

HARET HREIK - MLEETA

(RE)CONSTRUCTED UNCERTAINTIES

An Exhibition by Sandra Schäfer

UMAM's The Hangar presents the first solo exhibition by Sandra Schäfer in Lebanon. Displaying two large scale video-installations, Mleeta (2016) and Constructed Futures: Haret Hreik (2017), the artist returns to the location of her extended research from 2014 to 2016 on questions and intersections of architecture, geopolitical spaces, and propaganda. The video-installations are accompanied by 22 poster-fragments with which the artist appropriates stills from a film by the Waad Project, a massive reconstruction program in Haret Hreik after the war of 2006.

"Constructed Futures: Haret Hreik" (2017)

4-channel video installation | 11', 8', 5', 3', 4K to HD

The Shiite dominated neighborhood Haret Hreik in Beirut houses the headquarters of the Hezbollah Party, invisible to the outside. In 2006, the Israeli Army bombarded the neighborhood, which Hezbollah quickly rebuilt. This rebuilding project is part of a military conflict and a geopolitical network in which architecture takes part in the production of space, landscape, and memory. The video installation shows offices where the reconstruction was planned and designed, one of the rebuilt houses itself, as well as a hall where Hezbollah sympathizers regularly gather to attend video addresses by the party leader Hassan Nasrallah. What does it mean when new buildings are meant to be added without rupture or break into the existing urban structure and into individual memories? How has the interpretation of resistance by Hezbollah become a dominant project that is manifest spatially? What does building mean if it leaves no room for ruins and commemoration, because it thinks in a logic of brief intervals of warlessness?

"Mleeta" (2016)

2-channel video installation | 12', 4K to HD

Mleeta was filmed and staged on location at the Museum of Resistance in Lebanon. During the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon (1982-2000), Mleeta Mountain stood right in the middle of the occupied zone. Thirty-five kilometers from Israel to the south and forty kilometers from Syria to the east, the mountain served as a haven for Hezbollah fighters, making it the site of real battles as well. The summit of Mleeta is now home to the Museum of Resistance, a propagandistic re-enactment that reproduces scenic and military scenarios. Set up in the style of a theme park, visitors assume the role of both observer and performer. An auditorium screens lavishly-produced films that dramatically tell the history of the past battles, while guns and other weapons are integrated into the museum's architecture.

The installation Mleeta explores this theme park's script with its perspectives, stagings, and narratives, focusing on the creation of affective perception. The artist intervenes into the staged setting through staged gestures, artificial audio recordings, and camera framings.

About the Artist

Sandra Schäfer works with film and video installations including stills/photography. Therein she deals with processes of unfolding and the rereading of documents, images, spatial narratives, and performative gestures. Often her works are based on longer researches, in which she is concerned with the margins, gaps, and discontinuities of our perception of history, political struggles, urban, and geopolitical spaces. Her works were exhibited at 66th and 67th Berlinale (Forum Expanded), Berlin; Mumok, Vienna; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Depo, Istanbul; La Virreina, Barcelona; National Gallery of Art, Vilnius; Camera Austria, Graz; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin; Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologien (ZKM), Karlsruhe. Schäfer also is an associated member of the feminist film distributor Cinenova in London. www.mazefilm.de

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