

VOICES OUTSIDE THE ECHO CHAMBER

QUESTIONING MYTHS, FACTS AND FRAMINGS OF MIGRATION
29 APRIL - 03 JUNE 2016

Voices Outside the Echo Chamber: Questioning Myths, Facts and Framings of Migration takes the phenomenon of echo chambers as a starting point for understanding the meta-framing producing current discourses on migration.

The form of recent debates about migration to the European continent mirrors that of online filter bubbles, or so-called echo chambers, in which individuals intensify their world-views by surrounding themselves with information that corroborates and echoes back their own beliefs. The recurrent use of terms such as 'crisis', 'borders' and even 'human rights' in recent discussions on migration largely disregards the complexity of human mobility and movement, obscuring the histories created largely by European colonial powers, that call for closer attention to the conditions and uses of such words.

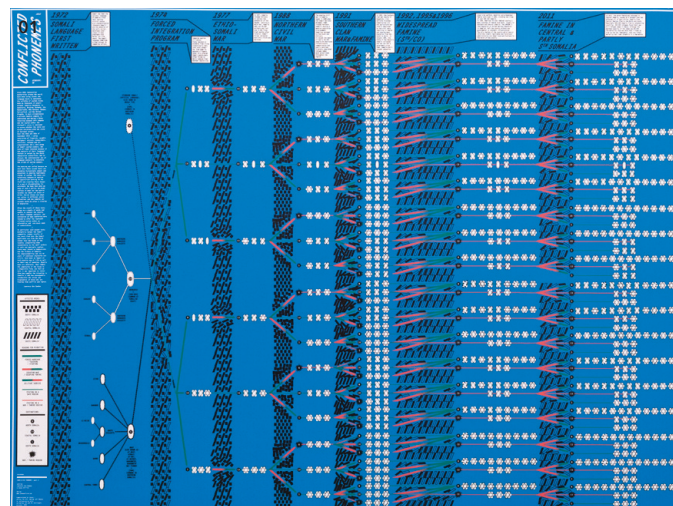
Departing from the dialectical relation between the discourses of 'human rights' and 'border control', the exhibition *Voices Outside the Echo Chamber* explores the complexity of human migration beyond supposedly fundamental notions and the repetitive use of empty signifiers. The artists' works in the exhibition break out of these

echo chambers, freeing themselves from the regulated discourse propagated through the language used by the media, NGOs and other institutions, which conveniently filters out all other possible perspectives. In an attempt to unsettle these fundamental notions and concepts, the exhibition calls attention to modernist knowledge-systems and structures of truth-making at work today.

The exhibition and the event-program question perceived realities and locate perception gaps. They reflect on actorhood, imaginary geographies, images and the conditions and use of language in debates on migration. In destabilizing prevailing views on migration from a historical and contemporary perspective, and by shifting and displacing the meanings of supposedly fundamental concepts such as 'human rights' and 'borders', the exhibition and the event program create space for voices that are otherwise filtered out or marginalized.

Curated by Katayoun Arian

The exhibition features works by Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Angela Anderson, Kaya Behkalam & Azin Feizabadi, Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson, Banu Cennetçülu,



LAWRENCE ABU HAMDAN

01 *Conflicted Phonemes*
vinyl wall print 208cm x 300cm
9 A4 vinyl wall prints, 2012

In 2012, Lawrence Abu Hamdan held a meeting in Utrecht to discuss ways of countering the controversial use of language analysis in determining the origin of asylum seekers and unjustly denying legitimate claims of asylum. The group consisted of twelve Somali who have all been subjected to a language, dialect, or accent analysis by the Dutch immigration authorities and subsequently had their asylum requests rejected. In addition to the Somali asylum seekers, the group included linguists, researchers, activists, cultural organizations, and the graphic designer Janna Ullrich. The group created a series of nongeographic maps that seek to expose and disseminate the realities of this technology/policy. These tests, which target the Somali community in particular, seek to determine that asylum seekers are actually coming from small pockets of relatively safe regions in the north of the country, thus making

it possible for their applications to be rejected.

