

An Unremitting yet Gentle Point of View

In collaboration with the renowned Whitechapel Gallery in London, the Kunstmuseum Bern is presenting the first retrospective on British photographer, filmmaker, and installation artist Zarina Bhimji. With a criticism marked by gentleness and a poetic touch, Zarina Bhimji tackles the complex subjects of migration, globalization, and post-colonial history.

The artist was born in 1963 as daughter to parents of Indian descent living in Uganda, where she grew up until Idi Amin's expulsion of the country's Indian minority. Zarina Bhimji completed her art studies in London. She has been invited to participate in many international group exhibitions and was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2007.

A poetic search for traces of the past

Zarina Bhimji's work is strongly marked by her personal experiences of exile and her diverse cultural background. Her poetic films and photographs are documents of her search for traces of the past. The artist constructs fragmented narratives by interweaving personal experience and intuition with facts concerning the countries of her origins and their post-colonial history. In doing so, she formulates a subjective view of the present situation in three continents (Europe, Africa, Asia) and unveils the complex entwinement of culture, ethnicity, and politics. In her art, Bhimji does not articulate her bonds to Africa, India, and Europe by way of accusations, political analyses, or blame. Instead she engages with locations and landscapes related to her background while exploring their beauties.

Emotional honing in on truth

Bhimji addresses history and truth via poetry and beauty. The artist explains that her emphatically poetic approach is due to her skepticism toward documentary coverage as a medium for finding truth. As Bhimji says herself, she strives to express "emotional states in visual language." It is the visual beauty of Bhimji's artworks that speaks to the beholder. However, her unpeopled films and photographs are neither sentimental nor do they forcibly put things in a favorable light. And haunting soundscapes sometimes enhance her films, including a mix of snippets from newscasts, local background noise, and music. Furthermore, her art does not evade the traces of violence in history: The scars from exploded grenades in an interior, guns lined up against a wall in Uganda or walls scrawled with graffiti, and likewise the scratched-away face of a statue of Queen Victoria all allude to appalling events. Mute and profound tragedies unfold in her work. Bhimji's aloof viewpoint, her gentle perseverance in lifting the veil off hidden beauties while also exposing the scars, endeavors to be both factual and excite our interest.

The most comprehensive show of her oeuvre to date

Besides exhibits from her photographic oeuvre and her installation work (among others, loans from the Victoria & Albert Museum in London), her film *Out Of Blue* (2002) will be shown for the first time in Switzerland, and the same is true for her new film *Yellow Patch* (2011) that was produced especially for the present exhibition. For Zarina Bhimji's 25-year-long career as an artist, this exhibition – with some 30 artworks and series – is the most comprehensive show of her oeuvre to date.

Contact person: Brigit Bucher, brigit.bucher@kunstmuseumbern.ch, tel.: +41 31 328 09 21

Images: Marie Louise Suter, press@kunstmuseumbern.ch, tel.: +41 31 328 09 53

KUNSTMUSEUM BERN

MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE BERNE

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS BERNE

HODLERSTRASSE 8 – 12 CH-3000 BERN 7

T +41 31 328 09 44 F +41 31 328 09 55

INFO@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH WWW.KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

MEDIEN-SERVICE

SERVICE DE PRESSE / PRESS OFFICE

T +41 31 328 09 19/44

PRESS@KUNSTMUSEUMBERN.CH

The Exhibition

Opening: Thursday, May 31, 18h30

Duration: 01.06. – 02.09.2012

Curator: Kathleen Bühler

Entrance Fee: CHF 14.00 / red. CHF 10.00

In Collaboration with:

**Whitechapel
Gallery**

where the exhibition was shown from 19.01. until 09.03.2012.

Patronage:

Sarah Gillett CMG CVO, British Ambassador in Berne

The Catalogue



Zarina Bhimji. Hrsg. von Achim Borchardt-Hume, Kathleen Bühler und Doro Globus, Ridinghouse London 2012, Englisch/Deutsch, Farbe, 144 Seiten, ISBN 978-1-905464-51-7, CHF 28.00

The Poster



F4
89,5 x
128 cm
CHF 20.00

The Special Events (in German)

Öffentliche Führungen

Sonntag, 11h: 3. / 17. Juni, 15. / 29. Juli, 19. August, 2. September 2012

Dienstag, 19h: 5. / 19. Juni, 3. Juli, 7. August 2012

«Zeitfenster Gegenwart»: Rundgang und Gespräch mit Kathleen Bühler, Kuratorin

Dienstag, 26. Juni, 18h. Ohne Anmeldung, Ausstellungseintritt

Kino Kunstmuseum - Filmreihe zur Ausstellung

Mit dem Ausstellungseintritt kann ein Gutschein für ein reduziertes Kinoticket verlangt werden.

Kino Kunstmuseum, Hodlerstrasse 8, 3011 Bern, Reservation: 031 328 09 99. www.kinokunstmuseum.ch

- Général Idi Amin Dada: Autoportrait (F, 1974)

Barbet Schroeder, Farbe, Ton, 90 Min.

Frz. mit engl. Untertiteln. Portrait des ugandischen Diktators. 14. Juni 18h30: mit Einführung von Kathleen Bühler, Kuratorin / 18. Juni, 18h30 / 29. Juni, 18h30

- The Last King of Scotland (UK, 2006)

Kevin MacDonald, Farbe, Ton, 118 Min. Engl. mit dt. und frz. Untertiteln. Verfilmung des gleichnamigen Romans von Giles Foden

15. Juni, 18h30 / 17. Juni, 18h00 / 27. Juni, 18h30

- My Beautiful Laundrette (UK, 1985)

Stephen Frears, Farbe, Ton, 97 Min.

Engl. mit dt. und frz. Untertiteln. Spielfilm nach einem Originaldrehbuch von Hanif Kureishi

16. Juni, 18h30 / 26. Juni, 18h30 / 28. Juni, 18h30

With the support of:

**STANLEY THOMAS
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