

**hinterland  
galerie**



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NIKO WAHL  
Dreams, 2015  
Epoxy, newspaper collage, stick  
Various diameters  
Tehran, Iran

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## INTRODUCTION

# “WHERE ARE WE?”

**An intercultural exhibition: Art from Austria in Pakistan.**

With this intercultural and international art programme, hinterland is taking up a temporary home in Pakistan. “Where are we?” is a series of exhibitions designed to promote intercultural understanding. The first took place in June 2015 in Tehran/Iran, then it moved to Vienna, Austria and now an extended version of the exhibition will be shown in Lahore and Islamabad. For this third venue thirteen artists – all living in Vienna – were invited to create works based on their personal understanding of identity: their personal perception of, historical understanding and/or image of a (national) identity.

Artists: Azra Akšamija, Vooria Aria, Carla Degenhardt, Siegfried A. Fruhauf, Clemens Krauss, Constantin Luser/Stefan Arztmann, Lisl Ponger, Frenzi Rigling, Gabriele Sturm, Niko Wahl, Nives Widauer/Ilma Rakusa  
Curator: Gudrun Wallenböck

### Exhibition Venues 2016

#### Lahore

**May 15 – 22, 2016**

Alhamra Art Gallery (1 & 2), Alhamra Cultural Complex  
Shahrah-e-Quaid-i-Azam, Lahore / Pakistan

#### Islamabad

**May 25 – 28, 2016**

COMSATS Art Gallery (CAG-Library Basement), COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Park Road, Chak Shehzad, Islamabad / Pakistan  
Coordination: Farrah Mahmood Rana (CAG)

### Exhibition Venues 2015

#### Tehran / Iran

**Vista Art Gallery**

Tehran, Mir Emad Avenue, Alley 12, No. 11  
June 5 – 14, 2015

#### Vienna / Austria

**hinterland galerie**

Krongasse 20, 1050 Vienna  
September 10 – October 17, 2015

In cooperation and with generous support from the Austrian Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. A project by hinterland, Vienna / Austria. <http://art.hinterland.ag>

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AN INTERCULTURAL EXHIBITION CURATED BY GUDRUN WALLENBÖCK.

## “Where are we?”

hinterland initiated this intercultural project in 2015 with the aim of an exhibition and fostering exchange between different countries and cultures. In 2015 this exhibition was launched in Tehran, Iran. Afterwards it moved to Vienna, Austria and is now being shown in Pakistan. It features artists from different parts of the world, all now living in Austria and struggling with their culture and identity. What does identity mean? Do I have my own identity? How is my personal identity influenced by the culture, the country and the way of living that surrounds me? Is there such a thing as a national identity? What is the image of a national identity? Thirteen international artists address the subject of identity: their personal perception of, historical understanding and/or image of a (national) identity.

**Azra Akšamija** came to Austria during the war in Yugoslavia. In her new home country she was confronted with new traditions. In her artworks, she mainly deals with the different cultural backgrounds she was and still is facing and tries to find solutions within the mixture that makes her life and research special.

The Iranian artist **Vooria Aria**, living in Vienna, addresses his own culture and history. After many years abroad, his interest in his own background and personal roots grew stronger – in his artistic works he tries to reflect his own story, to look back on his childhood to be able to restart a new life in a new country while maintaining the identity at his birth for himself.

**Carla Degenhardt** grew up in Argentina and moved to Vienna, Austria many years ago. She has spent time living in different countries and cultures. In her work she combines the old tradition of stitching with an eternal topic in the (art) world – money. Every country has its own currency – its own identity; every currency is worth more or less, depending on where you live.

The experimental Austrian filmmaker **Siegfried A. Fruhauf** works with the postcard image – the so-called idyllic vision / version of Austria. In his *Höhenrausch* (Mountain Trip), scrolling images of postcards of the iconic Austrian Alps flow by. Their undulating, inverted mountain tops take on a surreal, warped graphic representation of a sine wave, here playing off distorted, out-of-tune Alpine folk music. With *Höhenrausch*, sound and image invite us to question nationalist stereotypes of landscapes and culture and their often awkward and embarrassing representations.

The Austrian artist **Clemens Krauss** is famous for his structurally strong figurative paintings, working reflectively and prolifically on developing and positioning his work. Clemens focuses constantly on issues regarding the contexts in which

his paintings are positioned, where and how they relate to contemporary social, political and also personal biographical questions, and where content-related links exist with other non-painted works, such as his recent videos and photographs.

The Austrian artist **Constantin Luser** works with collages and drawings. He was the first artist to collaborate with hinterland design. hinterland design was first exhibited in Tehran in 2010; for the first instalment of “Where are we?” in 2015 it returned to Tehran with a personal work by the emerging Austrian artist Constantin Luser. The hinterland skirt is made out of 2 aprons – typical items of traditional Austrian clothing. Constantin folds the aprons and uses them as a canvas for his own personal history drawings. A wearable art work also to be hung on the wall.

**Lisl Ponger** has long explored the constructed nature of (cultural) identity, our – often stereotypical – ideas about and images of the “Other,” and the associated questions of visual representation. In her film *Passage* Lisl Ponger creates an imaginary map of the twentieth century on which the stories of emigration are engraved like well-worn tracks of occidental memory. The pictures, made by observant tourists, are revealed in their tensile relationship to the soundtrack as a post-colonial journey. A journey through precisely those countries which were long ago shrunk together in space and time.

The Swiss artist **Frenzi Rigling** started her “diary” many years ago. As part of her daily routine, she sketches her personal outfit: she documents her daily life with the chosen garments. Using just one line and no colours, she allows the beholder a closer look at her taste, her choice of clothing and at the same time at her personality.

**Gabriele Sturm** identifies herself with the (loop) holes in borders, fences and barriers. In her research she tries to find ways out, to overcome fears, to conquer boundaries. There are always two sides, but there is also a chance of getting to the other side, of changing your opinion, of manifesting resistance.

