

True Stories/ Scripted Realities

24 November 2012 3 March 2013

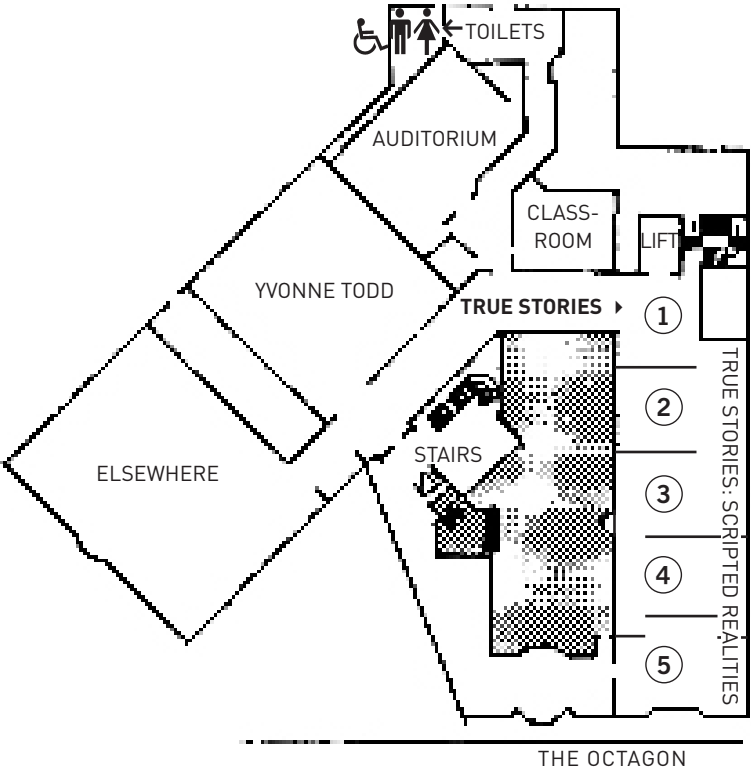
Mercedes Vicente

Curator Contemporary Art, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery



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True Stories: Scripted Realities
is toured by
Govett Brewster Art Gallery

New York based, German born Andrea Geyer (Freiburg, 1971) uses both fiction and documentary strategies in her image and text based works. Her work has been shown at RedCat/Los Angeles, Vera List Centre for Arts and Politics/The New School, The Whitney Museum of American Art, TATE Modern, Serpentine Gallery, Generali Foundation, Secession Vienna, Smart Space Project Amsterdam, the Turin Biennale and documenta12, among others. Geyer studied at the Whitney Independent Study Program and the Academy of Fine Arts in Baynschweig, Germany and has a degree in Photography/Film Design from Facchochschule Bielefeld. She is an Assistant Professor in Fine Arts at Parsons The New School for Design in New York.

performer: Wu Ingrid Tsang

director of photography: Ashley Hunt

assistant director of photography: Harold Batista

production assistants: Feliz Solomon and Harold Batista

assistant editor: Michael De Angelis

sound editor: Lidia Tamplenizza

sound mixer: Alexa Zimmerman

performance support: Justin Perkins

crew: Jane Anderson, Lily Benson, Cynthia Chris, Cassandra Xin Guan

location: Industry City, Sunset Park, Brooklyn

research: The Jewish Museum, New York, www.nizkor.org

① Liam Gillick and Anton Vidokle

A Guiding Light 2010

Single channel video, sound, 21 minutes

Courtesy the artists

In *A Guiding Light*, Liam Gillick and Anton Vidokle gather eight artists, two curators and a critic at a New York television studio. Combining a curatorial text by Gao Shiming, the Artistic Director of the 2010 Shanghai Biennial, with a structural analysis of a 1952 episode of the popular American television soap opera *Guiding Light*, the artists then stage a production where the ‘actors’ discuss the role of the artist as an individual and a member of the public.

Rehearsal, the theme title of the 2010 Shanghai Biennial, makes an analogy between the exhibition and theatre by which then everything leading up to the exhibition is a rehearsal. Gillick and Vidokle take Shiming’s artistic curatorial statement as the script of *A Guiding Light* and invite visual artists Boško Blagojevi, Noah Brehmer, Nadja Frank, Shuddhabrata Sengupta, and Danna Vajda, critic Tim Griffin and curators Anna Colin and Shama Khanna to consider Shiming’s curatorial premise. The scene is minimal: a film set with ‘actors’ cast from real artists, critic, curators and art dealers discussing the role of artists, filmed in real time and without any form of prompting. Staged as a film production that shifts between analysis and self-critique, the film that results preserves the soap opera’s signature stage-blocking and cuts, while highlights the performative role and dialogic critical processes of contemporary curatorial practice.

