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Sarah Dornhof is a postdoctoral fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin. She received her PhD in Cultural Studies & Anthropology from the Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder. Her current research examines contemporary art and cultural politics in Morocco in relation to questions of the public sphere. Among her publications are Alternierende Blicke auf Islam und Europa: Verletzung als Rationalität visueller Politik (Fink Verlag, 2016); F(r)ictions of Art (edited together with L. Kelting & N. Graeff, Paragrana 25/2, 2016), Situating Global Art. Topologies – Temporalities – Trajectories (edited together with B. Hopfener, B. Lutz & N. Buurman, transcript Verlag, 2017 forthcoming)

Mustafa Diktaş is a PhD candidate at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris. He holds a MA in Social and cultural anthropology from the University of Hacettepe. His research interests are in culture and religion in the Levant and Anatolia. The topic of his Phd is on two shared pilgrimage sites dedicated to St George in Turkey and Lebanon.
Sencer Vardarman is a visual artist based in Berlin and Istanbul. In his artistic practice, Vardarman uses analytical research with visual abstraction to evoke critically engaged responses from viewers. In a world overwhelmed with information, data, and a huge influx of images, Vardarman seeks to not only organize this information, but also creates narratives that are fundamentally his; subjective and specific. His inherently amplified constellations aim to remind viewers that all information is authored and is ideologically charged. Vardarman’s visual approach to his subjects, whether they are weaponry or city maps, verges on the clinical. His process extends over time, stripping layers and processing information in order to get to the almost taxonomical point where all phenomena seem to resemble each other. It is only at this point of convergence that patterns of behavior, thinking, and histories emerge—this grouping gesture is at the crux of Vardarman’s practice. Among his recent exhibitions and artistic participations: 2017 Axel Obiger - Critical Mass, Berlin, Germany; 2016 Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume - Soulevements-Résistances Numériques, Online Project, Paris, France.

Marina Repezza is a PhD candidate in sociology at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS), under the supervision of Nilüfer Göle. After her studies in Communication Sciences and Cinema History at the University of Padua (Italy), she obtained a MA degree in Semiology at Paris 5 and another MA degree in "Gender, Politics, Sexuality" at the EHESS. Her master's theses were about cinema and politics in post-war France, visual communication of values for a non-profit organisation, and the representation of communist masculinity in French cinema. Her doctoral thesis is on the political dimension of contemporary art controversies in Italy and France. She is interested in visual culture, cultural studies, the relationship between art, politics, and the public sphere. She co-edited a volume on "Collective memory, subjectivities and commitment" in 2013 (special issue of the review "Emulations").

Asmaa Soliman is visiting research fellow at the European Institute of the London School of Economics and Political Science. Prior to this she has acted as Teaching Fellow at the University College London and as Research Associate for the ESRC UK-funded project Muslims, Trust and Cultural Dialogue. Soliman has an interdisciplinary and international background. She completed her bachelor degree in Arts and Culture at Maastricht University. She received her first master in Media Culture from Maastricht University and her second master in International Politics from City University London. She was awarded her PhD in 2015, which she has conducted at the Centre for Multidisciplinary and Intercultural Inquiry at the University College London. Her main research interests include everyday lived religion, Islam in Europe, religion and the arts, religion and media, religion and the public sphere, gender, intercultural communication, youth culture, identity, multiculturalism, migration, Europe-Middle East relations. Her latest publications include European Muslims’ Engagement in the Public Sphere -Soft Counterpublics (International Review of Sociology, 2016), Muslim Social Media – an Alternative Online Public Sphere (Transcript, 2015) and Young German Muslims and their Visibility in the Media (University of Cambridge-Centre of Islamic Studies, 2015). Her manuscript European Muslims Transforming the Public Sphere: Religious Participation in the Arts, Media and Civil Society will be published by Routledge this year.