The Austrian artist and historian **Niko Wahl** spent some weeks as an artist in residence at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Tehran in 2015, researching the personal history of families in Iran. He deals with personal micro-narratives, small memories brought together and compiled to form a bigger common picture, perhaps one with historical impact.

The Swiss artist **Nives Widauer** has a personal connection to a pomegranate tree – her studio overlooks the park of the Iranian Ambassador in Vienna. This tree prompted her to start researching the identity of this pomegranate – a story of the pomegranate in different cultures and religions. The Swiss author Ilma Rakusa joined this project with an essay on her reflection on the pomegranate.

The author Taiye Selasi, when asked about her nationality and her identity, always said: "All identity is experience, and our experience is where we come from and where we are local". This project tries to bring together different ideas and approaches inspired by the artists' conceptions of identity. For all of them the place where they come from and/or live influences their artworks and their understanding of identity. A collection of experiences, an approach to a universal but still personal topic.

## VENUES

### Vista Art Gallery

Tehran/ Iran, June 6 – 15, 2015

### hinterland gallery

Vienna/ Austria. September 10 – October 17, 2015

### Alhamra Art Gallery (1 & 2)

Alhamra Cultural Complex, Shahrah-e-Quaid-i-Azam, Lahore/Pakistan. May 16 – 22, 2016

### COMSATS Art Gallery (CAG-Library Basement)

COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Park Road, Chak Shehzad, Islamabad/Pakistan May 25 – 28, 2016

**Gudrun Wallenböck** is the founder and artistic director of the hinterland galerie based in Vienna. hinterland is an independent art space and platform dedicated to the promotion of intercultural and interdisciplinary projects with emerging and established artists from the Middle East with a focus on Iran. Since 2008 she has regularly curated interdisciplinary exhibitions and organized international art projects, workshops and lectures (e.g. "It's not easy being green", an exhibition at the Kunsthalle Mürz; "Hinterland meets Iran", an exhibition and workshop in Tehran). She is also the founder of hinterland design and co-founder of sitios, a global network on urban solutions for public space. She has been part of the project and programme team for two European Capitals of Culture (2003 Graz, 2009 Linz). Gudrun Wallenböck holds Master's degrees in Architecture and Cultural Management. She is a member of the advisory board of The Simorgh, a foundation based in Vienna which encourages cultural and social exchange between countries and peoples.

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## AN ESSAY ON THE EXHIBITION BY AJLA BAJRAMOVIC

# We are lost, can you tell us who we are?

Where are we? A question we ask when we are lost. When the map in our hands is not understandable, even if the answer to the question is staring us right in the face. And we always, frantically and consistently, feel the need to answer that question as soon as possible, because the idea of being lost is something quite frightening for everyone.

The feeling of not knowing makes us powerless. It makes us question everything we do and everything that is happening in our environment to the fullest extent. We question our actions, we question whether our character, whether the habits and thought processes we usually practice in familiar surroundings match this new and unknown location that we are in. Humans are by default social creatures and it is not in our nature to be isolated. The approval, understanding and acceptance given by society are imperative for an individual and his or her further development, and in order to receive such treatment, we are ready to adapt. To observe, learn, apply and implement their customs into our routines. But it is here that the problem emerges in the form of a question: Where are we?

Because if you don't know where you are, if you are unfamiliar with their traditions and customs, with their way of life, how can you adapt and thus become accepted? The answer to this question can be expressed in a contemporary, poetic form, which takes shape through the universal language of art. This was how the exhibition at the hinterland gallery under the title "Where are we?" was conceived. The concept behind the exhibition mirrors the focus of the hinterland gallery itself and presents a microcosm of the eternal struggle to simply belong. Artistic reflection on the idea that a place in which one dwells echoes one's identity prompted the question of whether that truly is so. Should we change who we are when we change where we are? Is that a process or a sudden sequence of events? And are we or are we not aware of it? The concept of identity has always been a fragile one, in a fluid state, taking many and varied shapes and sizes according to the situation and the pattern dictated by society it is forced to fit. And honestly, that is a truly intriguing thing to observe.

It is fascinating how identity is reflected through the medium the exhibiting artists choose to work with, through the title, even through the way they frame their work. But of course, it is the various ideas they give voice to that crown their creative evolution as artists. The artists give form to something as conceptual as

identity. They reinterpret the simple things of everyday life, be it stone, textiles or a pomegranate, and give them another meaning. And then there are artists who rely less on reinterpretations of everyday objects and more on using those objects, or even traditions, as a complex catalyst or construction for the ideas they want to voice.

Both of these approaches ultimately succeed in bringing the artists' visions of identity, national or personal, closer to the observer. They all succeed in drawing a personalized map of their own perception, and it is up to the visitor to read it. And if you fail, there is nothing left but to ask yourself the same question those artists also had to answer: "Where am I?". And so the magic circle widens through this exhibition; it spreads as if there were no borders on this planet, enabling everyone to stand in front of a personalized map and find a path to themselves. Some of the artwork exhibited voices a very deep and personal confrontation on the part of the artist with identity. Vooira Aria and Azra Akšamija both left their homeland and found themselves questioning the process of adapting to the country that had welcomed them. For them, wearable Bosnian/Austrian clothes and traditional Kurdish slate stone are the objects through which the transcendental momentum of identity emerges. But not all of the artists chose to occupy themselves with a deeply personal history, looking instead at the history of the majority. In their work, Siegfried A. Fruhauf and Niko Wahl focus on visually tangible, allegorically executed approaches to a particular social issue. Niko Wahl had chosen to unveil the complex and intricate history of Jewish society in Tehran and to turn the results of this research into an artwork. Siegfried A. Fruhauf, on the other hand, is concerned with the idealistic approach many have in regard to his own home country, Austria.

Identity, be it personal or universal, observed on a large or a small scale, concerning only one person or an entire nation, has a constant that is undeniable. And that is that identity is fluid. You will never know for sure where you are. Nor who you are. Nor where you are going next. But none of us do.

