

Special Exhibitions from 25 October 2017

Sharing Stories

Speaking Objects

Over the course of more than two years, beginning in 2015, the Weltmuseum Wien has set up ten temporary stations around Vienna and invited the broad public to bring an object meaningful to them and to tell its story.

Alongside the entire collection of the 150 object-stories, the exhibition highlights a selection of 20 of them. These objects are portrayed in Tal Adler's photographic object-portraits in their 'usual place' – at home on a shelf, in a box or under the bed, in the pocket, in the hand, or on one's head – and as video interviews with the owners of these objects and with other people talking about these objects from their own perspective. A special interview format developed for this project has produced around 150 intimate, rich and captivating stories. From simple, daily objects such as a key or a necklace, to specific or rare objects such as a box of a missing film or a handmade ritual mask, the object owners shared stories of love and friendship, loss and longing, belonging and alienation, faith, passion, travels and adventures, migration, assimilation, terror and hope.

Throughout the duration of the project, photos of the objects and summaries of the stories have been gradually uploaded to the project's page at the museum's website, thus forming an open-access archive. Now that the archive is open, the public is once again invited to look at the objects, read the stories, and contribute their own perspectives on these objects. Multiple perspectives on the same object can enhance our understanding of how we relate to our objects and to each other.

Rajkamal Kahlon

Staying with Trouble

In her exhibition *Staying with Trouble*, American artist Rajkamal Kahlon presents a series of works inspired by her two-month residency at the Weltmuseum Wien. During her stay she conducted research on historic materials in the Museum's photographic collection.

Rajkamal Kahlon reflects on how the staging of late 19th and early 20th century ethnographic portrait photography was often based on constructions of the "savage" or "primitive", and thereby helped to form certain codes of representation that can still be found today. Through her visual analysis and transformation of archival images, the artist examines these continuities and invites visitors to question their own gaze. The title of the exhibition refers to the biologist and philosopher of science Donna Haraway, whose writing influenced Kahlon in her working process.

In the work of Berlin-based American artist, Rajkamal Kahlon, we witness an autopsy, a dissection of the visual legacies of empire. By redrawing and repainting the bodies of photographed native subjects, Kahlon allows for the rehabilitation of those bodies, histories, and cultures that have been erased, distorted, and maligned.

Kahlon received her MFA from the California College of Art, participated in the Whitney Independent Study Program, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

Rajkamal Kahlon's residency is part of the project "SWICH – Sharing a World of Inclusion, Creativity and Heritage", and is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union. www.swich-project.eu

More informations about the artist on www.rajkamalkahlon.com.

Pop-Up World

Narratives

The reopening of the Weltmuseum Wien is accompanied by an innovative book about the Museum. The exhibition *Pop-Up World: Narratives* turns part of this book into a real-life experience. Sets of several objects are arranged into individual narratives. The range of themes stretches from traditional ethnography to art history, from historical backgrounds of object acquisitions to the beliefs of various world religions, and from collectors and their personalities to the tensions between "us" and "others".

Although rather unusual for an exhibition, the curators also enter the stage as the narrators in film recordings themselves. They tell the stories of their favourite objects, and illustrate their special and often quite personal relationship to these exhibits.

They are all united in the basic intention of the Weltmuseum Wien: to enable visitors to experience the narratives behind the objects and to grant them access to a diverse spectrum of questions that every single object may raise. The Museum does not understand itself as an authoritative institution anymore, as it is impossible to recreate the entire world of an object in encyclopaedic fashion. Instead our house is rather able to provide insights – into the diversity of the world and our relationships to it in the past and present.

Lisl Ponger

The Master Narrative

At the invitation of the Weltmuseum Wien, the MuKul, the (fictitious) Museum for Foreign and Familiar Cultures is presenting an exhibition of works by artist Lisl Ponger. Visitors are invited to take part in an exploratory journey that starts out from six large-scale, staged photographs in light boxes and a 2-channel installation with the title *The Master Narrative und Don Durito* which lasts a full museum day.

In Tahiti they will witness a conference. At a garden party in a tropical landscape (located in the entrance hall of the Weltmuseum Vienna) Christopher Columbus chats with Margaret Mead over a glass of wine and Franz Boas puts on a performance. The artist herself is engaged in preparations for her field work as a participatory observer while Indian Jones raises the curtain on his own museum. As with the woman in Sigmund Freud's study, he has a categorised and labelled a collection of non-European objects. The list tattooed on a woman's lower arm shows the genealogy of white appropriation of foreign lands and provides hints about the contents of the installation.

'For those at the top, the calendar is made up of the past. So that it will stay that way the powerful fill it with statues, holidays, museums, homages, parades. That all serves the purpose of keeping the past in place; where things have already happened and not where they will happen,' says Don Durito, a well-

dressed, pipe smoking beetle from the Lacandon Maya jungle, the shield bearer chosen by Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatista Liberation Army.

Statues, museums, famous people and important anniversaries are found yet again on stamps and first day covers, those small envelopes where the postal services of various nations celebrate at various times and immortalise them all for the future.

Dejan Kaludjerović

Conversations

Dejan Kaludjerović (born in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia) makes drawings, paintings, installations and research-based projects. This installation ‚Conversations‘ is one such project, culminating as a kind of overview of multi-year research and production. Between the years 2013 and 2017, Kaludjerović interviewed children (6-10 years old) with a set of simple but provocative questions.

Each set of interviews took place in the context of artist residencies that the artist held in Russia, Azerbaijan, Israel, Iran and his "home countries" of Austria and Serbia. These interviews were recorded then fused into recordings presented in exhibitions in each context, as sound installations. These interviews have been edited together in this exhibition, bringing all the material together as an overall analysis. Each prop that the artist made for each original context (sandbox, marbles, cubes etc) is also re-made and re-presented in this exhibition, presented together in an unsettling playground that stages some sort of invisible performance.

Within a stream of often naïve responses in these recordings appear from time to time curious absurdities, humorous outbursts, frightful musings, and absolute profundities as emitted by these children. The entire work takes on the format of an unusual sociological research, apparently with no direct or pragmatic results.

Adjacent to the installations is an Information Lounge, where conversations that the artist has encouraged further elaborate on the content and reception of the overall project.

Dejan Kaludjerović lives and works in Vienna.