

## Check Instead: the Colonial Matrix of Power! December 8-19, 2009

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Exhibition Opening  
07.12.2009 at 19h  
Panel Discussion  
21.01.2010 at 20h

### Check instead:

the Colonial Matrix of Power!\*

\*The Colonial Matrix of Power is a concept that examines historical and contemporary coloniality. It was coined by Homi Bhabha and re-proposed by Walter Dignato. More: Marco Grillo and Walter Dignato, „De-linking coloniality from capital and patriarchy - a conversation with Walter Dignato“, in: „Aesthetik“, Issue No. 6, 2008 at: [http://www.reaktualojja.org/66-4/ENK/dec08aakt4\\_ENG\\_reign.html](http://www.reaktualojja.org/66-4/ENK/dec08aakt4_ENG_reign.html)

Sheri Avraham, Iris Borovcnik, Lina Dokuzovic, Christian Gangl, Miltiadis Gerothanasis, Ana Hoffner, Tatiana Kai-Browne, Baris Kiziltoprak, Marissa Lobo, Natasa Mackuljak, Ivana Marjanovic, Maria Muhar, Marion Oberhofer, Ervin Tahirovic, Majda Turkic, Reinhard Uttenthaler

The notion of representation in the history of exhibition production in Western Europe has often been based on sexist and racist stereotypes and is directly related to the coloniality of power. With the changes in Europe and globally over the last few decades (such as EU integration), new tendencies in the mode of representation have appeared. Forces are put together not only to investigate what the creativity of the “developing Other” is about, but also what the “developing Other’s” emancipation is about, or better yet, where the developing Other is now on the scale of the implementation of neo-liberal values.

This year, numerous exhibitions have been staged, artworks produced and symposia organized, as Europe is in the euphoria of celebrating the triumph of capitalism: the anniversary of twenty years of the fall of the Berlin Wall. One such project is the Gender Check exhibition, investigating femininity and masculinity in Eastern European art since the 1960s, initiated by the Erste Foundation at the MUMOK.



Our exhibition intervention takes such projects as a point of departure for a critical reflection of the ongoing Western investigation and control of democratic values and social emancipation in countries that recently joined, and those which are about to join, the EU (as well as in other regions). Exhibiting role models of femininity and masculinity in Eastern Europe follows a strict logic of identity politics as they make it possible to identify, fragmentize, categorize and make the Other visible, and therefore, controllable.

Parallel to that investigation and control of political values, state-legitimized racism and patriarchal models of exclusion in Western countries are perpetually reproduced. Both practices, inside and outside of Western imperial centers, follow the same logic of strengthening former colonial powers through systematic exploitation and marginalization. We can find a continuity of colonial practices in the way that the “Eastern” and “Southern” worlds are perceived as uncivilized, underdeveloped and barbaric and how migrants are constantly supervised, accused and criminalized in Western countries themselves. These institutionalized racist processes, in addition to the constructed exceptionality of Western Europe as progressive and emancipated, are never checked.

The exhibition is the outcome of the workshop that took place at the VBKÖ as part of Squatting Teachers initiative within the context of the university protests. The workshop was organized by Ana Hoffner and Ivana Marjanovic and supported by the Post Conceptual Art Practices Class, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna.

Exhibition Opening: December 7, 2009, 7pm

Duration: December 8-19, 2009

Opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 4-7pm

The workshop and exhibition are part of the VBKÖ 2009 program with a follow-up panel discussion on January 21st, 2010 at 8pm within the VBKÖ 100 year anniversary program.

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\* The “colonial matrix of power” is a concept that examines historical and contemporary coloniality and it was coined by Hanibal Quijano and re-proposed by Walter Mignolo. More: Marina Grzinic and Walter Mignolo, “De-linking Epistemology from Capital and Pluri-versality,” [Reartikulacija, No. 4, 2008](#)

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