

about translation

Nina Höchtl & Anila Rubiku

From September 14 to November 18, 2011

Opening: Tue, September 13, 7 pm

Opening hours: Tue to Fri, 1 to 6 pm

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dominance is measured by the length of the trousers and the role of the housewife—who hangs the trousers up—is made absurd in order to produce the slogan imperative: love the other. The irritation between subject, object and language also provides the starting point for the work *Ad amo* in which gender frictions are suspended somewhere between the meaning of the Italian translation for “fish hook” and Adam on around 50 hooks. The interpretation bound up in object and text in Rubiku’s work becomes a mirror of the techniques of cultural translation of a present which is characterized by gender and politics.

Karin Pernegger

Anila Rubiku
Love Difference
Steel, 14 cloth
hangers made
of wood
and engraved,
60x250x60 cm, 2011
Photo/Courtesy:
Anila Rubiku

Nina Höchtl
Carlota & Max
en español,
deutsch & english
Videostill
2011



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In cooperation with AIR artist-in-residence Krems

Curated by Karin Pernegger and Dagmar Höss

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The main focus of the works of Austrian artist Nina Höchtl and Albanian artist Anila Rubiku is the diversity of gender roles and identities gauged by their cultural socialization and bonding. Along with a fundamental questioning of feminism, identity, postcolonialism and migration, the praxis of both artists reflects the modes of research, appropriation, and critical analysis of their own artistic authorship. The exhibition *about translation* reflects the cultural processes of translation and their readings. In both cases autobiographical references are excluded though the personal experience horizon does provide the logical starting point. The work process is carried out using interviews and found materials—Höchtl—and by involving a third party as producer and, literally, by ready-mades—Rubiku.

In her three-part video work *Carlota & Max in Español, Deutsch & English*, Nina Höchtl examines a Mexican parody on Austrian history between language, colonialism and power. The raw material is provided by the historical events around the Austrian imperial couple Maximilian und Charlotte (1864–67) who claimed the imperial crown even though Benito Juárez had already been sworn in as Mexican president. Was it the alleged statement of Napoleon III that the Mexicans wanted a Habsburg emperor or pure ignorance coupled with naivety and a will to power that led them to take the step? We do not know. In 1939 the two comedians Mario Moreno (Cantiflas) and Manuel Medel developed a filmic parody of the imperial couple—“El signo de la muerte”. By using a distorted language they exposed the colonial impetus of the

Nina Höchtl
Carlota & Max
en español,
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Digitale Collage
2011



Europeans in a way that is still alarmingly valid. Here Mario Moreno’s trademark comes into its own. Even today the addition to his name is still in use as: “cantiflear”. It means a continuous muddle that inadvertently touches the critical nerve. Höchtl developed an alternative ending to the described plot and re-records both roles. The failure of language and mutual understanding turns the historical parodic subtext into a present-day criticism of a still undefined global world with all its cultural facets.



The provoking question of a mid-nineteenth century slave woman *Ain’t I A Woman* is not only the title of Anila Rubiku’s installation of a hundred embroidered handkerchiefs, but also stands for the biography of one hundred women—such as Simone de Beauvoire, Judy Chicago, Bertha von Suttner or Elfriede Jelinek—who have influenced our society, politics, arts and sciences up to the present day. Rubiku had the individual handkerchiefs embroidered by Albanian women with a request that they concern themselves with the relevant biography. The artist gave them the biographies to read in order to impact with the women’s subconscious and engender a state of self-reflection and inner translation. While exemplary models are used here to stimulate a self-image, elsewhere Rubiku “translates” word games into ready-made sculptures. She exaggerates associative meanings playfully by using a material estrangement—in *Love Different* she shows a mobile clothes rack that has been cut down to knee level and supports (trouser) clothes hangers, each with a letter of the title. Gender roles here take on an ironic charge and the entire functionality of the object is turned upside down. Male

Anila Rubiku
Ain’t I a woman
100 silk sewn
handkerchiefs,
community project,
dimensions
variable, 2010
Photo/Courtesy:
Anila Rubiku

