

# Aggressive Peace

Elke Auer & Yorgia Karidi,  
Secretariat for Ghosts,  
Archival Politics and  
Gaps (SKGAL),  
Selma Doborac

15/5—8/6 2022

Kunstraum  
Memphis



- 1 Secretariat for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps (SKGAL) “Entrüstet Euch”
- 2 Elke Auer & Yorgia Karidi, “Leaking Vessels”
- 3 Selma Doborac, Memphis Light Box

# Aggressive Peace

For decades, a fundamental pacifist consensus was the inviolable basis for security, stability and prosperity in Western societies. What has remained of it? Starting from this question, five artists approach the fragile fiction of peace. The list of demands of the International Peace Movement serve as a reference space, as do the anti-militarist actions of feminist and anti-war movements of the 1970s to ,90s; aspects of binary gender role attributions in conflict situations; what it means to be a „un-peaceful“ woman; the influence of visual language and propaganda; and the perpetual question of in what kind of world we actually want to live in. The different artistic approaches complement each other through juxtaposing archival materials and current perspectives. Hovering over everything is the question of individual agency. Once again it becomes clear that it is womxn who are the first to be silenced in conflicts; once again it shows that it is above all voices of womxn who call, time and again, for the need of resistance against authoritarian structures, war and violence.

\*The international peace movement has been calling for global disarmament, international arbitration and efficient international law since the 1880s. In 1920, the League of Nations began its work in Geneva; since 1945, under the impression of the world wars and the Vietnam War, civil society pressure for peaceful conflict resolution reached a peak, and by the end of the 1960s, „Make love not war!“ was the slogan of an entire generation and of global pacifist impact. Peace and disarmament agreements such as SALT I

and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty were gained, and with the dissolution of the bloc states and the end of the Cold War, „perpetual peace“ — at least in Western democracies — seemed guaranteed. Nonetheless, the Gulf and Iraq wars led to impasses in peace policies, and in the meantime conventional war between hostile nations has faded into the background.

Since 9/11, new forms of military struggle have been legitimized as acts of ‚counter-terrorism‘. It is only ostensibly about ideological or religious sovereignty of interpretation; still all revolves around territorial supremacy and resources: water, land and natural resources. The legacy of colonial history and the unfulfilled promise of global peace challenge our self-conception and privilege. At the same time, doubts about pacifism are being raised in Western civil society. There is growing acceptance of authoritarian structures, demands for rearmament and a longing for the ‘strong man’. Since Donald Trump’s withdrawal from the treaty on February 1, 2019, the bilateral agreements on global disarmament are history, and after not even 40 years, the use of nuclear weapons on European soil is no longer conceivable. The demands of the peace movement are more pertinent than ever.

# Secretariat for Ghosts, Archival Politics and Gaps (SKGAL)

## 1 ENTRÜSTET EUCH

Black and white copies, colour prints, texts printed on coloured paper

SKGAL works with flyers from STICHWORT, the Archives of the Women's and Lesbian's Movement in Vienna, that were produced for feminist peace actions.

Dating from 1979 to 1992, the flyers show how the work of feminist groups overlapped with various peace movements. From the North to the West, from the South to the East, from concerts to camps, from information evenings to demonstrations, from quizzes, peace songs, regular tables to peace marches, they document an array of actions and strategies for demanding global peace. They point to the past and offer a glimpse into the future.

STICHWORT was founded in 1983, at a time when the peace movement in Europe mobilized anew. Legitimizing the deployment of new nuclear missiles in Western Europe, the NATO Double-Track Decision of 1979 was one of its triggers. In the 1980s the arms race between the NATO countries and the Soviet Union took on new momentum. The flyers from the archive demonstrate a diverse commitment to peace — the concerns, demands and means of protest, often transcending the borders of nation-states and language barriers. Likewise, the documents emphasize the importance of the STICHWORT archives themselves: Only if archives have collected documents and have made them accessible, we are able to engage with the hi/herstory/ies of resistance and protest.