The maps explore the hybrid nature of accent, complicating its relation to one's place of birth by also considering the social conditions and cultural exchange of those living such itinerant lives. It reads the way people speak about the volatile history and geography of Somalia over the last forty years as a product of continual migration and crisis. Its complexity is a testimony to the irreducibility of the voice to a passport, namely its inapplicability to fix people in space.

These maps are thus meant to offer the rejected/silenced asylum seeker an alternative and non-vocal mode of contestation. As well as being exhibited in various galleries and refugee organizations around Europe, these maps were presented to a chief judge working within the Dutch immigration authority. The research was also submitted at a deportation hearing before the UK Asylum tribunal.

Conflicted Phonemes was commissioned by Casco Office for Art theory and Design, Utrecht.



ANGELA ANDERSON

02 *The Sea between You and Me*
15min HD 16:9, with text excerpts
from Sappho, Natalie Clifford Barney and Renee Vivien, 2016

September 7, 2015. The white marble statue of the Aeolian poet Sappho gazes over the port of Mytilene, lyre in hand. Usually alone, today she is surrounded by people - walking, standing, sitting, lying down. They use her warm stone to dry their clothes and escape the sun in her shadow. They are some of the 25,000 individuals who have made the perilous journey over the sea from Turkey in the past week alone.

In Sappho's shadow, the mythological imaginary of Lesbos as a place of refuge - as an idyllic paradise of the arts in ancient times and later as a haven for

women seeking love and expression free from the restraints of patriarchal forces - takes on another yet layer of meaning as the first point of entry into the supposed safety of modern Europe.

The Sea between You and Me interrogates how geographic imaginaries are formed, transformed, and transmuted at the intersection of medial and historical processes through the psychic function of language. In a refusal to simply ignore or repress the affective power and historical significance of the word "Lesbos", this work challenges the viewer to consider the metaphoric and karmic nature of the fact that this island - already an escape route for Greek refugees from Asia Minor in 1922 - has yet again become a refuge for over 550,000 people fleeing war and violence since the beginning of 2015.

KAYA BEHKALAM & AZIN FEIZABADI

03 The Negotiation

HD Video, color & b/w, 1/2-channel video, 38 min, 2010

A diverse group of actors come together on a film set analogous to the architecture of UN Security Council - a round table. The script: an unnamed visual/textual three-act drama on an undefined revolutionary situation. Within the working process: directing, reading, rehearsal and embodiment - in which the actors

interpret their real and scripted characters - the borders between fictional and factual histories, individual and collective desires, projections and biographical backgrounds become more and more blurry. Only commented from afar by an authoritarian narrator, the actors discuss, improvise and negotiate between language and the necessity for action.

The Negotiation was commissioned by *Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW) Berlin*

03



BANU CENNETOĞLU

04 I KNOW VERY WELL BUT NEVER-THELESS*

28 foil helium-filled balloons, inflated and installed on Thursday, 28.04.2016

Octave Mannoni's famous quote "Je sais bien mais quand même", or in English "I know very well, but nevertheless", is spelled out using foil helium balloons. The phrase is the title of one of the chapters in Mannoni's book *Clefs pour l'imaginaire* or *l'Autre Scène* from 1969.

After working as an 'ethnologist' and as the head of information services in French colonized Madagascar for twenty years, Mannoni returns to France in 1945 where he starts publishing articles and books on the psychological significance of colonization. Writing on the process of psychological projection of the colonizer onto indigenous subjects, Mannoni includes insights about himself learned from psychoanalysis with Jacques Lacan, applying those insights to his experiences in Madagascar.

The sentence "I know very well, but nevertheless", explores the disavowal of the colonizer and the pseudo melancholy which results from his position of privilege, pointing to the over-reliance on knowing without it necessarily triggering action. The phrase is especially relevant in the context of ongoing coloniality and the violent materiality of refugees' and undocumented migrants' condition today. The sentence could therefore also be read as self-reflexive as well as a critique within, and beyond, the context of the exhibition. The phrase will appear bold and beautiful at the beginning of the exhibition, but will eventually become something else: Each letter has a different relationship with the helium, the room temperature, with the letter next to it and the way they lean on each other. Knowledge might eventually disappear, just like the letters might disappear over the course of the exhibition.

