

**Noor
Afshan Mirza**

&

**Brad
Butler**

**T H E
S C A R**

25. Oktober 2018 – 13. Januar 2019

Visitor Guide

EDITH-RUSS-HAUS

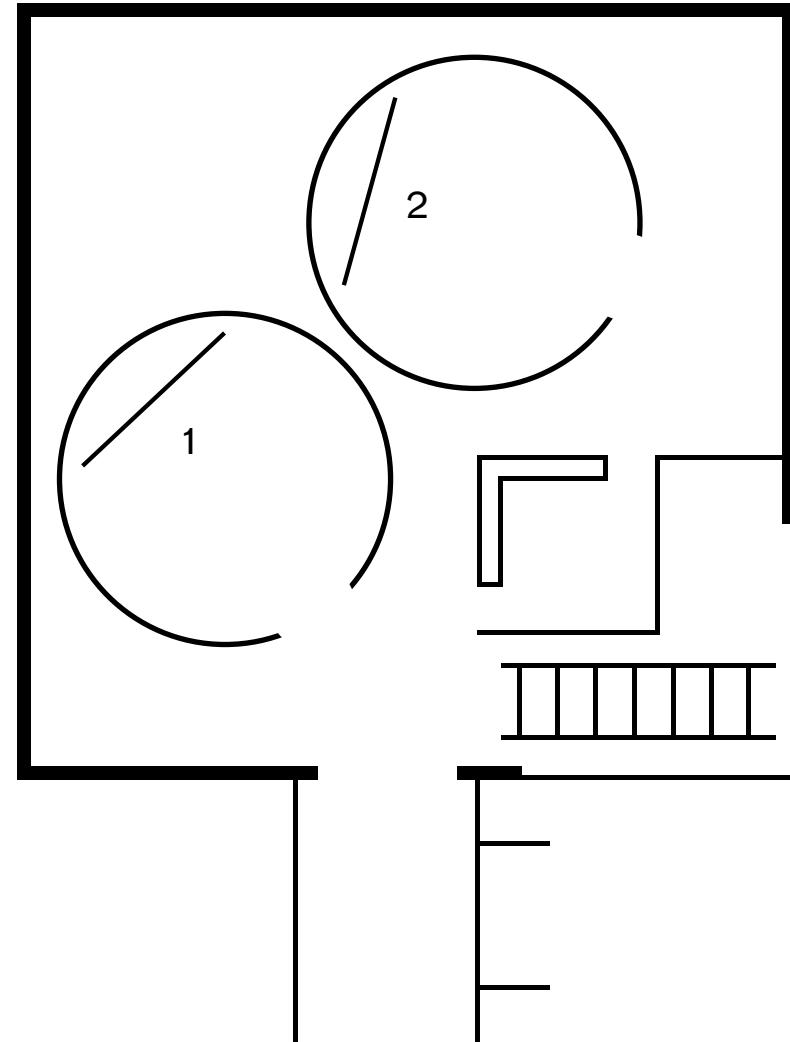
The Scar is a three-part, large-scale fiction mixed media installation by Noor Afshan Mirza and Brad Butler that is the central new piece of their first solo show in Germany.

Bringing together films, grand-scale installations, objects, texts and collages from the last 10 years, the exhibition follows the artist's investigation towards the possibility of a political art practice that explores themes of resistance, inequality, power and privilege, and (non) participation.

Differentiating between work made 'in' struggle and work made about struggle they take up an expanded notion of how to think politics with and through the body. Mirza and Butler work in an international context and are interested in expanded notions of art that turn to such areas as state violence and forced disappearance, the ectoplasm of neoliberalism and women's bodies as sites of resistance.

Noor Afshan Mirza and Brad Butler live and works between Istanbul and London have been working together since 1998. They were the recipient of the Media Art Grant from the Foundation of Lower Saxony at the Edith-Russ-Haus in 2017.

Noor and Brad are well-known for their fictional construct *The Museum of Non Participation* (2008-2016), which interrogated the synergies of politics and art. Past exhibitions include installations at HOME Manchester (2018); Delfina Foundation, London (2018); The Sydney Biennale (2016); Hayward Gallery, London (2015); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2015); Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (2013); and Performa 13, New York (2013). They are recipients of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Award for Visual Artists 2015 and were nominated for Artes Mundi 6 (2014), a prize dedicated to visual arts engaging with the human condition.



1

The Scar I – The State of the State

2018

HD Video

16 min

2

The Scar II – The Mouth of the Shark

2018

HD Video

19 min

Video installation, texts, prints, mixed material

“Together we are barrelling towards the scene of the accident at 120 kilometres an hour.”

