

DOCUMENTS FROM THE EDGES OF CONFLICT

kennardphillipps

George Barber

Alfredo Jaar

Mona Hatoum

Wolfgang Tillmans

Santiago Sierra

Paolo Pellegrin

Sarah Pickering

Catherine Yass

Ori Gersht

Steffi Klenz

David Birkin

George Barber, David Birkin, Mona Hatoum,
Alfredo Jaar, kennardphillipps, Ori Gersht,
MacDonaldStrand, Steffi Klenz, Paolo Pellegrin,
Sarah Pickering, Wolfgang Tillmans,
Santiago Sierra and Catherine Yass

Curated by Jean Wainwright and Steffi Klenz

01 December 2021– 25 February 2022

Finissage 9th February 2022

James Hockey Gallery,
UCA Farnham

MacDonaldStrand

The international group exhibition Documents from the Edges of Conflict presents the work of artists who engage with society's increasing desire to capture and disseminate images of conflict and tension in world events. Their subjects include the impact of political decisions and divisions; newspaper and media reports of traumatic events; contested boundaries and borders such as those between Mexico and the United States or Palestine and Israel, and the influence of aggressive world leaders on our histories and experiences.

The lens-based work of the artists engages us with the various meanings of the word 'document' and creates new visual routes through a documentary field marked by the disappearance of its traditional models of representation. The belief that it is possible to present conflict in an objective manner has given way to new photographic and lens-based counter-stories, or at least different versions of representation. In the face of global uncertainty, intolerance and polarization this exhibition presents artists seeking other ways of approaching conflict and dispute, through film and photography, to provide alternative and contemplative visual reactions and provocations. From presentations on screens, a light-box, or photographic prints there is a provocative visual response to the consequences of our social and political histories.

Steffi Klenz All works untitled from the series Beun (2016) Digital C-Type Print (Courtesy of the artist)

In Klenz' five images from the series Beun (2016) her starting point is an Associated Press Photograph of a concentration camp in Ohrdruf in former East-Germany. She then built a model of the space in her studio, which she digitally photographed using the same image and erasing and deforming it using software algorithms. The disrupted images from the original archival reference becomes a series of disturbing, and destabilised photographs, not a linear history, but a corrupted pathway subverting the language of the photographic image and a comment on memory.

Catherine Yass Wall/Abu Dis (2004) Lightbox (Courtesy the artist)

Yass' glowing lightbox displays two images that she photographed one directly after the other, concentrating on one section of the physical wall that separates Palestine from Israel. Yass works with an analogue camera, overlaying a positive transparency on top of a negative, one taken moments after the first, this means that often the images do not quite register, creating a slight movement between them, adding an extra psycho-logical layer and slippage, to the silent concrete and steel barrier.

Paolo Pellegrin Tijuana – A Girl celebrating her Quinceanera along the US- Mexico Border Tijuana Mexico (2019) Archival pigment print. Courtesy the artist and Michael Hoppen Gallery.

Pellegrin's photograph portrays an image of a fifteen-year-old teenager standing on the beach in her elaborate and bejewelled dress: With her face turned away from us and towards the barbed wire and steel fence marking the Mexican border stretching into the distance, the image becomes symbolically enigmatic.

Santiago Sierra Black Flag, North Pole, 14 April, 2015. Ditone archival print. Courtesy the artist and a/political; Black Flag, South Pole, 14 December, 2015. Ditone archival print. Courtesy the artist and a/political

Sierra's diptych Black Flag, North Pole, 14 April, 2015, and Black Flag, South Pole, 14 December, 2015, combines the symbolic sites for explorers and nations with a journey by his team to plant a black flag, the symbol of anarchy, at both poles. Declaring that borders 'disgust him', his symbolic flags were left as a rebuke to nationalist's who have 'befouled' the earths pristine landscape but also in different circumstances can be symbols of hope, fostering and sheltering, adding another layer of dialogue to his actions. The hanging of the bottom image is accordance to the hemisphere that the work is exhibited in, with the lower image inverted.

Alfredo Jaar The Cloud (2000) 16mm film digitally rendered. Courtesy the artist.

Jaar made repeated visits to both sides of the Mexican Border area, undertaking numerous interviews and discussions with activists. The music, poetry, the minutes silence and the release of the cloud of white balloons, provides a symbolic link, uniting a divided land and people. We are offered a space and time of mourning, as those who lost their lives are sent back home to Mexico by the errant wind currents.

kennardphillipps Massacre of the Innocents (2014-21) mixed media (burnt pinboard, newspaper, photocollage.) Courtesy the artists

kennardphillipps reproduce photographs of world leaders and politicians imposed onto pages of the Financial Times in torn and printed collages. Cat Phillipps and Peter Kennard who have collaborated for twenty years use their work as a critical tool that 'connects to international movements for social and political change, to confront established political and economic systems'. Their burnt pinboard with the multi-layered images pinned to them are provocative visual statements in our uneasy political times

George Barber 'We Need To Speak Tony' (2017) Video. Courtesy the artist.

