

**Los Angeles Filmforum presents:
What We Imagine in Its Absence
Part 1: Vika Kirchenbauer**
Online, Thursday May 13 – Sunday May 16, 2021

Los Angeles Filmforum is the city's longest-running organization dedicated to weekly screenings of experimental film, documentaries, video art, and experimental animation. 2021 is our 46th year. www.lafilmforum.org

Conversation with Vika Kirchenbauer, Caroline Key, moderated by programmer Leeroy K. Y. Kang on Thursday May 27, 5:00 pm PDT (8:00 pm EDT). *The conversation will be prerecorded.

What We Imagine in Its Absence

In order to know something, must we be able to see it? If not, then how do we come to know what refuses visibility? What is imagined in what we cannot see?

This three-part program series explores these questions by engaging with the works of two artists and filmmakers **Vika Kirchenbauer** (Berlin) and **Caroline Key** (Brooklyn, NY). Within their respective practices, these artists meditate on conditions of alterity and constructions of otherness by exploring opacity as a mode of formal, conceptual, and aesthetic address.

Rather than prioritizing notions of transparency and the insistence of visual representation as a central means of capture, Kirchenbauer and Key instead call attention to the gaps, traces, and peripheries of the subjects within their works. Through utilizing forms of experimental non-fiction, essay, translation, and performance, the artists' works in this series reflect on the conditions of medicalized, institutional, and state violence and its material and affective impacts on subjects marked by racialized, gendered, classed, and sexual difference. They allow us to consider what remains unknowable, invisible, or unremembered within the limitations of the image and its production, and by doing so, reveal what often lies in plain sight -- reorienting us to other registers of perception, speculation, and impossibility.

Programmed by Leeroy K. Y. Kang

For this series we are presenting two screenings online and a conversation:

Part 1: Vika Kirchenbauer runs from May 13 - May 16, 2021

Part 2: Caroline Key runs from May 20 - May 23, 2021

Part 3: Conversation with both artists and programmer Leeroy K. Y. Kang will be on Thursday May 27 at 5 pm PDT/8 pm EDT.

All tickets include admission to the conversation on May 27.

PART 1: VIKA KIRCHENBAUER

This program features five works by Berlin-based filmmaker, artist, writer, and music producer Vika Kirchenbauer, including the Los Angeles virtual premiere of her new short film, **UNTITLED SEQUENCE OF GAPS**, which recently was awarded the German Film Critics Award for Best Experimental Film in 2020. Offering a glimpse into Kirchenbauer's wide-ranging practice, these works are interconnected through their complex negotiations of visibility as they relate to ideas of personal and collective memory/non-remembrance, politics of spectatorship, and the performative gestures by which difference is codified. These themes are explored as part of the artist's ongoing examination of the role of the participatory gaze in the maintenance of violence and institutional power structures.

Produced nearly a decade apart, **LIKE RATS LEAVING A SINKING SHIP** (2012) and **UNTITLED SEQUENCE OF GAPS** (2020) operate in many ways as companion pieces -- two essay films that offer reflections on the artist's past through first-person and polyvocal address, montage, and non-linear narrative. As the former challenges categorical distinctions between personal subjectivity and psychiatric discourse surrounding the diagnosis of gender dysphoria, the latter approaches trauma-related memory loss through reflections on light outside the visible spectrum, meditating on what is felt but never seen. These films work to examine the interiorities of trauma and the unstable devices of visibility, remembrance, and the institutionalized notions of objectivity that cipher into our everyday understandings of personal and collective history.

Continued themes of spectatorship and the politics of "looking" figure into the remaining works in the program. Produced as part of her music production project **COOL FOR YOU**, the two works **SHE WHOSE BLOOD IS CLOTTING IN MY UNDERWEAR** (2016) and **SHAME/HUMILIATION** (2018) feature Kirchenbauer's frequent use of infrared cameras in her practice, a technology most often deployed in militarized warfare. As we listen to the artist's compositions of distorted sounds and samples taken from choir harmonies (Sacred Harp music to be more specific), the presence of our gaze is laid bare -- complicating notions of consent, violence, and abjection as they relate to ambiguously gendered bodies and queer sexual practices.

In **WELCOME ADDRESS** (2017), a work commissioned by the Schwules Museum, an institution with collections focusing on LGBTQ+ history and culture, Kirchenbauer plays on confessional and exaggerated modes of address through scripted performance as a means of institutional critique. In this piece, curator Ashkan Sepahvand performs a "welcome address" assembled and scripted by Kirchenbauer as a contributing piece to the exhibition, *Odarodle - An imaginary their_story of naturepeoples, 1535-2017*, which was on display at the Schwules Museum in 2017. This piece reveals the performative practices of embracing difference and diversity as forms of currency among art institutions, and by doing so, further exposes the underlying and sinister operations of their colonial gaze.

WORKS IN THE PROGRAM



SHAME/HUMILIATION

Vika Kirchenbauer, 2018, 2 mins *Los Angeles virtual premiere



LIKE RATS LEAVING A SINKING SHIP

Vika Kirchenbauer, 2012, 24.5 mins *Los Angeles virtual premiere



WELCOME ADDRESS

Vika Kirchenbauer, 2017, 10 mins *Los Angeles virtual premiere



SHE WHOSE BLOOD IS CLOTTING IN MY UNDERWEAR

Vika Kirchenbauer, 2016, 3.5 mins



UNTITLED SEQUENCE OF GAPS

Vika Kirchenbauer, 2020, 13 mins *Los Angeles virtual premiere

TRT: 53 mins

**This program is geo-blocked to the United States*

Vika Kirchenbauer is an artist, writer and music producer based in Berlin. In her work she explores opacity in relation to representation of the ‘othered’ and discusses the role of emotions in contemporary art, labour and politics. With particular focus on affective subject formation, she examines violence as it attaches to different forms of visibility and invisibility, and considers the ways in which subjects are implicated in and situated within institutional power structures.

Her work has been presented in a wide range of contexts including Whitechapel Gallery London, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Bonn Museum of Modern Art, ICA Artists’ Film Biennial, Kunsthall Charlottenborg Copenhagen, Donaufestival Krems, transmediale festival for art and digital culture, Berlinale – Berlin International Film Festival, New York Film Festival, CPH:DOX, Images Festival Toronto, Festival du Nouveau Cinéma, Bucharest International Experimental Film Festival, European Media Art Festival and Oberhausen International Short Film Festival. She has given lectures at institutions such as New York University, Goldsmiths University of London, Otis College of Art and Design Los Angeles, the Ruskin School of Art Oxford, the University of Copenhagen, the Berlin University of the Arts, the Academy of Media Arts Cologne and the Academy of Arts Kassel.

Los Angeles Filmforum screenings are supported by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Department of Arts & Culture, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles, the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, the National Endowment of the Arts, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, and the California Community Foundation. We also depend on our members, ticket buyers, and individual donors.

Coming Soon:

May 20 - 23, 2021: What We Imagine in Its Absence / Part 2: Caroline Key

May 27, 2021, 5:00 pm PDT: What We Imagine in Its Absence / Part 3: Conversation with Vika Kirchenbauer and Caroline Key

Memberships available, \$75 single, \$125 dual, \$40 single student, \$225 silver nitrate.

Contact us at lafilmforum@yahoo.com. www.lafilmforum.org.

Become a fan on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @LosAngFilmforum #lafilmforum and on Instagram @lafilmforum