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## Future's Dialect

### Róza El-Hassan / Martha Rosler

KUNST RAUM RIEHEN/BASEL

Baslerstrasse 71

L4125

Riehen, Switzerland

Friday, 27 May, 7 pm

OPENING RECEPTION

28 May to 3 July 2016

15 June 8 pm

CONVERSATION

Róza El-Hassan (Budapest), Barnabás Bencsik (founder and director of ACAX, Agency for Contemporary Art Exchange, Budapest) and Catherine David (vice-director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Curator Documenta X).

In English, free admission

Resistance against war, violence and oppression. Two artists, two generations, two cultural backgrounds, one subject. Róza El-Hassan (Budapest) and Martha Rosler (Brooklyn) are two conceptual artists who refuse to accept a life of inhumane conditions. At the Kunst Raum Riehen, they will jointly exhibit their work for the first time.

The title of the show, *Future's Dialect*, is taken from El-Hassan's text and exhibition concept from 2014. In her stirring vision she links archaic Syrian earth domes to utopian content escaping to space and constructing moon dome settlements as proposed by Iranian-American architect Nader Khalili for NASA in the eighties. *Future's Dialect* was chosen as the anticipative and hopeful, yet critical, title of this joint exhibition in which they combine works representing different moments of social crises, military conflicts, humanitarian tragedies, and responses of artistic solidarity.

Martha Rosler has been an outstanding figure of contemporary art for many decades, contributing works focusing on the relationship between social life and the public sphere, while exploring feminist, anti-war, and human rights activist positions. Rosler's perspective is presented through her photomontages and the archive of her groundbreaking project on housing and homelessness, *If you lived here...*, first exhibited at the Dia Art Foundation in New York in 1989. In her revisiting (in 2004 and again in 2008) of one of her best-known photomontage series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* following the US invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, she leads the viewer into aspirational domestic spaces, melding highly designed interiors with the realities of war and their representation in the mass media.

In the past few years, Róza El-Hassan has carried out thorough research into archaic methods and forms of Syrian architecture. She opened a new chapter in her committed human rights activism and social criticism by connecting in her artistic vision the thousands of years of tradition of the ecologically based authentic Arab folk architecture with proposing a viable and sustainable solution for mitigating the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Syria and for rebuilding major cities razed to the ground. The drawings, sketches, sculptures, architectural models and installations showcased in this exhibition under the titles *Breeze* and *Architecture of Compassion* represent her deep involvement with experimenting in radical solutions, reexamining ancient materials and technologies in the light of ecological approaches and awareness of sustainability.

As different as the works of these two artists may be, they touch on one question at their core: What can the individual accomplish in the face of war and devastation? Criticism encounters grievance in the exhibition. Confrontation encounters hope.

## About the artists

**Róza El-Hassan** was born in 1966 of Hungarian-Syrian parentage in Budapest, Hungary, where she is currently living. Her extensive graphical and sculptural works have been shown at various international institutions among others at the Secession, Vienna (2000), Drawing Center, NY (2003) Műcsarnok/Kunsthalle, Budapest (2006) and Kunstmuseum Basel (2012) along with videos, installations and performances. Her works examine contemporary history, sociopolitical and philosophical issues and her new series of projects focusing on social design and ecological architecture. Róza El-Hassan portrays human complexity from all relevant dimensions: social, political, environmental, psychological, emotional and symbolic. Artistic and political actions are inextricably linked for her. She works on individual projects, cooperates with other artists and is active as a curator and blogger.

**Martha Rosler** works in a variety of media, including photography, video, sculpture, performance, and installation. She often addresses matters of the public sphere and landscapes of everyday life, especially as they affect women. Some of her best known works deal with the geopolitical dilemmas of dispossession and entitlement. Her diverse projects—from a traveling library and a community garden in Singapore to visual studies of airports—have been shown throughout the world. *If You Lived Here...*, a cycle of exhibitions and forums on housing, homelessness, and the built environment (Dia Art Foundation, 1989) is considered a groundbreaking exhibition paradigm. In 2004 and 2008, in opposition to the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, she resumed her series of photomontages *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home*, originally made as a response to the war in Vietnam in the late 1960s. A retrospective of her work has been shown internationally, and her writing is published widely in publications such as Artforum, e-flux journal, and Texte zur Kunst.

Organised by Kunst Raum Riehen and Erna Hecey Gallery Luxembourg/Brussels

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**ROZA EL HASSAN**, *Breeze 9 Adobe House*, 2015  
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**MARTHA ROSLER**, *Invasion*, C-Print 2004-2008  
Courtesy: Nagel Draxler Gallery Berlin/Cologne