



PRESSEINFORMATION
PRESS RELEASE

**Say Shibboleth!
On Visible and Invisible Borders**

Press conference: Mon | May 27, 2019 | 11am
Opening: Tues | May 28, 2019 | 7pm
Duration of exhibition: May 29, 2019–Feb. 23, 2020

Despite talk about globalization and the international community, new border fences and walls are being erected all over the world—around states, occupied territories, and exclusive gated communities, between public and private spaces, between the legal and the illegal. Some of these borders are permeable and others fatal, some are visible and others reinforced by cultural codes, language tests, or biometric methods. Borders decide about life and death, “identity” and “otherness,” belonging and exclusion.

*And the Gileadites took the fords of the Jordan against the Ephraimites; and it was so, that when any of the fugitives of Ephraim said: Let me go over, the men of Gilead said unto him: Art thou an Ephraimite? If he said: Nay; then said they unto him: Say now “Shibboleth” and he said “Sibboleth”; for he could not frame to pronounce it right; then they laid hold on him, and slew him at the fords of the Jordan; and there fell at that time of Ephraim forty and two thousand.
(Judges 12:5–6)*

Starting from the biblical story of the Ephraimites’ escape from the victorious Gileadites and their slaughter on the banks of the River Jordan, the Jewish Museum Munich has invited international artists to critically reflect upon borders around the world.

The exhibition

From May 29, 2019 onward the Jewish Museum Munich will be staging “Say Shibboleth! On visible and invisible borders”—an exhibition that has been devised in collaboration with the Jewish Museum Hohenems. Curated by Boaz Levin, twelve international contemporary artists have taken a critical look at the phenomenon of the border. Large-format photographs, object installations and video works will be shown. The artworks will be complemented by audio points that focus on the subject of fleeing and borders as experienced by residents from Munich in the 1930s and 1940s. The installation “Say Parsely” by Caroline Bergvall has been re-interpreted and expanded especially for the exhibition in Munich.

The exhibition extends over all levels of the Jewish Museum. A large-format installation by the photographic artist Arno Gisinger awaits visitors in the foyer. On the second upper level seven works, thematically divided into three sections –“Un/Natural Borders,” “Europe: Union or Fortress” and “Capital and Labour”–are to be seen. These include video installations by Ovidiu Anton, Pınar Öğrenci, Fiamma Montezemolo, and Ryan Jeffrey/Quinn Slobodian, photographic installations by Mikael Levin, Leon Kahane, and Fazal Sheikh, as well as a room installation by Vincent Grunwald. A large photographic installation by Sophie Calle on borders “between private and public spaces” follows on the first upper level. There is also a multimedia work by Zach Blas on “biometric borders,” and in the last section that picks up on the subject of “Language and Borders” there are installations by Caroline Bergvall and Lawrence Abu Hamdan. Audio points, modelled on boundary stones erected on the outer borders of the German Reich in the 1930s and 1940s, can be found on all levels in the building, right down to the space occupied by the permanent exhibition.

With works by

Ovidiu Anton (Vienna), Caroline Bergvall (London), Zach Blas (London), Sophie Calle (Paris), Arno Gisinger (Paris), Vincent Grunwald (Berlin), Lawrence Abu Hamdan (Beirut), Ryan S. Jeffrey (Los Angeles) and Quinn Slobodian (Cambridge, MA), Leon Kahane (Berlin/Tel Aviv), Mikael Levin (New York), Fiamma Montezemolo (San Francisco), Pınar Öğrenci (Istanbul/Berlin), Fazal Sheik (Zurich)

Curator: Boaz Levin

Project coordination: Nikolaus Hagen

Exhibition design: Roland Stecher / Thomas Matt, atelier stecher

Exhibition catalogue

Boaz Levin/Hanno Loewy/Anika Reichwald (eds.):

Say Shibboleth! On Visible and Invisible Borders

BUCHER Verlag Hohenems-Wien-Vaduz

240 pages, 29.80 euros

ISBN 978-3-99018-470-7

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