**Ajla Bajramovic** was born in 1994 in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, where she completed a degree at the School of Applied Arts. She obtained a BA in Art History at the University of Vienna and will pursue further studies in Art History at the Ca'Foscari University in Venice, Italy.

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## About hinterland

hinterland is an independent art space and platform dedicated to the promotion of intercultural and interdisciplinary projects with emerging and established artists from the Middle East with a focus on Iran. hinterland is an international meeting point where social, cultural, political, creative and other relevant contemporary topics are discussed and put into practice. The world is changing; social and cultural changes re-organize our lives. The uprisings in the Middle East have brought it into focus as a troubled area. But at the same time, lots of interesting art is coming out of these countries. Underground art scenes in the big cities are becoming bigger and more visible at large contemporary art fairs and important biennales – for example in the Persian Gulf region. In the past, Orient and Occident influenced each other in cultural, artistic and scientific ways – this mutual fascination still exists and should be expanded further.

hinterland uses this fascination, sets its sights on intercultural understanding, international cooperations and exchange. hinterland acts as an intermediary for establishing international cultural dialogue: to build bridges that will allow insights into the artistic and creative scene in this mostly unknown region – an exchange between East and West. Previous cooperations and exhibitions with international partners are continued and extended. The framework for discourse starts encompassing the whole Middle East.

hinterland is looking for new multidisciplinary approaches: not a typical "white cube" gallery space but a direct confrontation with art, culture, sociology, history and the present. It seeks international cultural exchange to deepen mutual understanding, break barriers and bring people together; it seeks to maintain everyone's cultural background and traditions. An interdisciplinary art space for intercultural and intersocial communication: art as a universal language.

hinterland seeks to become the international competency centre in this field in dialogue with other metropolitan cities in Europe and the Middle East.

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## AZRA AKŠAMIJA

**Dirndlmoschee [Dirndl Dress Mosque], 2005**

**Dress, photos**

**Austria**

Based on the concept of the Nomadic Mosque, the premise of the Dirndlmoschee is the nomadic principle of assimilating certain characteristics of a place into one's own context, whereby mutual enrichment is achieved. The Nomadic Mosque project explores various ways of negotiating spatial relationships between Islamic traditions and modernity in the US and Western Europe. Through the design of wearable mosques – clothes that can be transformed into prayer-rugs – the project examines the notion of the mosque space and investigates its formal limits. While respecting religious restrictions, the Nomadic Mosque aims to redefine traditional forms and functions of mosques in the contemporary context. The dirndl, a traditional Austrian dress, is still worn in everyday life in some places in Austria. The Dirndlmoschee can be transformed into an Islamic prayer environment that provides a prayer space for three people. The dirndl's apron is made out of a water-resistant material that can be unfolded into three connected prayer rugs. In the mosque configuration, the traditional shoulder scarf opens up into a veil. The silk decoration at the scarf's edge playfully references a person's hair, which is actually hidden by the veil. The belt carries a compass with a carabiner attached, from which prayer beads on ropes are hanging. The prayer beads are decorated with Swiss knives, locally found souvenirs from which the crosses were not removed but re-symbolized as a decoration. The project also involved a prayer performance in various public spaces, as well as communication with local immigrants.

**Azra Akšamija** is a Sarajevo born artist and architectural historian and is Associate Professor on the MIT Art, Culture and Technology Program. In her multi-disciplinary work, Akšamija investigates the politics of identity and memory on the scale of the body (clothing and wearable technologies), on the civic scale (religious architecture and cultural institutions), and within the context of history and global cultural flows. Her projects explore the potency of art and architecture to facilitate the process of transformative conflict mediation through cultural pedagogy, and in so doing, provide a framework for analysing and intervening in contested socio-political realities. Her recent academic research focuses on the representation of Islam in the West, conflict in the Balkans since the 1990s, and the role of art and cultural memory in connecting divided societies. In her transcultural practice, Akšamija combines intangible heritage from different cultural and historical contexts towards the creation of new art forms and shared future heritage.

## VOORIA ARIA

Perishable 1-3, 2015

Aludibond, slate, plaster 70x35cm

Austria, Iran

Vooria Aria was born in Sanandaj, Iran and now lives in Vienna, Austria. In his recent works he deals with his personal history and identity. In his native city Sanandaj, traditional graves are usually arranged with slate. *"The most intriguing for me is the way the stones are installed and how the composition influences the entire appearance of the grave and its design."* Slate is a fine grained stone, composed of volcanic ash also found in the area around Sanandaj. Slate is composed of various very thin layers, easily broken, perishable. He uses these characteristics to address migration and social issues in our society regarding identity. Hence he uses slate as the main source for his current art works: slate as object and also trace.

*"The stone that I am working with is called slate. It can be found usually on traditional graves in my native city Sanandaj. The thing that fascinated me the most, and still does, is the way the stones are arranged and the composition that influences the entire appearance of the grave and its design. I am working with material that has occupied my mind since I was a child. As an aspiring artist I try to process the influence this material or physical appearance has had on my perception. Slate fractures easily and the multitude of shapes that come from one stone or from one mountain is associated for me with our society. When the slate is within the mountain it stays whole. When it moves, it risks fragmentation. When I went to Kurdistan I brought back two stones to Austria in order to create my art-work. The nature of the stone is unstable so I preserve its original form by etching it and then let the stone fracture in an unpredictable way."*

**Vooria Aria**, born in 1979 in Sanandaj, Iran, lives and works in Vienna. From 2004–2010 he studied Sculpture and Multimedia at the University of Applied Arts Vienna (Class of Gerda Fassel and Erwin Wurm). From 2002–2004 he studied Architecture at the Technische Universität Wien. Exhibitions: 2016 Karsi Sanat, Istanbul, Turkey. 2015/2016 Museum am Bach, Austria. 2014 underline, hinterland gallery, Vienna, Austria; transient, AiR Artlab Seeboden, Austria; nAkt, TatortKunst Gallery, Graz, Austria. 2012 Lost & Found, Porgy&Bess, Vienna, Austria; Forum experimentelle Architektur, Museumsquartier, Vienna, Austria. 2008 Honart Festival, University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna, Austria; Gerda Fassel & Students, Kleine Galerie, Vienna, Austria. 2007 Akt-Studies, Haus Döbling, Vienna, Austria; GENDER ART LABORATORY, Wittgenstein House, Cultural Department of Bulgaria, Vienna, Austria. 2005 GROUP INSIDE OUT PROJEKT, Semper Depot, Vienna, Austria; ARTverwandt, St. Peter an der Speer, Wiener Neustadt, Austria.





