

secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien
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Press release

BOUCHRA KHALILI

April 13–June 17, 2018

Press conference: Thursday, April 12, 2018, 11 a.m.

Opening: Thursday, April 12, 2018, 7 p.m

“Europe is incapable of solving the two major problems to which its existence has given rise: the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem. So unless Europe undertakes on its own initiative a new policy founded on respect for peoples and cultures, Europe will have deprived itself of its last chance with its own hands drawn up over itself to lift the pall of mortal darkness.”

Aimé Césaire, “Discourse on Colonialism” (1950),

as cited in Bouchra Khalili’s *The Speeches Series*, Chapter 1: *Mother Tongue*

Bouchra Khalili’s first solo exhibition in Austria showcases the Moroccan-French artist’s video trilogy *The Speeches Series* (2012–13), a selection from the mixed media installation *Foreign Office* (2015), and *The Tempest Society* (2017), a 60 minutes film premiered at documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel. The history of international solidarity forms the narrative theme running through the exhibition, with a particular emphasis on anti-colonialism and international revolutionary liberation movements that sought to strengthen socially marginalized groups and bring about their emancipation.

Foreign Office focuses on the decade that followed Algeria’s independence and Algiers, between 1962 and 1972, became a “mecca for revolutionaries”, hosting representations of numerous international liberation movements such as The Black Panther Party, Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress ANC, the Palestinian National Liberation Movement and People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola. While, by means of its protagonists, two young Algerians exploring this largely forgotten history, and cinematic montage the video offers a new perspective to the history of internationalism, the silkscreen print *The Archipelago* draws an abstract map of Algiers based upon the geographical dissemination of liberation movements headquarters throughout the city. These (historical) locations are also subject to the series of photographs that Bouchra Khalili took in 2015. The triptych shown at the Secession draws attention to the Algerian poet, playwright, and novelist Kateb Yacine (1929–1989) mirroring the third chapter of the film that meditates on the role of poetry and language in the transmission of history.

The video trilogy *The Speeches Series* is presented on monitors, and spread between different rooms, these videos play a kind of connective role. Each of its three “chapters” is composed of five speeches

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performed by five protagonists at times in their mother tongue, all recited from memory. The speeches in the first video, *Mother Tongue*, are excerpts from political or poetic texts chosen by the protagonists and deal with language and resistance; the second video *Words on Streets* focuses on the question of citizenship in today's globalised world, and the final chapter, *Living Labour*, looks at the conditions of undocumented workers in the US reflecting on the articulation between language, citizenship, and class-belonging.

The Tempest Society is neither documentary nor fiction, but a *hypothesis*. Nowadays in Athens, three individuals from different backgrounds form a theatre group. Together with their audience they seek to examine the current state of Greece, Europe, and the Mediterranean on stage, which is defined as a civic space. Paying homage to *Al Assifa* ('The Tempest' in Arabic), a legendary Parisian theatre group composed of North-African immigrant workers and French students, who in the 1970s addressed the daily struggle against inequality and racism in France through the format of the "theatrical newspaper", they name themselves *The Tempest Society*. On a stage in contemporary Athens, members of *The Tempest Society* and their guests – Ghani, a member and a spokesperson of 300 immigrant workers on hunger strike; Katerina, born in Greece but undocumented, and Malek, a young Syrian refugee – call together for equality, civic belonging, and solidarity.

In total, the exhibition presents around 2 ½ hours of filmic work.

Bouchra Khalili, who is on this year's shortlists for two internationally renowned awards—the Hugo Boss Prize and the Artes Mundi Award—has devised a lucid and formally precise visual idiom in videos and photographs that break new ethical as well as aesthetic ground at the forefront of contemporary documentary practice. With her works that effectively form visual essays, the artist weaves a kind of "alternative history." Challenging our collective historiography, she outlines a history of the individual as narrated by its protagonists, who are members of social minorities. With these stories, which are told from generally neglected perspectives and challenge hegemonic narratives, Khalili prompts a discussion of the articulations between colonial, postcolonial history, and the current debates on global migrations.

We are especially pleased to announce the **Austrian premiere of *Twenty-Two Hours*** (2018), Bouchra Khalili's new film, which she realised during her recent fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute at Harvard University, Boston, Mass.

It takes Jean Genet's visit to the United States in early 1970 as a starting point. Responding to the call for solidarity extended by The International Section of the Black Panther Party, the French novelist, playwright and poet Genet travelled secretly to the U.S, and spent two months among Black Panthers supporting their struggle for collective emancipation and equality.

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In the film, two young African-American women now investigate Genet's commitment to the Black Panther Party and ask themselves what the position of Genet's was in regard to the BPP? Was he a sympathizer? An ally? Or a witness?

Bouchra Khalili was born in Casablanca, Morocco, in 1975, and lives and works in Berlin. She is a Professor of Contemporary Art at Oslo National Art Academy.
www.bouchrakhalili.com

The exhibition program is conceived by the board of the Secession.
Curator: Jeanette Pacher

Curators' guided tour

Thursday, April 19, 5 p.m.

Guided tour through the exhibitions by Bouchra Khalili and Elaine Reichek with curators Jeanette Pacher and Bettina Spörr

Film screening and talk

Bouchra Khalili, *Twenty-Two Hours* (2018)

Sunday, June 17, 12 noon

Matinee at Stadtkino Wien followed by a conversation with the artist and curator and writer Rike Frank. Organised with the Friends of the Secession.

