

FORUM ON

CULTURE &

POLITICS

CAIRO, 7-8 DECEMBER 2011

DOCUMENTATION





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PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 6 December 2011

19:30 - 22:00 Opening Reception at the Novotel Cairo El Borg

Wednesday, 7 December

09:00 - 10:00 Registration and coffee at the Goethe-Institut, 5 El Bustan

10:00 - 11:00 Welcome address: Gabriele Becker (Goethe-Institut)

Opening statements:

Basma El Hussein (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy)

Günther Hasenkamp (Goethe-Institut)

Keynote addresses:

Bahaa Taher (writer, Egypt)

Norbert Niemann (writer, Germany)

Conference moderation: Amira El Ahl

11:00 - 11:15 Coffee break

11:15 - 13:00 Session 1: Cultural Policies in a Changing Arab World -

An overview of the cultural policy program

led by *Al Mawred* and partners: Hanan Hajj Ali (Beirut)

Comparing Notes: The role of the *European Cultural Foundation* in this program: Philipp Dietachmair (Amsterdam)

Regional Perspectives: Mourad Kadiri (Morocco), Rana Yazaji (Syria), Huda Lutfi (Egypt)

Moderated discussion

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:30 Session 2: Alternative Visions

Tunisia: Habib Bel Hadi

Egypt: Basma El Hussein

Moderated discussion

15:30 - 15:45 Coffee break

15:45 - 17:00 Session 3: In Transition - Needs and Challenges during Democratic Transition

Moderated by Amira El Ahl

Panelists:

Emad Abu Ghazi (Cairo, Minister of Culture, resigned)

Atia Lawgali (Tripolis, Deputy Minister of Culture in the National Transitional Council)

Comments by Viola Shafik and Laila Hourani

20:00 **“The Agenda and Me” (2011), “Victory of the Martyrs” (2011),
film screenings and discussion**
with Nevine Shalaby and Khaled Abdallah

Thursday, 8 December

09:00 - 10:00 Coffee at the Goethe-Institut

10:00 - 11:00 **Session 4: Civil Society Initiatives and Cultural Policy**
Turkey - From a Cultural Policy by Default to a Cultural Policy
by Consensus? - Serhan Ada (Istanbul)
The Tunisian “Cave People” Project (Ahl Al Kahf) - Hadhri Zied
(Tunis)
Comments and questions

11:00 - 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 - 13:00 **Session 5: Social Change and Culture -**
Introductory remarks on the “15M” movement by Lupe García
Spain: María Ruido
Spain: Amador Fernández-Savater
Comments and questions

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 15:00 Greece: Kostas Spiropoulos
Greece: Marilena Simiti
Comments and questions

15:00 - 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 - 16:00 Egypt: The “Al Fan Midan” Project - Azza Elhosseiny (Cairo)

16:00 - 18:00 **Panel and open discussion:
“Culture and Society - Europe and the Arab World”**
Moderated by Sonia Hegasy (Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin)
Panelists:
Ambassador Marc Franco - Delegation of the EU to Egypt
Gemma Aubarell - Head of Programme Coordination Unit
Anna Lindh Foundation,
Wolfgang Schneider Institut für Kulturpolitik, Universität
Hildesheim
Salma Mobarak - Faculty of Arts, Cairo University
Hala Galal - Filmmaker, Producer (Coalition of Independent
Culture),
Tamer El Said - Filmmaker, Producer (Coalition of
Independent Culture)

18:00 Wrap-up and closing comments

20:00 Farewell Dinner



SPEAKERS

Amador Fernández-Savater

collaborates regularly with the Spanish newspaper Público but he is not a journalist; he cares for the publishing house “Acuarela” with other friends for more than ten years without being a professional in the world of books; he dedicates much in his life to the activity of thinking but he’s neither an intellectual, not philosopher, nor has anything in common with the academy; and he conceives the existence politically without to have been related to a party, or to consider himself now a militant or activist. The label that better squares him is the one of “editor”, because his activity accompanies processes of thought and registers, synthesizes, coordinates and communicates fragments of speech, in order to weave lines and relations between different points of a statement, taking the voice of others to speak it from his mouth and proposing incessantly thousand conversations to think the world along with the others.



