

Press release

Nida Sinnokrot | *Horizontal Cinema*

26.11.2022–19.01.2023

Opening: Friday, 25 November, 2022, 6 – 9 pm

Following *Expand Extract Repent Repeat* (2018), carlier | gebauer presents the second solo exhibition by Palestinian-American artist Nida Sinnokrot in Berlin.

At the heart of the exhibition, we find the interactive 16mm film installation *When Her Eyes Lifted* (2016). It is part of the cinematographic apparatus body of work developed by Sinnokrot, for which the artist coined the term *Horizontal Cinema*. The installation comprises three modified projectors turned on their side and arranged on a wooden box so as to form a kind of semicircle. This wooden box and the accompanying motor system built from analog and digital components are in turn placed on a carpet in the center of the room. The three-meter-long film reel that runs through all three projectors is thus shown in a horizontal position instead of the usual vertical orientation. This is further emphasized by the visible perforations at the projection's upper and lower edges. Since the projectors don't have shutters, each individual frame is frozen within its respective borders—as in Muybridge's early motion studies, movement emerges in the cumulative progression of individual frames. The film is projected onto three screens arranged separately in the room, which creates an additional layer of fragmentation. The fact that the image we see appears upright—that is, vertical—despite the horizontal projection is due to the fact that Sinnokrot operated the camera at a 90-degree angle during filming. We see a woman pulling on a chain to open a heavy shutter door; the scene is accompanied by the rattling sound produced by the motors and the film reel running through the projectors. Since the playback speed responds through sensors to the movement of the people in the room, the noise can increase to a machine-gun-like staccato—and subside again as soon as the room quiets down. As the film loops and the door—the shutter—is repeatedly opened in a Sisyphean effort, the image before our eyes increasingly disintegrates due to the scratches that develop on the surface of the film stock.

This technical operation has something profoundly violent about it given the device's mechanism, which provokes fragmentation and slow degradation. Its origins can be traced back to Sinnokrot's biography, as well as his concern with colonial history, cinema, and the politics of technology. The son of Palestinian parents, Sinnokrot grew up in Algeria and studied in the United States. He currently lives in East Jerusalem. Displacement, uprooting, sectioning, and fragmentation are expressed in almost all of Sinnokrot's works; rather than showing violence, he is concerned with exposing its structural mechanisms, material reality, and mediatic perception. Similarly to *Horizontal Cinema*, the segmentation of a shipping container used in a West Bank construction site (the work *Jonah's Whale* (2014) was the focus of his last exhibition at the gallery) produced an optical dissection into individual frames of how the landscape could be seen through its cross-sections.

When Her Eyes Lifted is predominantly a physical experience, whose focus is on the machinery and the sound it produces. It makes us aware of our agency, power, and helplessness as viewers. Our mere presence is able to control the playback speed (although our control is lost as soon as there are multiple people in the room); at the same time, each step we take adds further scratches to the film stock. The sequence of ephemeral images, which become brighter and brighter as they unfold, is jarring—as if one were stumbling into the next.

The film's three temporal levels play out simultaneously before our eyes, with past, present and future collapsing into one another. The split loop evokes Edward Said's "Contrapuntal Consciousness," described as the simultaneous perception of multiple perspectives and chronologies. *Horizontal Cinema* deconstructs the cinematic illusion while revealing the transformative interrelationship between viewers and celluloid.

Eva Scharrer.

Nida Sinnokrot (b. 1971) is a Palestinian-American artist whose work explores how various forms of power and bias are embedded in dominant narrative structures and attendant articulations of time and space. Working across film, video, photography, sculpture, installation, and agriculture, Nida seeks to expose and cannibalize -through tactile, tactical and material acts of technical and conceptual detournement- various technologies of control that give rise to shifting social, political and environmental instabilities. His works have been featured in exhibitions including *Nida Sinnokrot* at Kunst-Station Sankt Peter, Cologne, (2019-2020); *Expand Extract Repent Repeat* at carlier | gebauer in Berlin (2018-2019); *Exquisite Rotation* at KIOSK in Ghent (2018); the Sharjah Biennial 13 (2017); Taipei Biennial, Taiwan (2016); *Art in the Age of Asymmetrical Warfare*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, Netherlands (2015); *Tea with Nefertiti*, Mathaf; Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris; Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, Spain; Staatliches Museum Ägyptischer Kunst, Munich (2012-2014); Biennale Cuvée, World Selection of Contemporary Art, Linz, Austria (2010); Sharjah Biennial 9 (2009); *Never-Part: Histories of Palestine*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (2008-2009); *The Jerusalem Show*, Al Ma'mal Foundation, Jerusalem (2008); *When Artists Say We*, Artists Space, New York (2006); and the first museum exhibition in the United States devoted to the contemporary art of Palestine, *Made in Palestine*, Station Museum, Houston; SomArts Cultural Center, San Francisco; T.W. Wood Gallery and Arts Center, Montpellier, US and The Bridge, New York (2003-2006). Nida's first feature film, *Palestine Blues* (2006), a documentary on Palestinian farmers' struggles in a disappearing landscape, screened in over thirty festivals worldwide and won seven awards for Best Documentary. Nida is a co-founder of Sakiya - Art | Science | Agriculture, an international residency program and research platform in the West Bank village of Ein Qinya, and a faculty member of MIT's Art, Culture and Technology Program (ACT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts.