

EXHIBITION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LAUNCH FESTIVAL

This catalogue is a documentation of an artist-collaboration-program developed by the new initiative QUESTION ME & ANSWER. In June 2019 we launched an open call, trying to reach artists with a wide range of disciplinary and biographical differences. Of all entries, we selected 19 artists and divided them into 8 groups. Each group was to be comprised of 2 or 3 artists with a maximum of differences in their preferred medium, discipline and approach. We also had a focus on bringing together artists who recently moved to Vienna with such artists that have already been based in Vienna for a long time. This ensured that they had very different perspectives on the Viennese cultural sector and could enter into a debate on its nature and inclusivity. These groups of artists worked together for almost 3 months, collectively developing one art work per group and then exhibiting it in the framework of the official launch festival of our initiative.

QM&A: Exhibition & Launch Festival

Location: Improper Walls

Date: 25.09 - 11.10.2019

Contributing artists:

Farouk Muhammad, Leonie Spitzer, Thaer Maarouf, Ausländer, Hamodi Madi, Maria Belowa, Darja Shatalova, Ali Kianmehr, Kata Anna Tüz, Rezâ Zavari, Sophie Esslinger, Linda Zahra, Axel Schindler, Aral Cincim, Ekaterina Kormilitsyna, Oula Al Khatib, Saad Al Ghefari, Christian Bazant-Hegemark, Antonio Semeraro

All photos by: Zoe Opratko

Supporting artists new to Vienna to find an entrance into the Viennese cultural sector.

Advocating for more diversity in Viennese cultural programs.

Making Vienna's art community more unforeseeable.

WWW.QUESTIONMEANDANSWER.COM

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IG: @QUESTIONMEANDANSWER

WHY WE EXIST

It is hard for every artist to find an entrance into the Viennese artists community and art market. However, it is even harder as a person who has only recently arrived here, be it as a migrant or a refugee. Often times, people do not yet have a professional network in the European art sector and don't have the needed amount of time to organically build up this network. QM&A wants to shorten this process of network-building and foster the exchange between artists who have been based in Vienna for a long time and newly arrived artists. This constitutes active network-building as a vital aspect of this project that is achieved by various programs and events. Furthermore, we offer courses that should convey key competences for successfully navigating the Austrian cultural sector. These include lectures by gallerists, curators and bookers. As a newly arrived artist, certain difficulties arise in finding the correct venues for your exhibitions, concert or any other form of cultural event. For these cases, we offer counselling and direct contacts.

Another important aspect of our work, is advocating for more diversity in the Viennese art sector. We see Vienna as a city comprising a wide range of diverse nationalities, backgrounds, experiences and genders and believe that art should reflect this character. Cultural institutions should be a place where each and every one of us can recognize themselves or part of ourselves. We do not believe that this is currently possible and therefore aim to foster the discussion among cultural institutions to bring the topic on the agenda. The following questions should always be raised: Are programs designed and implemented taking into consideration different perspectives? Do the artists and curators invited correctly represent the Viennese population? We want to support cultural institutions in implementing mechanisms for the inclusion of artists with different backgrounds living in Vienna into their regular program. Here, a strong focus has to be laid on working against tokenization of people belonging to a certain minority. We want to constitute a force that helps ensure that Viennese cultural programs reflect the unique Viennese character that is diverse in genders, nationalities and backgrounds.

WHO WE ARE

QUESTION ME & ANSWER is a joint project by Refugees Welcome Austria and Improper Walls Gallery.

Refugees Welcome Austria is an NGO that supports refugees in finding accommodation in shared housing with locals. In this manner, people get to know each other better, prejudices are reduced, social networks created and people new to the country learn the language faster. QM&A is a direct continuation of our work since it fosters mutual understanding and creates strong social networks.

Improper Walls is a cultural platform in Vienna's 15th district. We are focused on urban and contemporary art, illustration and multimedia. What makes us special: we organize exhibitions on a non-profit basis. We offer an exhibition venue for artists and support them during the whole process of preparing an art show. Besides the vernissages that can include live music and performances we also host and organize other cultural events and workshops, that are dedicated to social issues, always in collaboration with other creative minds.



