

# secession

Vereinigung bildender KünstlerInnen Wiener Secession  
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Wien  
T. +43-1-587 53 07, F. +43-1-587 53 07-34  
office@secession.at, www.secession.at

## Press release

### HEIDRUN HOLZFEIND

#### *the time is now.*

February 1 – March 31, 2019

Press conference: Thursday, January 31, 2019, 11 a.m.

Opening: Thursday, January 31, 2019, 7 p.m.

Over many years, Heidrun Holzfeind has created an oeuvre in film, photography, and sculpture that has insistently addressed questions of the documentary mode in general, and the social function of architecture and alternative ways of life that renounce consumerism in particular. Based on extensive research and realized with poetic flair, her works probe the interrelations between society and identity, between individual histories and the political narratives of the present.

For her exhibition *the time is now*, Holzfeind has developed a new video installation composed of two films about the Japanese shamanic improvisation duo IRO. The couple Shizuko and Toshio Orimo have worked together since 1981. Their music, their activism in the peace and anti-nuclear movement, and their free-spirited way of life reflect an animist and pantheistic worldview that rejects commercialism in all its forms.

The first film shows performances of the duo in various locations in the Inter-University Seminar House in Hachioji, Tokyo. The unique modernist complex—whose main building has the shape of a pyramid turned upside down—was designed in 1964 by the Japanese architect and thinker Takamasa Yosizaka (1917–1980). Yosizaka's ideas about the relationship between humans, nature and architecture, individuality and community, sustainability and peace, as well as his critique of Western civilization in many respects concur with the musicians' worldview. Holzfeind stages Yosizaka's extraordinary architecture as a set for IRO's performances, which combine improvisation on Noh and stone flutes, fan drum, and kagura bells with their unique punk kagura version of ancient Shinto rituals, indigenous ceremonies, and Korean mask theater.

In steady takes and rhythmic cuts, Holzfeind's film plays with the contrasts and interactions between the brutalist architecture, the surrounding nature, and the musicians' performance and instruments. IRO's invocation of traditions that interpret artistic performance as a kind of magic is mirrored by Holzfeind's use of color filters and subtle color shifts that suggest a crossover into other realities. Like the recurring motif of the eye, the tinted shots refer to the film *Phantom* by Japanese experimental filmmaker Toshio Matsumoto (1932–2017). The soundtrack interweaves the instrumental sounds with Shizuko's chants and the sounds of nature and civilization. At times, it feels like the cicadas and crickets are in dialogue with IRO's instruments.

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The film's second part takes the viewer inside the Central Seminar Hall, where Shizuko and Toshio perform an improvisation for piano and contrabass with free-form vocals based on their "anima animus" and "Maburi Henoko" motifs. "Maburi Henoko" is a "kotodama" or "word-spirit" coined by the Orimos that plays on the animist concept of "maburi" (a word originating in the Amami Islands that means "soul" or "spirit") and emblemizes their call for an end to the destruction of human and natural habitats caused by the construction of a US air base in Okinawa's Henoko Bay. Holzfeind juxtaposes the concert with found footage of the "Izaiho" women's ritual in Okinawa, protest movements in Tokyo and Okinawa between the 1970s and the present, and a video recording of a concert by IRO in 1987. It was their last performance as the punk-rock duo IRO and marks a radical change in their musical practice: shaken by the Chernobyl disaster, they decided to exclude electronic sounds from their performances altogether, using only acoustic instruments and focusing on indigenous traditions and Shinto rites to make what has been described as "energy-free music." The visual juxtapositions and acoustic superimpositions of the concert recordings from the 1980s and the fall of 2018 yield a synthetic impression of their artistic collaboration and experimentation, which spans more than four decades.