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Press images

Installation views are available for download:

www.secession.at/en/presstype/aktuell

www.secession.at/en/presstype/preview/

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Wiener Secession, Association of Visual Artists

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Tuesday – Sunday 10 am – 6 pm

Permanent presentation: Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

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Biography Bouchra Khalili

Bouchra Khalili was born in Casablanca, Morocco, in 1975, and lives and works in Berlin. She is a Professor of Contemporary Art at Oslo National Art Academy.

Selected Awards / Commissions / Residencies (since 2012)

2018: Nominated for the Hugo Boss Prize, Guggenheim Museum, New York
2018: Nominated for the Artes Mundi Prize 8
2018: Sea as Sky, commissioned work by MoMA, for The New York Times
2017-2018: Radcliffe Institute Fellowship, Harvard University
2017: Ibsen Award, Ibsen National Theater, Skien, Norway
2017: *The Tempest Society*. Commissioned for documenta 14, Athens / Kassel
2014: Abraaj Group Art Prize 2014
2013–2015: Sam Art Prize, Sam Art Projects Foundation, Paris
2013: *Living Labour*, commissioned piece by PAMM, Miami
2011–2013: Vera List Center for Arts and Politics Fellowship, The New School, New York
2012: DAAD-Artist in Berlin

Selected Solo Exhibitions (since 2012)

2017: *Living Labour*. Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio
2017: CAAC, Sevilla
2017: Bouchra Khalili, Lisson Gallery, London
2016: *The Mapping Journey Project*, MoMA – Museum of Modern Art, New York
2016: *The Opposite of Voice-Over*, Färgfabriken Konsthall, Stockholm
2015: *Foreign Office*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris
2015: *Garden Conversation*, MACBA, Barcelona
2014: Bouchra Khalili, mit Galerie Polaris, Art Dubai
2014: *The Player*, Frac Poitou-Charentes, France
2013-2014: *Speeches – Chapter 3: Living Labour*, PAMM, Miami
2013: *The Opposite of the Voice-Over*, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto
2013: *Wet Feet and More*, DAAD Galerie, Berlin
2013: *The Seaman*, Freedman Gallery, Albright College, USA
2012: *Wet Feet*, Tarragona Art Center, Spain
2012: *Short Films by Bouchra Khalili*, Deutsche Kinemathek, Berlin
2012: *Bouchra Khalili at The Wapping Project*, Wapping Project, London
2012: *Wet Feet and More*, Galerie Polaris, Paris

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Selected Group Exhibitions (since 2012)

2018: Asian Biennale, Taipei National Museum

2018: Outposts, The Glucksman Gallery, Cork

2017: documenta 14, Athens / Kassel

2017: La Terra Inquieta: Triennale di Milano, Palazzo Triennale

2017: Holland Festival, International Performing Art Festival, Amsterdam

2016: 6th Marrakesch Biennial, Morocco

2016: Telling Tales, MCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

2015: 8th Göteborg Biennial: *A Story Within A Story*, Sweden

2015: *Europa: Die Zukunft der Geschichte*, Kunsthaus, Zurich

2015: *Common Grounds*, Museum Villa Stuck, Munich

2015: *A Republic of Art*, Vanabbe Museum, Eindhoven

2015: *En y entre geografías*, MAMM – Medellin Museum of Modern Art

2015: *Memorias Iborrables*, MARCO, Museo de Arte Contemporanea de Vigo, Spain

2014: *Here & Elsewhere*, The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York

2014: *Positions*, Vanabbe Museum, Eindhoven

2014: *Giving Contours to Shadows*, NBK, Berlin

2014: *Journal*, ICA – Institute for Contemporary Art, London

2013: *The Encyclopedic Palace*, 55th Venice Biennial

2013: *Mehr Licht*, 5. Moscow Biennial

2013: *Cross-Borders*, ZKM, Karlsruhe

2013: *Mirages d'Orient*, Yvon Lambert Collection, Avignon

2012: *Intense Proximity*, La Triennale. Palais de Tokyo, Paris

2012: 18th Sydney Biennial, *All our relations*. Sydney

2012: *Wide Open School*, Hayward Gallery, London

2012: *You have been there*, Marian Goodman Gallery, New York

2012: *Becoming voice*, South London Gallery, London

2012: *Drift – an exploration of urban & suburban landscapes*, Sharjah Art Museum, UAE

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List of works Bouchra Khalili

Room 1

Foreign Office, 2015

Mixed media project comprising a film, 15 photographs, and a silkscreen print

Foreign Office

Digital film, sound, 25'

The Archipelago

Silkscreen print on Rivoli Paper 300g, mounted on aluminium, framed
70 x 50 cm

Centre Familial de Ben Aknoun, Ben Aknoun Area. Location of Kateb Yacine's house.

Fig. 1/3: *Théâtre de Verdure*

C-Print, 100 x 120 cm

Fig. 2/3: *Cyclamen africanum (African Cyclamen)*

Flower that Yateb Yacine used to offer to women

C-Print, 51 x 63 cm

Fig. 3/3: *Playing Field*

C-Print, 77 x 95 cm

On monitors

The Speeches Series, 2012-13

Video trilogy

Speeches – Chapter 1: Mother Tongue, 2012

Digital film, sound, 23'

Speeches – Chapter 2: Words on Streets, 2013

Digital film, sound, 18'

Speeches – Chapter 3: Living Labour, 2013

Digital film, sound, 25'

Room 2

The Tempest Society, 2017

Digital film, sound, 60'

All: Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Polaris, Paris

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