## CARLA DEGENHARDT

**100 Euros and 10 Euros, 2012**  
Embroidery on Egyptian cotton, embroidery frame  
Luxor, Egypt

The artist is interested in power structures and gender identities in society. Her work explores the body, sexuality, social role models, economics and the art trade, identity and language. In the series Euros and Pounds, created in 2012 during a period of time spent in Luxor, Egypt, the artist worked with the themes of gender and economics. To do so she used the medium of conventional embroidery. Distanced, "alienated" from the usual floral and ornamental embroidery patterns, various banknotes such as the Egyptian pound were recreated, stitch by stitch, as motifs of desire. Paper money, stocks and shares, take on a graspable form.



**110 Euros, 2012**  
Embroidery on Egyptian cotton, embroidery frame  
Luxor, Egypt

**Carla Degenhardt**, born in Buenos Aires, lives and works in Vienna. She studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (painting with Arnulf Rainer and sculpture with Michelangelo Pistoletto). She has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as the Secession Wien, 20er Haus museum of modern art Vienna, OK Zentrum Linz, Museum of modern art Buenos Aires, Hampton Court Palace London, TEA 15 Foto biennale Teneriffa, Galerie Steinek, and Galerie Hämmerle. Carla Degenhardt works with video, film, photography and drawings as well as objects, installation and stage design. Her works have been shown at international film festivals in Istanbul, Kolkata and Washington.



## SIEGFRIED A. FRUHAUF

### Höhenrausch [Mountain Trip]

AT / 1999

Video, 4 min.



Höhenrausch (Mountain Trip) is a cinematic myriorama constructed from hundreds of Austrian postcards, which reflect a country's hackneyed trappings as no other medium can. (Siegfried A. Fruhauf)

In Siegfried A. Fruhauf's Höhenrausch (Mountain Trip) (1999), scrolling images of postcards of the iconic Austrian Alps flow by. Their undulating, inverted mountain tops take on a surreal, warped graphic representation of a sine wave, here playing off the distorted out-of-tune Alpine folk music. With Höhenrausch, sound and image invite us to question nationalist stereotypes of landscapes and culture and their often awkward and embarrassing representations. (Steve Bates)

The parameters of this experiment have been clearly defined: two rows of postcards with mountain motifs (the cards in the upper row have been turned on their heads) are juxtaposed in such a way that mountains point to other mountains, the peak of a massif butts up against a meadow, etc., resembling Chinese „cadavre exquis“ cards which can be arranged to show an endless landscape. The camera pans to the right, and its speed varies while Alpine folk music plays in a monotonous loop. One would expect the camera's movements to accelerate, the mountains flowing together into a blurred line. Instead, Fruhauf works with imponderabilities, breaks and irritations. The acceleration is not continuous; there are new approaches, repetitions of motifs and jumps. The transitions shift and are jerky as if the postcards were held in someone's hand; the unity of the individual shots is extremely unstable.... While the observer's gaze willingly accepts the Alpine panoramas at first, it is gradually channelled into the undercurrent of something in-between, the irregular border between top and bottom. The accuracy of detail in the mountain genres (according to statistics, most people still think of a mountain landscape when asked to imagine a „pretty picture“) dissolves into a non-referential dynamic. One is reminded of how the borders come alive over the course of several hours in Michael Snow's La région centrale and may regret that this trip ends after only four minutes. (Birgit Flos)

**Siegfried A. Fruhauf**, born in Grieskirchen (Upper Austria) in 1976 and grew up in the small village of Heiligenberg (Upper Austria). From 1991–1994 he trained as a commercial manager. He then studied experimental visual design at the University of Artistic and Industrial Design in Linz, where he first came into contact with the Austrian Film Avantgarde. From 1995 to 2010 he lived and worked in Linz and Heiligenberg. In 2002 he was awarded a Supporting Award for Film Art by the Austrian Federal Chancellery. Since 2001 he has organized film and art events and has been a lecturer at the University of Artistic and Industrial Design, Linz since 2009. Numerous works and shows in the areas of film, video and photography. Participation in various important international film festivals (Festival de Cannes - Semaine Internationale de la Critique, International Film Festival of Venice - Section Nuovi Territori, Sundance Film Festival Park City, ...). He is a member of sixpackfilm.

## CLEMENS KRAUSS

**7 Saints, 2009**  
**C-prints**  
**40x25cm**

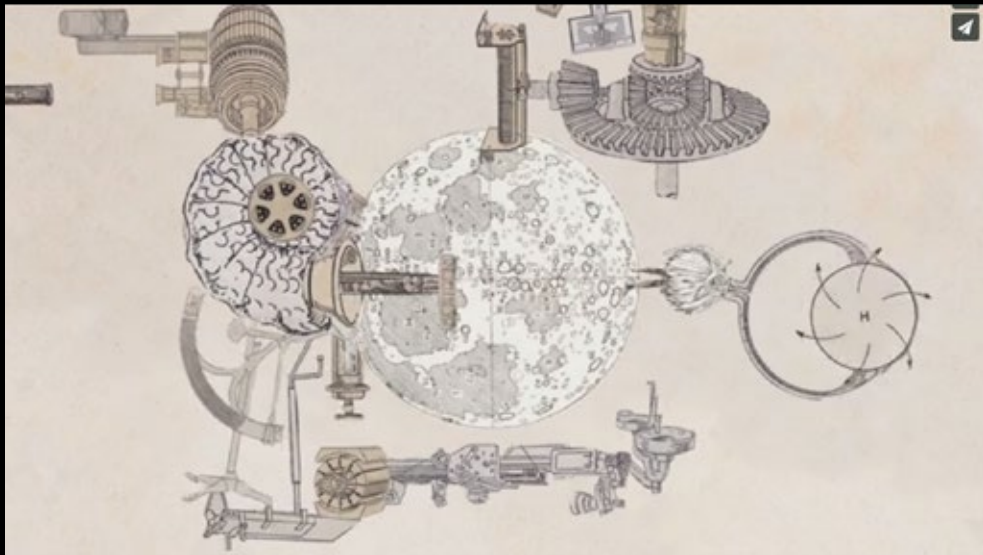
For the photographic series 7 Saints, Clemens Krauss has chosen young people from all over the world who are currently based in Berlin. They share a kind of androgynous appearance – women seem to be men and vice versa. This ambivalent state refers to body and identity as fragile phenomena. Mythological concepts can become metaphors for the body and the violence inflicted upon it. In the series 7 Saints Clemens Krauss chooses Christian iconography and language as symbols for more overall ideas of corporality and identity.

