

Larissa Sansour / Søren Lind

As If No Misfortune Had Occurred in the Night

5.3.23 – 2.7.23

Curator:
Kathrin Becker

As If No Misfortune Had Occurred in the Night, 2022 / 23
Installation. Pool, tree trunks, steel chains, fabric, 3-channel video installation
with surround sound (22 min.)

In her work, the artist and filmmaker Larissa Sansour combines historical facts with fictional, futuristic and mythological elements, in this way intervening, sometimes humorously, in familiar narratives or seemingly hopeless situations. She has been working with the author Søren Lind for more than ten years. Their medium is primarily film, but also photography, books, sculpture and installation. In their work, the artists refer to political and societal themes, such as questions of ecology. One recurring point of reference is the conflict in the Middle East.

The focus of Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind's first solo exhibition in Germany is the 3-channel video work *As If No Misfortune Had Occurred in the Night* (2022). The featured operatic aria, sung by soprano Nour Darwish, combines the Palestinian traditional song *Al Ouf Mash'al* with Gustav Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. The work deals with loss, collective trauma, and rituals of mourning.

In a song cycle that premiered in 1905, Gustav Mahler set to music poems that Friedrich Rückert wrote after the death of two of his children. In the lamentation *Al Ouf Mash'al*, a Palestinian woman mourns the loss of her lover, who was drafted into the Ottoman army during World War I. Over the course of the opera aria, the two musical traditions increasingly merge with one another, so that Rückert's text, translated into Arabic, is also sometimes transported to the composition of *Al Ouf Mash'al* and vice versa. In the last stanzas of the aria, the soprano singer is accompanied by a choir, which combines its Mashaal pleas with lines by Rückert, thus completing the musical amalgamation.

The film, presented as a 3-channel installation like an altar triptych, was shot in the ruins of a London chapel and in front of a green screen. The archive material montaged for it originates from holdings of the Imperial War Museum and shows scenes of Palestine from the early era of the British mandate and of struggles against the Ottoman Empire. In the final scene of the film, Nour Darwish breaks out of the black and white colour scheme with a traditional Palestinian way of mourning when she dips her bright clothing in indigo blue water. The installation in the exhibition space adopts central elements of the film set, like the basin filled with blue water or the hanging tree trunks.

Credits

Directors: Larissa Sansour and Søren Lind
Lyrics: Søren Lind (and Friedrich Rückert)
Producer: Ali Roche
Soprano: Nour Darwish
Composer: Anthony Sahyoun
Costume: Omar Nasser Khoury
Director of Photography: Anna Valdez Hanks
VFX Supervisor: Henrik Bach Christensen
Sound Design: Tom Sedgwick
Editing: Sue Giovanni

Discursive Programme

29.3.23, 19:00

Politiken der Trauer

Conversation with Çiğdem Inan (Sociologist and publisher, Berlin), Lydia Röder (Palliative care expert and bereavement counsellor, Berlin) and Senthuran Varatharajah (Writer, philosopher and theologian, Berlin), moderated by Katja Kynast (KINDL)

In German

Free admission

7.6.23, 19:00

Performance by Nour Darwish

Free admission

Larissa Sansour (* 1973 in East Jerusalem, lives in London) has regularly collaborated with author and visual artist Søren Lind (* 1970 in Denmark, lives in London) since the early 2010s. In 2019, she represented Denmark at the 58th Venice Biennale.

Selected solo exhibitions: High Line, New York (2021); Bildmuseet, Umeå (2020); National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens (2020); Copenhagen Contemporary (2019); Dar El-Nimer, Beirut (2018); Bluecoat, Liverpool (2017); New Art Exchange, Nottingham (2016); Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen (2016).

Selected group exhibitions: FACT Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, Liverpool (2022); Barbican Centre, London (2017); Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (2016); Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk (2011); Liverpool Biennial (2010); Istanbul Biennial (2009), Guangzhou Triennial (2008).

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