SHADOW AND LIGHT

Ali Kianmehr and Kata Anna Tüz

Stencil/calligraphy/led installation, hanged with bended barbed wire
Acrylic on ceramics, 2019

‘Foreigners’ and refugees ‘should’ integrate and adapt to our culture - although we could learn so much if we only asked questions and listened to them too. That is exactly what our joint work is about, which represents the questions and answers of our dialogues. What is happening in Iran that Austrian media is not covering? How is the art scene there, how different is it compared to Austria? It quickly became clear that, as the Iranian artist Shirin Neshat said (in her Ted Talk on art in exile) ‘an Iranian artist can never not be political’. This work represents the current political situation in Iran with an Iranian-European perspective. Three sentences were translated into persian and carved into the lanterns:

‘Through shadow we can find the light.
For every source of light extinguished.
The smallest light is better than darkness.’

Ali Kianmehr studied graphic design and Persian calligraphy and has been teaching type design and typography in various institutions, including the Tehran Art Academy. His typeface works have been and are still represented in several exhibitions in Iran, e.g. in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran. His calligraphic works are preferably executed on large canvases. Ali Kianmehr has been living in Vienna since 2015 and has since given numerous workshops and participated in several exhibitions in Austria.

More info: www.kianmehr.com

Kata Anna Tüz is a Vienna-based illustrator, painter and curator. The topics of her work are inspired by experiences, music and literature but also socio-political issues. Kata has been part of a number of group exhibitions in Vienna and her work can be seen in a large format on the public walls in the city.

More info: www.instagram.com/kata_anna_tueez





THAT ASTOUNDING MOMENT OF HA?

Ekaterina Kormilitsyna & Aral Cimcim

Site-specific installation with QR Codes in varying sizes up to 10 x 15 cm, 2019

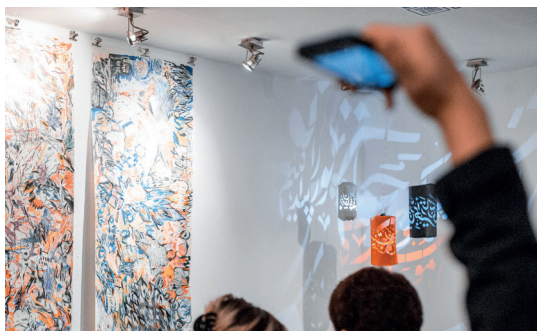
The interactive installation consists of individually generated QR-Codes which can be employed with the use of a smartphone to send SMS messages that are accessible to a mathematically random group of recipients including our own cell phone numbers. This project itself involves whimsical dynamics of a game environment inside the gallery space where participants are asked varying questions of everyday existentialism and its peculiar hair-trigger moments of psychopathology. This project is at the moment in its infancy therefore we decided to make use of the group exhibition as a testing ground for the proof of concept of our interpretation of “Choose Your Own Adventure” or similarly “Twistaplot” of interactive fiction instead progressing in first-person and manifesting itself in the orderly physical structure of the gallery by an exponential habitation of printed out, two-dimensional QR snippets. The viewers are asked to send an SMS message after scanning the code to a person they haven’t met before, initiating a mutually amaurotic dialogue or possibly not being part of any SMS conversation of any sort at the same time. The decision and the result is dependent on the number of players and the tête-à-tête situations they may venture themselves into, suppositionally interspersing between the apparatus and its conscious annotator.

Ekaterina Kormilitsyna is an artist and theorist currently living and working in Vienna. She works primarily as a filmmaker and digital media artist with a focus on memory and perceptions of history. Her academic research work focuses on economic and political philosophy and the roles of contemporary digital pop culture in Japanese societies. She completed her Bachelor in Film Studies at Queen Mary, University of London in 2015 and is currently studying under Constanze Ruhm at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna and working towards a Masters in Research at Cardiff Met University, Wales.