Atia D. Lawgali

was appointed Minister of Culture by the Libyan National Transitional Council. Born and raised in Benghazi, he was a student leader at Tripoli University (1971-73). He was also active in the Libyan and Arab student movements in the United States. Atiy D. Lawgali holds a MA in Sociology and a MBA in Information Systems. He has worked in the fields of Training, IT and Teaching for the last 25 years. Furthermore he has also worked in education and culture-related assignments. He is engaged in literary translation from English to Arabic in order to help young writers from many countries to introduce their work to the Arab reader. He is a regular contributor to various Arab and Libyan magazines and newspapers. He himself has published two books and several articles and research papers on history, literature, culture and society.



Azza El Hosseini

was born in Cairo and graduated in Business Administration from Cairo University in 1988 and from the Higher Institute of Cinema, Arts Academy in 1991. Started as an actress and assistant editor but then focused on directing and acting for theater, TV and cinema. She is founder of non-profit organizations and cultural spaces, a member in the syndicate of filmmakers and syndicate of acting, founder of an independent theater group and a member in many active groups and coalitions in culture, arts and community service. Azza played a leading role in El Fann Midan, a monthly cultural event in post-revolutionary Cairo, and she is the executive director of Luxor African Film Festival which will held its first edition in February 2012 in Luxor city.





Bahaa Taher

was born in Cairo in 1935. He graduated in literature from the University of Cairo. Upon being banned from writing in 1975, he left Egypt and travelled widely in Africa and Asia. During the 1980s and 1990s he lived in Switzerland, where he worked as a translator for the United Nations. His works include: *East of the Palms* (1985), *Qalat Duha* (1985), *Aunt Safiyya and the Monastery* (1991), *Love in Exile* (1995), *The point of light* (1999), *Sunset Oasis* (2007). Awards: State Award of Merit in Literature (1998); Italian Giuseppe Acerbi Prize (2000); International Prize for Arabic Fiction (2008)



Dr. Emad Abo Ghazy

was born in Cairo in 1955. He has been professor at the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, Department of Libraries, Archives and Information Science, since 2007. He is member of a number of Egyptian NGOs. In November 2010, Dr. Emad Abo Ghazy became Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Culture. He was appointed Minister of Culture in 2011, resigned from office in November.



Gemma Aubarell

has been Head of the Programme Coordination Unit of the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (Alexandria) from 2009, responsible for coordinating and planning different projects of the Foundation in intercultural dialogue. She was previously the Programme Director of the European Institute of the Mediterranean IEMed in Barcelona. Involved in the Euro-Mediterranean relations since 1990, she has been organizing and participating in international seminars and meetings on issues relating to civil society, migration, cultural dialogue and Euro-Mediterranean relations. Latest Publication: (with Andreu Claret), *Euromed Intercultural Trends 2010* (ALF, Alexandria)



Habib Bel Hédi

After running cultural centres and festivals in Tunisia between 1980 and 1985, Habib Bel Hédi specialized in theatre production with private companies. He was in charge of productions within the National Theatre of Tunisia from 1987 to 1992.

In 1992, together with Fadhel Jaïbi and Jalila Baccar, he set up Familia Productions Company where he is in charge of the production and distribution of Familia Company's theatre productions, amongst others *Les Amoureux du Café Désert* and *Soirée Particulière*. He started producing adaptations of the company's productions for television and cultural magazines and documentary. In 2007, he went into a partnership with some Tunisian film directors in order to reopen the movie theatre Africa in Tunis with a new conception and a new name ("CinémAfricart") within the distribution company Arts Distributions whose objective is to launch the distribution of films d'auteurs in Tunisia

Hala Galal

is a film director, script writer and producer. She founder and executive director of SEMAT Production & Distribution (Cairo), directed more than 18 films and produced more than 15. Her long documentary 'Women ChitChat' won the Silver Prize at the Rotterdam Film Festival in 2006. Hala Galal has participated in several local and international film festivals in recent years, and has been a guest speaker and lecturer in many festivals, conferences and workshops. Moreover, she is a member of the Cinema Committee in the Egyptian National Higher Council of Culture in Egypt.