In SKGAL's installation, black-and-white copies of the flyers are attached on

SKGAL in collaboration with Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski, Lina Dokuzović, Margit Hauser and Sassy Splitz.

In cooperation with STICHWORT. Archives of the Women's and Lesbians' Movement.

Photography: Julia Gaisbacher

the walls and windows of the Memphis artspace. They convey the aesthetic and thematic diversity of various actions of the peace movement. SKGAL work with a group of archivists, theorists, artists, and activists with whom they have been in exchange for some time. Together, they delve deeply into a selection of documents: Colour photographs of the flyers next to texts printed on coloured paper reveal perspectives and questions for the present.

Due to their unwavering relevance three posters from Great Britain announcing peace actions leave archivist and designer Ego Ahaiwe Sowinski with an eerie feeling and triggering questions about peace and archives.

Archivist and theorist Margit Hauser writes about the collages on one of the many flyers by the women's movement and peace activist Hermi Hirsch and how the flyer — twice in red, once in green — came to STICHWORT. From 1978 to 1983, Hirsch's Beisl, a pub in Vienna's city centre, was the meeting place of her association Frauen für den Frieden Wien [Women for Peace Vienna].

An announcement of the Initiative for Croatian-Serbian Peace Dialogue calls to reflect upon images of war and upon images or characteristics that are "created to be attributed to the enemy." The flyer for the „Information Evening for Women“ in Graz from 1992 arouses Lina Dokuzović's own memories of war. The theorist and activist contrasts current forms of war coverage on Ukraine with

those on the war in former Yugoslavia.

SKGAL relates the question „WHERE ARE YOU 99.98%?“ posed on a flyer of the Women for Peace in Innsbruck to the 2019 manifesto „A Feminism for the 99%“ by Cinzia Arruzza, Nancy Fraser, and Tithi Bhattacharya – drawing attention to the intersections of war and capitalism.

Using flyers from the Blockade Group that participated in protests against the transport of U.S. tanks through Tyrol during the 1991 Gulf War, archivist Sassy Splitz shows how actions in Austria are connected with wars elsewhere. In her opinion, this awareness is an important step to take action.

At a time in Europe when armed conflicts occur again, SKGAL calls to delve into the sources of the peace movement's hi/herstory/ies. Ways of distribution and emphases of demands have changed over the decades, but in the face of violent conflicts — of which war is the most destructive form — the question of how to achieve peace for all arises more than ever before.

(Text: Nina Höchtl & Julia Wieger)

Through lecture performances, workshops, texts, videos, exhibitions or programs the SECRETARIAT FOR GHOSTS, ARCHIVAL POLITICS AND GAPS (SKGAL/ Nina Höchtl & Julia Wieger) has grappled with history, history writing and archival materials in the context of art and culture since 2012. It is important for SKGAL to do so through feminist and decolonizing lenses. In their research-based practice, SKGAL delves into places, documents and objects that are largely ignored by the grand narratives of history writing. SKGAL interweaves events from different historical periods as well as materials and artistic methods in order to draw connections to the present.

[www.skgal.org](http://www.skgal.org)

# Elke Auer & Yorgia Karidi

## 2 LEAKING VESSELS or the Fear of Feminine-sounding voices

Installation and Performance

*„Putting a door on the female mouth has been an important project of patriarchal culture from antiquity to present day. Its chief tactic is an ideological association of female sound with monstrosity, disorder and death.“ (Anne Carson)*

**LEAKING VESSELS** started two years ago in Athens as a conversation between Elke Auer and Yorgia Karidi and is charged by the desire to understand the historical and cultural context of being a feminine-sounding voice in the world, of being heard as unchill.

Images of women as leaky vessels, wet, unstable and unable to contain themselves, leaking vocally, somatically, emotionally and sexually are recurrent throughout greek literature. In contrast to, as Anne Carson tells us in her splendid Text *“The Gender of Sound”*, the dry stability and verbal continence of men and the male concept of *Sophrosyne*. But a dried clay vessel, filled with water, eventually cracks, and melts into wet dirt again —a lesson in undoing rigid forms— which seems to be even more important in times of war when old gender roles are once again enforced and cemented while inflicting tremendous harm on people of all genders in the process.