### Saints and Symbols

Saint Marta: The sister of Holy Mary holds keys in her hands – a symbol for taking care of the home. Patron of housewives. Saint Apollonia: She died as a martyr while her teeth were being torn out for not renouncing her faith. Patron of toothache and dentists. Saint Lucy: Her eyes were torn out because she supported the poor. Patron of the blind and the poor. Saint Helena: She found the remaining parts of the cross to which Christ was nailed. Patron of smiths and nailers. Saint Hedwig: She donated her shoes to the poor. Patron of the reconciliation between Poland and Germany. Saint Ludmilla: She took care of her son's baby but was throttled by her jealous daughter-in-law. Patron of mothers. Saint Veronica: she gave Jesus a cloth to wipe away his sweat on his way to Golgotha – the vernicle. Patron of photographers, sewers and aid for bad injuries.

Born in 1983 in Graz, Austria, **Clemens Krauss** studied Fine Arts at Central St. Martins College of Art and Design, London, and Universität der Künste, Berlin. He has received numerous awards, scholarships and had many national and international exhibitions. Solo exhibitions include MARTa Herford, Herford, Germany; Artport, Tel Aviv, Israel; Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney, Australia; Kulturhuset, Stockholm, Sweden; Museu de Arte Moderna Aloísio Magalhães (MAMAM), Recife, Brazil; Haus am Waldsee, Berlin, Germany; Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.





## CONSTANTIN LUSER / STEFAN ARZTMANN

**Das rote Seil [The Red Rope], 2011**

**Video, 8:45min**

Luser develops his Denkstrecken - Lines of Thought primarily in his drawings. He covers large areas with tiny graphic elements, causing them to overflow, meander, condense, and dissolve. Similar to electronic data streams, he organizes his drawings as traces and fractals of information units. With his fineliner pen, Luser works his way through micro and macro views of architectural structures, scenic arrangements, snapshots, and storyboards. Closeness and distance are brought onto one and the same level of perception; faces, muscles, and blood vessels gather around construction elements or cityscapes, developing into a map of a ubiquitous visual reservoir that time and again alludes to the artist's own biography. The starting point for the work *Das rote Seil* (The Red Rope) is a series of collages, whose constituent parts Constantin Luser took from the 8th edition of "Meyers Lexikon" (1936–42), which is still synonymous today with encyclopaedic knowledge. This edition of the encyclopaedia, known as the "Nazi-Meyer" or "Brown Meyer", which, with its nine volumes (A to Soxhlet) remained incomplete due to the war, has rarity value, since the majority of copies were confiscated by the Allies after the end of the war. *Das rote Seil*, created as part of a collective with Stefan Arztmann in Zagreb, takes from this stock and raises the elements onto a new level, taking them yet another step further away from the original context. It tells of the emergence of different worlds, of nature, humanity and technology, which act upon one another, enter into symbioses and are constantly developing. Old creation mythologies are mixed and knitted together. The fatal fallibility of humans and their constructions are linked to the possibilities inherent in today's information technology and the implicit accessibility of knowledge. (Constantin Luser & Stefan Arztmann, Vienna 2011).

**Luser Constantin** (born in 1976 in Graz) studied Industrial Design from 1995–1999 at the University of Graz. He then studied Conceptual Art with Renée Green and Marina Grzinic at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna (1999–2001), followed by Visual Media with Brigitte Kowanz at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna (1999–2004). His works were shown as part of the exhibition clouds act in 2008 in the Augarten Contemporary (Museum Belvedere) in Vienna. In 2005 he presented works at the Wien Museum (animals in the big city), in 2008 at the Museum of Modern Art in Salzburg (Sound of Art) and the Stedelijk Museum ,s-Hertogenbosch (multitasking synchronicity as a cultural practice) along with other artists. In 2016 he has a large solo show at the Kunsthaus Graz, Austria.

**Stefan Arztmann** (born in 1985 in Vienna) studied Multimedia and Design at die Graphische in Vienna and Information Design at the FH Joanneum in Graz, Austria. Since 2011 he has been studying Transmedia Arts with Brigitte Kowanz at the University of Applied Arts. In 2011 he was artist in residence in San Francisco (Futurefarmers). Exhibitions: 2011 Gallery Ortner II, Vienna, Austria; Shortfilm Corner, Film festival Cannes, France; MSU Zagreb, Croatia; Festival Miden, Greece. 2012 "Vermessung der Welt", Kunsthaus Graz, Austria; Gallery 12-14, Vienna, Austria. 2013 The Vienna Project, Orte der Erinnerung, Vienna, Austria. 2014 Brot/Lose/Kunst, Gallery So Weit Die Zukunft, Vienna, Austria; Verwall View, St. Christoph am Arlberg, Tyrol, Austria. 2015 08-15, Gallery So Weit Die Zukunft, Vienna, Austria.

## LISL PONGER

**Passagen [Passages], 1996**

**Video, 12 min.**

**Austria**

A woman stands alone at the railing of a passenger liner and gazes into the blue. She will remember for us an arrival in New York, the walk of a young couple through Chinatown, the house boats in Shanghai and the excited children who gather round the visitor with the obscure picture machine. Beneath the pictures the sounds of distant lands can be heard and, in parallel, a montage of various memories and people unfolds. People who at some time either left or arrived in Vienna involuntarily. (...)

Lisl Ponger creates an imaginary map of the twentieth century on which the stories of emigration are engraved like well-worn tracks of occidental memory. In their tensile relationship to the soundtrack, the pictures, made by observant tourists, are revealed as a post-colonial journey. A journey through exactly those countries which, long ago, were shrunk together in space and time. Finally the wonderful neon signs of the „Hotel Edison“ and „Radio City“ remind one of the origins of this form of appropriation of the world, of the time of great expeditions, of Benjamin's shop windows and passages, and of the time when technical apparatus and means of transportation fundamentally altered the perceptions of modern man. (Christa Blümlinger)



**Lisl Ponger** was born in 1947 in Nuremberg, Germany. She went to the School of Graphic Arts in Vienna, attending the photography class. From 1974–1978 she travelled in Mexico and the USA. She has been making films since 1979 and is a founding member of sixpackfilm, and is also a member of Vienna Secession. In 1994 she received the National Prize for Film Art. Photobooks and exhibitions: Doppleranarchie, Vienna 1967–1972 (1990), Fremdes Wien (1993), Xenographische Ansichten (1995). Lisl Ponger has long explored the constructed nature of (cultural) identity, our – often stereotypical – ideas about and images of the “Other”, and the associated questions of visual representation. Her art frequently engages with the academic disciplines of ethnology and anthropology, whose methods and politics become manifest in the collection and exhibition practices of ethnographic museums.



Samstag 16.1.16



Sonntag 17.1.16

## FRENZI RIGLING

**Diagramm [Diagram], 2004**  
**Drawing on paper**  
**21 x 28 cm**

Frenzi Rigling finds remarkably direct images for various concepts of time and identity, which would be difficult to imagine without such visualisation. These images are present especially in the diary in *Diagramm*, 2004–ongoing. For many people, the diary is a means of recording memories and events. Every evening, Frenzi Rigling makes fine-line monochrome drawings on A4 paper of the clothes she has worn that day. She writes the day and date on each sheet, but omits any mention of herself. The day's events and her own frame of mind are documented solely by the chosen garments. What can we tell from this about Frenzi – especially in the absence of colour? Trousers, skirt and dress alternate; this indicates female gender. There is a distinct preference for patterned materials, a leaning towards blouses, often a body-stocking, etc. The person describes herself by means of choice of and taste in clothes, and of course by the fact of drawing. Outlines are drawn with fine strokes; no information is given on dress size, physical dimensions, hair colour, etc. The individual garments, including underwear, are “hung” by a thin line on an invisible valet stand. The individual “records” are presented so that they can be read in a row from left to right. In this way, it is possible to survey three weeks in the life of Frenzi Rigling. The German philosopher Max Dessoir (1867–1947), who founded an association for aesthetic research, called the diary “the line of one’s own life”<sup>1</sup>. Irrespective of form and content, whether private diary or artistic expression, a record is kept primarily in order to preserve the present for one’s own future, and to document proof of existence for a readership. With daily records kept since 2004, Frenzi Rigling has set forth proof of her existence; thanks to the reduction to clothing, we can use this as an aid to memory. Thus for the artist, the “hooks” are recorded memories which afford her quick association with the events in her life on the date in question. In addition, she has a clear memory of making each drawing. The viewer looks first for data with some personal association in time. The omission of the artist’s own person enables viewers to “occupy” the garments, thus filling the daily records with their own (hi)story. (from Hannelore Paflik-Huber, “The Line of Life”).

**Frenzi Rigling** – Born in Schaffhausen, Switzerland, in 1958. From 1977–1984 she studied at the Zurich University of the Arts and Fabric Design. She has lived and worked in Vienna since 1992. Selected exhibitions: 2016 Don't panic, it's organic, Galerie Zimmermann Kratochwill, Graz. 2015 Nahe Ferne, Landesmuseum, St Pölten; Beatrice, Artbox, Vienna; Zeit für A • Zeit für F, Vebikus, Kunsthalle Schaffhausen, Schaffhausen; Rabenmütter, LENTOS Kunstmuseum, Linz; Zeit für A • Zeit für F, Kunsthau Muerz, Müzzzuschlag. 2014 Frenzi Rigling, Elisabeth zeigt, Vienna; Essen in der Kunst, Nordico, Linz; Une exercise de style, Stadtgalerie, Waidhofen an der Ybbs; Art and function, Messe, Vienna. 2013 Ich und das, Semperdepot, Vienna; Zollamt, Graz; Studio Corsaro, Vienna; Seite an Seite, Kammgarn, Schaffhausen. 2012 Far-Land, Pfeilgasse 22, Vienna; Luxus, Stilwerk, Vienna; Spuren legen, Festival der Bezirke, Vienna. 2011 Galerie 3, Klagenfurt; Struck by, Kunstraum Weikendorf. 2009 Aus dem Westen, Galerie im Traklhaus, Salzburg.

<sup>1</sup> Max Dessoir, *Die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Wiesbaden 1925.

