

EXHIBITION**«Victory over Tyranny»****Mariah Lookman****Guest Curator: Daniel Kurjaković****An exhibition with a shift and partial substitutions****Exhibition: March 5, – April 30, 2016****Artist talk: March 9, 2016, 6pm****Part 1****Opening: Friday, March 4, 2016, 6:30pm****March 5 – April 2, 2016****Part 2****Opening: Thursday, April 7, 2016, 6:30pm****April 8 – May 12, 2016**

For the exhibition *Victory over Tyranny* Pakistani artist Mariah Lookman delves into iconographies of violence. Her exhibition – featuring entirely new works made, for instance, of video collages, disused bank notes, an artist book or an embroidered shawl – examines historical and current representations of war and violence as well as forms of resistance. The works touch upon seemingly divergent aspects and topics such as ‘The Great Seal of England, 1648,’ American President Harry Truman’s announcement of the Bombing of Hiroshima in 1945, or contemporary video games. While immersive and at times confrontational, the exhibition also encompasses poetic and analytical facets, enabling viewers to explore ethical questions related for example, to states of exception in warfare as discussed in the works of Hannah Arendt, Giorgio Agamben, or Carl Schmitt.

In conceiving the works Mariah Lookman has activated a wide ensemble of references, ranging from military documents, vernacular materials on war, conflict, and violence, or historical works of other artists and poets. She has gathered thematically relevant audio and video footage from the Web to create collages of sound and moving images. These allow the viewer to examine the different aspects of the representation of power, military and the other that all share in common some aspect of the timeless theme of the virtuous versus the evil. A central question concerns how media transmit, reproduce, and alter the imagery of violence, and the kinds of information and effects implied by it. In her work, the artist rearranges and re-contextualizes the various materials at the base of her research in order to recalibrate seemingly unrelated materials within a field of simultaneous politico-ethical relevancy. Lookman herself has stated: “When we gaze at these images [of war, weapons and violence] with an often unacknowledged sense of wonder, does the distance created by the media continually shift the violence that accompanies technological accomplishment into the distant realm of sublime? What kind of geometries and spaces do these images create? And why can’t I stop watching?”

The overall, two-part exhibition includes three video works, objects, collages, prints, and an artist book. The exhibition will be shifted by early April entailing the partial substitution of works with new ones. This shift will reconfigure the works’ relationships, create alternative aesthetic constellations and reorient the visitor’s experiences in space. The artist will also present a new twin-set of editions entitled *Lale/Lori*: “Lale”, meaning ‘poppy’ or ‘red’ in Urdu, or ‘wild-lily-of-the-mountains’ in Persian, and “Lori” designating a lullaby both in Urdu and Persian. For the second part Lookman will present a new edition entitled *Red Eagle*.

Text by Daniel Kurjaković

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Mariah Lookman is a Pakistani artist and researcher. Her works cover a range of media rooted in drawing and painting. Her participation in museum shows include the group exhibitions In-Site at the Ashmolean Museum (2012) and Ruskin Shorts (2013 at Modern Art Oxford. Her research interests are art and the history of ideas with special focus on scientific ideas/inventions and the political. Mariah Lookman has a B.F.A. from the National College of Arts, Lahore, a M.A. from the Slade School of Fine Art, and a D.Phil. from the Ruskin School of Art. She lives and works between Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and the United Kingdom. Current work in progress involves setting up an artist's residency with an interdisciplinary and multi-format publication called "Art South Asia" (ASA). With residency locations in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and India, the first ASA project (2016-18) looks east towards China, along the Silk route (land and sea) as vital to the exchange of ideas that have had a forming influence on the syncretic philosophies and cultures of both South and East Asia. Mariah Lookman is the Independent Researcher for Pakistan Projects, Asia Art Archive, Hong Kong.

For the first time, Counter Space invites a guest curator, **Daniel Kurjaković**, based in Paris and Zurich, to realize an exhibition. Recent projects by Kurjaković include the transnational film program Cinéphémère for FIAC 2015, or the third issue of *Torrent* – Magazine for Source Material by Artists, which Kurjaković also founded. Concurrently with the exhibition by Mariah Lookman, Kurjaković presently is working on the inter-institutional project De-Neutralize – Global Stories from Zurich, with the publication due to be released in late May 2016. It unites newly commissioned contributions by some thirty artists, writers and historians. The project, initiated by Kurjaković, is a cooperation between the Chair for History of the Modern World/ETH Zurich, the Johann Jacobs Museum in Zurich, and both the Fine Arts Department (VBK) and the Institute for Contemporary Arts Research (IFCAR) at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). Kurjaković is a researcher, critic and longtime lecturer at the Zurich University of the Arts. In 2015-16 he has lectured at Bibliothèque Kandinsky Paris, École supérieure d'art de Grenoble, Museum Haus Konstruktiv in Zurich as well as the École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts Paris (upcoming).

Counter Space is an independent exhibition and project venue in Zurich, where contemporary and process-like methods in artistic practice are presented. The programme is curated by Angelo Romano, Linda Jensen and Tashi Brauen; Yasmin Kiss (Research and text); Vicenta Rodrigo-Jiménez (Administration).



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