London and New York based Liam Gillick (UK, 1964) has had solo exhibitions at Whitechapel Gallery, Palais de Tokyo, Witte de With, Kunsthalle Zurich and the MCA, Chicago. He was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2002 and the Vincent Award at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam in 2008 and represented Germany in the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009. Public commissions and projects include the Home Office in London (2005) and the Dynamica Building in Guadalajara, Mexico (2009). Gillick has published a number of texts that function in parallel to his artwork such as *Proxemics. Selected writing 1988-2006*, published alongside the monograph *Factories in the Snow* by Lilian Haberer (JRP-Ringier, 2007); the

critical reader *Meaning Liam Gillick* (MIT Press, 2009) and the anthology of his artistic writings *Allbooks* (Book Works, London, 2009). In addition he has contributed to many art magazines and journals including *Parkett*, *Frieze*, *Art Monthly*, *October* and *Art Forum*.

Moscow born, New York based Anton Vidokle's (Russia, 1965) work has been exhibited widely in venues and institutions such as the Venice Biennale, Lyon Biennial, and at Tate Modern, London; Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana; Musée d'art Modern de la Ville de Paris; Museo Carrillo Gil, Mexico City; UCLA Hammer, LA; Haus Der Kunst, Munich; and P.S.1, New York. As founding director of e-flux, he has produced projects such as *Next Documenta Should Be Curated By An Artist*, *Do it*, *Utopia Station* poster project and organised *An Image Bank for Everyday Revolutionary Life* and *Martha Rosler Library*. With Julieta Aranda, he organised e-flux video rental, which traveled worldwide. As co-curator for Manifesta 6, Vidokle initiated research into education as site for artistic practice and when this was canceled, he set up the independent project *unitednationsplaza* in Berlin.

Pompidou in Paris, ZKM Museum of Contemporary Art in Karlsruhe, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Hammer Museum at UCLA and the Hayward Gallery in London as well as in the Berlin Biennale and the Whitney Biennial. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Guggenheim Museum of Art, Hamburger Bahnhof, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Hirshhorn Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, Vienna.

③ **Andrea Geyer** ***Criminal Case 40/61: Reverb* 2009**

6 channel video installation

HD video, sound, 6 stools, 52 minutes

Courtesy the artist

Criminal Case 40/61: Reverb 2009 is based on edited transcripts of the 1961 trial of Nazi Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem and the writings of German-American political philosopher Hannah Arendt. Geyer's staged trial is built around six characters – Accused, Defense, Judge, Prosecution, Reporter, Audience – who are all portrayed by the same performer. Six screens, one for each character, surround the viewers, immersing them in the epicenter of the scene.

Geyer is not invested in unveiling new evidence or in taking a definite political stance with respect to the wartime atrocities. She seems to speak from a moral position, that of condemning all violations of human rights, with the Holocaust as a point of departure. As viewers we can defer judgment and go deeper into that Holocaust history or we can meditate on recent times – Abu Ghraib, Bosnia during the 1990s, the Congo or Darfur, among others – and on the philosophical questions of truth and justice “as they travel across time within an individual and become history”.

②

Omer Fast

The Casting 2007

4 channel video projection

35mm transferred to video, colour, sound, 14 minutes

Courtesy the artist and Arratia, Beer Gallery, Berlin

The Casting is built from an edited conversation between Omer Fast and a young American soldier who served in Iraq and interweaves two different stories into one. The first story is about the soldier's date with a German girl who has a self-mutilation disorder. The second story takes place outside Baghdad where the soldier is involved in a traumatic accident killing an Iraqi civilian. Presented as a double projection onto two parallel screens suspended from the ceiling, the front projection features the fictionalised, staged account of these two stories, reenacted by actors in a series of silent tableaux. The other side features plain headshots of Fast and the soldier during the process of the real interviews. The dissected footage and jump cuts of the original interviews, necessary in order to thread the two stories together, expose the montage or apparatus of its making.

Fast intercepts the linearity of the two separate stories, blurred into one another. This disruptive strategy casts a doubt on the truthfulness of the story and prompts the viewer to stay alert. Fast is a master at revealing the pitfalls of the 'true' interview, the apparatus of broadcast and the power of media and montage to seamlessly alter a story. As the artist spells out to his interviewee, "I am not interested in providing a political angle. I am interested in the way experiences turn into memories, which in turn become stories and how these ultimately are recorded, mediated and broadcasted".

Israeli born, Berlin based Omer Fast (Jerusalem, 1972) is a contemporary video artist. He received his BA from Tufts University in 1995 and his MFA from Hunter College in 2000. He was the recipient of the Pries der Nationalgalerie fur Junge Kunst, Berlin and the Bucksbaum Award from the Whitney Museum of American Art. Fast has had solo exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Berkeley Art Museum, Museum of Modern Art in Vienna, Carnegie Museum, Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich and the Frankfurter Kunstverein. His work also featured in group exhibitions at Hamburger Bahnhof, Centre

④

Kerry Tribe

There Will Be ____ 2012

Single channel video, sound, 32 minutes

Courtesy the artist and 1301PE Gallery, Los Angeles

There Will Be ____ reenacts the different possible scenarios around the unresolved murder/suicide of Ned Doheny and his secretary and lover, Hugh Plunkett that happened at Greystone Mansion in Beverly Hills, California, in 1929. The infamous murder/suicide was associated with Ned's father Edward Laurence Doheny Sr.'s involvement in the Teapot Dome scandal to which the two young men had been called to testify. Their deaths insured that they would never take the stand and the trial against Doheny Sr. was subsequently called off.

