 1. Jahrh. v. Chr. Marmor, H. 0,435 m. London, British Museum



Nedusia Hondiusi. München, R. Glycerthe

[illegible]

Lutz Becker

After the Wall, 1999/2014

Sound sculpture, 37' 18" on loop

5 parts

Section one: *Potsdamer Platz*, 8' 28"

Strong atmosphere. It is the basis of the installation. Hammering and distant voices.

Section two: *Invalidenstrasse*, 3' 32"

Dramatic close-up percussion of hammers.

Section three: *Checkpoint Charlie*, 17' 12"

Heavy percussion. Massive rhythmical sound bundles.

Section four: *Brandenburger Tor*, 5' 22"

Relaxed, regular beats, quite close.

Section five: *Night*, 5' 11"

End piece with dominant echoes.

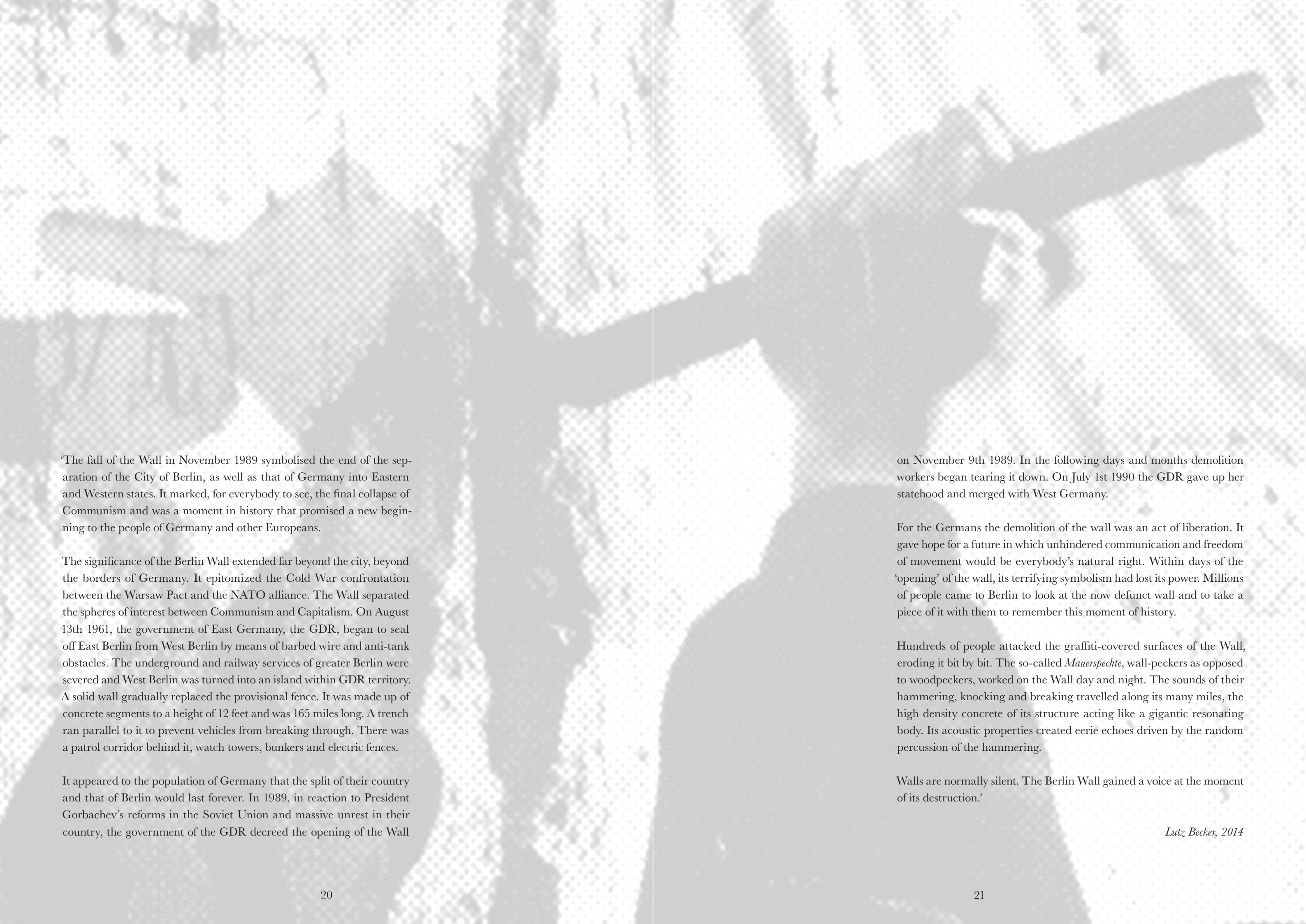
Sound montage in collaboration with David Cunningham

Original sound recordings courtesy of Sender Freies Berlin (SFB)

Lutz Becker was born in 1941 in Berlin and now lives and works in London. He is an artist, filmmaker, curator and film-historian who studied at the Slade School of Fine Art, London, where he graduated under Thorold Dickinson and became a distinguished director of political and art film documentaries. A practicing painter, he is also a curator of exhibitions. He collabo-

rated with the Hayward Gallery on *The Romantic Spirit in German Art* (1994), *Art and Power* (1995), and with Tate Modern on *Century City* (2001). As of 2003, Becker has been working for the Mexican Picture Partnership Ltd.'s reconstruction project of Sergei M. Eisenstein's film *¡Que viva México!—Da zdravstvuyet Meksika!* (1932).