More info: www.ekaterinakormilitsyna.com

Aral Cimcim does not refer to himself in the third person as do almost all digital artist statements regardless of any pointless reason and while being implausible but nothing but an allotment of modus operandi, Aral Cimcim does and is therefore as Aral Cimcim adduces to it, responsible for his behavior inside artistic circles, since Aral Cimcim does not have any preoccupation of the slightest in the curatorial, Aral Cimcim remains somehow critical of the current tendencies of a collective consciousness of hesitation. Since 2018 Aral Cimcim attempts to substantiate virtual-spatial environments, which rely on the human visual system and its cognitive components, in particular, the presumably indigent human sensory cognition and/or the mechanisms of the human eye as an optical interface through the biological augmentation of sensory data elucidation.

More info: www.aralcimcim.com





RECORDS ON UNCHARTED TERRAIN

Leonie Spitzer, Farouk Muhammad

Acrylic on canvas, 100 cm x 120 cm; video projection, duration 02:04 min, 2019

By putting on earphones, the viewer gets the possibility to enter an intimate mental space that was created by the artists Farouk Muhammad and Leonie Spitzer during the summer of 2019. The painting shows landscapes of Syria, the country Farouk escaped from in 2015, and builds the visual and actual backcloth of the work. Leonie reacts by projecting map-like-drawings onto it. The process of the map-formation becomes visible on the canvas at the same time as spoken words, questions of projectability and of recommencements emerge. What does life form from? When the structures are unknown, how do you find orientation? What are useful elements to rebuild orientation? How do you get towards new ranges of action? Aren't inner worlds always a construction, nourished by different elements of learned skills? As soon as we establish distance from the familiar environment, because we had to escape or because we wanted to travel, we become aware of mental habits that don't serve our purposes. So strategies have to be found in order to create new mental spaces. How do we fill gaps arising out of old experiences and skills which don't serve us the way we are used to? Structuring our inner worlds and finding strategies gets us to the point where we realise that we construct the mental world we live in. The work can be understood as a lively plan which builds upon fragility and suspense.

Leonie Spitzer has completed her studies of visual arts and theatre studies at the IUAV (Istituto Universitario di Venezia) in 2008 with a distinction on her thesis on the Austrian female architect Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, social architecture and interior architecture. Subsequently, she continued studying at the Chelsea College of Art and Design in London, at the department of interior design. After graduation she moved back to Vienna where she currently lives and works as an artist and interior designer. Leonie Spitzer's work often reflects on the interaction between life and space. The central theme is how space influences life and vice versa.

More info: www.archilovers.com/leonie-spitzer

Farouk Muhammad studied painting at the University of Fine Arts in Damascus. In the year of his graduation in 2007, he had a solo exhibition at the French Cultural Centre of Damascus and won the first Ayyam Prize for emerging Syrian artists. Several group and solo exhibitions in Lebanon, Turkey and Syria followed. From 2009 until the beginning of the war in Syria in 2012, he taught painting at the University of Aleppo. Even in 2013 he still exhibited at the Zamaan Gallery in Beirut. With great difficulty he succeeded in getting back to Afrin and flee to Austria within a year. Since he lives in Vienna, his work is being exhibited more and more in Europe and its vicinities - 2015 in Amsterdam and Graz, 2017 in Istanbul and 2018 in Sandviken and Catharge, while frequently being exhibited in his current hometown Vienna.

More info: <http://faroukart.com>



DIFFERENCE/SAMENESS

Reza Zavari, Sophie Esslinger

2 drawings (ink, crayon, acrylic, marker, charcoal on paper)
each 70 x 300 cm, 2019

In their work they discovered a way of communication via drawing.

Drawing is like language - a way of understanding, a learning process shifting between coding and decoding. The intuitive lines and structures reflect traces of perception, the presence of the other person within and beyond the artwork to create. The individual gets integrated into a new dynamic, an artistic dialogue.