Barber's video 'We Need To Speak Tony' (2017) looks at the impact of Tony Blair as five improvisers 'channel' his 'psyche'. Barber asks the questions and feeds the actors anecdotes from various sources about Blair's life, from the Iraq war to meeting George Bush. Blair's key decision and regrets are revealed as the improvisers channel Blair's 'real' feelings.

Mona Hatoum Measures of Distance (1988). SD digital file. Courtesy the artist and LUX.

Hatoum's video Measures of Distance (1988) is a moving personal and autobiographical work. The voice of Hatoum's mother and the reading aloud of her letters by Hatoum, written to her from war torn Beirut, add a personal and psychological chronicle to the political events of the time. The subtle images of Hatoum's mother in the shower, the compelling dialogue between mother and daughter, the veil of Arabic writing in front of the body and the power of their intimate conversations, provide a compelling visual and audio narrative with a powerful contemporary resonance.

Wolfgang Tillmans The State We're In, B (2015) Inkjet print in artist frame. Courtesy the artist and Maureen Paley, London.

Tillmans' photograph The State We're In, B (2015) speaks of borders, using the surface of the Atlantic Ocean where timelines and boundaries intersect. The swell of a stormy sea in one area affecting and agitating the waves on the surface of another. Although brutally neutral, the sea in this image is an analogy for the worlds increasingly violent weather patterns, social and political unrest, territorial rights over seas, economic crisis' and migration, a potent evocation of the 'the state we're in'.

Sarah Pickering High Street Barricade (2002). C-type photograph. Courtesy the artist; Farrant Street (2004). C-type photograph. Courtesy the artist; River Way, Road Block (2004). C-type photograph. Courtesy the artist; Dickens - High Street (2003). C-type photograph. Courtesy the artist; Job Centre Transport

Lane (2004). C-type photograph. Courtesy the artist

Pickering's photographs from her series Public Order deals with unrest. She explores the simulated urban environment of the Metropolitan Police Public Order Training Centre. The urban environment in her five images with their deserted streets and facades are strangely menacing portents of imagined and real threats and civil unrest. Referencing traditional landscape photography, she dissects public order systems raising a number of contemporary questions

Ori Gersht Neither Black Nor White (2001) (digital video) Courtesy of the artist; Dew (2001) (Digital video) Courtesy of the artist

Gersht's Neither Black Nor White (2001) was filmed from the top of the hill in the Jewish quarter in Nazareth looking down on the Arab village of Iksal. The footage captures only half a second every thirty seconds for eight hours, and as the dawn breaks, the contested border landscape is revealed, before being bleached out by the intensity of the rising sun. In Dew (2001) Gersht similarly condenses two hours of film into three minutes. The landscape between Israeli and Palestinian territory is revealed as the dew symbolically evaporates on his camera lens.

David Birkin Untitled I from the series Embedded, (2011). Inkjet prints (text & image) framed together. Courtesy the artist and a/political

The photographer's name, Yosuke Yamahata, is inserted into the digital code of his own photograph, rendered back into visual form. Yamahata died of cancer in 1966 as a result of radiation poisoning sustained whilst taking this photograph, immediately after the bombing of Nagasaki. A 1945 US Government directive stipulated that, 'Nothing shall be printed which might, directly or by inference, disturb public tranquility.'

Untitled III from the series Embedded, (2011). Inkjet prints (text & image) framed together. Courtesy the artist and a/political

Twenty names from the Iraqi civilian casualty database inserted into the digital code of an image by an

anonymous US military photographer, rendered back into visual form. The original photograph was released by the Pentagon in response to a Freedom of Information Act request, despite a media ban in place since 1991 prohibiting the depiction of repatriated American coffins.

Untitled II from the series Embedded, (2011). Inkjet prints (text & image) framed together. Courtesy the artist and a/political

Two names from the Yad Vashem Holocaust database inserted into the digital code of an image by an anonymous German military photographer, rendered back into visual form. The art historian Griselda Pollock notes that neither the time or place at which the original photograph was taken, nor the names of the subjects portrayed, have been determined with any historical accuracy, arguing that such images float freely, "as icons of the event, becoming generic rather than historically identified in terms of what was being witnessed, and above all by whom and why."

