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Performance Art in Belgrade. This is exemplified lucidly by "Act II" (2010). A Serbian immigrant becomes an actor in his adopted Western country, but, due to his Eastern European accent, he is only cast for certain minor parts, for instance a criminal or a drunkard, thus embodying the stereotypes regularly inflicted on him. The scenes in which he reenacts these parts become almost sculptural forms of performing the post-communist identity.

The postcolonial subject also takes centre stage in "My Lifetime (Malaika)" (2012). The elaborately filmed and montaged video work (the outcome of a residency in Ghana) shows a performance of Ghana's National Symphony Orchestra. Founded in the late 1950s to represent the newborn nation, it adopted Western-style classical music, a colonial heritage insignificant in Ghanaian society today and therefore poorly funded. That's why in addition to their musical career, the members of this orchestra must also work in other jobs. In close-ups, the video shows the worn wooden instruments and faces of the musicians, who appear drained and exhausted.

A centrepiece of the exhibition, the poetically constructed film "Rise Again" (2011), takes Zdjelar's interest in the performative aspects of identity even further, giving it an odd cinematic twist. Seeking shelter under a massive group of trees, several men, whom many in the audience would assume to be refugees (they are asylum seekers from Afghanistan), hang around until a person resembling Bruce Lee (one of the Afghans) shows up and performs a series of martial art movements using an unimpressive stone stela that is actually a World War II monument. Here, Zdjelar again brings up the subjects of memory and shifting identities, drawing attention to globally intertwined cultural and historical layers, combining documentary and fiction introducing elements of magical realism, and aesthetically adjoining cinematic languages in a manner similar to Thai director Apichatpong Weerasethakul—in long shots, slow takes, and the poetic rhythm of montage.

In Cologne, Zdjelar also twists the idea of the monographic show. She turns it into a dialogue, juxtaposing her work with a few selected pieces by other artists, such as a photograph by Özlem Altın, a film by Aernout Mik, and a drawing by Petrit Halilaj, the "Bourgeois Hen" (2009), a figure fusing two birds that strangely echoes the hybrid characters of Zdjelar's works. What they all have in common are their peculiar, uncanny motifs and styles, each specific to their respective media. The exhibition is part of a larger transdisciplinary programme for fine art, literature, music, performance, film, and discourse, the Pluriversale, headed by Ekaterina Degot. In this fifth edition, Zdjelar's works enter a broader dialogue with projects by artists such as Uriel Barthélémi, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Louis Henderson, Mona Kkanj, Avi Mograbi, and Željimir Žilnik, all of which revolve around political landscapes—as the one Buden reflects upon—in which postcolonial bodies act and reenact identities in endless loops.

1 Boris Buden, *Zone des Übergangs. Vom Ende des Postkommunismus*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2009, p. 45. Transl. by A. S.

Tamar Guimarães: La incorrupta

Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, 28. 9. 2016 – 13. 3. 2017

by Ana Teixeira Pinto

"La incorrupta" (The Uncorrupted, 2016), Tamar Guimarães's most recent film, was commissioned by the Museo Reina Sofía, Madrid, as part of their "Fisuras" programme. The thirty-five minute-long work, whose script was co-authored by the artist and museum staff, brings together professional actors and volunteers (interns, curators, the director) who essentially play themselves. The script revolves around a fictional exhibition project, proposed by a guest curator, who wants to thematize the hand as an emblem for contradictory concepts, for instance political agency (raised fist) or economic corruption (one hand washes the other). But to complicate matters further, the curatorial vision involves staging "La Mano Incorrupta de Santa Teresa" (The Uncorrupted Hand of St. Theresa), a religious relic, as the exhibition's centrepiece.