**Je sais bien mais quand même /Octave Mannoni (Clefs pour l'imaginaire, Paris, 1969)*

04



LIBIA CASTRO AND ÓLAFUR ÓLAFSSON

05 Bosbolobosboco #6 (Departure-Transit-Arrival)

Audio-sculpture, 2014, with great thanks to Hadi, Shokufa, Mona and Asif

Bosbolobosboco #6 (Departure-Transit-Arrival) is an audio sculpture made in collaboration with refugees working with the Sydney based collective *The Refugee Art Project*, its co-founder and artist *Safdar Ahmed*, and psychologist *Nina Melksham*.

This is the 6th biomorphic experiential sculpture of this type the artists have made, gathering recorded testimonies, conversations and statements from various people. In dialogue with psychologist *Nina* and using methods of deep relaxation and memory visualization to heal trauma, *Hadi, Shokufa, Mona* and *Asif* describe images of departure, transit and arrival from memories of their journey to Australia. The biomorphic sculpture, made of everyday materials, wood, textiles, cardboard and cello tape, invites viewers and listeners to touch it and find their own spot to sit or lie down and listen to their stories through headphones.

The sculpture is a testimony of the struggle of displacement, from before the departure to the arrival, and the journey's lasting traumatic effects. The descriptions given by *Hadi, Shokufa, Mona* and *Asif*, invite the audience to perceive the difficult task of excavating memories of traumatic journeys. The voices of *Hadi, Shokufa, Mona* and *Asif* extend the notion of subjectivity, inviting the audience to abandon their positions as "voyeurs" or observers of personal and intimate accounts, and to shift their subjective perception to the other - to position themselves in the place of the observed. The audio-sculpture creates the possibility for active participation through deeper listening, allowing for these stories of migration to become part of our collective memory.

06 The riGHt tO RiGHt/WrOnG
Mixed-media campaign, 2012-ongoing

The riGHt tO RiGHt/WrOnG is a project and campaign, through which the artists assert the fundamental 'Right to Right' as the first step towards a real and communal socio-political emancipation, above and beyond the multitude of international conventions, declarations, protocols and constitutions that specify and regulate the rights that nation-states and transnational agencies have made available to, or withhold from, citizens and people.

The riGHt tO RiGHt/WrOnG takes on different forms, in outdoor public space and at different cultural and media platforms, intervening and initiating discussions, events, actions and collaborations with different groups, organizations and professionals.

In the context of the exhibition *Voices Outside the Echo Chamber*, several iterations of the campaign will take place. The phrase 'The right to Right/Wrong' will appear as a sculptural intervention on the facade of the building *de Tolhuistuin*. The text work *The Partial Declaration of Human Wrongs*, based on the Universal Declarations of Human Rights (UDHR), will be presented both in the exhibition space and as an insert in the newspaper *The riGHt tO RiGHt/WrOnG*. The newspaper - a collaboration with the philosopher *Nina Power* - will be distributed outdoors and at *Framer Framed*. The campaign will unfold through a collaboration with the online radio platform dedicated to the arts *Ja Ja Ja Nee Nee Nee*, where the artists will discuss articles from *The Partial Declaration of Human Wrongs* and analyze the origin and the meaning of the UDHR document in the face of human right violations against refugees and undocumented migrants.