In *Fragments of Empires*, Becker re-visits a sound installation originally commissioned for the exhibition *After the Wall. Art and Culture in Post-Communist Europe*, also curated by David Elliott, together with Bojana Pejić, for the Moderna Museet Stockholm in 1999. It was subsequently shown at the Ludwig Museum (Budapest) and the Hamburger Bahnhof (Berlin) in 2000. Becker's sound sculpture is a montage of archival recordings made by the radio station Sender Freies Berlin (SFB) at the Berlin Wall in the weeks immediately after its opening in November 1989. The eerie sound is of the gradual erosion of the Wall brought about by hundreds of people, die *Mauerspechte* (wall-peckers), attacking the concrete structure with their own hammers and chisels. This sound montage includes the recordings taken at various venues in Berlin, such as Potsdamer Platz, Invalidenstrasse, Checkpoint Charlie and Brandenburg Gate. Now, MOMENTUM presents this sound sculpture in the context of the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which coincides with the opening of this exhibition. A limited edition of this work has been produced for this exhibition in partnership with The Vinyl Factory in London, and individual parts of it may be downloaded from the MOMENTUM website as a public art intervention to be played on the streets to rekindle the spirit if 1989 when the whole of Berlin rang and rocked to the liberating sound of hammers and pickaxes as the Wall was demolished.



‘The fall of the Wall in November 1989 symbolised the end of the separation of the City of Berlin, as well as that of Germany into Eastern and Western states. It marked, for everybody to see, the final collapse of Communism and was a moment in history that promised a new beginning to the people of Germany and other Europeans.

The significance of the Berlin Wall extended far beyond the city, beyond the borders of Germany. It epitomized the Cold War confrontation between the Warsaw Pact and the NATO alliance. The Wall separated the spheres of interest between Communism and Capitalism. On August 13th 1961, the government of East Germany, the GDR, began to seal off East Berlin from West Berlin by means of barbed wire and anti-tank obstacles. The underground and railway services of greater Berlin were severed and West Berlin was turned into an island within GDR territory. A solid wall gradually replaced the provisional fence. It was made up of concrete segments to a height of 12 feet and was 165 miles long. A trench ran parallel to it to prevent vehicles from breaking through. There was a patrol corridor behind it, watch towers, bunkers and electric fences.

It appeared to the population of Germany that the split of their country and that of Berlin would last forever. In 1989, in reaction to President Gorbachev’s reforms in the Soviet Union and massive unrest in their country, the government of the GDR decreed the opening of the Wall

on November 9th 1989. In the following days and months demolition workers began tearing it down. On July 1st 1990 the GDR gave up her statehood and merged with West Germany.

For the Germans the demolition of the wall was an act of liberation. It gave hope for a future in which unhindered communication and freedom of movement would be everybody’s natural right. Within days of the ‘opening’ of the wall, its terrifying symbolism had lost its power. Millions of people came to Berlin to look at the now defunct wall and to take a piece of it with them to remember this moment of history.

Hundreds of people attacked the graffiti-covered surfaces of the Wall, eroding it bit by bit. The so-called *Mauerspechte*, wall-peckers as opposed to woodpeckers, worked on the Wall day and night. The sounds of their hammering, knocking and breaking travelled along its many miles, the high density concrete of its structure acting like a gigantic resonating body. Its acoustic properties created eerie echoes driven by the random percussion of the hammering.

Walls are normally silent. The Berlin Wall gained a voice at the moment of its destruction.’

Lutz Becker, 2014

Theo Eshetu

***ROMA*, 2010/2014**

3-channel video, 2010, 55'

Soundtrack composed by Alvin Curran

Theo Eshetu was born in London in 1958, and grew up in Addis Ababa, Dakar, Belgrade and Rome. He now lives and works in Berlin, having originally arrived on a DAAD fellowship. Forging a hybrid language to merge practices of video art and documentary filmmaking, Eshetu explores perception, identity, and notions of the sacred through electronic time-based media and optical devices and effects. He draws from anthropology, art history, scientific research, and religion — Catholic, African, Muslim, Buddhist — to explore clashes and harmonies of human subjectivity between world cultures in the global context. Though essentially conceptual, Eshetu's work is often focused on cultural displacement, and is always grounded

in compelling aesthetic components, often achieved through fractal repetition, such as kaleidoscopic mirroring, multi-screen projections, or mosaic-like patterning of images. His solo exhibition at the DAAD gallery in 2014 featured *The Return of the Axum Obelisk* (2009), which chronicles the repatriation of a monumental war trophy from Rome to Ethiopia. Unlike most monuments that are built to consolidate and commemorate a given event, in the course of its long history with its succession of different empires, the exceptional characteristic of the Axum Obelisk has been its unique capacity to change significance. New meanings have been ascribed to it within every cultural context it has physically and conceptually inhabited.

Here Eshetu shows a related work, a re-edit of his 3-channel video *ROMA* (2010), a work that was ten years in the making. “The narrative structure takes its cue from a short novel by Ben Okri, *Astonishing the Gods* (1995), in which an imaginary character, we presume an African, goes to an imaginary place, we assume, a European capital. *ROMA* is the marvelled vision of this imaginary character”. This was Eshetu's starting point: a vision of the city in which the sacred and profane enter into a dialogue with its ephemeral and eternal qualities to reveal a city full of the ghosts of its imperial past. With images gathered over the course of a decade, this non-narrative film, presented in the form of a triptych, conveys the impact the marvels of this city would have on the eyes of an imagined foreigner. Its delirious vision of splendour and rootlessness is counterpointed by a soundtrack composed of field recordings in the streets of Rome, made by renowned contemporary composer Alvin Curran.

Here and on the following spread
Stills from *ROMA*, 2010





‘In his autobiography, Carl Gustav Jung writes that in all his travels, he had never visited Rome. He was so concerned to understand a city from a psychological point of view that he feared the overwhelming effect that Rome would have on his consciousness. What is it about this city that terrorized him? It is, in part, its layers of history and the accumulation of mental states that this implies. At its core, Rome is the fountainhead of a specific aspect of Western civilization and Classical Antiquity—not the Arts, which should be attributed to Greece, nor the Sciences, which should go to Egypt—but its Power.