Sophie Esslinger finished her Bachelor's degree in Comparative Literature 2017 (University Of Vienna) and has been studying Graphics and Printmaking at the University Of Applied Arts since 2017. Her work emphasizes abstract compositions in different media. She has been part of group exhibitions at kaeshmaesh and Galerie Zwischendecke.

More info: www.sophieesslinger.com

Reza Zavari is an artist, art director and graphic designer from Iran. He has exhibited works in Iran, UK, Sri Lanka, France and other countries around the world. Since 2017 he lives and works in Vienna.

More info: www.instagram.com/reza.zavvari





UNTITLED

Linda Zahra, Axel Schindler

UV-printing on linen, acrylic on canvas, 54,5 cm x 90 cm

Visitors of the exhibition have been asked to leave an anonymous comment on feelings the artwork evokes. So, what do you feel? Your answer is the intended description of the artwork.

Linda Zahra has worked as a make-up designer, photographer and executive producer on several films such as 'A Little Sun', 'Faraway, so Close to the Homeland', 'Wooden Rifle' and 'A Memory in Khaki'. Her work 'Insight' was shown on a digital wall in the main train station in Vienna on the 8th of March 2016. With her work she was a part of various photo exhibitions in Vienna.

More info: www.instagram.com/lindazahra1

Axel Schindler is an illustrator who breaks graphic design rules and constantly experiments with new printing techniques to embody his drawings, looks for new approaches in his paintings and plays blues and rock'n'roll inspired music.

More info: www.axelschindler.at





Y A I O N A

Maria Belowa, Darja Shatalova

Performance (duration: 31 min), permanent marker on glass, both sided
4,3 x 2,2 m, temporal and non vendable, 2019

The duo performance of Maria Belowa and Darja Shatalova consists of two graphical, overlapping maps that are created on the front glass wall of Improper Walls gallery during the performance. Maria is standing on one side of the glass and Darja on the other. In a timed rhythm they draw lines of movements in space during their lives in a set color code. One minute in the drawing process corresponds with one year in their lives. Through the transparency of the drawing surface both performers get into a choreography of real movement while reconstructing individual routes in their lives. The work deals with the topic of the personal perception of time and distances and the mental capabilities of reconstruction as a process of recapturing one's course of life.

Maria Belowa obtained a Bachelor degree in Education Studies (Moscow Pedagogical University) and migrated to Vienna in 2017. As a visual artist, she mostly works on the border between photography and illustration. Attributing herself to a post-soviet generation, she explores topics such as personal and collective identity, memory and nostalgia.

More info: www.instagram.com/mkrauz

Darja Shatalova studied Mathematics at the University of Cologne and Transmedia Arts at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. She works in the field of space-based installations, performances and sound, mainly connected to the topics of system and time. Her solo exhibitions took place 2019 in Sihlhalde Zurich and kaeshmaesh Vienna, 2018 in HFBK B-Galerie Hamburg and 2017 in Whitedwarf Projects Vienna. Besides that, she has been part of multiple group shows.

More info: www.darjashatalova.com





THE CRYING GOD

Antonio Semeraro, Saad Al Ghafari, Oula Al Khatib, Christian Bazant-Hegemark

Video installation, duration 02:12 min, 2019

For this exhibition the actor and comedian Saad Al Ghafari, the writer and director Oula Al Khatib, the visual artist Christian Bazant-Hegemark and the visual and performance artist Antonio Semeraro collaborated on an artwork to distill their unique perspective. The video work is based on poems written by Oula Al Khatib during and after her time in war-torn Syria. While Al Khatib wrote several of these, only a small selection of two were used for this project. In this work Saad Al Ghafari reads these poems, which offer poetic insights into a brutal reality mostly unknown to people born in Vienna. The poems are accompanied by digitally processed video footage using a program developed by Christian Bazant-Hegemark, for additional visual stimuli. The physical experience is enhanced by an installation arranged for this piece by Antonio Semeraro.

Oula Al Khatib is a movie and theater director and writer with a Bachelor in Psychology. Since 2007 Oula has worked on various projects as a director in Syria and has already produced a play in Vienna called „Flüchtling in Wunderland“.