The Scar weaves together gangster, film noir, corruption, fantasy and reality and is the culmination of a thorough long-term research project loosely inspired by a major scandal of Turkish political history. In film one (*The State of the State*) four passengers are on a journey in a black Mercedes, unaware of their significance as state archetypes: the Chief of Police, a politician and a right-wing assassin. The fourth passenger is Yenge, the only female traveller, silenced by the genre conventions of her role in the film. In film two (*The Mouth of the Shark*) Yenge's noir voiceover begins to interrupt the male characters' forced bravado as they are haunted by the Resistant Dead - the residual movements created from stories of people refusing to be forgotten. The film's final part (*The Gossip*) addresses tales of female emancipation and empowerment, where a group of female activists transcend time, geographical borders and linguistic barriers to gather in a neutral nether-realm of conversation and mutual support.

In all three films, character names, scenes and locations have been fictionalised through the use of Magical Realism.

CAST

Yenge: Yasmine Alice

Reis: Devrim Evin

Kaptan: Murat Erkek

Ağa: Eyup Aydin

THE GOSSIP

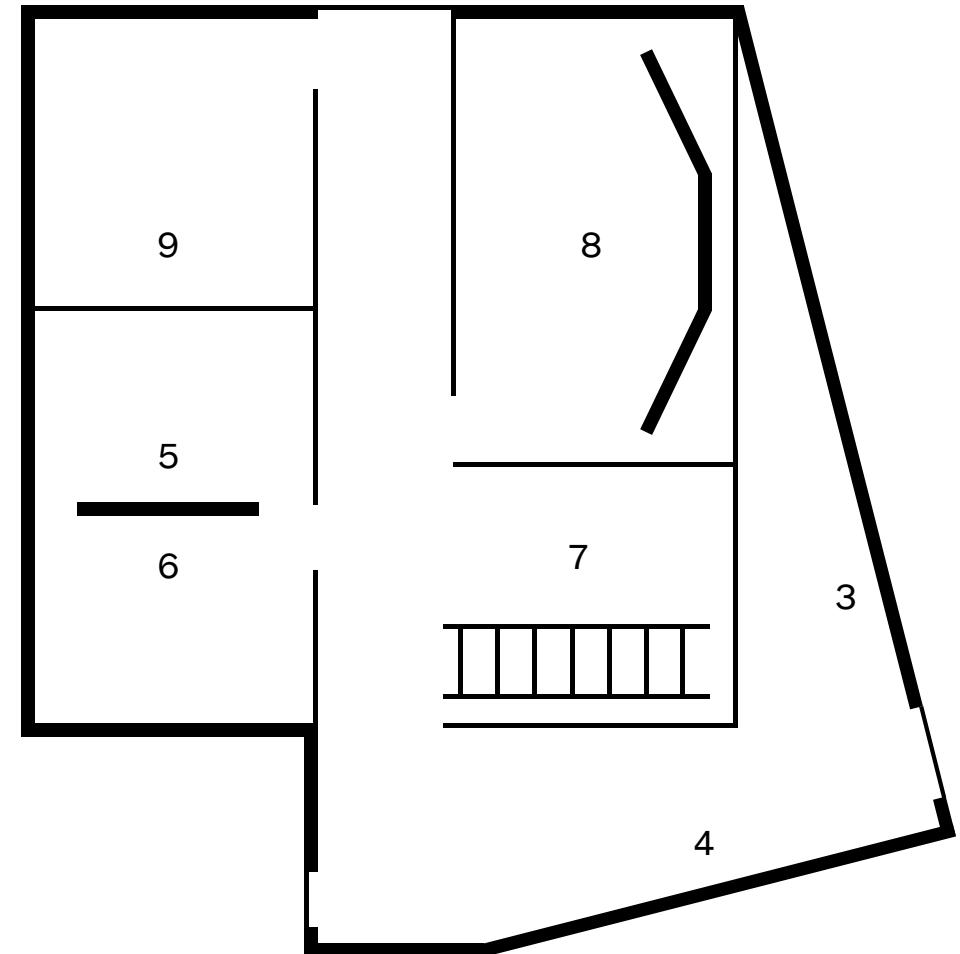
Bookie Anifowse, Rayna Campbell, Yasmine Alice, Maria Jose Bavio
Mogali Masuku, Simona Roman, Mavin Rasheed

THE RESISTANT DEAD

Anna-Maria Nabirye, Clare Barrett, Halema Hussain
Jerry Ezekel, Leona Allen

The installation *The Scar* is commissioned by FLAMIN Productions through FILM LONDON Artists' Moving Image Network with funding from Arts Council England in partnership with HOME & no.w.here and Edith-Russ-Haus through Stiftung Niedersachsen with support from University of Salford Art Collection, Spectre Productions, Delfina Foundation, Centre national des arts plastiques France, and àngels barcelona.

The exhibition is funded by the Ministry of Science and Culture of Lower Saxony, the Foundation of Lower Saxony and the Gesellschaft zur Förderung von Medienkunst.



3
The Committee

2014
HD-Video
3 min

“What state of mind are we in when we face the state?”

The background of the production of *The Committee*:

Launched in 2011 Random Acts is a short-form daily arts strand on Channel 4, aimed at supporting and providing a platform for risk-taking and innovative arts content from both established artists and emerging talent. With an emphasis on television as art, rather than about art, Random Acts programmes content including, but not restricted to, spoken word, dance, animation, video art and music.