Many writers and travellers have attempted to pinpoint its character and have often fallen prey to its romantic allure. It is a place greater than any imagination and eternally indifferent to any reading of it. Rome is a city full of ghosts. The thought that you can walk in the footsteps of Julius Caesar or sit on a stone where Michelangelo might have sat or have a date under the balcony where Mussolini addressed the masses, all within the space of a few hundred meters, is truly overwhelming. It is a city of contradictions where the opposite of every assertion is also true, a place of great warmth and beauty that can also reveal an indifferent detachment, characterized by a natural and often comical vulgarity. It can be loved and hated in the same measure.

ROMA portrays this through the eyes of an identified foreigner that comes to visit the city, bringing with him his diversity, art and culture, only to find them absorbed into the city’s own fabric. We see the city through his enchanted eyes, but ultimately there is an experience of loss with its terrifying capacity to drain one’s consciousness.

In *Roma* (1972), as in many of his films, Federico Fellini made strong use of Jung’s understanding of ritual, symbolism and the notion of the collective unconscious as a basis for his filmmaking, as well as for the construction of his own filmic poetics. It is this aspect of his work which most attracted me to Fellini and I had developed a project to make a biographical portrait of him. His untimely death, however, led me to make a brief film on his funerals instead. As Fellini realised, despite the imperial, papal and fascist nature of Rome, in reality it is an African city...

I had recently collaborated with Alvin Curran, whom I’ve known for many years, and his field recordings, fragments of sounds and evocative music perfectly suited the kind of otherness that is so typical of Rome. The soundtrack, which mixes these recordings with some of my own camera sounds, is a narrative counterpoint to the images, blending the ethereal beauty of Rome with the nitty-gritty coarseness of the Romanaccio slang.

ROMA is a delirious portrait of the splendour and ruthlessness of the city of Rome, whose root symbols are the She-wolf and the Eagle: two creatures of prey that control the sky and the land.’

Theo Eshetu, 2014

Amir Fattal

From the End to the Beginning, 2014

Single-channel video, 14'

Amir Fattal was born in Israel in 1978, and is currently based in Berlin. Active both as an artist and a curator, Fattal is curator of Tape Modern Berlin, a series of group exhibitions featuring emerging and established artists. He was the recipient of the Berliner Senat Katalogförderung in 2013, the Berliner Senat Arbeitsstipendium Bildende Kunst in 2010 and the GASAG Förde preis in 2008. Fattal graduated from Universität der Künste, Berlin, in 2009, and is a conceptual artist whose practice is one of historical reflection, grounded in the history of aesthetics and cultural

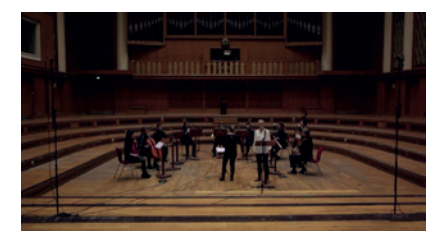
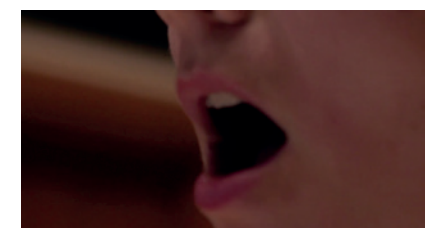
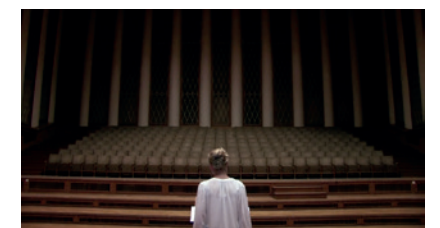
schisms. Fattal's overarching concerns are the cultural connections between Germany and Israel — countries inexorably linked through their history, memory, culture, and architecture — and the geographical diaspora which resulted from mass migration, in which cultures were transposed to new and different nations. The territory of Israel was once part of the Ottoman Empire, and then later administered by the British, yet the very creation of Israel is the legacy of the failed attempt to start the Third Reich.

From the End to the Beginning (2014) is a single-channel video piece, based on a live performance of Richard Wagner's *Vorspiel und Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde* (premiered in 1865), played in reverse order. By copying the last note as the first and proceeding in this order, a new 'mirrored' musical piece was made in an arrangement for nine instruments and a soprano. *Liebestod* is the final, dramatic aria, sung by Isolde after Tristan's death. Performing this piece backwards is therefore an attempt to bring back the past and resurrect the dead hero. It reflects on the power of music to transcend real life and on the possibility of reversing the ultimately irreversible — death itself.

The video version of this performance was filmed in the big hall of the Berlin Funkhaus, built in the late 1950s as East Berlin's new radio station, after musicians could no longer travel freely between the two sections of the city. It depicts a journey into the soprano's inner world during the recording of the piece, as she remains in Isolde's character. This work is an initial step leading to a larger piece, *Tristan Resurrected* — a musical performance combined with a light installation — also based on Wagner's *Vorspiel und Liebestod* — that will research parallel narratives between aesthetic developments and historical events in the context of Modernism in Germany. Following the process of abstraction in music, theatre and light installation, this work also reflects on cultural taboos and historical memory. Wagner's works remain banned from public performance in Israel because they are a symbol of the catastrophic outcome of anti-Semitism. On the anniversary of fifty years of diplomatic relations between Germany and Israel in 2015, it is especially compelling to engage with an artist who spans both cultures and whose work so meticulously addresses the conflicted histories of both. This work rewrites Wagner's *Liebestod* line by line, fragmenting it to copy the last note as the first note, much in the same way that the Hebrew alphabet is read.