There Will Be ____ was shot on location at Greystone Mansion. Built in 1928 as a gift from Doheny Sr. to his son and the most expensive residential home in California at the time, Greystone Mansion was sold in 1955 and became a popular film location. Tribe builds the script of *There Will Be* ____ word by word taken from the scripts of dozens of the films shot in this iconic location. Using fictional cinematic sources as the underlying support for the restaging of historic events, this work addresses the limits of representation and the accuracy of historical memory. As the film unfolds, gaps emerge in the 'composite' narrative where the source material is unable to produce the necessary dialogue or action, or the filmic referent is so strongly evoked that it interrupts the primary storyline.

Los Angeles based Kerry Tribe (US 1973) has had solo exhibitions at the Camden Arts Centre, London; Arnolfini, Bristol; Modern Art, Oxford and the Power Plant, Toronto. Her work has also been exhibited at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; the Generali Foundation, Vienna; Kunst Werke, Berlin and SMAK, Gent. Her work is in the public collections of important institutions such as The Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum, Hammer Museum, The Orange County Museum of Art and Generali Foundation among others. A fellow at the American Academy in Berlin (2005-2006) and the Whitney Independent Study Program (1997-98), Tribe received her MFA from UCLA in 2002 and a BA in Art and Semiotics from Brown University in 1997. Tribe is represented by 1301PE Gallery in Los Angeles, where she currently lives and works.

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Yael Bartana

...And Europe will be Stunned 2007–2011

3 part single channel videos

Part 1

Mary Koszmary (Nightmare) 2007

Super 16mm film transferred to Blu-ray, sound, 10 minutes

Courtesy the artist and Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

and Foksal Gallery Foundation, Warsaw

Part 2

Mur i wieża (Wall and Tower) 2009

RED transferred to HD, sound, 15 minutes

Courtesy the artist and Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

and Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

Part 3

Zamach (Assassination) 2011

RED transferred to HD, sound, 35 minutes

Courtesy the artist and Annet Gelink Gallery, Amsterdam

and Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv

The three films comprising *...And Europe will be Stunned* revolve around the activities of the quasi-fictional Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland (JRMiP), a political group that calls for the return of three millions Jews to the land of their forefathers in Poland. Bartana follows the evolution of JRMiP in Poland from a rally, through the construction of a kibbutz and the death of and memorial service for its leader. Apart from the films, the artist has established the JRMiP as a new political movement. The work examines notions of cultural identity, the histories of competing nationalisms and militarisms, statehood, the Israeli settlement movement, Zionism, anti-Semitism, the Holocaust and the Palestinian right to return.

The first film *Mary Koszmary (Nightmare)* revolves around a young activist, played by Sławomir Sierakowski (founder and chief editor of *Krytyka Polityczna* magazine). Sierakowski delivers a speech in the form

of a manifesto in the abandoned National Stadium in Warsaw in which he urges the three million Jews to come back to Poland. Filmed in the style of propaganda films, the work addresses the contemporary anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Poland, the longing for the Jewish past among liberal Polish intellectuals and the Zionist dream of the return of Israel.

The second film *Mur i wieża (Wall and Tower)* revolves around the building of a new kibbutz, in the 1930s architectural style, in the Warsaw central district of Muranów. The district had been the Jewish residential area before the war, and then a part of Warsaw Ghetto. The film invokes previous heroic images of strong and beautiful men and women who mythically established Israel. They are depicted as determined pioneers who, despite the most unfavorable conditions, built houses, cultivated the land, studied, brought up children collectively and trained to fight off potential enemy attacks.

In the last film *Zamach (Assassination)*, which premiered at the Polish Pavillion for the 54th Venice Biennale, Bartana brings the dream about a multinational community and a brand new Polish society to the ultimate test. The film revolves around the funeral ceremony of the Jewish Renaissance Movement's leader in Poland, who had been killed by an unidentified assassin. His death strengthens the new political movement – a movement, which according to the artist, “can become a concrete project to be implemented in Poland, Europe, or the Middle East in the days to come”.

The artistic practice of Israeli born Berlin based Yael Bartana (Afula, 1970) includes film, photography, video and sound installation that deal with the impact of war, military rituals and a sense of threat on everyday life. She has had numerous solo exhibitions at noted institutions such as PS1, New York; Moderna Museet, Malmö; Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv; Kunstverein, Hamburg; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven and Fredericianum, Kassel. She has also participated in international group exhibitions at biennials such as Manifesta 4, Frankfurt (2002); 27th São Paulo Biennial (2010 and 2006) and documenta 12 in Kassel (2007). Bartana is a winner of numerous prizes and awards including Artes Mundi 4, Anselm Kiefer Prize, Prix Dazibao, Prix de Rome and the Nathan Gottesdiener Foundation Israeli Art Prize. She represented Poland in the 54th International Art Exhibition in Venice (2011).