The second film paints a poetic portrait of the couple that offers glimpses into their personal universe: their musical roots in ethnic music, punk, and 1970s free jazz, their philosophical influences and reflections, their sustainable lifestyle, and their political commitments. The film captures the fragility of their relationship and emphasizes how major decisions shaping their lives were time and again bound up with political events. "What we do is ultimately futile. But the reason we continue is not to change the world, but so we won't be changed by the world," they say, paraphrasing Gandhi: "We don't want to be controlled. We want to be free."

It is the characteristic quality of Holzfeind's documentary approach that she leaves a lot of room for her interview partners' personal histories and reflections and empathizes with her protagonists. Her work aims to underscore the interconnection between personal and political narratives. Like Holzfeind's earlier projects, the time is now. examines strategies of resistance and the potential for social change inherent in a day-to-day life devoted to self-development, artistic expression, and collective personal growth.

Released in conjunction with the exhibition, the album *IRO. anima animus* features four pieces recorded at the Seminar House: two improvisations on Noh and stone flutes, frame drum, and kagura bells, a duo for piano and contrabass, and a trio featuring their son Sabu Orimo on the shakuhachi flute. The LP comes with an illustrated booklet with Heidrun Holzfeind's interviews with the musicians as well as the architect Yuko Saito, a former associate at Takamasa Yosizaka's studio (Atelier U), about his work and ideas.

Heidrun Holzfeind was born in Linz in 1972 and lives and works in Umeå, Sweden.

The exhibition program is conceived by the board of the Secession.  
Curator: Annette Südbeck

**A 12" vinyl record with a booklet** is published in conjunction with the exhibition.

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## **IRO**

### ***anima animus***

Side A

*yurari (prayer of summoning) 2'13*

*ryūjin tamafuri (invoking the dragon god) 2'41"*

*anima animus 14'09"*

Side B

*susabu 22'24"*

Shizuko Orimo (double bass, chime, vocals)

Toshio Orimo (frame drum, piano, vocals)

Sabu Orimo (bamboo branch, jinashi shakuhachi, primitive shakuhachi)

## **Booklet**

Details: Softcover with stitch seam, 16 pages

Texts: Conversation between Shizuko and Toshio Orimo, Norie Fukuda and Heidrun Holzfeind, "Noritō prayer" by Shizuko Orimo, Interview with architect Yuko Saito

Master plan: Heidrun Holzfeind

Released and produced by Secession 2019

EUR 19.-

## **Curators' guided tour**

Friday, February 15, 2019, 4 p.m.

Guided tour through the exhibitions by Gerard Byrne, Klara Lidén and Heidrun Holzfeind with Bettina Spörr, Jeanette Pacher and Annette Südbeck.

## **Curators' guided tour – Month of Photography**

Friday, March 29, 2019, 4 p.m.

Curators Bettina Spörr and Annette Südbeck give a tour through the exhibitions by Gerard Byrne and Heidrun Holzfeind in cooperation with Foto Wien Festival – Month of Photography.

## **IRO. *anima animus* – Record Release**

Friday, March 29, 2019, 7 p.m.

Heidrun Holzfeind presents her album produced on the occasion of her exhibition with compositions by IRO as well as other experimental Japanese music.

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**Press images**

Installation views are available for download at [www.secession.at/en/presstype/aktuell](http://www.secession.at/en/presstype/aktuell)

**Press contact**

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**secession**

Vienna Secession, Association of Visual Artists  
Friedrichstraße 12, A-1010 Vienna, Austria  
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office@secession.at, www.secession.at  
Permanent presentation: Gustav Klimt, *Beethoven Frieze*

**Opening hours**

Tuesday to Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

**Permanent Presentation**

Gustav Klimt, *Beethovenfries*

**Admission** Beethovenfries & Contemporary Art Exhibitions

Adults € 9,50

Pupils, students and senior citizens € 6,-

**Guided tours**

Every Saturday at 11 a.m. in English and 2 p.m. in German

€ 3,- per person plus admission (without registration)

**Art Information**

Every Saturday, 1 – 2 p.m. (while exhibitions of contemporary art are on view), free of charge

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