More info: www.facebook.com/uda.artverein

Saad Al Ghafari is an actor and comedian from Syria. After 4 years of living in Vienna he still has hope to be recognised as an actor or a comedian or at least a funny human being; that's why he changed his stage name to Gefährliche Saat.

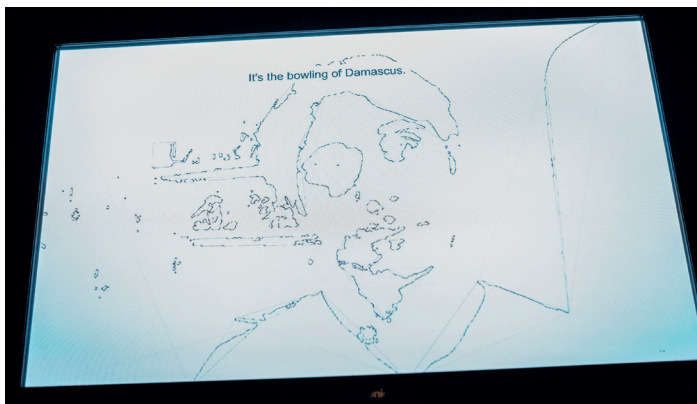
More info: www.facebook.com/Saad-Al-Ghafari-108519563938967

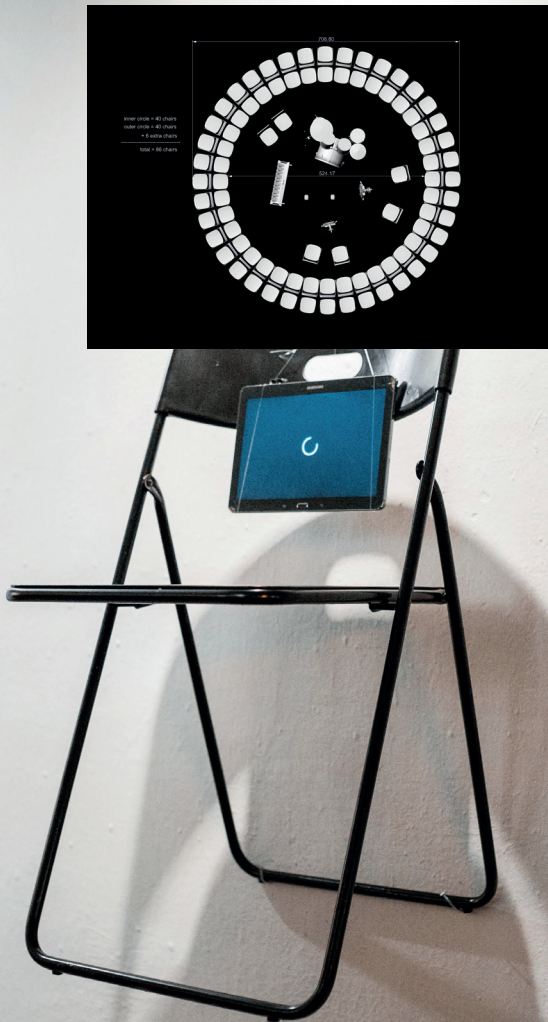
Christian Bazant-Hegemark used to program video games before studying fine arts and completing a PhD on „Painting and Digital Technologies“. He lives and works in Vienna and is represented by Galerie Voss (Düsseldorf) and unttd contemporary (Vienna).

More info: www.bazant-hegemark.com

Antonio Semeraro is a multimedia artist who draws his inspiration from different areas of experience. In his work as a set designer he focuses on composition and colours. As a trained carpenter and former rehearsal stage coordinator at Volkstheater Wien he combines technical feasibility with artistic components of the fine arts. His main focus is on a conceptual approach. His subject areas include social justice, gender equality and elimination of prejudices.