## GABRIELE STURM

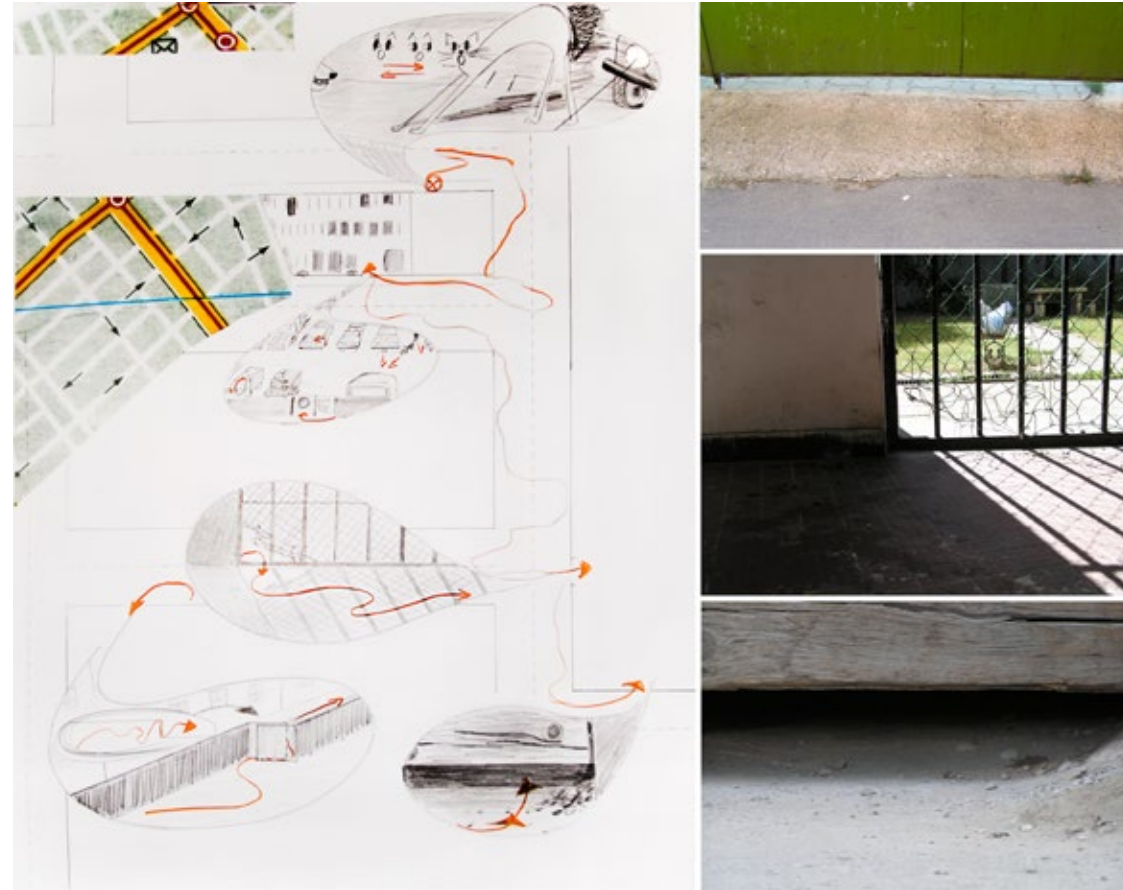
**Schlupflöcher [Loopholes], 2004**

**Photos, drawings**

**Various sizes**

**Budapest**

Gabriele Sturm investigates intercultural relations and tries to reprocess these critically. Her personal experiences and observations form the basis of her work. Many years ago she started looking for holes in fences – so called “Schlupflöcher” (loopholes) – breaking through a barrier, trying to find a way to the other side, overcoming personal boundaries, finding a way out... A fence’s function is the inclusion and/or exclusion of specific territories for humans, animals, etc. These fences demonstrate the order of the world – in 1989 we took down the fences in Europe, now we are putting them up again. Gabriele Sturm searches for the loopholes in these barriers. These holes are a manifestation of resistance – perforating, ripping, cutting a way through that border. In 2004 she started mapping loopholes in the city of Budapest. The wire was often carefully bent away so that the small animals sneaking through would not be hurt. She positions herself in these loopholes – being trapped in a barrier, trying to find another way, a new solution...



**Gabriele Sturm** attended the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna from 1995–2002, studying Sculpture with Heimo Zobernig and painting and graphics with Markus Prachensky. She has exhibited internationally at ZKM, Karlsruhe, Germany; Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria; Galerie 5020, Salzburg (solo), Austria; Museum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck (solo), Austria; Taxispalais, Innsbruck, Austria; Apex Art, New York, USA; held art, Berlin, Germany; Babinart Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna, Austria; Galerie für Gegenwartskunst, Bremen (solo), Germany; Galerie Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Austria; and the Winterpalais Belvedere, Austria, among others.

## NIKO WAHL

Tehran in a tent 1- 8, 2015

Epoxy, newspaper collage, plaster

33 x 33 cm

Tehran, Iran

Tehrans collective memory is suffering from amnesia enhanced by its own growth unburdened with the respect for historical structures and by a drain of citizens. The story I looked into is about a group of nearly 800 Jewish Polish orphans who came to Tehran in 1942. They had fled the Nazis in Poland, had survived the conditions in the Russian and Siberian hinterland, the famine and the illnesses in the central Asian cities of Ashkabad, Sarmakand and Buchara and had then followed an army trek over the Caspian sea and into Iran. In Tehran they lived for months in tents before resuming their journey to India and Palestine.

Tehran offers only scarce memories of the presence of these children. Buildings have been eradicated, streets renamed, and as a local rabbi said 'those who remembered are dead now.'

In 2015, when prolonging my visa for Iran, I stood at the police office between young Afghans and others who tried to secure a permit to stay legally in this country. Their dreams, hopes and perceptions stay as vague for me as those of the children who stayed in tents in this city in 1942.

Niko Wahl was artist in residence at the Austrian Cultural Forum Tehran in May/ June 2015. During his stay he carried out research in the Tehran community and prepared his art works for the exhibition: layered (vintage) prints in combination with text and (vintage) graphic elements.

**Niko Wahl** (born in 1974 in Vienna, Austria) studied History and other subjects at the University of Vienna. Niko Wahl's work is based on the agglomeration of various contents covering whole exhibitions as well as single objects. Ripping contents out of their historical setting and connecting pieces and parts of pieces introduces new meanings and constructs genuine stories. Artefacts as well as found objects are used here following the method of collage and montage.