The Committee was commissioned by this very special occasion and context of the Random Acts project in 2014.

4
How to Protest Intelligently

2013
drawings
ink and pencil on paper
21 x 29,5 cm

How to Protest intelligently was an original pamphlet produced urgently by an anonymous individual in Cairo to distribute information to the masses “on how to stay safe on the streets” during the uprising in 2011. Where the experiences of state violence being enacted on its citizens created a need to act autonomously and collectively. This collection of instructions were picked up by the artists who had previously come across something very similar in Pakistan during the Lawyers Movement (the Lawyers Movement also known as the Black Coat Protest was the popular mass movement initiated by local lawyers in 2007 against an assault on the independence of Judiciary). The artworks highlight the gesture that speaks towards the pedagogy and

language of the body when under attack by a state sponsored violence. It investigates a possible ‘street language’ as body movement as protection.

5
Deep State

2012
HD-Video
45 min

Deep State is a science fiction inflected protest ‘training film’ made in collaboration with author China Mieville which takes as its starting points different moments of political struggle, informed particularly by current revolutionary processes taking place in Egypt and close collaboration with the Cairo media collective Mosireen. The film takes its title from the Turkish term *Derin Devlet*, meaning state within the state. Although its existence is impossible to verify, this shadowy nexus of special interests and covert relationships is the place where real power is said to reside, and where fundamental decisions are made decisions that often run counter to the outward impression of democracy.

Amorphous and unseen, the influence of this deep state is glimpsed at regular points throughout the film most clearly surfacing in its reflexive responses to popular protest, and in legislated acts of violence and containment.

A powerful undertow in the ongoing tide of history, this push and pull of competing forces is illuminated in a vivid montage of newly filmed and archive footage. Collided together, past, present and future trace a continuum, in which the same repetitive patterns are played out. Against a backdrop of momentous, historically resonant demonstrations, an eternal rioter, or riotonaut, is picked out, as if by a searchlight, ever-present at each and every flashpoint.

6

Hold Your Ground

2012

Video

HD-Video

8 min

Hold Your Ground is a companion piece to a larger film, *Deep State*. Inspired by the events of the Arab Spring, and triggered by the artists' discovery in Cairo of a pamphlet of instructions for pro-democracy demonstrators, called 'How to Protest Intelligently', the piece dissects the 'semantics' of the crowd, and the resulting performative 'speech act'.

7

Sie sind Bundeskanzler*in – You Are the Prime Minister

2014–2018

Mixed-Media-Installation

Based on the original installation, titled *You are the Prime Minister*, in *Sie sind die Bundeskanzler*in* a prominent neon work shapes a special room installation that take up the title role like in a fantasy fiction. The original neon statement in english belongs to a larger context referring to a scholarship exam for thirteen years-old boys entering Eton College, an elite school that trained 19 of the Britain's Prime Ministers and 12 members of the British Government.

This version of the work is an adaptation for this Edith-Russ-Haus presentation within the actual political context of Germany under the title *Sie sind Bundeskanzler*in* (You Are the Chancellor).

This participatory installation piece engages with the question of political responsibility and the critique of participation through the political instruments of liberal democracy, when parliament seems to fail to address the representational needs of the majority.

8

The Scar III – The Gossip

2018

Three-channel video Installation

22 min

The film's final part *The Gossip* addresses tales of female emancipation and empowerment, where a group of female activists transcend time, geographical borders and linguistic barriers to gather in a neutral nether-realm of conversation and mutual support.

9

The Exception and the Rule

2009

Video

37 min

Mirza and Butler produced *The Exception and the Rule* as a non-documentary that seeks new directions for ethnographic film.

Shot primarily in Karachi, *The Exception and the Rule* employs a variety of strategies in negotiating consciously political themes. Avoiding traditional documentary modes, the film frames everyday activities within a period of civil unrest, incorporating performances to camera, public interventions and observation.

THE SCAR | Colophon

Production:

Edith-Russ-Haus für Medienkunst

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Technical Realisation: Carlo Bas Sancho, Mathis Oesterlen

Press: Juliane Goldbeck, Steffen Pilney

The artists would like to thank the following persons: Annamaria Nabirye, Razwana Akram, Sarah Perks, Aaaron Cezar, Gillian Dickie, Haza Vuzu, Edit Molnar, Marcel Schwierin, Emilio Alvarez, Ampem Dako

Guided tours

Every Sunday during the exhibition at 3 p.m. (Attendance free, regular entrance).

Group tours on request. Please consult the special parallel program.

Opening hours

Tuesday – Friday 2 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Monday closed

Admission: 2,50 Euro | 1,50 Euro

Free admission on 27 October, 24 November, 22 December 2018 and 12 January 2019

Closed on 31 October, 24, 25 and 31 December 2018 and 1 January 2019

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