Hanane Hajj Ali

is an actress, writer, teacher and cultural activist. She is a trainer in arts management and cultural moderation and a researcher in cultural studies and cultural policies. She is Chair of the Artistic Board of Culture Resource (Al Mawred Athaqafy, Cairo) and a founder member of SHAMS - The Cultural Cooperative Association for Youth in Theatre and Cinema (Lebanon). Her book Theatre Beirut (2010) about the history and the evolution of one of the oldest theatre venues in the Lebanese Capital, the mythical "Theatre Beyrouth", describes the relation between the metamorphosis of cultural spaces and the mutation of the city, between theatre and politics.



Huda Lutfi

trained as a cultural historian and, with her second career as a visual artist, Huda Lutfi emerged as one of Egypt's contemporary image-makers in the last decade. She received her doctorate in Islamic culture and history in 1983 from McGill University, Montreal, and has been teaching at the American University in Cairo since then. Born in Cairo, Lutfi has worked both as a visual artist and cultural historian since the early nineties until 2009, when she opted to take up visual art as her full time practice. Drawing upon the historical, cultural and local experiences of Egyptian society, she began exhibiting her artwork in the mid-1990s. Her works have been exhibited both locally and internationally.



Laila Hourani

Laila Hourani is a novelist and cultural facilitator. Her first novel ("Revelation") was published by Dar Aladab Publishing House in Beirut in 2009. She worked with the British Council and the Ford Foundation. Has academic training in television journalism. Communication and Media Assistant, UNICEF Syria (1995-1998). Syrian television correspondent (1994-1995). She has also published cultural essays in many Arab newspapers and magazines (1993-1995). She is a member of the Art Board of Al Mawred Al Thaqafy (Culture Resource). (rawafed.org)



The views expressed in this conference are entirely her own and are not intended to represent those of any institution.



Maria Ruido

is an artist, filmmaker, researcher and a cultural producer who has been working on interdisciplinary media projects since 1996. In her work, she is developing imaginaries of labor in post-Fordist societies and investigating the mechanisms that construct the memory and its relations to the different historical narratives. Teacher in at the Media Department of the University of Barcelona. Exhibitions: 19th Women International Film Festival (Barcelona, 2011); Ejercicios de memoria (Centre d'Art La Panera, Lleida, 2011), 53th Documentary Film Festival of Bilbao, 2011. Her publications include: Uqui Permui / María Ruido (eds.): *Corpos de produción: Miradas críticas e relatos feministas en torno aos suxeitos sexuados nos espacios públicos*, Santiago de Compostela, 2005; (ed.): *Plan Rosebud: On images, places and the politics of memory*, Santiago de Compostela, 2008



Dr. Marilena Simiti

is Assistant Professor of Political Sociology at the Department of International and European Studies of the University of Piraeus in Greece. She holds a Master of Arts from Columbia University and a PhD from the London School of Economics and Political Science. She has been a member of the Advisory Body of CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development) in Brussels. Her Publication include: "Central and Peripheral Non-Governmental Organizations in the International Community: The Construction of Social Networks" in: Chouliaras. A., Sklias P. (eds.) *Diplomacy of Civil Society*, Athens 2002; "Non-Governmental Organizations and European Union's Development Policy: Current Challenges and Limitations" in Xenakis D., Tsinisizelis, M. (ed.), *Global Europe The International Dimension of the European Union*, Athens: Sideris, 2006. Most recent paper: *The volatility of urban riots* (2011).