06 Centre d'Artre Ólafsson - Friday, 14 September 2012 - www.therightto-right.com
The riGHt tO RiGHt





EUROPEAN SOUVENIRS

07 Eurovisions

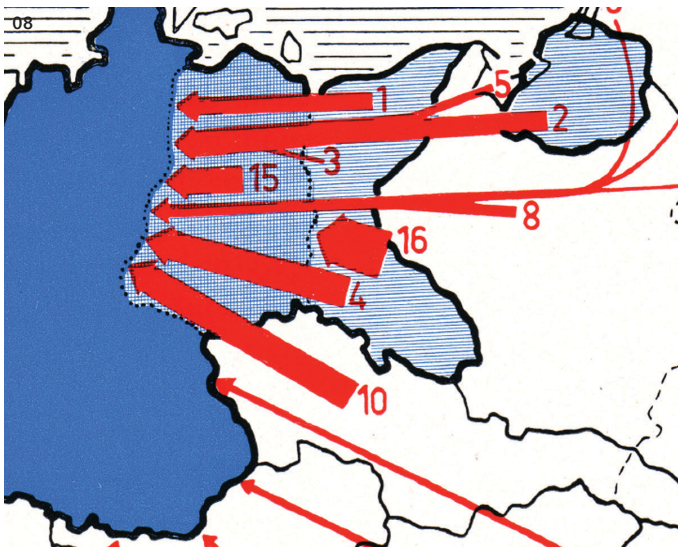
Live performance, 50 min., multiscreen, live music, audiovisual actionism, sampling and cut-ups. Eurovisions is partly drawing on the material generated in the Remapping Europe workshops, 2014

The live cinema performance *Eurovisions* is an audiovisual journey, remixing different disciplines and archival material on the subjects of migration, Fortress Europe and border control. For the occasion of the opening of *Voices Outside the Echo Chamber: Questioning Myths, Facts and Framings of Migration*, European Souvenirs - during a one-week residency prior to the exhibition - delves into recent footage and archival audiovisual material. The nearly hour-long

performance *Eurovisions* is the reinterpretation of material from leading European institutional archives, including EYE Film Institute (NL), FRONTEX, and Euronews, aiming to capture their perspective on European border regimes.

European Souvenirs consists of Noriko Okaku (GB), Karol Rakowski (PL), Farah Rahman (NL), Pedro Jimenez (ES) Benito Jimenez (ES) and Malaventura (ES).

Performance includes: Laptops, midi controllers, cameras, audio recorders, turntables, serato mixer, D-Fuser video mixer. Software: VDMX, Ableton, Audiovisual Sampler, Quartz Composer, Mpeg Streamclip, Premiere, After Effects. Audio-visual archival material, animations by Noriko Okaku.



HARUN FAROCKI

08 In-Formation

video, format DV, b/w and color, 16 min., (loop), 2005

The diagrams used, visualize consumer-shopping baskets, the pensions deficit or migration are anachronistic. They hark back to modernist nineteenth century political allegories. In *Aufstellung [In-Formation]*, Farocki shows a collage of statistics, pictograms, bar graphs and pie charts that provide a highly schematic account of migration in the Federal Republic of Germany. Whether pictographs or simple bar or pie charts, their abstractions displays an impotence that is touching. The examples of diagrams gleaned from newspapers, school textbooks and official publications are used to reconstruct the history of migration in the Federal Republic of Germany.

What is sought after is a conceptual critique of the ways in which migration is presented, pursuing the icons and symbols back to their origins and examining them with regard to content they themselves are unaware of. Through his ingenious editing of this material, Farocki undertakes a critique that demonstrates the touching incapacity of abstraction.

Original title: Aufstellung
 Director, scriptwriter: Harun Farocki
 Idea, researcher: Antje Ehmann
 Researcher: Matthias Rajmann
 With support from TRANSIT MIGRATION, Kulturstiftung des Bundes Production, Harun Farocki Filmproduktion, Berlin

FOUNDLAND

09 Friday Table

Installation table, 4m x 1m with projection, 2013-14

In *Friday Table*, a Syrian family's dinner table is restaged and mapped out on its surface is a family migration story, showing how most of the members have moved from their country over time. The work reveals fragments of family memory set in a ravaged country where millions of people are displaced. The schematic diagram on the table cloth, mapping their displacement, is overlaid with a series of family photos, heightening the awareness of the intimate dinner environment and emphasizing the impossibility to relive what was once a weekly family gathering. The edition of *Friday Table* developed for this exhibition has been updated with information relevant for 2016.

10 Ground Plan Drawings

series of drawings, 21cm x 29,7cm, 2014

Ground Plan Drawings is a collection of sketches gathered from a group of Syrians in exile who were forced to leave their homes because of the Syrian conflict. Many no longer have visuals or evidence of the places they may have once owned, but were forced to leave behind. By asking them to re-trace the living structure of the home, their sketches show the permanence, ritual and structure embedded within that space. The drawings form a collection of fragmented memories of the sanctuary that was once a home to these people. Some of these properties have been destroyed and others are currently occupied by military and rebel forces.