## NIVES WIDAUER / ILMA RAKUSA

**Pomeglobe, 2015 -  
Installation of a series of photos,  
pomegranate  
1 essay by Ilma Rakusa, 2015**

Pomeglobe is an art project by Nives Widauer that basically deals with the story of the pomegranate in different cultures. Because of its unique form, colour and inner nature, the pomegranate is a symbol of love, fertility, wisdom, beauty and might. The pomegranate originated in the Mesopotamian area and spread over the whole world. It appears in art, literature and ornamentation as well as in different cultural contexts. Moreover the fruit is extremely nutritious and is used in international cuisine. On her website, the artist collects photos of people from all over the world holding a pomegranate in their hands, thereby establishing a network of intercultural dialogue. The aim of this project is to document and discover the pomegranate within its history and to create an international symbol for intercultural and peaceful dialogue. The symbol aims to signal openness to intercultural dialogue and to function as a sign of peace even in problematic regions.

Website: [www.pomeglobe.com](http://www.pomeglobe.com) Instagram: [#pomeglobe](https://www.instagram.com/pomeglobe) [#showinterculturality](https://www.instagram.com/showinterculturality) [#spreadpeace](https://www.instagram.com/spreadpeace) E-Mail: [photo@pomeglobe.com](mailto:photo@pomeglobe.com)

**Nives Widauer** was born in 1965 in Basel, Switzerland. In 1990 she graduated from the class for Audiovisual Arts at the School Of Design Basel. Parallel to her first exhibitions (video installations) she created video sets and movies. Various art awards, scholarships and exhibitions followed. Since 1996 Nives Widauer has lived in Basel and Vienna. In her recent work the artist plays with the interface between analogue and digital and she has expanded her medias to include painting and sculpture.

**Ilma Rakusa** spent some time in Tehran in 2015, where she was writing an essay for Nives Widauer's project.



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AN ESSAY BY ILMA RAKUSA

## Pomegranate wonder

Just to write about dates, that would inspire me too; about those sweet, nourishing dates, which I cannot do without. Five dates in my pocket—and they save the day. Neither hunger nor sulkiness can affect me. Admittedly, they are no paragon of beauty, but small and often wrinkly. Whereas the mere sight of a pomegranate enchants. Perfect in form, a shimmer of yellow-green, red-brown, often deep crimson. Well, look for yourself. Just take a look. How it glows, the sepals reach up like a little crown. It's hardly comparable to the base apple that was Adam and Eve's undoing, that drove them out of paradise. To me, it seems that only this is suited to paradise: the pomegranate. Without the snake, without Adam and Eve. The quintessence of an absolutely beautiful fruit. Botanists call it a leathery-skinned berry, which sounds rather clinical. Granted, taking a bite isn't going to work. But open one up, and it's a treasure chest: in a great many chambers, ruby red pearls shine. They are the seeds surrounded by a bulging layer of flesh. Squash that, and suck in the sweet juice. A single fruit may contain up to 400 seeds. Surely that's something of a miracle.

And now it occurs to me how, during my studies in Paris, I sat in cafés and drank pomegranate juice with milk. Lait grenadine, the pink-red drink was called. It tasted subtly sweet, just as the colour suggested, and was affordable. I took small sips through my straw while I observed passers-by or wrote something in my notebook. The way I remember it, it was always summer. The drink called for sun and relaxation.

I do not live in a pomegranate region, the climate is far too harsh. However, it was a joy to discover a dainty pomegranate tree in Pécs, southern Hungary. Sheltered from the wind, it grew next to an old wall and looked on to the dome of the mosque that the Ottomans had built during an attempt at conquest. It seemed to me like a distant messenger, reconciled to all things foreign.

But in Shiraz, I gained an impression of pomegranate trees in their element, surrounded by cypresses, palms, quinces and lemon trees, by roses and many other plants that I am not familiar with. I imagine the garden of paradise to be no different: an abundance of green, brought forth from desert-like surroundings. Little streams sustain luxuriant growth, fountains signify exuberance. Young couples wander in the shade of the trees. A fitting line of poetry is bound to occur to one or another among them. The Song of Solomon comes to mind, which sings of the beauty of the beloved in terms of a multitude of comparisons: „As a piece of a pomegranate / are thy temples within thy locks“, „Your shoots, a paradise of pomegranate trees with precious fruit.“ In Nizami Ganjavi's love poem Layla and Majnun, the boy Qays is compared to „a pomegranate's laugh“, and Layla's school

companions are like „firm pomegranates, almost bursting out of desire with juice“. Pomegranates do not only signify beauty and fertility. This I know, thanks to a British perfume producer, whose perfume „Pomgranate“ is the best that I have ever tried, at once tangy and spicy, simply irresistible. The stream of my inner associations continues. I see saffron rice with berberis berries and pomegranate seeds. I see a painting by Botticelli, in which Maria and the infant Jesus hold a single, open pomegranate, like a regal sign. And I see an Afghan war rug, with a pomegranate tree woven decoratively into the centre, while around the border there are many tanks. This is a painful juxtaposition. Like the etymological link between grenade and pomegranate (Italian, *granata*). Obviously, paradise always calls for a counterpart. The red of beauty for the red of blood.

And nonetheless: don't allow these paradoxes to disconcert you, persevere with appearances. Look at it, this pomegranate. Then, with a simple gesture, take it in your hand. It sits well, fills your hand. You observe the colouring, you think about its diverse inner life. And experience a feeling of happiness. Let's call it round and red. Yes, round and red. And tender.

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**Ilma Rakusa** was born in 1946 in Rimavská Sobota, Slovakia, to a Hungarian mother and a Slovenian father, and spent her childhood in Budapest, Ljubljana and Trieste. From 1965–1971 she studied Slavic Languages and Literature, and Romance Languages and Literature in Zürich, Paris and St. Petersburg, and in 1971 she was awarded a doctorate for her dissertation on the “Theme of Loneliness in Russian Literature”. Since 1977 she has been a lecturer at the University of Zürich, and also a freelance writer, translator and journalist (for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *Die Zeit* etc).

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## IMPRINT

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