

Press release

Hassan Khan | *HOST*

7 December 2019 to 9 February 2020

From 7 December 2019 to 9 February 2020, the Kestner Gesellschaft presents a comprehensive solo exhibition by the artist Hassan Khan (*1975 in London, lives and works in Berlin and Cairo) in the lower exhibition halls. Hassan Khan is an artist, musician and writer who is known for his broad and diverse artistic practice that includes music, performance, photography and film, sculpture, installation and text. Khan's work partially deals with the precepts, gaps and energies that lie at the core of how a sense of self as well as a collective social order are formed. It engages with both familiar, shared conditions as well as elusive and undisclosed content to produce forms that excite the imagination, raise fundamental questions, channel simmering undercurrents, seduce and alienate, engage with expectations, pose mysteries as well as help re-articulate our experiences with the shifting structures of power.

Khan's exhibition at the Kestner Gesellschaft is, like many of the artist's exhibitions, an associative system. It brings together works based on a present yet sometimes invisible thread. These works are diverse in form, medium and date of production. They are also informed by and suggest radically different registers sometimes within single works; the violent undercurrents of mass action as well as the joy and promise of collective power, the seemingly innocent gestures of a cute dance and the primordial act of self-possession that allows consciousness to operate.

Other material included span computer generated images, 2D illustrations, altered power boxes, and a programmed light piece produced in part between 1997 and 2019 including two new pieces for the exhibition. The highly stylized performances of actors teetering on the brink of complete loss of control in *Host* (2007), the brutal haunting computer-generated imagery and eerie algorithmic logic of 2013 (2019) as well as the grotesquerie of the large stuffed creatures are all driven by an intense interest in sublimating real conditions into something that is viscerally generative and surprising. Thus together they form a network of choreographed forms, humorous punctuations, rigorous conceptualism and its dissolution, and a very real attempt to find a way to grasp the conditions we produce and live with.

Khan is the 2017 recipient of the Venice Biennale's Silver Lion. In 2018 he was appointed professor at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main. He has also participated in Documenta 13 (Kassel, 2012), the Montreal Biennale (2016), the Sharjah Biennale (2015), the New Museum Triennial (2012), Gwangju Biennial of Sydney (2006) and the Istanbul Biennial (2003) amongst others. Running parallel to the exhibition at the Kestner Gesellschaft, Khan's *The Keys to the Kingdom* can currently be seen at the Palacio de Cristal / Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid. Further solo exhibitions include the Beirut Art Center (2016), Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (2015), Downtown Contemporary Arts Festival (2014), SALT Istanbul (2012), Queens Museum, New York (2011), Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp (2011) and Kunst Halle St. Gallen (2010). The artist's work has been represented in numerous group exhibitions including San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2019), Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (2018) Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2018), Villa Medici, Rome (2017), the Guggenheim Museum, New York (2016), M+, Hong Kong (2015), and Secession (Vienna, 2013) amongst many others.

As a musician he regularly performs his music live, for example at the Ruhrtriennale, Essen (2018), the Intonal Festival Malmö (2017), the Guggenheim Museum New York (2016), Maerz Musik Festival, Berlin (2013) and the Louvre, Paris (2012). His most recent publication *An Anthology of Published and Unpublished Writings* is co-published by Staedelschule and Koenig Books and his album SUPERSTRUCTURE EP was released earlier this year by The Vinyl Factory.

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The exhibition is accompanied by the first catalogue of Hassan Khan's work.

The exhibition is supported by Kunstfonds and by the friends of the Kestner Gesellschaft.

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