

[PERSONAL]—geographies—

—ANA HOFFNER—

TRANSFERRED MEMORIES, EMBODIED DOCUMENTS

video installation, colour/sound, 14:35, 2014

Transferred memories, embodied documents focuses on the confrontation with images of atrocities and the affective reaction of the viewer. The work starts with a complex description of the video report on camp Omarska in Bosnia-Herzegovina, made in 1992 by the ITN journalists Penny Marshall and Ian Williams, which grabbed an image from the video footage and made it into an “iconic photograph” from the Bosnian war. The pictures of Fikret Alić and other prisoners behind a fence topped with barbwire became the headline for many newspapers that reported on the Bosnian War, juxtaposed with images of emaciated men behind barbwire made around the end of the Holocaust. Instead of comparing iconographies of horror to each other, is it possible to look closer at the internal psychic mechanism which led to the production of images of atrocities back then and still today?

I watched Bergman’s Persona during the same time period when the images of the camp in Omarska were screened on TV. It was one of my first intense filmic experiences, and in my mind both sets of images became blurred and suggested a continuation of war time. The Swedish drama from 1965 functioned like a filter that enabled me to look at the Bosnian War, which had otherwise appeared inaccessible. I thus placed the war in a temporal setting before it had actually taken place—transferring an actual experience into a cinematic impression of the past. Transferred Memories—Embodied Documents is a sound and video installation in which I experimented with this concept of transference by looking at the stories of Omarska sideways: through the screen of mid-1960s experimental cinema. In the video, a queer relation develops between two performers dealing together with the images of atrocities. The viewer is placed in a position between the two, but is mainly challenged to open his/her own imaginations about the given fragments of speech. They both describe their view of these images and listen to each other’s descriptions of their reactions, thereby gaining recognition of their own affective responses in front of the images. However, their responses do not depend on an identification with the bodies shown in the footage nor on an identification with each other.

*performance by Vivienne Löschner and Ana Hoffner
camera by Judith Benedikt
light by Lenja Gathmann
hair and makeup by Regina Breitfellner
concept, script and postproduction by Ana Hoffner*

Ana Hoffner is engaged in an art practice that excavates moments of crisis and conflict in history and politics. Hoffner’s performances, video and photo installations seek to introduce temporalities, relations and spaces in-between established perspectives and memories of iconic images and highly performative events. Hoffner employs means of appropriation such as restaging photographs, interviews and reports and desynchronization of body and voice, sound and image. She holds a PhD in Practice from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Her* work has been shown in Kunsthalle Vienna, Künstlerhaus Graz, Salzburger Kunstverein, Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen, Museum Moderner Kunst Klagenfurt, Galerie für zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig, Museum of Contemporary Art Banja Luka, Stedelijk Museum s’-Hertogenbosch, City Art Gallery Ljubljana, HDLU Croatian Association of Artists Zagreb, Kunstraum Bethanien Berlin and Belgrade Cultural Center. Hoffner’s films have also been shown at international festivals such as Videoex Festival Zurich, Brussels Womens Film Festival, City of Women Ljubljana and Feminist and Lesbian Film Festival Paris. Lives and works in Vienna.*