MARYAM MONALISA GHARAVI

11 Dictionary of Military Terms

Three-channel video, color, 5:56 min., 2014

The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms is a compendium of terminology used by the United States Department of Defense. The artist's *Dictionary of Military Terms* visualizes this text as an abecedaire of empire. Words with both mundane and military functions are extracted, arranged, and voiced alongside stock footage illustrations. They are accompanied by the artist's chronology of modern U.S. armed aviation, from the B-52 bomber to the modern drone.

12 Apparent Horizon II

text, drawing, 14.8cm x 18.7cm, 2016

In *Apparent Horizon II*, entries from the U.S. Department of Defense's Dictionary of Military Terms (which houses terms and definitions approved for use) are recomposed and rearranged as graphic poems, whereby modern military aircrafts overlay and invade the page.





DANIELA ORTIZ

13 Condecoración

Video, 1 channel, color, 3:52 min., marble powder sculpture and 4 color prints 330cm x 483cm, 2016

Eurowhite societies, their media and their political representatives constantly make migrant people their focus of attention when describing, analyzing and debating the situation of the internal and external borders of the European Union. The hyper-visibility of the migrant population achieves to maintain the invisibility of the migratory control system and its mechanisms of persecution, detention and deportation, as well as the people who are responsible for it.

The project *Condecoración* proposes to give visibility to those subjects responsible for the migratory control system through a series of violent actions inflicted on their images. A bust representing Fabrice Leggeri, the current Executive Director of the migratory control agency FRONTEX, is attacked.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, born in Amman, is an artist based in Beirut, Lebanon. His work frequently deals with the relationship between listening and politics, borders, human rights, testimony and truth, through the production of documentaries, essays, audio-visual installations, video works, graphic design, sculpture, photography, workshops and performance.

Angela Anderson is an artist and filmmaker from the US who has lived in Berlin for a long time, working on research-based audio-visual projects at the intersection of the fields of ecology, economics, migration, media and feminist and queer theory.

Kaya Behkalam and Azin Feizabadi, respectively born in Berlin and in Tehran, are Berlin-based artists and filmmakers, who besides their own individual practices often work together, producing films, stories and environments that deal with migration and translation, poetry and projection, dreams and dark matter.

Banu Cennetoğlu, born in Ankara, is an artist who lives and works in Istanbul. Through her works, the artist explores the materiality and the potential of photography, installation and printed media. Her research focuses on areas of socio-political uncertainty and the documentation of such uncertainty.

Libia Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson, respectively from Spain and Iceland, are an artist duo based in Rotterdam and Berlin. The guiding principle of their work is an ongoing investigation of injustice and inequalities, portraying the oppressed as well as the authoritative subject and the emancipating one.

Violence is also inflicted upon the images of Ilkka Laitinen - Executive Director of FRONTEX until 2015, Gil Arias - first Deputy Executive Director and Berndt Körner - current Deputy Executive Director of the agency.

The project includes a poster depicting various people from four fundamental and intertwining scopes of the migratory control system: The Political, with representatives of the European Commission and Council, as well as Member States; The Economic, with subjects from diverse private companies and lobbies that create profit in the security and defense industry through border control; The Persecutory, related to agencies of control such as FRONTEX, EUROPOL and the police of each Member State, and finally the Industry of Human Rights, which includes people from agencies such as the UNHCR, Amnesty International, Red Cross and Caritas who collaborate on legalizing and normalizing the use of violence in the migratory control system.

European Souvenirs is a collective of new media artists based in different European countries: the Netherlands, Poland, the UK and Spain. Their works combine different cultural expressions as well as disciplines - music, animation, video art, dramaturgy, photography and film. Through remixing of media as a method, they aim to review, reinvestigate and reconsider prevailing imagery of migrants in European societies.

Harun Farocki, born in the Czech Republic, was a filmmaker, author, and lecturer in film. His films often took the form of non-narrative essays on the politics of imagery. As a teacher, Farocki had a significant cinematic and intellectual influence on the development of the acclaimed 'Berlin School' film movement.