The performance combines opposing strategies that represent developments in aesthetics from the nineteenth century into Modernism. Together these create a new conceptual work that challenges contemporary perceptions of historical and cultural readings to illustrate how culture is always an assemblage of the fragments of others.

Here and on the following spread stills from *From the End to the Beginning*, 2014





Gülsün Karamustafa

Personal Time Quartet, 2000

4-channel video installation, 2' 39"

Memory of a Square, 2005

Single-channel version of 2-channel video installation, 17' 07"

Unawarded Performances, 2005

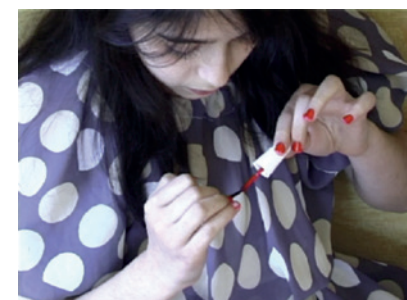
Single-channel video, 23' 36"

Gülsün Karamustafa was born in 1946 in Ankara, Turkey. She lives and works in Istanbul, where she is recognized as one of the most important and pioneering Turkish contemporary artists. Her family history was caught up in the forced migrations between Turkey and Greece, and during the 1980s she was imprisoned by the Turkish military government. In her work, Karamustafa explores the historical and social connections of Oriental cultures, using materials that express the hybrid character of different

cultures and religions. She also addresses questions of migration, displacement, military dictatorship, identity, cultural difference, gender and acculturation within the contexts of orientalism and post-colonialism. Since the late 1990s, she has often used pre-existing materials and images of Oriental or Occidental origin that she fragments, dismantles and reassembles in order to contrast private with public by referring to every-day life, culture, art history and the media.

In *Fragments of Empires*, Karamustafa shows three video works. *Personal Time Quartet* (2000), a 4-channel video installation, focuses on inherent similarities within supposedly disparate cultures. *Memory of a Square* (2005), a 2-channel video, juxtaposes scenes of family life not linked to any place or time with fifty years of documentary footage of Istanbul's famous, and now infamous, Taksim Square. This highly charged site has played a crucial role in political and cultural change throughout the history of the Turkish Republic and does so again in the present. With the continuing demonstrations in Istanbul using Gezi Park in Taksim Square as their focus, this is a critical moment at which to revisit this work. *Unawarded Performances* (2005) is a film about the little known Gagauz people, an Orthodox Christian community of Turkic descent in Southern Moldovia, who still speak Balkan Turkish. Having lived under the dominion of the Byzantines, Seljuks, Ottomans, Bulgarians, Romanians, and Russians, during their history, they were continuously bound to resist external pressures—a plight that extended into the 1890s, when radical political shifts sparked strong waves of immigration. With their knowledge of Turkish, many Gagauz women fled to Turkey to work illegally as maids. The stories of six of these women tell an eloquent tale of the legacy of migration and of a culture trapped between empires.

Stills from *Personal Time Quartet*, 2000



Personal Time Quartet, 2000

The four-part video *Personal Time Quartet* is concerned with the point of intersection between the artist's own personal biography and the history of her home country. Having been invited to an exhibition of German domestic interiors from various periods in the twentieth century at the Historical Museum in Hanover, Karamustafa was inspired by what she saw there to take a closer look at the similarities between her own childhood reminiscences and these museological German living spaces. The timeframe (or 'personal time') covered by these four video's begins in the year of her father's birth and ends in the early days of her own childhood. A video screen placed in each of the rooms shows the same young girl—the artist's alter ego—engaged in various activities. We see her skipping with a skipping rope (dining room, 1906), sorting and folding laundry (kitchen, around 1913), opening cupboards and drawers (living room and parents' bedroom, around 1930) and painting her nails (room from the 1950s). The films themselves, however, were not shot inside the museum, but rather in her apartment in Istanbul. Viewing them therefore gives rise to the most diverse associations. The girl skipping suggests a carefree childhood, the nail-painting a concern with the artist's own femininity, the folding of laundry could be read as preparation for her future role of housewife, while opening cupboards and drawers is a way of discovering the hidden secrets and stories that are so much a part of our recollections of childhood and adolescence. In this installation, therefore, Karamustafa not only debunks the local or national specificity of certain styles, but at the same time exposes just how similar the evolution of (female) identity can be, even in very disparate cultures.

Barbara Heinrich,
from *Gülsün Karamustafa. My Roses My Reveries*,
Yapi Kredi Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık A.Ş., Istanbul, 2007



Still from *Personal Time Quartet*, 2000

Memory of a Square, 2005

Memory of a Square is a two-channel video installation that refers to the relationship between public and private space. On one screen is a family in a domestic interior, while on the other is actual documentary footage taken in Taksim, Istanbul's a main square, which was recently brought onto the world stage through the protests of 2014.

In these documentaries, a timeline beginning from the 1930s to the end of the 1980s is established that points to the main events related to the square: the opening ceremony of its central Atatürk 'Monument' in 1930 (and the tradition of taking family photos in this spot); the provocative demonstration against Greek, Armenian, Jewish minorities on September 6th/7th 1955 that ended up with many of them leaving the country; the military coup of May 27th 1960 that led to the execution of the Prime Minister and two of his ministers; March 12th 1971 — 'Bloody Sunday' — a fundamentalist Islamic riot that served as a pretext for a second military coup; May 1st 1977 — May Day celebrations — where more than thirty people were killed, that gave way to the third military coup of September 12th 1980.

