

Kunsthhaus Bregenz

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Austria



KUB 2016.03 | Press Release

Wael Shawky

16 | 07 - 23 | 10 | 2016

Press Conference

Thursday, 14 July 2016, 11 a.m.

Opening

Friday, 15 July 2016, 7 p.m.

in good weather with subsequent summer party on KUB Platz.

The highlight will be the live performance of Egyptian band *El Sweasy & Halabessa* [100copies music].

Press photos for download

www.kunsthhaus-bregenz.at

»Saladin is still considered an Arab hero. He managed to return Jerusalem to the Muslims. The story is a topic in any Muslim nationalist discussion. It is the same language Pope Urban II used in 1095. He said, 'if you go to Jerusalem, you will have more food and a better life and if you die, you will go to heaven.' You can still hear these words today.« Wael Shawky, Bregenz, April 2016



The foreign and the other are currently topics of fierce discussion. The Egyptian artist Wael Shawky (born 1971) uses his filming of puppet theater to tell the story of the Crusades. In his film trilogy *Cabaret Crusades*, based on a book by the French-Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf, the story of the war is told from an Arab perspective. The puppets are clad in sumptuously oriental clothing, their heads evoking molten crystal rocks or honey-colored amber, which Shawky has had fabricated from Murano glass.

Two parts of the *Cabaret Crusades* trilogy are being screened in Bregenz: part three, *Secrets of Karbala*, tells the story of the second (1147 – 1149) and third (1189 – 1192) Crusades, which finally ended in 1204 with the destruction of Constantinople. Pope Innocent III had called for the conquest of the Holy Land, using the Venetian fleet.

However, the enterprise faltered in the Adriatic, as the negotiated sum had not been paid, the Christian army then looting Zadar in order to generate funds. Christians murdered Christians in order to subsequently murder Muslims.

Whether Saladin or Richard the Lionheart, the Frankish kings or the Muslim leaders, there are no heroes. The earthen architecture on a revolving stage creates cinematic movement whilst also symbolizing the world as a flat disk. The scenes are accompanied by a compilation of the songs of Arabian pearl fishers and Egyptian electronic music. The second part of the trilogy, *The Path to Cairo* (2012), features handmade ceramic creatures.

On the upper floor of Kunsthaus Bregenz four glass panels are on display in which a historical map from the Orient has been cut. Adjacently a kind of flying object is both a metaphor for the 9/11 attacks and the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca. In the same space a flag has been spread on the floor. A second hangs over the façade of KUB, itself a pale green Kaaba, announcing the exhibition in the form of a symbol of victory enveloping the chain mail façade.



Wael Shawky, born in Alexandria in 1971, studied Fine Art at the University of Alexandria before receiving his M.F.A. from the University of Pennsylvania in 2000.

His work has been included in major international exhibitions such as *Saltwater*, 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015), *Re:emerge: Towards a New Cultural Cartography*, Sharjah Biennial 11 (2013), *Here, Elsewhere*, La Friche Belle de Mai, Marseille (2013), dOCUMENTA (13) (2012), 9th Gwangju Biennial, South Korea (2012), 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011), SITE Santa Fe Biennial (2008), 9th Istanbul Biennial (2005), *Urban Realities: Focus Istanbul*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2005), and the 50th Venice Biennial (2003). He has had solo exhibitions most recently at MoMA PS1, New York (2015), Mathaf – Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha (2015), K20 – Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf (2014), Serpentine Gallery, London (2013), KW – Institute of Contemporary Art, Berlin (2012), Nottingham Contemporary (2011); Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (2011), The Delfina Foundation, London (2011), Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut (2010/2011), Cittadellarte-Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella, Italy (2010), as well as Townhouse Gallery of Contemporary Art, Cairo (2005, 2003).

Shawky has received many awards for his work, including the Mario Merz Prize (2015, together with Cyrill Schürch), the Sharjah Biennial Award 2013 for an exceptional contribution, the »Award for the Filmic Oeuvre« created by Luis Vuitton and Kino der Kunst (2013), the Abraaj Capital Art Prize, joint winner (2012); Kunstpreis der Schering Stiftung (2011), as well as the Grand Prize, 25th Alexandria Biennale, Alexandria (2009). In 2011 he was an artist in residence at The Center for Possible Studies, Serpentine Gallery, London. Wael Shawky lives and works in Alexandria, Egypt, and is the founder of MASS Alexandria, a studio program for young artists.



Exclusive special editions for Kunsthaus Bregenz are a result of close collaboration with artists and their production processes.

The limited edition that has been designed by Wael Shawky on the occasion of his exhibition at the Kunsthaus Bregenz returns to a material central to his work. Glass panels, mirrored from behind, display historical maps of Mesopotamia. Motifs, Shawky has also used in building stages that have created the illusion of Islamic regions and towns. The elaborate etching technique also suggests a spatial depth and feel. The dimly perceptible motif enables this sumptuous limited edition to oscillate between a mirror and image, drawing and object.

On the occasion of the Wael Shawky exhibition at Kunsthaus Bregenz, an artist's book designed by Shawky is also being published.

KUB Online-Shop

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Upcoming

KUB Billboards | KUB Projects

KUB Billboards

Maja Čule

05 | 08 – 31 | 10 | 2016

Seestraße Bregenz

Opening

Thursday, 4 August 2016, 7 p.m.

Press preview

Wednesday, 3 August 2016, 11 a.m.

KUB Projects

Sol Calero

23 | 10 | 2016 – 15 | 01 | 2017

Curator

Eva Birkenstock

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Kunsthaus Bregenz would like to thank its partners for their generous financial support and the cultural commitment that goes along with it.



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Opening Hours

Tuesday to Sunday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Thursday 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Ticket Office ext. -433

Summer Opening Hours

16.07 – 31.08.2016 | 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Ticket Office ext. -433

Assumption Day, 15.08. | 10 a.m. – 8 p.m