Marc Franco

Marc Franco joined the European Commission and worked in the Directorate General for Development from 1978 to 1990. He was the Head of Unit responsible for support programmes to Central and East European countries from 1990. From 1995 to 1998, he was the Head of Unit responsible for the relations between the EU and Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics, and Slovenia. From 1998 to 2001, he was the Director responsible for the Cohesion Funds and the Structural Pre-Accession Instrument (IPSA). During this period, he was seconded as Director of the EC Task Force which was in charge of the management of the EU assistance to Kosovo, where he remained until February 2000. From 2001 to 2004, he was the Deputy Director General of DG EuropeAid, the DG responsible for the implementation of the EU financial and technical cooperation instruments. From 2004 to August 2009, he was Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Commission accredited to the Russian Federation. Since September 2009, Marc Franco has been Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union accredited to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mourad Kadiri

graduated in 2000 from Mohamed V. University in Rabat. Received a diploma of cultural and educational activities from the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and a Diploma in Cultural Management from Al Mawred El Thaqafi. He was a counselor and member of several cultural councils and organizations. Worked with the Minister of Education (2003-2007) and was counselor of the Minister of Culture (2009-2010). Member of the administrative council of the Moroccan alliance for Arts and Culture. Official spokesman of "The Moroccan front for good governance in cultural management".



Kostas Spiropoulos

is a producer, broadcaster and content development consultant. Currently Director of the Educational Institute Storydoc (www.storydoc.gr). He has produced, managed and participated in workshops for the international co-production of documentaries in Leipzig, Munich, Sheffield, Paris, Marseille, Biarritz, Copenhagen, Tel Aviv, Ramallah, Corfu, and Athens. With a TV Managing background, he was the General Manager of ERT from 2004 to 2007 and the General Director of Content SKAI TV from 2007 to 2010. He organized international co-productions of fiction TV series with ARTE, RAI, ZDF (The Lord of the Balkans, Defence Zone) and more than 100 documentary series, elevating ERT from the 37th to the 6th position in the list of international co-productions of EBU.



Norbert Niemann

is a German writer born in 1961 in Landau. Studied German language and literature, musicology and history. Contributes regularly to newspapers, journals and radio programmes. His book publications include: „Wie man's nimmt“ (novel, 1998), „Schule der Gewalt“ (novel, 2001), Willkommen neue Träume“ (novel, 2008). Edited "Inventur. Deutsches Lesebuch 1945-2003" (2003, with Eberhard Rathgeb), „Keine Lust auf Untergang. Gegen eine Trivialisierung der Gesellschaft“ (2010, with Thomas Kraft). Awards: Ingeborg-Bachmann-Preis (1997), Clemens-Brentano-Preis (1999), Centro Tedesco di Studi Veneziani (2006), German Literature Fund (2010/2011)



Philipp Dietachmair

is Programme Manager at the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) in Amsterdam. He develops and manages programmes in local cultural policy, networking and capacity building for cultural organizations operating in the Eastern Neighbourhood states of the EU, Turkey, the Western Balkans and the Arab countries across the Mediterranean. Next to his work for ECF, Philipp Dietachmair pursues PhD research studies in Cultural Entrepreneurship and Contemporary Arts at the University of Utrecht.





Rana Yazaji

is an activist, researcher and curator. She holds a degree in theatrical studies from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Art in Damascus. She has a postgraduate degree in management of cultural projects from the University of Paris III and a postgraduate degree in dramatic direction and dramaturgy from the University of Paris X.

Yazaji carried out research in the fields of planning and cultural policies in Syria. She further published papers and research studies on cultural policies and development. Besides having worked as a researcher and coach in several cultural and developmental projects and social initiatives, she has also acted as project manager and head of programs in the cultural arena for different institutions (e.g. General Committee of the Damascus Capital of Arab Culture Festival, 2008; Cultural Project of the Syrian Trust for Development).



Salma Mobarak

is an Assistant professor of Comparative Literature at the French Department of the Faculty of Arts of Cairo University. Specialized in the field of literature and visual arts and literature and cinema. She published articles and contributed to publications in both Arabic and French in Egypt, France, Belgium and Switzerland. In 2000, she founded the first Cinema Club in the Faculty of Arts in Cairo University and supervised many workshops in creative, critical and journalistic writing. She worked in the Ministry of Culture as undersecretary of state for Foreign Cultural Relations in 2008 – 2009 and joined the working group on cultural policies in Egypt in 2010 as an independent member.