Peter Ronald deSouza is a professor at CSDS and holds the Dr S.Radhakrishnan Chair of Rajya Sabha till April 2017. He was director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), Shimla, where he served two terms from 2007 till 2013. Subsequently, as interim director, he set up the International Center for Human Development (IC4HD) between 2013-14. He works on issues of democratic politics and in the comparative politics of South Asia. favouring an eclectic approach to unpacking the problems of politics he searches for the ‘inconvenient fact’ that troubles established ways of talking about the politics of India. He has worked on a range of themes from Panchayati Raj, to trust and political institutions, to dalits and discrimination, to the uniform civil code in India. In addition to numerous articles he has edited four books, Contemporary India: Transitions (Sage, 2000), India’s Political Parties (with E. Sridharan, Sage, 2006), Indian Youth in a Transforming World: Attitudes and Perceptions, (with Sanjay Kumar and Sandeep Shastri, Sage 2009) and Speaking of Gandhi’s Death (with Tridip Suhrud, Orient Blackswan 2010). He was one of the three principal investigators of a five nation study on the State of Democracy in South Asia (2006). He has served as an expert and consultant for the UNDP, World Bank, International IDEA, Ford Foundation and Inter Parliamentary Union. He is also a regular columnist for The Hindu, The Indian Express and Outlook. As a political theorist his abiding interest is in threats to freedom of expression in democratic polities, particularly on the issue of the threshold of offence, and on the question
Pénélope Larzillière is a social scientist, senior research fellow at the Institute for Research on Development (Paris), and associate fellow at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (Paris). Her research focuses thematically on political commitment, activism, narratives and ideologies, including extreme forms of repertoires of violence and action. She also works on artistic engagement and protest art. She has carried out extensive field research in the Middle East (Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon). Her books include Activism in Jordan (Zed Books, 2016) and To Be Young in Palestine (Balland, 2004). She has also co-edited the journal issues “Révolutions, contestations, indignations” (Socio, 2013), and “Faut-il désoccidentaliser l’humanitaire”, (Humanitaire, 2010). She has been associate fellow at the French Institute of the Near East (IFPO Amman), and visiting fellow at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut (AUB). She sits on the steering committee of the Institut d’études de l’Islam et des sociétés du monde musulman (IISMM) and the editorial board of the review Socio.

Sarp Kerem Yavuz, born in Paris in 1991 and raised in Istanbul, is a multimedia artist working primarily with photography, light projection, and video. His works explore various aspects of gender, politics, religion, and violence. He is the recipient of several international accolades, including the 2016 Palm Springs Photo Festival Emerging Photographer award, presented by Leica Camera, the 2013 New Artists Society Award from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the 2013 Leah Freed Memorial Prize. In 2013, he became the youngest artist to exhibit and be included in the permanent Photography Collection of the Istanbul Modern Museum. His works are also included in The Luciano Benetton Collection as part of Imago Mundi, in the permanent collection of the Norton Museum in Florida, USA, the CICA Museum in South Korea, The Impossible Worlds Collection in Berlin, the Soho House Collection in Istanbul, and The Marmara Hotel Collection in New York. He has been in over 30 exhibitions in Copenhagen, Sydney, Shanghai, New York, Chicago and Istanbul. He is represented by Chicago-based Carl Hammer Gallery in the United States and Singapore-based Yavuz Gallery in Asia and Australia. He lives and works between Chicago, Los Angeles and Istanbul.


Nadia Fadil is an assistant Professor at the IMMRC (Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre) at the University of Leuven. After having obtained a PhD at this same institute, She has been affiliated as a Postdoctoral Jean Monnet Research Fellow at the European University Institute (2008-2009) and a Visiting Fellow at the University of California Berkeley (2011-2012) and have been a FWO Postdoctoral fellow at the KU Leuven (2009-2012). Her primary research interest pertains to the presence of Islam as a lived and embodied reality in Europe. Her current project deals with the ways in which subjectivities of Maghrebi background constitute themselves as “Muslims” through a distinct and heterogeneous engagement with the Islamic tradition. More broadly, her theoretical interest extends to questions of subjectivity and power, ethical selfhood, postcoloniality, race and secularism. On this questions, she has published extensively in academic journals (such as Social Anthropology, Feminist Review or Ethnicities) and written various book chapters in edited volumes. She has also written on the policies of integration in Flanders, on which she co-authored a book (Leeuw in een Kooi. De Multiculturele verbeelding in Vlaanderen, 2009) and has been engaged amongst various minority organizations involved with the politics of integration in the field. She is also the PI of the research project “Redefining Home” which started in February 2015 and seeks to understand new mobility patterns amongst second and third-generation Maghrebi Muslims from Europe to the UAE and Montreal.
Gökçe Tuncel is a PhD student in sociology at EHESS. She holds an MA degree on Alternative Media Studies and Collective Action from the University of Paris 8. She is interested in social movements, public sphere, media studies and political agency. Her co-authored book *Mobilisations numériques: Politiques du conflit et technologies médiatiques* (Presses de Mines) and her article on the politicization process of the ultras in the Gezi movement will be published in 2017. She is currently working on an empirical study of the Gezi movement for her PhD thesis and working as a research assistant in PublicDemoS Project.
Abstracts