Footage is also included of the demolition of the Tarlabasi district in order to open up a grand boulevard between Unkapanı bridge and Taksim by pulling down two beautiful hundred year-old apartments on the square. These events have many parallels with Turkey today. The films are without comment and there is no verbal reference to any time or event on the screen. They are accompanied by an original soundtrack specially composed for the film that is reminiscent of the accompaniment to silent movies.

Gülsün Karamustafa, 2014

On the opposite page
Stills from *Memory of a Square, 2005*





Unawarded Performances, 2005

Before 1990 not many people in Turkey were aware of the Gagauz people, the Orthodox Christian community that lives in Southern Moldavia who are of Turkic decent, whose ethno-genesis lies with the tribes that inhabited the plains of Central Asia and who speak pure Balkan Turkish. Living under the successive dominion of the Byzantines, Seljuks, Ottomans, Bulgarians, Romanians and Russians, they were obliged, throughout their history, to resist the linguistic, religious and cultural pressures of others.

In the last decade of the twentieth century, with radical changes in political regimes in the region, they were again inundated by waves of immigration. Their knowledge of the Turkish language proved a benefit to the Gagauz women, many of whom found illegal jobs in Turkey as maidservants. By the beginning of 2005 in Southern Moldovian cities like Komrat Cadyr Lunga or Vulkanesthy, nearly every family had one woman member illegally working in Istanbul.

In 2005 I made this video film for the exhibition 'Project Migration' which took place in Cologne. I followed the trails of the illegal migration of Gagauz women and gave them a chance to speak about their backgrounds, their lives back at home and their working conditions in Istanbul households'.

Gülsün Karamustafa

On the opposite page
Still from *Unawarded Performances*, 2005

Fiona Pardington

Young Hawk, Hag Stone, Paper Nautilus, Ripiro Beach, 2014

Photographic print on canvas (104 × 140 cm)

Lux et Tenebris, 2014

Mixed media installation

Fiona Pardington was born in 1961 in Devonport, New Zealand, of āi Tahu, Kati Mamoe and Scottish descent. She lives and works in New Zealand and is recognized as the leading female artist working with photography there. Her work examines the history of photography and representations of the body and encompasses investigations of subject-photographer relations, medicine, memory, collecting practices and still life. Pardington often works in a still-life format within museums, recording *taonga* (Māori ancestral treasures) and other historic objects such as *hei tiki* (greenstone pendants) and the now extinct Huia bird. In these she brings an awareness of traditional

and forgotten objects to a contemporary audience. Re-examining the history of portraiture in more recent work, she addresses the New Zealander traditional idea of the photograph as a stand-in for an actual person — a way of looking at portraits that Western minds associate with traditions of Māori animism that imbue photographs of loved ones who have passed away with their actual presence and characteristics. Applying this tradition to a still-life format, Pardington portrays ancestral Māori carvings alongside objects redolent of the colonial history of an island nation at the outer edges of empire.

Here Pardington shows one out of a series of large photographic still lifes entitled *Ex Vivo*, which, in accumulation of personal, natural and historical objects, reconstructs the multiple identities that an empire inflicts on its colonies and their inhabitants. Showing ancestral objects which survived for generations in the wake of colonial trade and collection alongside banal relics of daily life made expressive through their personal meanings, Pardington merges the language of traditional still life with that of portraiture in order to unpack and recontextualize the weighty colonial imprint of her own culture and experience. Alongside this photograph, the work shown in *Fragments of Empires* includes an installation produced in Berlin as the result of a seven week artist residency at MOMENTUM. While her practice of still life photography relies heavily upon the aesthetics of installation, this is the first time Pardington has exhibited an installation in an exhibition.

Lux et Tenebris, 2014



LUX ET TENEBRIS

Fiona Pardington, and by extension her photography, is an indexical signifier of the history of British colonial imperialism in New Zealand. Her *Whakapapa/Genealogy* reflects the hybrid nature of the culture(s) produced by a heritage of intermarriage and warfare between predominantly Anglo-Celtic settlers and indigenous Māori. In Pardington's case, she is Ngāi Tahu, Kati Mamoe and Ngāti Kahungunu (the first two iwi/tribes from the South Island of New Zealand, and the latter from Hawke's Bay in the North Island), and Clan Cameron from Erracht in Scotland. The Scottish presence in New Zealand is likewise a product of British Imperialism, beginning with the *Fuadach nan Gàidheal* (the 'expulsion of the Gael') or Highland Clearances; the forced migration of Highland Scots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and continuing with the Scottish economic diaspora into the early twentieth century.¹ Māori, in turn, were displaced by these new arrivals under their agreement with Queen Victoria. Their ancestral lands were fraudulently purchased or stolen outright from under them, their language and tikanga/culture was brought under Pākehā/European authority, and their numbers decimated by introduced diseases.

'New Zealand' as an entity—from British Imperial realm to Dominion, and eventually sovereign Commonwealth nation—is roughly the same age as photography. The two histories are contemporaneous; Sir John Herschel² coined the word 'photography' in 1839 and the Treaty of Waitangi between the British Crown and the ariki/chiefs of Aotearoa/New Zealand was signed the following year. New Zealand identity has a very natural symbiosis with photography and all but its earliest modern history is captured in light. Photography has an uneasy relationship with indigenous peoples frequently subjected to its anthropological gaze. While it is a cliché that tribal cultures feared that the photograph stole the soul, this was not an uncommon superstition among nineteenth century Europeans. Victor Hugo anecdotally was afraid that each portrait photograph of him was an oblation of more of his essence, and Émile

On the opposite page
*Young Hawk, Hag Stone and
Paper Nautilus, Ripiro Beach, 2014*



Zola wrote, “To my mind, you cannot say that you have seen the essence of a thing if you have not taken a photograph of it...”³ The photograph fixes the living subject behind the plane of the image (“Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null, dead perfection; no more”— Alfred, Lord Tennyson, ‘Maud’, 1855). The photograph is a kind of death because it sometimes edits out information suggestive of life; a trope subverted by the Victorians in their penchant for post-mortem photography.

