

Peter Friedl

Report

Private View: February 14, 6–9 pm

Exhibition: February 15–April 13, 2019



Peter Friedl, *Report* (still), 2016. Single-channel HD video installation, color, sound, 32 minutes. Courtesy the artist and Erna Hecey Gallery.

Erna Hecey is proud to announce a new solo exhibition with video works by Peter Friedl.

Report (2016) is the title of the paramount video installation produced for documenta 14 in Athens and Kassel. It is perhaps the cinematographically most complex among Friedl's video installations, exploring the permeability of language and identity boundaries. The source text is "A Report to an Academy" (1917), Franz Kafka's short story about the ape Red Peter's becoming human—a famous, often overinterpreted parable about assimilation and mimesis. Seemingly conform with classical dramatic theory, the only setting is the empty stage of the National Theater in Athens, designed by German architect Ernst Ziller in the late nineteenth century.

More than twenty actors, mostly non-professionals, appear on the stage, alone or in pairs. They all recite by heart extracts from Kafka's monological text in their own native tongue or a language of their choice: Arabic, Dari, English, French, Greek, Kurdish, Russian, and Swahili. German, the original language of the canonical Kafka piece, is deliberately absent. Uniting them all, besides Kafka's text, is the actors' physicality, the intentionality of their gestures, and the fact that they belong to today's migrant populations, or rather, to the global community of men, women, and children in transit. Friedl's film, doing away with subtitles, comes to life through the presence and charisma of the actors and through the precise and multi-layered editing.

With some omissions and variations, *Report* remains faithful to the original narrative throughout the fragmented polyphony of languages and gestures. Bodies, voices, geographies, social classes, personal and political stories coexist in a complex and highly suggestive tableau vivant.

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In *Liberty City* (2007), Friedl addresses a standard historical scene. On the night of December 17, 1979, the (black) motorcyclist Arthur McDuffie was stopped by (white) cops on the corner of North Miami Avenue and 38th Street and beaten to death. When the accused policemen were acquitted five months later, riots broke out in Liberty City. It was the darkest moment in the history of Miami. Friedl inverts the dramatic structure; in his nocturnal scene, staged and filmed on site, the white cop is beaten up. The looped and uncut sequence appears to have been filmed by an eyewitness. In fact, it is a meticulously constructed dramatic study. The film was shot on the streets of the Liberty Square Housing Project, a residential complex built during the Roosevelt era in the 1930s for African-American residents. To keep the black and white communities separate, a wall was erected on the eastern boundary of Liberty Square, the remains of which can still be seen today. Friedl's short loop pays homage to the community of Liberty City—epic theater in the genre of documentary aesthetics.

Since Charlotte Beradt began collecting source material in 1933 for her anthology *The Third Reich of Dreams*, we know about the social dimension of dreams and the significant role they play as documents within political and historical anthropology. As part of his workshop on exercises in imagination, Friedl organized two public Social Dreaming sessions in a small theater in Rome in spring 2014. Social Dreaming is the psychotherapeutic version of the artistic fiction that narration—in this case, through sharing and telling dreams—may change the world. Supervised and guided by two psychologists, the participants told each other their dreams without any prior instructions. Friedl's *Study for Social Dreaming* (2014–17) is based on the documentation of the two sessions, each with different participants, filmed by several cameras. The fragmented montage blurs the actual chronology and focuses on the narrative structures disclosed in often banal, associative speech acts.

Peter Friedl (b. 1960) is an artist based in Berlin. His work has been exhibited worldwide, including at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; MoMA PS1, New York City; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Hamburger Kunsthalle, and Museo Tamayo, Mexico City. He has participated in documenta 10, 12, and 14 (1997, 2007, 2017); the 48th and 56th Venice Biennale (1999, 2015); the 3rd Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art (2004); Manifesta 7, Trento (2008); the 7th Gwangju Biennale (2008); the 28th Bienal de São Paulo (2008); La Triennale, Paris (2012); the Taipei Biennial (2012, 2016); the 10th Shanghai Biennale (2014); the 1st Anren Biennale (2017); and Sharjah Biennial 14 (2019). Selected solo exhibitions include *OUT OF THE SHADOWS*, Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2004); *Work 1964–2006*, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona; Miami Art Central, Miami; Musée d'Art Contemporain; Marseille (2006–07); *Blow Job*, Extra City Kunsthall, Antwerp (2008); *Working*, Kunsthalle Basel (2008); *Peter Friedl*, Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2010); *The Dramatist*, Artspace, Auckland, (2014); *The Diaries*, Grazer Kunstverein, Graz (2016); and *Teatro Popular*, Lumiar Cité, Lisbon (2017). *Teatro* will open at Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna in March 2019, in cooperation with Carré d'Art – Musée d'art contemporain de Nîmes.

Venue:

20C, Boulevard Emmanuel Servais, 1st floor
Luxembourg-City
L-2535 Luxembourg
Parking Glacis and Boulevard Paul Eyschen

Opening hours:

Thursday and Friday from 14:30 through 19:30 h
on Saturday, from 11 through 18 h
and on appointment.

For appointments please contact: office@ernahecey.com

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