

No Man's Land / Everybody's Land – Glaring in Defiance

Three-days of film screenings exploring partitions at T2F – The Second Floor
On the occasion of 'Lines of Control' an exhibition project by Green Cardamom

"Last night I dreamt of this river. Come monsoon and it swells with defiance. Playful, unruly and rebellious it refuses to circumscribe the land on its either side. It runs amok upsetting all and assuming nothing except its own freedom. Seeing it make a mockery of its given role of a boundary, even I want to re-draw my maps every season."

(Sequence from "Temporary Loss of Consciousness", D: Monica Bhasin; India - Bangladesh Border, Padma River)

No Man's Land / Everybody's Land – Glaring in Defiance deploys Saadat Hasan Manto's literary proposal as the conceptual starting point for a cinematic exploration of partitions, of the borders and walls, the enforced enclosures and migrations that these engender and the ways of being that result from negotiating those frontiers.

Over three days a series of screenings is leading us back into different corners and layers of histories to create a ground from which to think the traps and potentials of the present – and to possibly speculate upon how to further think in relation to lines. *No Man's Land* ... is hereby not following a nostalgic path nor does it seek a representation of historical events. Instead, it seeks to borrow from Manto's stories the choice to refuse a given logic, a given order of the sensical and the non-sensical.

No Man's Land ... proposes a cinematic dialogue between films from different geographical and time contexts - South Asia, the Middle East and Europe - not to compare regions or to generalize but to open up a possibility to think about the lines closest to us through the perspective of the ones that seem far off. It is to not only accentuate known historical and political relations between those places but to maybe find unforeseen ones. The chosen films address, in a necessarily eclectic and fragmental manner, particular aspects of the different histories and presents which are shaped, defined - often violently so - by the drawing of lines and the marking of spaces. The condensation of stories might allow creating a momentary space from which partitions can be thought of through multiple ways of speaking and may thereby provide touch stones from which to think and discuss very timely pressures we live by. The curator's cultural background, the fact that partitioned lives never happen only elsewhere and can thus not be talked about as Other, was an additional underlying drive for the diverse choices and the insertion of instances of inclusions, exclusions and appropriations from the site of Europe.

On 9th November 2009 Germany will commemorate 20 years after the downfall of the wall that divided East and West Germany. It is a coming together of two separate histories, which is often addressed through the gains and losses that a nevertheless governed process of becoming-one, once again, provoked. Stressing the politics of image making is here thought to evoke reflections on the 'before' and 'after' and their

different ways of relating to The Wall.

No Man's Land / Everybody's Land – Glaring in Defiance also stresses the difficult and productive ways of making and looking at images as a form of civic engagement. Many of the works are investigating whether evidence of partitioned lives is decipherable in the visible or non-visible; they work in between defying the image and returning to it with a sense of fidelity. Their defiance can be to continue to make and show moving images and their refusal can be to deprive the viewer of images, to not give the testimonial image, to not reproduce the anthropometric relation between seeing and knowing, between truth and the image, between the onlooker and the one to-be-looked at. The relation between the deployment of images and the workings of frontiers addresses us as image makers and spectators in specific and challenging ways.

No Man's Land ... is thus an experiment and an invitation to go on a cinematic journey. A travel that might foster an exilic state of mind where individual and collective stories, sounds and images, make us stop and glare at the particular fabric of lines; at lines that enforce departures, fragmentations, occupations and lines that seek to find old and new relations. The films are interwoven and thought to create an unwieldy narrative over three days. They are arranged so that they might communicate on the level of the questions they ask and how they ask them. Films will be introduced and ample time will be given for open discussions.

Concept and presentation by Nicole Wolf

With heartfelt thanks to:

All the filmmakers who have provided their films and thoughts!

Special thanks for suggestions and advice to Kay Dickinson, Nanna Heidenreich, Conny Klauss, Alisa Lebow, Stefanie Schulte Strathaus and Florian Wuest. And many thanks to Green Cardamom.