MacDonaldStrand No More Flags (2021) digital film. Courtesy the artist

The artistic duo MacDonaldStrand digital films No More Flags (2021) explores the symbolism of flags which have been crudely removed from the images to withdraw their asserted legitimacy and their implied message of being for the benefit of a national identity owned and defined by groups in the US and UK. They hope that their action will disempower these groups of the symbols that they rely on, stating that 'It is not the flags or nations that they are trying to undermine with this project, but rather they are trying to reclaim them from the historic and ongoing misuse by those who have an interest in using them to divide'.

George Barber was born in 1958 near Georgetown, Guyana at Uitvlugt West Demerara. Barber's work is diverse and over his career, he has had an installation at Tate Britain entitled 'Automotive Action Painting' (Film & Video Umbrella) and shows of his video sculptures, 'The Long Commute' at Jack the Pelican Presents Gallery Brooklyn, New York. He has also been part of numerous programmes at Tate Modern and had retrospectives at the ICA, New York Film & Video Festival and recently at La Rochelle Festival, France. Seventeen Gallery and Anthony Wilkinson have also shown his work and his DVD release from the LUX gained glowing reviews from Art Forum, Art Monthly and the Daily Telegraph among others. In 2021, Barber has been nominated for the Derek Jarman Award and his work has been shown at the Next Dataa, the world's premiere video art digital gallery. He currently lives and works in London.

Ori Gersht was born in Israel in 1967, but has lived in London for over 30 years. Throughout his career, his work has been concerned with the relationships between history, memory and landscape. He often adopts a poetic, metaphorical approach to explore the difficulties of visually representing conflict and violent events or histories, including his own family's experiences during the Holocaust. He is currently represented by Yancey Richardson Gallery, New York; Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, Texas; Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, California; as well as Noga Gallery of Contemporary Art, Tel-Aviv, Israel; and Brand New Gallery, Milan, Italy.

Mona Hatoum was born into a Palestinian family in Beirut, Lebanon in 1952 and has lived in London since 1975. She has participated in numerous important group exhibitions including the Turner Prize, Tate Britain, London (1995); Venice Biennale (1995, 2005) Documenta, Kassel (2002, 2017); Biennale of Sydney (2006); Istanbul Biennale (1995, 2011); and Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art (2013). Her work has been exhibited in major museums and art institutions around the world; with recent solo exhibitions including the Menil Collection, Houston, Texas (2017) which toured to the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St Louis, Missouri (2018).

Hatoum was awarded the Joan Miró Prize (2011), the 10th Hiroshima Art Prize (2017) and the Praemium Imperiale (2019) in recognition of her lifetime achievement in sculpture. In 2020, Mona Hatoum was winner of the Julio González Prize.

Alfredo Jaar is an artist, architect, and filmmaker who lives and works in New York. His work has been shown extensively around the world. He has participated in the Biennales of Venice (1986, 2007, 2009, 2013) and Sao Paulo (1987, 1989, 2010, 2020) and in the Documenta in Kassel (1987, 2002). Jaar has realised more than seventy public interventions around the world. Over sixty monographic publications have been published about his work. He became a Guggenheim Fellow in 1985 and a MacArthur Fellow in 2000. He received the Hiroshima Art Prize in 2018 and the Hasselblad Award in 2020.

His work can be found in the collections of dozens of museums, institutions and private collections worldwide.

kennardphillipps is a collaboration between Peter Kennard and Cat Phillipps working since 2002 to produce art in response to the invasion of Iraq. kennardphillipps' work has evolved to confront power and war across the globe,

but also as a critical tool that connects to international movements for social and political change. Their work is conceived for the street, the gallery, the web, newspapers & magazines, and they have participated in numerous international and home conferences and workshops. Collections in which their work is presently held are the National Portrait Gallery, London, UK; Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, UK; Design Museum, London, UK; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK; a/political, private collection, and others.

Steffi Klenz is an artist based in London who works with photography and video. Her practice has been consistently preoccupied with the built environment, critically exploring the notion of place and spatiality. Her works indicate a clear interest in the political engagement with particular buildings, environments or geographies in conflict, considering the relationship between aesthetics, technology and representation. Her work has been shown in group and solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally at institutions such as the Wellcome Collection London, The British Museum, Camden Art Centre, The Royal Scottish Academy in Edinburgh, FotoMuseum Antwerp, Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei, Los Angeles Centre for Digital Arts, Phoenix Art Museum, The Fine Art Museum Luleå, The Finish Museum of Photography, The SeaCity Museum in Southampton, The Royal Academy in London, The New Art Gallery Walsall, Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Kunstverein Ludwigshafen and Museum Künstlerkolonie in Darmstadt.