Death, memory and history haunt Pardington’s photography. She is as much at home among the random jumble of market stalls as she is in the imperfect encyclopaedias of museums and their Aristotelian mission to collect and catalogue. The museum is also a product of empire, a Wunderkammer of souvenirs and symbolic ownership of distant lands. Consider James Clifford’s⁴ ‘salvage paradigm’, a concept of twentieth century anthropology whereby stronger, more dominant cultures were compelled to try and preserve the narrative and material culture of weaker groups threatened by the predations of progress. With that in mind, the museum functions something like a photograph, capturing a culture at one moment in time and freezing it there like one of Vladimir Nabokov’s prized butterflies (a subject for a future Pardington project)⁵. Pardington, not unlike Zola, believes that the photograph has the ability to bring the viewer closer to the metaphysical Deleuzian *Immanence*,⁶ or the Heideggerian Dasein⁷ of the subject. She has spent over two decades experimenting with (mainly) analogue photography’s alchemical power to mimetically summon a sentient sense of presence through the image. Faced with the Wittgensteinian dilemma of the incommunicability of inner states, Pardington’s solution is to explore the photograph as, in the words of Rhana Devenport, Director of Auckland Art Gallery in New Zealand, “a catalyst for empathy”.⁸

Pardington first began creating her vocabulary of motifs and syntagms while studying at Auckland University’s Elam School of Fine Arts in the 1980s. Her work came to attention for its haunting classical aesthetic and lyrical sensuality. These early works were often portraits of friends and family, drawing on sources as diverse as Robert Mapplethorpe and Nan Goldin. These lushly romantic images challenged the dominant orthodoxy of the time, international social documentary modernism, and became objects in their own right in elaborate reliquary-like framing structures. From there, Pardington’s work redirected to the still life format, leading her to New Zealand’s museums and their collections of taxidermically-preserved native birds like the Huia (*Heteralocha acutirostris*, (whose white-tipped black feathers were a chiefly symbol for Māori, but were rendered extinct by the European feather trade to decorate the hats of fashionable nineteenth century ladies), and Māori taonga/treasures made from shell, bone and ponamu/nephrite greenstone, often

invested with their own wairua/spirit or mauri/life force. Remaining in the museum context, this ambit expanded to embrace affection, likeness, artifice, pseudoscience, and the complexity of European Enlightenment ideas about rational inquiry in medicine, natural history, anatomy, and the colonial drive of imperial expansion. This would later manifest in a project with the Musée du Quai Branly, Paris, in 2011, a series of photographs of life casts of indigenous peoples made by medical scientist and phrenologist Pierre Dumoutier during one of French explorer Jules Dumont d’Urville’s South Pacific voyages from 1837–1840. The Māori busts were particularly significant for Pardington as they included some of her tīpuna/ancestors (Māori identity is determined by genealogy rather than blood quanta per se) and in Māori culture the head is considered tapu/sacred.

Pardington’s *Wahine pātēre*, *wahine pānekeneke* as part of her 2013 doctoral research at the University of Auckland, ‘Towards a Kaupapa of Ancestral Power and Talk’ (kaupapa means roughly ‘conceptual knowledge’) pushed the interplay between animate and inanimate, human and object even further with a series of portraits of her daughter Akura as an archetypal anima bearing the tā moko (the tattooed chin and lips exclusive to Māori women) and tangled in kelp as if she had been washed up on the beach like one of the sea birds that often feature in Pardington’s later work. The title loosely means ‘woman flowing free (like an unrestricted river current), woman slippery, shifting and vulnerable’ and represents the mana wahine/the mystical power and authority of women, of the artist’s female line going back to Hine-ahu-one, the Māori equivalent of the biblical Eve, created by the gods on a beach. ‘Hine-ahu-one’ means ‘formed from earth’. Most recently Pardington’s work has concerned itself with the pure still life in its incarnation as Vanitas, the readymade and the *objet trouvé* as a staging mechanism for visually exploring philosophical concepts of identity and presence. Objects within the still life, and the implied relationships between them, are symbolic, though their syntax is often personal and rarely communicated. Flowers may represent ephemerality as well as individual people in the artist’s life. Birds and their feathers often relate to Māori spiritual and cultural traditions. Glass vessels suggest fragility and allow the artist to both explore the effects of light and the virtuosity of analogue photography, but also likely contain water from a physical site significant to the artist and her genealogy. The intention is to invest the images with an animistic presence.

The installation *Lux et Tenebris* gathers many of these threads together. The seed point was Pardington’s discovery of ‘Blanke Helle’ in Alboinplatz, Tempelhof-Schöneberg. Blanke Helle is a pond which in Antiquity, according to some sources, was sacred to Hel, the Nordic goddess of death and the underworld. The Roman historian Tacitus

writes of human sacrifices, the park itself is named for Alboin, king of the Lombards between 560 and 572, and in later ages the area was associated with the Knights Templar (hence Tempelhof). Berlin is a city of Eros and Thanatos, sex and death, and biform Hel is almost a patron of the city along with the syncretic Berolina. Fritz Lang, in his 1927 cinematic classic *Metropolis* (an expressionistic futuristic stand in for Berlin), the infamous *Maschinenmensch*, the robot seductress, is inspired by a woman named Hel, her inventor’s dead lover and the wife of the city’s creator. Weimar Berlin was notoriously decadent. Hitler’s Berlin, a city he hated for its liberality, brought together brutal violence and death with a lustre of sadistic eroticism. The title *Lux et Tenebris* is a play on Blanke Helle as ‘naked light’, as well as John 1:5 Vulgate, “*et lux in tenebris lucet et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt*” —“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (King James Version). Pardington equates Hel with Hine-nui-te-pō, the Māori goddess of night and death, as well as Hekate, the ancient Greek goddess of witchcraft, whose iconic image can be found on the Pergamon Altar in the Pergamonmuseum, Museumsinsel; the spoils of imperialism. Berlin has been the seat of several empires, some by any other name, and this is reflected in the booty of her museums.