### WOMEN\*, DIRT AND WATER

The recurrent greek verb of female physiology is *reô* (flow). Anne Carson writes the following about the dangers of flowing women\*:

*“If we look closely at the dilemma posed by female dirt, we will begin to see the outlines of an ideology powerful enough to shape the major details of women’s lives. (...) Physiologically and psychologically, women are wet. The assault of emotion was also thought to be an endangering wetness. Emotion pours into a person and melts, loosens, dissolves him. Fear is “wet”. Women are formless creatures who cannot or will not or do not maintain their own boundaries and who are awfully adept at confounding the boundaries of others.”*

Klaus Theweleit, who studied the diaries of the paramilitary *Freikorps*, not only elaborated in his book *“Male Fantasies”* on how misogyny is at the very root of fascism, he also shed some light on how misogyny, militarism, and anti-Semitism are driven by a fear of watery feminine flow, threatening hard invulnerable soldier bodies. An anxious, masculinist resistance to flows and flexibilities, of all sorts, used to justify violence against women\*.

*„A river without end, enormous and wide, flows through the world’s literatures. Over and over again: the women-in-the-water; woman as water, as a stormy, cavorting, cooling ocean, a raging stream, a waterfall; as a limitless body of water that ships pass through, with tributaries, pools, surfs, and deltas; woman as the enticing (or perilous) deep, as a cup of bubbling body fluids; the vagina as wave, as foam, as a dark place ringed with Pacific ridges,(...)where we are part of every ocean, which is part of every vagina (...)”*

## SPEAKING AS SELF\_REVELATION AND SINGING FOR POOR DEAD- HEADS

Audre Lorde taught us that we should use our anger and speak up because our silence is not going to protect us even though speaking is also always about self-revelation, which she admits is scary:

*„And of course I am afraid, because the transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger. But my daughter, when I told her of our topic and my difficulty with it, said, „Tell them about how you're never really a whole person if you remain silent, because there's always that one little piece inside you that wants to be spoken out, and if you keep ignoring it, it gets madder and madder and hotter and hotter, and if you don't speak it out one day it will just up and punch you in the mouth from the inside“.*

This project is about the attempt to overcome the fear of being a feminine voice in the world or how to unhinge the door at our mouths. Because we don't wanna be punched by our mad, hot truth, from the inside. Instead we would like to learn how to embrace the nervousness, the sweat and the blushing, this eruption of bodily manifestations as feminist critique. It is about breaking with the tradition of gendered speaking.

Mary Beard in her book *Women & Power* states: *“When it comes to silencing women, Western culture has had thousands of years of practice.”*

She also points out the first recorded example of a man telling a woman to shut up: Telemachus, in Homers Odyssey, telling his mother Penelope to shut the fuck up and go back up to her quarters, back to her loom, back to her work because *„speech will be the business of the men, all men, and of me most of all; for mine is the*

*power in this household.”*

For Yorgia Karidi most of her practice starts by close-listening to a voice, the most unique musical instrument and its ability to transmit unmeasurable qualities. To her the female voice is not only listened to, it also embodies a way of listening. The voice is also an ear.

For LEAKING VESSELS she studied the tradition of lament singing from the mediterranean area and lament arias from operas by central European composers. The high pitched voices traditionally attributed to women\* made her want to reach those high pitch notes of the vocal range herself. In a long process she started to teach herself to sing the aria „Poveri Fiori“ from the opera *Adriana Lecouvreur* by Francesco Cilèa, written for soprano voice, documenting her daily progress with recordings. The slowly earned access to the higher notes, the growth of her voice, the controlled release or discharge, felt empowering.