Judit Carrera, director of the European Prize for Urban Space, columnist for the newspapers El País and Ara and, since 2011, full member of the Culture Council of the City of Barcelona

Artistic intervention for democratizing city life

Urban public spaces as paces of meeting and conflict with difference and the power of architecture, urban planning and artistic interventions as potentially democratizing tools for city life. My reflection will be based on the experience of the European Prize for Urban Public Space (publicspace.org).

Sarah Dornhof, postdoctoral fellow at the Freie Universität Berlin

Public Art and everyday resistance: Case of the monument installation in Dresden

My paper is concerned with frictions between public art forms and performative forms of public assembly. I will discuss the recent example of Manaf Halbouni’s installation “Monument” in the city of Dresden: an installation of three discarded busses erected upright just next to Dresden’s famous anti-war monument ‘Frauenkirche’. Halbouni’s installation can be interpreted as a monument of everyday resistance in the context of the war in Syria, but also as an act of resistance against the populist PEGIDA movement in Dresden that best represents the recent anti-immigration and anti-Islam sentiments in Germany and whose protest was also strongly present during the inauguration of Halbouni’s public art work. Taking this example of tension between an art work, a form of public manifestation, and different ways of remembering the war, I would like to analyze the different modes and functions of the ‘public’ which are at play within this complex of public art and assembly.

Mustafa Diktaş, PhD candidate at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris

Public space and hybrid spirituality: Aya Yorgi in Istanbul

Experience of a public space is shaped by the simultaneous co-existence of people and their performances. Pilgrimage is such a performance which is central to the public realm. It involves mass movement, interactions and manifestation of religious or spiritual practices in public space. Consequently public space gives a character to the pilgrimage and in return pilgrimage shapes the dynamics and the frontiers of the public space. This research is based on my study of the Aya Yorgi Pilgrimage in Istanbul. Aya Yorgi (Saint George) is an old Greek orthodox church situated in Buyukada (Prinkipo) in Istanbul-Turkey. As a touristic spot in Istanbul with its beautiful nature, splendid civil architecture and romantic atmosphere, Büyükada welcomes both local and foreigner visitors for the weekends and daily excursions. Aya Yorgi church is such a highly recommended place that people almost never leave the island without seeing the church. Therefore all around the year it is open to the visitors. You can always see people climbing the path to the church anytime of the year. But the feast days are unbelievably crowded. The relatively small island hosts tens thousands of people on these days. Every year on the feast day of Aya Yorgi (st George) which is 23rd of April, thousands of pilgrims (vast majority are Turkish Muslim woman) flood into the island to participate in this big folk event. This study is an outcome of my participation in the ritual as, both, an anthropologist and a pilgrim. I focus on the church and its neighborhood as existing public spaces and their spontaneous impact on the pilgrimage and the pilgrims. From this perspective, I investigate the broader role of Aya Yorgi as a public space in a shared community ritual, shaping a common memory and its significance in shaping new art forms.
**Sencer Vardarman**, visual artist based in Berlin and Istanbul

*Image archive of Gezi protests*

My work consisted in constituting an archive of more than 10,000 images, texts, screenshots and videos collected from social media networks during the Gezi Park movement therefore I proceeded to a selection of the archive and compiled it in a video-slide show. The work has been exhibited in NGBK Berlin as a dual-screen-video-installation and during the 9th Berlin Biennale through an interactive online slide show. The study has a narrative structure that describes step by step the course of the protests and the emergence of socially prominent images and cults. It also includes numerous ironical posters and illustrations created definitely by professional designers spread throughout social media platforms. The work is composed of two distinct categories. In the first category, I gave priority to point out the humour, the solidarity and the creative aspects stemming from demonstrations. In the second category, I featured individuals and groups, who undertook actions for the documentation and archive of the events by conducting independent journalism, facing the biased attitude of the mainstream media, cruelly criticizing or even ignoring the protests. The second category also contains some results of a detailed public opinion poll that provides statistical information about the demonstrations.