Foundland is an art, design and research collective, initiated in 2009 by Lauren Alexander and Ghalia Elsrakbi, respectively from South Africa and Syria, and based between Cairo and Amsterdam. Their work analyzes, translates, contextualizes and intervenes with urgent, complex social and political systems and personal histories of migration.

Maryam Monalisa Gharavi, originally from Iran, is an Iranian-American artist, writer, and theorist living between different cities in the US. Her work explores the interplay between aesthetic and political valences in the public domain, surveillance, security and empire.

Daniela Ortiz was born in Peru but has been living and working in Barcelona since 2007. Her work focuses on analyzing the concepts of nationality, racialization, social class and gender. Her recent investigations revolve around coloniality, whiteness and eurocentrism.

EVENTS PROGRAMME

Friday April 29th

17:00

Opening with an introduction on the exhibition and a performance by European Souvenirs at Framed Framed. The opening event is a collaboration with Ongekend Bijzonder and Beeld voor Beeld and includes the Dutch premiere of the film *Trapped by law* (2015) by Sami Mustafa programmed by Beeld voor Beeld, at de Tuinhuis.

Saturday April 30th

14:00 - 23:00

Film portraits of refugees by Beeld voor Beeld festival:

www.dithadookmijkunnenoverkomen.nl

Tuesday May 3rd

17:00 - 19:00

Ongekend Bijzonder invites Thomas Spijkerboer (Professor Migration Law), Inesa Jasarevic (fieldworker Ongekend Bijzonder) and Annemarie de Wildt (Amsterdam Museum) to reflect on the exhibition from the perspective of migration law, personal migration narratives and curatorial practice.

Tuesday May 17th

19:00 - 21:30

Part of the *Voices Outside the Echo Chamber* dialogue series curated by Katayoun Arian

Talk on the European Migratory Control System, the German culture of deportation and the media schizophrenia surrounding Angela Merkel's "refugees welcome" while the war on refugees and migrants is going on as usual.

Invited speakers: Artist and activist Daniela Ortiz (Barcelona) and researcher and activist Aino Korvensyrjä (Berlin). Both speakers approach their research and activism through a decolonial perspective.

COLOPHON

Exhibition curated by Katayoun Arian

Open
April 29th - June 3rd
Tuesday - Sunday
14:00 - 22:00

Location
Framed Framed
in de Tolhuistuin
IJpromenade 2
1031 KT Amsterdam
www.framerframed.nl

Tuesday May 24th

19:00 - 21:30

Part of the *Voices Outside the Echo Chamber* dialogue series curated by Katayoun Arian

Dialogue with artists, collectives and individuals whose works deal with rethinking representations related to the subject of migration. This event also aims to discuss the confrontation and violence of forging an aesthetic language from subjects such as refugees, migration and displacement, keeping in mind art's own performance of the violence of modern thought. What are the possibility for different and layered forms of (self)-representation, beyond tired approaches, images, forms and terms? More information on invited guests and speakers to follow.

Tuesday May 31st

19:00 - 21:30

Part of the *Voices Outside the Echo Chamber* dialogue series curated by Katayoun Arian

Event on the human rights discourse, good intentions and the continuity of the coloniality through discursive frameworks and laws created to sustain in a legal way the persecution, detention and deportation of migrant people. More information on invited guests and speakers to follow.

Friday June 3rd

17:00

Finissage of the exhibition.
Music by *Discourse*.

Radio shows in collaboration with *Ja Ja Ja Nee Nee Nee*, online radio platform dedicated to the arts. Dates to be announced.

For more information see:
www.framerframed.nl

Route

Framed Framed can be reached from Amsterdam Central Station with the free ferry to 'Buiksloterweg', by car from the A10 road by taking exit S116. The entrance to Framed Framed is through the Tolhuistuin restaurant.

Sponsors

This Framed Framed exhibition and public program are supported by the Mondriaan Fund, Ongekend Bijzonder and Tolhuistuin.

Design

Foundland and Hanna Rullmann

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