

Kanon-Fragen

Bodies of Fact: The Archive from Witness to Voice

Saturday, July 8, 2017

2–7pm

FILM SCREENING IN LOOP

Conakry, 2013 (11 min)

English with Portuguese subtitles

Seraphine, Seraphine, 2015

(39 min) Original English version

→ Konferenzraum 1

4pm

CONVERSATION

Filipa César, Grada Kilomba,

Diana McCarty, Krista Belle Stewart

Moderated by Denise Ryner

→ Hirschfeldbar

The entire program will be held in English

The participating artists in *Bodies of Fact* each address the material and aesthetic legacies of colonial encounters and decolonization through archival footage in their respective works, *Seraphine, Seraphine* (2015) and *Conakry* (2013).

In the frame of *Kanon-Fragen*, *Bodies of Fact* considers institutionalization and positioning as conducted through the regulatory system of the archive and the document. The artists in this program counter the historicizing of archival footage, shifting its reading from universal, political and cultural fact to one that imagines documents as extensions of private witnessing and embodied memory.

Conakry, 2013

Filipa César, Grada Kilomba, Diana McCarty

Conakry is staged at Haus der Kulturen der Welt as a sequence shot on 16mm. This short filmwork, directed by Filipa César, revisits one film reel from the Instituto Nacional de Cinema e Audio visual (National Institute for Cinema and Audiovisual, INCA). This particular reel documents a 1972 exhibition curated by Amílcar Cabral at the Palais du Peuple (People's Palace) in Conakry, which reported on the state of the war against Portuguese rule. Texts by Grada Kilomba and Diana McCarty emphasize the possibilities and limits of these archived images in engendering personal and cultural decolonization. The film reels document the transition from colony to political nationhood and the attendant positioning within pan-African culture and global diplomacy as a sovereign entity. Restored and digitized in Berlin, the reels are missing sound and narration. This sonic amnesia enables a layer of speaking, reading, remembering and a fluidity of positioning that asks for whom can the archive speak?

Filmed in a single unedited shot that starts in the HKW's radio booth, *Conakry* explores the HKW's entrance hall then shifts focus to projections of black and white archival images. While the camera slowly moves and pans, it positions the viewer in a first-person perspective. The voice of Diana McCarty, who is pictured in the radio booth, serves as a guide by introducing the cinematic archive of Guinea Bissau's African Liberation Movement. She recounts the archive's relocation from Conakry to Berlin and back while detailing its history of precarity. Engaging what she terms "cinema as decolonization," Grada Kilomba inserts her experience as an Afro-Portuguese woman into a reading of the film archive.

Seraphine, Seraphine, 2015

Krista Belle Stewart

Through her work *Seraphine, Seraphine*, Krista Belle Stewart diverts selected archival documents from their intended service to cultural regulation and national narratives. Intermixed documentary footage of the artist's mother Seraphine Stewart includes moments of private memory and public inquiry that bookend her life as a young nursing student and participant in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's hearings on that country's now defunct Indian Residential School Program. The senior Stewart appears in a 1967 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation docudrama in which she is profiled as British Columbia's first Indigenous public health nurse alongside documentary footage of her 2013 testimony as a survivor of a system of cultural genocide.

In *Seraphine, Seraphine* a young woman in a graveyard appears in the left-hand image of a split screen. Her words are audible above the music soundtrack as if her inner voice was being shared with the viewer. The title of the black and white docudrama introduces her, *Seraphine: Her Own Story Told By Seraphine Ned*.

What follows are a series of film clips edited to focus on the shift between Seraphine's first-person perspective on her schooling in the city and dialogues she shares with figures of both official and unofficial authority. These atmospheric, jazz-scored television excerpts from 1967 share the screen with full-color video clips, which are frontally-fixed on an older Seraphine who speaks to an unseen questioner. This is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's video documentation of her in 2013, and this second Seraphine has experienced much of the future that her younger, docudrama-self questioned. Her survivor's testimony includes her recollections of life on her ancestral land in Douglas Lake, her nursing studies in Vancouver and her experience of Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia. Stewart's split screen editing reveals the contrast between the framing of her mother's experiences by public bodies such as the nursing college, the national broadcaster, the TRC and what really is Seraphine's "Own Story."

FILIPA CÉSAR is an artist and filmmaker interested in the fictional aspects of the documentary, the porous borders between cinema and its reception, and the politics and poetics inherent to moving image. Since 2011, she has been looking into the origins of the cinema of the African Liberation Movement in Guinea Bissau as a laboratory of resistance to ruling epistemologies. César premiered the collective feature length essay-film *Spell Reel* at the Forum section of the 67th Berlinale, 2017. Selected exhibitions and screenings have taken place at: 29th São Paulo Biennial, 2010; Manifesta 8, Cartagena, 2010; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, 2011; Jeu de Paume, Paris, 2012; Kunstwerke, Berlin, 2013; SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin 2014–15; Tensta konsthall, Spånga, 2015; mumok, Vienna, 2016; Contour Biennale 8, Mechelen and Gasworks, London, 2017.

GRADA KILOMBA is a Berlin-based, interdisciplinary artist and writer working on the themes of memory, trauma, race, gender and the “post-colonial condition.” She has presented her work internationally including most recently at documenta 14, 32a Bienal de São Paulo, Art Basel 2016, Cape Town Art Fair 2017, transmediale, Berlin 2017 and the Secession Museum, Vienna 2015. Through her artwork, Kilomba addresses what she terms “the colonial wound,” by exploring new formats to decolonize knowledge and narrative.

DIANA MCCARTY lives and works in Berlin. She co-founded free artists' radio reboot.fm/88.4 FM, kotti.fm, the radia.fm cultural radio network and the faces-I international community for women in media. She was active in early netzkultur with nettime, metaforum and hackerspaces. She co-initiated the exhibition *Nervous Systems: Quantified Life and the Social Question* (2016) at HKW. McCarty collaborated with Filipa César and Grada Kilomba on the short film *Conakry* (2013), part of the ongoing *Luta ca caba inda* project, with which she continues to work.

KRISTA BELLE STEWART engages the complexities of archival material through processes that allow for both intimacy and coincidence, and the atemporal meeting of actors across time. Working with video, photography, design, ephemera and textiles, Stewart straddles the gaps between personal and institutional histories through transparent mediation. Her work has been exhibited across Canada and in the United States. Stewart lives and works in Vancouver, Canada. DENISE RYNER is an independent curator. She has presented exhibitions, screenings and talks at the Jackman Humanities Institute and 8eleven Project Space in Toronto as well as VIVO Media Arts Centre, the Contemporary Art Gallery (CAG) and SFU Galleries in Vancouver. Currently she is based in Berlin where she is a visiting research associate in the Department of Visual Arts and Film at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. In September 2017 she will begin her tenure as Director/Curator of Or Gallery in Vancouver.

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Part of *Kanon-Fragen*



John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10
 10557 Berlin
hkw.de

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