Marina Repezza, PhD candidate in sociology at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS)

*The Mosque: Contemporary Art and the Question of Separation. Analysis of a controversy at the 56th Venice Biennale*

The installation of the artwork "The Mosque", by Swiss artist Christoph Büchel at the 2015 Venice Biennale triggered a public controversy in Italy. The artwork, which was designed in the form of a functioning mosque, was shut down by the police quickly after its installation. I propose an analysis of this debate in the Italian media in order to understand around which subjacent themes this controversy articulated itself. I will then draw upon an equally censured case, the installation of "The Cube" by German artist Gregor Schneider that could not be exposed at the 2005 Venice Biennale. Scrutinizing these two cases, the aim of this paper is to explore the limits and entanglements between art and life, public and private, secular and religious, or complete dissolution of these dichotomies.

Asmaa Soliman, visiting research fellow at the European Institute of the London School of Economics and Political Science

*Emerging Counterpublics: German Muslim Female Artists Challenging the Public Sphere*

This paper examines three young German Muslim female artists and their arts series 'Three Women x Three Projections'. A qualitative analysis shows that their public engagement can be seen as an example of counterpublics, which offers them a space to challenge negative mainstream discourses about Muslim women in Germany. Two main features of counterpublics can be found. First, Muslim women experience exclusions and misrepresentations by the mainstream public, which have prompted them to create their own public. An obvious frustration with the mainstream public comes to the fore. The Habermasian rhetoric of a neutral, accessible and democratic public does not seem to find resonance. Second, the circulation of Muslim self-representation and of alternative identities challenging mainstream representations of Muslim women plays a crucial role. The normality of female Muslim identity is conveyed and it is associated with positive features, moving away from negative identity representations.
Peter Ronald deSouza,

From celebrated artist to villain: the paintings of MF Husain

As the aspirations of democracy become part of the vocabulary of the Indian public discourse contradictions begin to emerge that require our attention. One of the areas where such contradictions are most intense is in the domain of expression, when claims of offence come into conflict with the rights of free expression. Such instances have been increasing in independent India. This should be seen as a measure of the greater mobilization of different publics along the politics of identity. One of the most controversial cases was that of the artist MF Husain whose biography records his transformation from celebrated artist to national villain. My paper will be a discussion of the MF Husain case looking at the issue of offensive expression in a plural democracy.

Pénélope Larzillière, social scientist, senior research fellow at the Institute for Research on Development (Paris), and associate fellow at the School of Advanced Studies in Social Sciences (Paris)

Artistic Testimony and Commitment: Perspectives on political art in the Middle East

How to create, and carry out artistic work in political contexts that have been afflicted by violence at their very heart? How do artists find themselves a space and a role within them? Are specific expectations applied to works produced in this type of context? The various forms of political violence, from situations of authoritarianism, to coercion and civil war that have left their scars on the Middle East translate into their artistic scenes, influencing works and their contents. This has involved the dramatization of questioning on artistic engagement. Testimony represents one of the main forms of this artistic engagement. It meets national and globalized expectations vis-à-vis these artists, in a form of framing of the role of artists but also in a process borne from their own existence, faced with the urgency of these situations. From the artistic testimonial of an ‘us’, to the creation of a narrative and collective identity symbols, to a singular testimony that performs these subjectivities of suffering which have been deeply marked/wounded through these contexts, different registers of testimonial exist. Examples of these facets will be given by tracing back the experiences of some Middle Eastern visual artists and in presenting their work.