Dr. Serhan Ada

is the head of the Cultural Management (BA & MA) Programme of Istanbul Bilgi University and the founding Director of santralistanbul, an international centre for arts and culture, converted from the Silahtarağa Power Plant, the first urban-scale power plant of the Ottoman Empire. He is Cultural Advisor to Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, founding member of AICA Turkey (International Association of Art Critics), Vice Chairman of Anadolu Kültür A.Ş. (an independent cultural network creating artistic structures and improving local cultural policies in various cities of Turkey) and Interim President of the Turkish National Commission for UNESCO on Cultural Diversity. Dr. Ada also worked as Urban Culture and Big Events Director respectively at the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency. His publication include: Introduction to Cultural Policies in Turkey, 2009, Turkish Cultural Policy: Report A Civil Perspective, 2011, Festivals of Istanbul, 2011



Dr. Sonja Hegasy

is a German scholar in Islamic studies and vice director of the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin. Studied in Cairo and New York. Received her

doctor's degree in political sciences from Freie Universität Berlin. Her book publications include: *Changing Values among Youth* (2007), *Egyptian and German Perspectives on Security in the Mediterranean* (1998); *Staat, Öffentlichkeit und Zivilgesellschaft in Marokko* (1997). Numerous contributions to journals, latest paper: *Populärkultur als Ausdruck gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen*. In: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 39/2011

Tamer El Said

is a film director, producer and actor. He was born in Cairo in 1972. Studied journalism at Cairo University and Film at the Higher Cinema Institute in Cairo. He worked as assistant director on several feature films and has made a number of short films and documentaries, including: *On a Monday* (2004), *Music of the Nets* (2000), *Crisscross* (1998), *Like a Feather* (1996), *Charlie* (1995) and *18 September* (1994). Currently working on the feature film *In the last days of the city* (with Khaled Abdallah; Zero Productions, Cairo).



Dr. Viola Shafik

is a freelance filmmaker, film curator and film scholar. She has published numerous articles and studies, primarily on Arab cinema and culture. She lectured at the American University in Cairo, has cooperated with national and international film festivals, and is a consultant to the al-Rawi Screenwriters Lab as well as a member of the selection committees of the World Cinema Fund (Berlinale) and the Dubai Film Connection. She directed short films and documentaries, among others *Die Reise der Königin Teje / Journey of a Queen* (ZDF/Arte 2003-4) as well as *Janat `Ali / My Name is not Ali* (2011).

She is the author of *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity*, AUC-Press, Cairo, 1998 (& 2007) and *Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class and Nation*, AUC-Press, 2007.



Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schneider

is the first and until now the only University Professor for cultural politics and the executive director of the Institute for cultural politics of the Hildesheim University foundation. His main research is in children and youth culture, cultural education, foreign cultural politics. He is chairman and member of several cultural organizations. He is Honorary President of the International Association of Children's and Youth Theatre and a member of the German UNESCO commission. His publications include: *Studien zur Kulturpolitik; Kinder-, Schul- und Jugendtheater; IXYPSILONZETT - Magazin für Kinder- und Jugendtheater; Kultur. Politik. Diskurs. Aus Forschung und Lehre. Edited Auswärtige Kulturpolitik. Dialog als Auftrag – Partnerschaft als Prinzip* (2008), *Theater und Schule. Ein Handbuch zur kulturellen Bildung* (2009), *Kulturelle Bildung braucht Kulturpolitik. Hilmar Hoffmanns 'Kultur für alle' reloaded* (2010), *Theater und Migration* (2011)





Hadhri Zied

is a young Tunisian artist with an artistic-political background. In 2009-2010 he joined the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Tunis, where he became a member of the Federal Office within the General Union of Tunisian Students. At the Higher Institute of Fine Arts, he was responsible for supervising many political and artistic strikes.