MacDonaldStrand are the collaborative partnership of Gordon MacDonald and Clare Strand. They are based in Brighton, England. MacDonald founded and, until recently, edited Photoworks magazine. He is a co-founder of the Brighton Photo Fringe and Chair of the Board of Trustees. He is also co-Director of GOST Books, alongside Stuart Smith; a new photography and visual arts publishers based in London. Strand is an internationally recognised artist whose work is held in many private and public collections including the Arts Council of England collection, the National Collection at the V&A and Collection Centré Pompidou. She is represented by Brancolini Grimaldi, London.

Paolo Pellegrin has documented many of this generation's major disasters and conflicts, from revolutions to wars to tsunamis. He photographed in Lebanon, Iran, Palestine, Romania, Afghanistan, Libya, Cuba, the United States, Mali, Egypt, Algeria, Haiti, Tunisia, and Indonesia.

Pellegrin was born in 1964 in Rome. Between 1991 and 2001 Pellegrin was represented by Agence VU in Paris. In 2001 he became a Magnum Photos nominee and a full member in 2005. Pellegrin is a winner of many awards, including ten World Press Photo awards and numerous Photographer of the Year awards, a Leica Medal of Excellence, an Olivier Rebbot Award, the Hansel-Meith Preis, and the Robert Capa Gold Medal Award. In 2006, he was assigned the W. Eugene Smith Grant in Humanistic Photography.

Sarah Pickering is a British visual artist who works with photography and whose work deals with themes of falsity and deception. Pickering uses the process of the photographic image making as a way of staging, observing, performing, and facilitating in order to examine and explore mediated versions of reality and work beyond its confines.

Central to her work is an intense and repeated scrutiny of the issues raised by such subjects as fakes, tests, hierarchy, science-fiction, explosions, photography, and gunfire. Pickering's photography examines the frequent gulf between documentation and that which is documented. Her work is held in the collections of the V&A, London; MoCP, Chicago; and North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh.

Santiago Sierra's work addresses contemporary social and political issues through sculpture, performance and installation. His subject matter seeks to arouse questions concerning globalisation, commerce, power and corporatisation. Sierra's materials and techniques are varied as his work is conceptually driven. He pushes the boundaries of the conventional gallery by placing unconventional objects within the gallery and even performing pieces outside of the gallery all together. Sierra's work displays the crossover between different media and art practices, taking it to the areas of social and political discourse. Sierra represented Spain in the 50th Venice Biennale. He has recently had shows in Austria, Spain, Tel Aviv and the UK and is in a number of major collections.

Wolfgang Tillmans was born in 1968 in Remscheid, Germany and since 2011 he lives and works in London and in Berlin.

Tillmans won the Turner Prize (2000), the Kulturpreis at the German Society for Photography (2009) and the Wollaston Award at the Royal Academy of Arts (2014). In 2015 he was awarded the Hasselblad Award and the Centenary Medal and Honorary Fellowship Award at the Royal Photographic Society, followed by the Gold Medal of Honorary Patronage of Trinity's Philosophical Society in Dublin (2016). In 2018 Tillmans was also the winner of the Goslarer Kaiserring award and the Nino Gennaro Award.

Wolfgang Tillmans was professor of interdisciplinary art at Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main (2003-2009). Between 2009-2014 he has been an Artist Trustee at the Board of Trustees for the Tate in London. Tillmans has been an RA (Royal Academician) since 2013.

Catherine Yass is a photographer and filmmaker, born in London in 1963. She represented Britain at the Indian Triennale at the Museum of Modern Art in Delhi (2001); in 2002 she was nominated for the Turner Prize and in 2005 she took up a British Council Residency in China. Yass has completed major commissions for The Jewish Community Centre, London (2013), the Rambert Dance Company, London (2013) and for Merce Cunningham, Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York (2003).

Her most recent solo exhibitions include Milton Keynes Gallery (2014); Alison Jacques Gallery, London (2012); a mid-career retrospective at De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill-on-Sea (2011); The Phillips Collections, Washington D.C. (2011); Stedelijk-Hertogenbosch Museum, The Netherlands (2009) and St Louis Art Museum, Missouri (2009). Yass has just had a major retrospective at Ambika P3 work can be found in a number of public collections including the Tate, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Biblioteca Albertina, Leipzig; National Museum of Women in the Arts Collection, Washington D.C and other important museums and institutions around the world.