The old zinc bath in the installation component of *Lux et Tenebris* is evocative of death in its coffin-like shape. Filled with water from Blanke Helle, they allude both to Hel’s pond and to Hine-nui-te-pō’s vagina. According to Māori legend, the trickster hero/demigod Māui attempted to gain immortality by crawling up Hine-nui-te-pō’s birth canal while the goddess slept, in a magical reversal of death. As Māui was halfway through, the fantail bird (pīwakawaka, *Rhipidura fuliginosa*) woke the goddess and she crushed the impertinent man between her thighs, or some say her obsidian *vagina dentata*. Hine-nui-te-pō is also present as a historical photograph by Charles A. Lloyd of a carving depicting the story, ca. 1900.⁹ The water in the bath is coloured black with ink to counterpoint the mirror immersed in it as a reference to the duality represented by the goddesses, life and death, light and dark, as well as the optical mechanics of eye and camera and the possibility of mystical vision. Zinc baths like these were issued to all Aryan households by the Nazi government and appear as a motif in the works of Anselm Kiefer—a further allusion to death and the darker threads of history. They also suggest a developing bath, relating back to photography. The horror of history develops like a photograph to those who live through it. Site specificity enters the installation by incorporating the sink on the wall, a utilitarian and structural component of MOMENTUM’s space, filling it with transparent vessels linking back to the themes of collecting and still life; the detritus of culture that colonises all.

Andrew Paul Wood, 2014

Andrew Paul Wood is a New Zealand-based art historian, educator, critic, broadcaster, writer and translator. His most recent publications have been translations into English of the New Zealand poems of German-Jewish refugee poet Karl Wolfskehl. He is currently completing his PhD on aspects of postmodernism and identity of New Zealand painting in the 1990s.

1. This was a result of enclosure of traditionally common lands and a change from small-scale agriculture to large-scale sheep farming, an agricultural revolution largely carried out by hereditary aristocratic landowners. This resulted in a century-long process of displacement.
2. Sir John Frederick William Herschel, 1st Baronet, KH, FRS (1792-1871), English, mathematician, astronomer, chemist, inventor, and experimental photographer.
3. Robert Massin (1979), *Zola photographe, avec François Émile-Zola*, Denoël, p.11.
4. James Clifford (born 1945), American scholar working across history, literature, and anthropology.
5. Nabokov was an avid amateur lepidopterist/collector of butterflies, making a number of contributions to research. His collections can be found in museums in Harvard and Switzerland.
6. *Immanence* is a founding concept of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, meaning ‘existing or remaining within’ in relative opposition to transcendence to that which is beyond or outside. Deleuze rejects the idea that life and creation are opposed to death and non-creation and instead conceives of a plane of immanence that already includes life and death, a smooth and infinite plain without division.
7. Philosopher Martin Heidegger uses the expression *Dasein* to refer to the self-aware experience of being peculiar to human beings with its associated sense of self, personhood, mortality and the paradox of living in relationship with other humans while being ultimately alone with oneself.
8. Rhana Devenport, ‘Foreword’ in Fiona Pardington: *The Pressure of Sunlight Falling*, ed. Kriselle Baker, Elizabeth Rankin (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2011), p.6.
9. Collection of the Alexander Turnbull Library, National Library of New Zealand.

Sophia Pompéry

Atölye / Atelier, 2013

3-channel video installation, 9' 30'' on loop

Sophia Pompéry is a Hungarian artist born in 1984 in Berlin, whose family roots extend both through the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian Empires from brothers separated by political re-drawing of national borders. In 2009 and 2010 Pompéry participated in the Institute for Spatial Experiments by Olafur Eliasson at the Universität der Künste, Berlin. In 2011 she was awarded the Toni and Albrecht

Kumm Prize for the promotion of fine arts and in 2012 and became a fellow of the DAAD art program with a six-month stay in Istanbul. She lives and works in Berlin and Istanbul. Her works have been shown in various exhibitions in Germany and abroad, and she had solo exhibitions at ARTER Space for Art in Istanbul (2012), Nassauischer Kunstverein Wiesbaden (GER) and at Galerie Dix9, Paris.

For *Fragments of Empires*, Pompéry re-edits her 2013 site-specific installation, *Atölye / Atelier*. The film was shot in an Armenian-Turkish workshop for architectural stucco work in Istanbul. Handed down over five generations of craftsmen, the expertise in this atelier provided the décor for some of the best known buildings in Istanbul, such as the Dolmabahçe Palace. Today, this atelier is an historical memory of Istanbul, the representative capital of the Ottoman Empire. A multitude of ornamental fragments of representational buildings in a diversity of historical and cultural styles mingle here in an eclectic way. The video shrouds the space in darkness, until a fugitive spotlight reveals a multitude of diverse gypsum fragments. As most of the fragments are in a European Rococo or Belle Époque style one has the impression of standing in an archive of stucco decor. The video gives no information about the geographical situation of this workshop, other than the atmospheric sound recorded on site. One can hear somebody walking through the space, opening a window, it rains, a muezzin calls for prayer, a ship blows its horn. When in the ballet-school next door someone starts to play Mozart's *Rondo alla Turca*, this emblematic moment entangles Western orientalism with the Ottoman version of European Rococo in present-day Istanbul.