## HAPPY VESSELS

The vessels in the exhibition are inspired by two pictures from the book *“Geschichte matriarchaler Gesellschaften und Entstehung des Patriarchats”* by Heide Göttner Abendroth. One is from a neolithic passage tomb in Kergüntuil in the Bretagne, showing three-dimensional breasts coming out of the wall and a line picturing a (pregnant) belly that resembles a smiley.

The other one shows Pédras Marmúradas, neolithic ancestor stones in Sardinia.

Within the duration of the performance at the opening 22 unfired vessels, were filled up with water and slowly dissolved to release their fluid contents, broke, collapsed, spilled all over.

Just like feminist killjoys tend to do:

*„Feminist killjoys tend to spill all over the place. What a spillage.  
Feminist killjoys: a leaky container.  
And so: Be careful, we leak.“ (Sara Ahmed)*

(Text: Elke Auer & Yorgia Karidi)

**Elke Auer was born in Graz in 1980 and studied at the University of Applied Arts in Vienna. Since her diploma in 2005 she works as an artist in mostly self-organised collaborative contexts and as a video and stage designer at the theatre.**

**Studio scholarships have allowed her to work in Athens, London, Rome, Sao Paulo and New York. She exhibited in Vienna, Graz, Salzburg, Ljubljana, Berlin, Belgrade, Bilbao, Bangkok, Krakow, Sao Paulo, London and Athens, and curated several group exhibitions in the premises of the Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs in Vienna. She lives and works in Vienna.**

<http://vookoov.net>



**YORGIA KARIDI** was born in Athens 1982, and is an artist, musician and performer with a background in Theatre Studies, Philosophy and the New Media masters programme Digital Forms of Art in the Athens School of Fine Arts. Her work has been presented at Benaki Museum, Museum of Cycladic Art, Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center, Athens and Epidauros Festival, National Theater, French Institute, Goethe Institut Athens, Knot Gallery and Romantso, among others. Her sound works have been published on the labels: Nutty Wombat, Seagrave, Orila Records, Ecstatic and Bokeh Versions. She lives and works in Athens.

<http://yorgiakaridi.com>

## Selma Doborac

### 3 Memphis Light Box

Facade-Installation

On 22 February 1993, the UN Security Council resolves to establish an International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Selma Doborac presents an excerpt from one of trials in the Case Srebrenica. That extract from the court record originates from case IT-98-33-T, at issue is the cross-examination by the representative of the prosecution/the prosecutor; the accused defends himself as a witness on his own behalf. The trial lasted 98 days. The prosecution called 65 persons to the witness stand. The prosecutors presented a total of 910 exhibits. The accused was charged under Rule 18 of the ICTY charter with being guilty of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The presented extract dates to the trial period in October and November 2000. This trial conducted as the groundwork and a model for future trials and accusations in the Case Srebrenica.

In the Trial Chamber – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY before: Judge Almiro Rodrigues (Presiding), Judge Fouad Riad, Judge Patricia Wald; Registrar: Mr. Hans Holthuys; The Office of the Prosecutor: Mr. Mark Harmon, Mr. Peter McCloskey, Mr. Andrew Cayley, Ms. Magda Karagiannakis

(Text: Selma Doborac)

**SELMA DOBORAC** was born in 1982 in Bosnia and Herzegovina she lives in Vienna is a filmmaker and works in the fields of essay film, documentary film and experimental film and photography. From 2002 to 2007 study and graduation at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna, Department for Mixed Media Strategies (Bernhard Leitner). From 2008 to 2012 study and graduation at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Department for Art and Film (Harun Farocki). Festival participations and exhibitions, awards and grants nationally and internationally.

<https://www.sixpackfilm.com/de/catalogue/filmmaker/5016/>



Kunstraum  
Memphis  
Untere  
Donaulände  
12/4020 Linz  
memphismemph.is

Mon/Tue/Thu/Fri  
2–6 pm  
office@  
memphismemph.is



≡ Bundesministerium  
Kunst, Kultur,  
öffentlicher Dienst und Sport

mit Unterstützung von  
**Kultur**

