

The Art of Solidarity

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The Challenge

- Working together on eye level
- Supporting refugees in various ways:
 - possibilities of self-representation
 - possibilities to deal with one's experiences
 - possibilities to earn money
- pursuing one's own artistic and political goals

Socio-cultural projects: Dual Commitment

Dual Commitment

Thesis: The arts can open up spaces to deal with problems that do not fit into other settings.

But: In order for this to work, the respective activity has to be labelled art. And art is defined by the institutions of the arts field.

When public art practices are true to their own claim of social and political impact, they have, therefore, to deal with a “dual commitment” towards those for and with whom they are working, on the one hand, and towards those who judge the artistic value of their work, on the other hand.

Dual Commitment ctd.

How can the claim for transgression and/ or a (more or less radical) change of the arts field be combined with the aim to succeed in precisely this field? How can political change be achieved by art practices that, at the same time, aim at profiting from the symbolic capital of the criticised system?

How to deal with different claims and ideas of different participants of arts projects?

Example: Gastarbeiter, Quartier 21

- Celebration of 50 years of the agreement on guest workers between Austria and Yugoslavia
- Exhibition of contemporary artists dealing with guest work
- Curator: Bogomir Doring, „narrator of unwanted stories“
- Opening: Hor 29 Novembar, open collective, workers and partizan songs
- Minister for Integration, Sebastian Kurz, will be present

DAWOUD BEY: THE CHICAGO PROJECT

April 24 - June 22, 2003

For this exhibition, Bey created large color portraits of 12 students. These photographs are accompanied by audio portraits of the teenagers by award-winning radio producers Dan Collison and Elizabeth Meister and by written statements and photographs that the teens have chosen to represent themselves. Presented together, the groupings of photographs, audio, and text question the illusion of completeness of any representation. As a whole, the exhibition design—developed in collaboration with Garofalo Architects, Chicago—presents a multi-faceted and fluid composite of teenage identity.



Working in the Arts with Refugees

Different Forms of Solidarity

- Solidarity and the nation state: Liberty, Equality, Solidarity → inclusion and exclusion due to nationality and legal status
- Christian solidarity: universal, closely related to charity, ease suffering of our co-humans
- Socialist solidarity: way of organizing a struggle, international, based on class

Solidarity of refugees and supporters

- Radically different privileges
- Radically different risks
- Supporters have more knowledge about the local situation and more cultural capital
- Artistic projects: mainly Austrian artists and contributing refugees

Warten aufs Bleiben (Waiting to Stay)

- Director: Tina Leisch
- Original idea: performing a play by Ibrahim Amir
- Adaptation in long work with refugees
- Still questions:
 - themes of the play important/interesting/attractive for the refugees?
 - who participated why?
 - how is the participation in the development recognized?

„Homohalal has been developed in a cooperation with the directors Tina Leisch and Natalie Assmann and the refugees Ali Asmat, Mohamed Mouaz, and Said Café during a one-year- theatre- workshop with refugees and activists of the Viennese Votiv Church Protest 2012.

Homohalal

Self-critical play trying to imagine the future in 20 years. The utopia becomes a dystopia: „The refugees and activists of 2012 have become xenophobic, sexist, homophobic, conservative (...) It becomes clear that world has not changed to the better but become even worse.

Homohalal ctd.

- Should be performed at Volkstheater, opening night in April 2016
- Has been cancelled in February 2016:

Manager Anna Badora: due to the situation, maybe not longer adequate, has been written two years ago

Playwright: Ibrahim Amir understands decision



Auf nach Europa (Off to Europe)

In his documentary road movie, *Auf nach Europa (Off to Europe)*, the former sans-papiers, Mohamed Mouaz, visits locations along his escape route from Tiaret in Algeria to Vienna. A film about the strength, the courage, the volition, the confidence, the friendship and the solidarity of refugees.

"The majority of the time, our history remains hidden," said Mouaz. "If it is told, then usually by Europeans who adapt it to the picture they have of us in their heads: such as that of the criminal foreigner or the pitiful refugee."

In contrast, *Auf nach Europa* is a documentary from the perspective of refugees and a many-voiced (counter-)narrative of coming, going and staying. In this way, a change of perspective is implemented that both takes an account of the fears and the precarious living conditions of refugees under the frontier regime of the EU and also focuses on the strength, courage, intentions, confidence, friendship and solidarity of refugees and those without papers.

<https://player.vimeo.com/video/137827213>

Auf nach Europa ctd.

- Self-representation of one refugee = a form of staging
- Not entirely true
- Idea by the director
- Large parts of the implementation: producer and camera man
- Politically correct way of staging?
- Strategical move?
- Misrepresentation? (see Algerian in Sofia)

How to stop a deportation

- German director
- But: (nearly) the story of one of the actors
- Learning experience for the actors
- Also a lot of fun

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2Umb7MyDhw>

Deportation, 3:00-4:22

Questions

- Who can participate in an arts project? (Friendship versus solidarity)
- Distribution of finances (and rumours on that)
- Distribution of cultural capital (I have been asked several times to present the movie „Auf nach Europa“)
- Distribution of responsibility and work (see again „Auf nach Europa“)
- Is there „correct life in the wrong“?