Here and on the following spread
Atölye / Atelier, 2013





About the Curators

David Elliott is an English born curator and writer. From 1976 to 1996 he was Director of the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, England, Director of Moderna Museet [The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art] in Stockholm, Sweden (1996-2001), founding Director of the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo (2001-2006), the first Director of the Istanbul Museum of Modern Art [Istanbul Modern] (2007), Artistic Director of the 17th Biennale of Sydney (2008-2010), Artistic Director of the 1st Kiev International Biennale of Contemporary Art (2011-12), Artistic Director of the 4th International Biennale of Work by Young Artists in Moscow (2014-2014), and the Rudolf Arnheim Guest Professor in Art History at the Humboldt University, Berlin (2008). From 1998 until 2004 he was President of CIMAM (the International Committee of ICOM for Museums of Modern Art). He is President of the Board of Triangle Art Network/Gasworks in London and Visiting Professor in Museum Studies at the Chinese University in Hong Kong.

Rachel Rits-Volloch is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in Literature and holds an M.Phil and PhD from the University of Cambridge in Film Studies. She wrote her dissertation on visceral spectatorship in contemporary cinema, focusing on the biological basis of embodiment. Having lectured in film studies and visual culture, her focus moved to contemporary art after she undertook a residency at A.R.T Tokyo. Rachel Rits-Volloch founded MOMENTUM in 2010 in Sydney and it rapidly evolved into a global platform for time-based art, with headquarters in Berlin. Rachel Rits-Volloch is currently based in Berlin, having previously lived and worked in the US, UK, Amsterdam, Tokyo, Istanbul, and Sydney.

About MOMENTUM

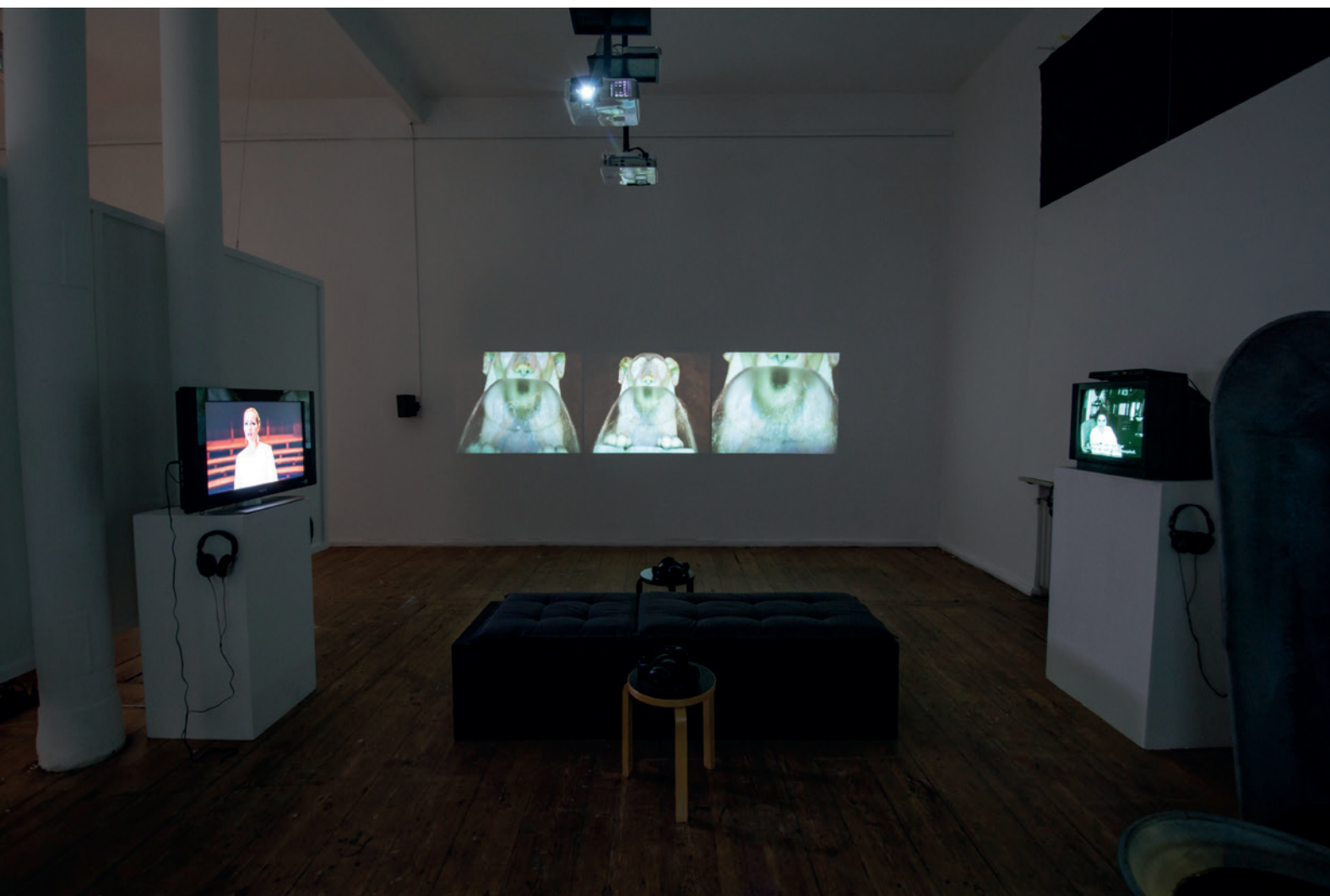
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answers to the question, ‘What is time-based art?’. Located in the Kunstquartier Bethanien in Kreuzberg, and positioned as a global platform with a vast international network, MOMENTUM serves as a bridge joining professional art communities, irrespective of institutional and national borders. The key ideas driving MOMENTUM are: Collaboration, Exchange, Education, Innovation and Inspiration.

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Colophon

This book accompanies the group exhibition
Fragments of Empires

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