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Towards Memory

Katrin Winkler

2016, 2-channel video installation, color, 32 min., German, English. **Producer** Katrin Winkler. **Production company** Katrin Winkler (Berlin, Germany). **Director of photography** Katrin Winkler. **Sound** Kauna Hoabeb. **Sound design** Stefan Röselmair. **Editor** Katrin Winkler, Noam Gorbat. **With** Monica Nambalela, Lucia Engombe, Fatima Pedru, Esther Utjiua Muinjange.

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How come some occurrences are edited out of history and some over-emphasized? Who is giving whom the right to speak and when? How is history visible and audible in the present? What is an anti-monument? What are ways in which an archive relates to the present?

Towards Memory is a video and research project in collaboration with Namibian women who as children were sent to the former GDR during the Namibian struggle for independence and against apartheid, which started in 1979. After the fall of the Berlin Wall they were abruptly sent back to Namibia.

The video installation is based on archival research, video interviews, as well as contemporary commemorations of 25 years of independence and the genocide of the Herero and Nama. The project scrutinizes the entanglement of German and Namibian politics dealing with the consequences and (in-)visibilities of colonialism, genocide, displacement, and apartheid.

Towards Memory

For some years now Katrin Winkler has been concerned with questions of the construction of history, primarily in a post-colonial context, and with the consequences this has for current public and political space. She understands her working method, which incorporates those affected, in part as an option for discourse, for emancipation and identity formation. In order to keep history from being instrumentalized – a continuous and ongoing process – it is constantly necessary to adjust interpretations, and thus their far-reaching influential power into what is currently up for negotiation.

How memory is defined, and the form, scope, and state, even the methods of documenting our archives determines the criteria used for storage and transmission, and how they have been and are subject to certain larger structures of power and ideology: these are the decisive questions with regard to our storage repositories themselves. Archives, constantly growing and proliferating in a range of media, are therefore more important than ever and will require, not least due to the range of their mass media sources, a new form of handling and of deconstruction, especially since an overheated media society tends greatly toward constantly publishing and “documenting.”

In this context, artistic research and documentary formats are adequate tools alongside strictly academic and historical methods to do research into reformulating “monuments” or recontextualizing “anti-monuments.” The media format of the multi-channel video installation therefore fits well to our complex circumstances and to the possibility of integrating a wide variety of visual and acoustic sources into an interlocked format of essayistic moving images. The *artistic* treatment of history produces the necessary difference from the ordinary reworking of history and in the best cases ends up in a new archaeology of the present. Katrin Winkler’s work is an excellent example of this.

Günther Selichar

Katrin Winkler, born in 1983 in Starnberg, Germany, works in the fields of expanded cinema, critical research, video, and photography. A recurring theme in her practice is the invisibility and visibility of history and its entanglement with the contemporary moment. She was an assistant at the Katutura Community Art Center, Windhoek, Namibia. She holds a BFA in Photography from the Hochschule München, an MFA in Photography and Media with Allan Sekula from the California Institute of the Arts, Los Angeles, and was a master student of Clemens von Wedemeyer at the Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig. Her work has been shown in exhibitions around the world.

Films

2009: *Not Only A.* (13 min.). 2011: *To Protect and to Serve* (10 min., loop). 2013: *We don't just want a piece of the pie, we want the whole fucking bakery!* (video installation, 28 min., loop). 2016: *Towards Memory.*