

e-flux

Secession



Barat Ali Batoor, *The Unseen Road to Asylum*, 2013. Photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

UTOPIAN PULSE – FLARES IN THE DARKROOM

A research project by Ines Doujak and Oliver Ressler
Comprising of 8 Salons, In collaboration with a group of artist-curators
September 11–November 2, 2014

Salon opening: every Wednesday (September 24, October 1, October 8, October 15 & October 22)

Secession

Friedrichstraße 12
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We understand “Utopia” as an always incomplete alternative, the invocation *within* the given world of something incompatible with, and hostile to, given conditions. It is a negation of the given and a recognition of “something missing,” but also a necessarily imperfect assertion of that which *is not*—yet.

The work follows utopian projections that serve the purposes of secession from and resistance to our particular present. The “negative” or “critical” version of the utopian “impulse” is not just a matter of satire, or listing what’s wrong with the world as though listing it could change it. Utopia, rather, is the assertion of the unrealized *in and against* the real.

The first public appearance of ***UTOPIAN PULSE – FLARES IN THE DARKROOM*** was *Salon Klimbim*, orchestrated by the artist-curator Fahim Amir and Ines Doujak on January 23 in correspondence with Oliver Ressler.

Between February and September a series of seven large-scale banners (3.4 x 9 meters) has been presented on the façade of the Secession. *Urgent Alternatives: Utopian Moments* related to the uprisings occupations and social movements that have emerged in recent years. The artists were invited to focus on the utopian pulse in these actions and movements. All the artists have in common that they are directly involved in the protests they focus on in their banner, or talk from a clear, unequivocal position of solidarity with them. Katarzyna Winięcka (February), Halil Altindere (March), Wealth of Negations (April), Nobodycorp. Internationale Unlimited (May), Etcétera (June), Oreet Ashery (July) and Daniela Ortiz (August) have been commissioned to create the banners.

UTOPIAN PULSE – FLARES IN THE DARKROOM as an exhibition at the Secession is divided into seven salons. It seems urgent precisely when the potential imperfectly expressed in the salon is seen as neither a proto-public sphere—that is, one stage in an orderly evolution towards universal convivial conversation—nor pure “courtly” proprietorship, but rather as a partial breach of the prevailing order of class and gender, a disruption that cannot become the public norm because it prefigures total upheaval of what constitutes the “public” and is instead a place for the monstrous birth of new alliances.

UTOPIAN PULSE – FLARES IN THE DARKROOM brings together international cultural producers who have substantial artistic and curatorial practices. Over two months, they will show and discuss works of other artists in the gallery of the Secession every week. The contributions of the individual artist-curators will not be shown sequentially, but will productively interact with one another. The salons will open in weekly intervals. The outcomes—whatever their form—will constitute a collective challenge to the constituent roles of social actors within the field of art in more complex ways than simply as “artists,” “curators,” and “viewers”, in order to imagine new forms of exchange.

The sequence of exhibitions at the Secession consists of **Salon Public Happiness** / curated by **Christoph Schäfer** (September 11–16), **Salon-E-Girdbad** (Salon of the Whirlwind) / curated by **Mariam Ghani** (September 17–23), **Salon Orizzonti Occupati** / curated by **Bert Theis** (September 24–30), **Salon Fluchhilfe** / curated by **Zanny Begg** (October 1–7), **Salon DADADA / AND AND AND** with **Ben Morea and friends** (October 8–14), **Cuartos de Utopía** / curated by **Pedro G. Romero/Máquina P.H.** (October 15–21), and **Salón de Belleza** / curated by **Miguel A. López** (October 22–November 2).

While the exhibitions are on view, large banners created by the artist-curators will be displayed on the Secession’s façade, also in weekly alternation.