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In The Making

Traversing the project exhibition In the Desert of Modernity: Colonial Planning and After

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In the Making

Traversing the project exhibition:
In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After.

Marion von Osten

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
by due permission of the Malmö Faculty of

Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University, Sweden.

To be defended at Malmö Art Academy, May 31, 2018 at 10.00.

Faculty opponent

Dr. Lucy Cotter

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IN THE MAKING

Traversing the project exhibition: *In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After.*

The principal aim of my PhD research is to think through practices involved in the making of *In the Desert of Modernity. Colonial Planning and After* (Berlin 2008, Casablanca 2009), that constituted as well as traversed the exhibitions and went beyond. The project developed through a transnational constellation of culture producers, scholars, and activists from Berlin, Zurich, Paris, Delft and Casablanca. In the process of its experimental study mode the finding was made that European ideas on architecture and urbanism were projected onto postwar French North African colonies, where they underwent change, modification, and testing before being re-projected back onto architecture and urban planning in France and Switzerland in the late 1950s. Through the creation of a transnational network, including architects, activists and local inhabitants from Casablanca, it became evident that the construction sites of the architectural cases under investigation became sites of anticolonial revolt in 1952 in Morocco. These findings revised existing assumptions by Western scholars and called for the decolonializing of the European episteme on modernist housing and urbanism.

Completing the PhD research made me see the project exhibitions of *In the Desert of Modernity* in Berlin and Casablanca not as endpoints. Instead, this thesis addresses practices as *in continuation*, rather than *completed* through events and curatorial methods. The need to establish a mode of thinking that allows constant revision created temporalities and socialites that revealed exhibitions as a too-limited frame for analysis and for a decolonializing practice. Instead practices that transcend the "show" are discussed in six chapters focussing each on a specific site, a document, conceptual thinking or conversational dialog. I conclude that the PhD research allowed me to think through my parainstitutional practice that aims to take long durational, dialogical and material approaches and local agencies into account. From the perspective of "in the making," I imagine a new understanding of culture production that also asks for supplements of our existing institutional infrastructures.

Keywords: COLONIAL PLANNING, ANTI-COLONIAL RESISTANCE, ARCHITECTURE, ART AND POLITICS, PARAINSTITUTIONAL PRACTICE, DECOLONIALITY.

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<tr><td colspan="2">Marion von Osten is an artist, researcher and exhibition maker. She is a founding member of the Center for Postcolonial Knowledge and Culture (CPKC) and kleines postfordistisches Drama (kpD) in Berlin as well as of the media collective Labor k3000 Zürich. Beyond her artistic practice, she initiates long term research projects and exhibitions. Between 2006 and 2012, she was Professor for Art and Communication at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, and from 1999 to 2006 Professor of Artistic Practice and researcher at the Institute for the Theory of Art and Design (ith ZHDK), Zürich. Prior to that she was curator at Shedhalle Zürich (1996–1999).</td><td>ENGLISH</td></tr>
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