

GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL

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HASSAN KHAN

September 18 - October 30, 2004

The Chantal Crousel Gallery is pleased to announce the first solo gallery exhibition of Hassan Khan.

Hassan Khan (1975) is an artist, a composer and a writer. He lives and works in Cairo. His work has been presented in various exhibitions and institutions in the Middle East and in Europe, such as 'Multitudes-Solitudes', at the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Bolzano, Italy, 2003, the project 'Contemporary Arab Representations', curated by Catherine David, Witte De Witte, Fundacio Antonie Tapies and the BildMuseet (2003), 'Mediterraneans', MACRO, Rome (2004). A selection of his single channel videos and the short film 'Transitions' (Short Documentary Film Jury Award, 6th Ismailia International Film Festival, 2002) has been shown a.o. at 'Les Mardis de l'artiste', a selection for MK2 by Caroline Bourgeois. Hassan Khan has performed 'Tabla Dubb' -an audio-visual performane - in Cairo, Beirut, Istanbul, Sao Paolo, Amsterdam, Brussels (Kunsten Festival, 2004), at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2004), Castello, Spain (2003). He has been invited by the World Wide Video Festival, Amsterdam (2001, 2003), and the Oberhausen ShortFilm Festival (2001, 2002) a.o.

The work of Hassan Khan is nourished by the urban reality of Cairo, a city of 16 million inhabitants. Both lascivious and oversurveilled, this gigantic metropolis, drained by various ideological networks, manages the individual and the society in a constant friction of competing matrices. Television and religion, tablas and electric guitars, kitsch beauty and promiscuity, everything mixes and problematizes in an acceleration of contemporary data characterising the actual Middle East, and – by extension and translation – any mega city in the world.

The exhibition at the gallery is composed of three works, among which two new projects: the video installation ***The Hidden Location*** and ***17 and in AUC***, a transcription of the performance with the same title realised in Cairo in April 2003, and ***re/lapse***, an audiovideo installation, created in 2000.

17 and in AUC - the book, is the final instalment of Khan's multi-staged project of the same name- the first being the performative action held over a period of 14 nights in a Cairo apartment last year, where for four hours every night, Khan sat in an isolated one-way mirrored sound-proofed glass room drinking beer and smoking cigarettes and talking about his undergraduate years at AUC (the American University in Cairo), watched by an audience that he could neither see nor hear. In the second phase the fifty-six hours of video documentation were installed in the Falaki Gallery of the American University in Cairo for two consecutive weeks. The final stage- the publication included in this exhibition - is a transcription of the artist's speech, placed within the frame of the text. The content is loosened by isolation, driven by the alcohol and the need for reevaluation, a personal cultural history of the institution where the construction of a specific identity is dissected through an affective relationship with an audience. One where the technology of communication is explored, utilised and critiqued all at once.

The book ***17 and in AUC***, a part of this exhibition, is published by A.S.S.N. (194p.) and printed in an edition of 500.

The Hidden Location is an environment of 4 simultaneous and synchronized projections, proposing a formalisation of urban systems as emotionally and affectively experienced. Each section creates its own specific approach language and visual style- this plethora of styles is used to interweave gritty moments out of dispersed interrupted narratives with imagery culled from the context, sections created out of a process involving performers with construction that lie between the fictional and the documentary. In ***The Hidden Location*** an enigmatic system is created; the emotional content of systems and products, the systematic nature of dialogue, what lies beyond both these constructions are engaged with. Khan creates situations with actors or interacts with the urban space and its inhabitants while developing a fast-paced, intense and overwhelmingly moving audio-visual language.

re/lapse explores issues of class by conflating the intensely personal with the monumental. In a dark room four projections of people sleeping are installed in a sequence. The ambience of the different rooms was recorded and then manipulated and amplified. When walking close to any of the projections an interview with the different people is heard in which they describe what they did in the morning.

This show was supported by the Ministry of Culture and Communication - Centre national des arts plastiques (Aide à la première exposition)