More info: www.instagram.com/whatifantonio





THAÏR MAKROUF & HAMDOU MADI & AUSLANDER
No. 10w

NO, HOW

Ausländer, Hamodi Madi, Thaer Maarouf

Public space happening (Postponed to 2020)

Ausländer, Hamodi Madi and Thaer Maarouf came together as a collective in order to merge creative and professional backgrounds in art, music and social engagement. The creation of new collaborative work took several weeks of dialogue, sharing of experiences and music rehearsals. As time passed, they were getting to know each other and started to create ideas according to their personal observations and opinions regarding society, art, everyday life circumstances and expectations. If we consider the position of the individual and the position of the group of people within certain situations or life circumstances, then we can talk about the relationship among these subjects – and their expectations towards society and vice versa.

A happening in public space was conceptualized to create the situation of repetitive expectations towards the audience and trigger audience interaction with the collective. In such a relationship, the audience influences the course of events within the happening and becomes a part of the collective. This setting aims at erasing the border between the audience and the performers by declassifying the positions of a conventional situation where the performers are in the position of monitoring, where there are those who observe and those who are being observed.

Ausländer is a band that was founded in May 2018 in Vienna and brings together people from Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Hungary, Slovenia, UK, USA, Colombia and from Austria who consider themselves as outsiders in their own country. Alongside the performers, the collective comprises many collaborators and people who participate in activities in order to construct or deconstruct the creative process. Ausländer is recognized on the alternative scene as unusual music, which follows in high-energized punk, electro, noise, drone and experimental genre with abstract vocals and dark appearance.

More info: www.facebook.com/auslaender.band

Thaer Maarouf is a Syrian painter who holds a Master's degree in Fine Arts from the Lebanese University in Beirut. His work has been shown in several collective exhibits in Lebanon, Syria, France, Singapore, USA, Dubai, Austria as well as in solo exhibits in Lebanon, Spain, France, Singapore, Philippines, London and Austria. His work can also be found in the permanent collections of Middle Eastern museums. His art pieces are appreciated for their use of symbolism to highlight human rights issues in the Middle East and cast an eye on the conditions of displaced populations affected by the regional upheaval in the Levant.

More info: www.thaer-maarouf.com

Hamodi Madi is a Palestinian percussionist based in Vienna. He has been playing percussion since the age of 6, was a band member of AWB and performed at TedXVienna in 2018. At the moment Hamodi works as a teacher at the music school DoReMi – Das soziale Musikinstitut and as a freelance performer/session percussionist.

More info: www.instagram.com/hamodi_madness

BECOMING PART OF A 6-MONTH-COLLECTIVE

Twice a year we publish an open call, inviting artists of all disciplines to apply to work with us. Out of all applications we chose between 15-20 artists that we find especially intriguing. Out of these artists we form groups consisting of 2 to 3 people. Our focus is on bringing together people that work in different disciplines and have a different perspective on Vienna's art sector and its inclusivity. These groups of artists have several months time to produce art works together that are then exhibited in a suitable space. In the meantime we coordinate different events for the collective to get to know each other better, meet other artists together and get to know more actors inside the Austrian cultural sector

MEET NEW PEOPLE AND GET SUPPORT

You don't want to work with other artists in the framework of a 6-month-collective, but nevertheless want to meet other artists and cultural workers and learn more about the Viennese cultural sector? The means of interaction with us are endless! Join us when we go on private guided tours of museums, meet interesting people in the art sector or participate in various workshops we host. Check our website to find updated information. But also please contact us if you are looking for support in your artistic endeavours. We are here to support artists new to Vienna in opening the hidden doors and navigating the labyrinth that is Vienna's cultural sector.

COLLABORATING ON AN INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Your institution is thinking of implementing mechanisms for the inclusion of artists with different backgrounds, nationalities, experiences and genders into its regular program? We offer support in the development of such mechanisms as well as contacts to a broad range of artists.

SEND US A COUPLE OF WORDS ABOUT YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK TO

contact@questionmeandanswer.com

STAY UPDATED

www.questionmeandanswer.com

FB: QUESTION ME & ANSWER

IG: @questionmeandanswer

smaranda@questionmeandanswer.com

justina@questionmeandanswer.com



Kultur



Flüchtlinge
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