Sarp Kerem Yavuz, multimedia artist

Daddy Issues & Middle Eastern Politics

I have spent my entire life terrified of becoming my father, a theater director whose absence shaped me. Growing up in Istanbul, traditional notions of masculinity eluded me, while the casual homoeroticism of everyday interactions blurred the lines between what I thought I was supposed to become, and what I was permitted to be, as a young man. My journey as a visual artist was largely triggered by a mixture of resentment towards my father, and the absence of heteronormative patriarchal figures in my life, and my struggle to locate myself between ideals of Middle Eastern and Western masculinity. Since the Gezi Park Protests of 2013, during which my father, who is a well-known leftist voice of dissent and a prominent figure in the arts, was targeted and physically assaulted by the Turkish police, my artistic practice has shifted to address the growingly conservative and nationalistic political landscape, where contemporary political discourse celebrates a reinterpreted, idealized, and often times brutal Ottoman rule. The majority of my current work employs patterns scanned from various tourism publications put out by the Turkish government, as well as designs from Blue Mosque and Hagia Sophia, projected provocatively onto naked figures illuminated in darkness. Depicting the human is taboo in Islamic culture, and ornamental geometry and fractal art have developed as a result of this ban. In breaking this rule by using the very product it has created, I seek to challenge the residual Ottoman mentality that unquestioningly embraces a totalitarian regime, to talk about the erasure of individual identity in Turkey.
Camil Ungureanu, associate Professor (Profesor agregado interino) of Political Philosophy and Coordinator of the MA in Political Philosophy (2011-today) at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Nihilism, religious fantasy, and humor in Michel Houellebecq’s “Soumission”

In Submission (2015), Houellebecq abandons his earlier belief in the death of God and substitutes the Comtean fiction of a new “positive religion” (The Elementary Particles, 1998; The Possibility of an Island, 2005) with an imaginary Islamic Leviathan taking over Europe. Submission is, according to a common interpretation, an Orwellian critical dystopia forewarning against the affinity between nihilism and religious authoritarianism. In contrast, I argue that Submission is a regressive phantasy in which biological scientism and the illusion of reconstituting a socio-religious totality are summoned against Enlightenment and modern humanism. Furthermore, I compare the nihilism of the “last man” in Submission to Houellebecq’s earlier treatment of nihilism in The Possibility of an Island; the latter preserves a fragile but essential connection to the values of humanism: reciprocal love, individual freedom, truthfulness, and the search for real-life experiences.

Nadja Fadil, assistant Professor at the IMMRC (Interculturalism, Migration and Minorities Research Centre) at the University of Leuven

Why we (need to) condemn. Investigating the calls for ‘auto critique’ after the Paris and Brussels attacks.

This paper looks at the genre of ‘critiques’ that have been produced into the Francophone public sphere after the recent attacks in Paris and Brussels in 2015-2016. The events in Paris have seen an unprecedented mobilization of Muslim public intellectuals expressing their public denunciation of what they consider pathological religious tendencies within the Muslim community, such as Salafism. Furthermore, after the attacks in both Paris and Brussels, many Muslim civil organizations felt the need to come out to publicly denounce these attacks. In this paper, I wish to inquire into these attitudes through the lens of ‘public critique’. I take these expressions of de-solidarization both as a particular genre as well as productive of particular subjectivities. I will argue that such critiques cannot simply be viewed as an effect of ‘interpellation’ by dominant discourses, but in many cases also resonate with a series of conversations that are internal to the Muslim tradition. I will try to reflect on the paradoxes and dilemma’s they generate – especially as these forms of critiques in many cases collude with contemporary forms of racialization of Muslims as “others”


Law and affective order: Entanglements of religious feelings and secular affects

Islam makes law in Europe and then unmakes it. Following the heated controversies that have emerged regularly during the last three decades problematizing various aspects of Islamic presence in Europe, many countries implement regulations defining legitimate and illegitimate practices in the public sphere. Whilst cloaked in legal terms of universality, these regulations and laws often seem to particularly target Muslim practices. Certain (Muslim) clothing and rituals considered to be unacceptable are by this token rendered illegal through law making, i.e. banning the headscarf at schools. These laws that illegalize bodily practices of Muslims in Europe however, in turn become subject to public critique and controversy. At time they can be overturned, even within a short period of time. In this paper, I would like to give an account of two legal cases in France and in Germany where the local laws were made to restrict Muslim practices and then abolished: the ritual circumcision ban in Cologne and the so-called burkini ban in various municipalities in France. Through an analysis of those examples of (un)making of law, I intend to demonstrate the role of the public sentiments, which I will conceive of as secular affects, intertwined with law and order as an essential element in defining the contours of the permissible as a precarious and changing category. While placing the feelings and affects in public, thus in the impersonal, I hope to shift the issue from the dominant understanding of personal feelings of religious minorities and their offense to a more encompassing conception of a relational approach based on affect that goes beyond the individual feelings as personal experience.