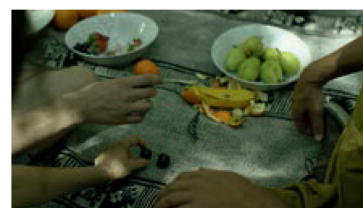
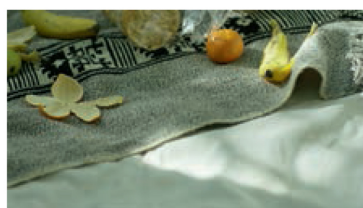
The staff finds the proposal rather tone-deaf, raising several objections that range from the trivial—the museum has overspent its budget for pedestals and display cases, and "La Mano" needs a protective encasing—to the potentially complicated: can the nunnery, in whose custody the hand is, grant permission for the loan, or should the request be addressed to the bishop; how will the museum, whose experts deal with the preservation of inanimate matter, be able to guarantee the integrity of a relic? More-

over, some of the objections are controversial: a museum is a "secularization machine", says one curator, and exhibiting "La Mano" is not simply a logistical question, it is also a conceptual one; the concept is an ill-disguised colonial gesture, says another, one that fails to recognize that this is no simple relic: it was kept in General Franco's private chapel for over thirty years, and thus carries a charged history.

Clearly the curator is not trying to raise controversy. She has been compiling images of hands in Chris Marker's and Harun Farocki's films and muses on corruption as a co-constituted condition, a *pas de deux* if you will, whose nature is only human. As if to illustrate her point, a young intern, possibly smitten, perhaps just driven by personal ambition, attempts to hasten the process and contacts the nunnery, only to be rebuffed by his supervisor, upon which he moans: "Do I need permission to work?"

Not that it matters. However stymied the living might find themselves to be, for artist Tamar Guimarães, the dead—even when in pieces—are always at work. Whilst curators and interns mull over institutional critique, "La Mano" already began to curate her exhibition. Turning lack into showmanship, she mastered the idiom of the fetish: a drama of presence and absence charged with sexual intensity—just ask the Generalissimo, who adorned her wrist with his highest military award, the Laureada de San Fernando. But the multivalence of her image extends beyond the spiritual field to include economic and political registers.

Conjuring the rhetorical sleight of hand (pun intended) of the "invisible hand", she disguises the brutal coercion of state-sponsored economic pressures under the guise of an impersonal force: every single day, she labours to push families onto the streets (almost one hundred daily evictions in Spain per year, since the crisis hit). Revelling in this play of visibility and invisibility, she secluded herself in her shrine, leaving it to other female body parts to occupy all the fields of the visible: breasts, legs, lips, buttocks, even hands—but manicured ones oozing sophistication and sex appeal. Hands for whom labour is no longer something to be suffered, but rather something to be commanded at a click of the keyboard—zombie limbs, alienated from the social body. Flipping sides, and with her sickle held high, she courted the imagery of labour movements and the symbolism of the clenched fist as she spoke out for resistance and solidarity. Appearing in Chris Marker's "A Grain Without a Cat" (1977, a documentary composed of two parts: "Fragile Hands" and "Severed Hands", a work the curator is particularly fond of) she mourned the frailty of the socialist movement and its subsequent fragmentation and atrophy. Playing on the gendered nature of the Spanish noun, she evoked the ousted Brazilian president, accused of corruption by a clique of corrupt parliamentarians. Hanging on the facade of the Reina Sofía,



Tamar Guimarães, stills from: *La incorrupta*, 2016. HD film (colour, sound), 36'. Courtesy: the artist.

her name, *La Incorrupta*, was a scathing juxtaposition that indicted her patron Sofia, the former queen of Spain, whose family has been embroiled in a corruption scandal.

Perhaps most importantly, "La Mano" does what hands do best: she points. She points to our failure to act, in spite of the upheaval of recent years, and to the remoteness of our political past, whose protest gestures we still mimic, but whose architecture we no longer grasp. The image of the clenched fist becomes as unreadable as the image of a holy relic—or, as T.J. Clark argued, readable only "under some dismissive fantasy rubric", which implies that both socialism and the cult of the saints were nothing but modes of representation, lies that fed on the credulities of the people or some beautiful but extravagant aspiration, totally devoid of realism. From this perspective, *La Incorrupta* and *La Pasiónaria* become identical qua romantic emblems, images of unyielding passion (and being passionate is what women do best) unaware of the rifted world from which they spring—yet nonetheless able to be reconciled and exhibited side by side in the museum.

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