In 2010 he was invited by the Amnesty International to direct a painting workshop at their National convention. Zied is a founding member of the revolutionary art movement "Ahl Al Kahf" that was established in 2011. He supported the revolutionary actions of this movement by participating in various sit-ins and marches since the sit-in of "Kasbah", where many revolutionary artworks were produced.



Hosts

Gabriele Becker
Regional Director, Goethe-Institut North Africa and the Middle East

Basma El Husseiny
Managing director, Al Mawred Al Thaqafy (Culture Resource)

Dr. Günther Hasenkamp
Head of Arts, Goethe-Institut North Africa and the Middle East







Dr. Emad Abo Ghazy



Bahaa Taher



PRESS RELEASE

By Culture Resource

Arab Spring countries in a Forum on culture and politics organized by the Goethe Institute Kairo in cooperation with the *Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy)*

Participants from the Arab countries, Greece, Spain, and Germany took part in this Forum to present and discuss.

Cairo, 12 December 2011: A Forum on Culture and Politics organized by Goethe Institut Kairo in cooperation with the Culture Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafy) was held on Wednesday the 7th and Thursday the 8th of December 2011 at Goethe Institute in Cairo. More than 100 researchers in cultural policy, artists, writers, cultural directors, and representatives of governmental institutions from Egypt, Tunis, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Turkey, Greece, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands participated in the forum.

The conference began with a keynote address by the Egyptian writer and novelist Bahaa Taher, who emphasized in his speech the relation between culture and social justice, and the German writer Norbert Niemann who pointed out the need for separation between democracy and capitalism. And in his opening statement, Gunter Hasenkamp, the Director of Cultural Programs at the Goethe Institute, talked about the importance of the historical moment that Arab revolutions provide, and the relation between this historical moment and the idea of the Forum on Culture and Politics. In the course of two days, the Forum attendees discussed several issues associated with the current status of cultural policies in the Arab countries undergoing democratic transitions, by introducing a number of international and regional visions that would reform the systems and structures of cultural work in the light of current situation. Basma El Husseiny, Managing Director of Culture Resource, presented an alternative vision of cultural work which included detailed concepts on the restructuring of the Egyptian Ministry of Culture by transferring its main sector to independent local institutions. She concluded her speech saying "We demand the independence of culture, as well as the judiciary and the media, because cultural work needs to be independent from the power so as not to be in its service". Also Attia lawgail , Libyan Minister of Culture in the national Transitional Council, and Emad Abu Ghazi, former Egyptian Minister of Culture, discussed the needs and challenges during the democratic transition.

On the second day of the conference, the Turkish Sarhan Ada offered the example of an important initiative of analysis and critique of the cultural policy in Turkey, which was carried out by civil society organizations with the participation of 185 researchers. The young Tunisian artist Zied Hadhri presented the experiences of Ahl Al Kahf movement, which considers the arts as a part of the political movement in the street. The experiences of the civil society movements during the uprisings in Spain and Greece also shared. On the final session of the conference, participants discussed the cultural relations between Europe and the Arab world in the light of the political changes in the region. The Ambassador Marco Franco, The EU ambassador in Egypt, referred to the role of concepts of identity which guide these relations. Gemma Abarell explained the role of the Anna Lindh Foundation, while the noted filmmakers Hala Galal and Tamer El Said referred to the importance of having a real dialogue about the points of agreement and difference between both parties.

The Forum included a wide range of culture professionals from Arab countries and from European Cultural organizations: the cultural activist Hanane Hajj Ali (Lebanon), Murad Kadiri (Morocco), Rana Yazaji (Syria), Huda Lotfi (Egypt), The filmmaker Viola Shafik (Egypt), the novelist Lila Hourani (Palestine), Habib Bel Hedi (Tunis), Philip Dietachmair (the program manager at the (ECF) in Amsterdam, Maria Rudio, Lupe Garcia (Spain), and others.



KEYNOTE

Statement on Culture and Politics

By Norbert Niemann

1.

I have a large pinboard in my study where I keep newspaper clippings, quotations, pictures, flyers, press photos and the like, creating an ever-changing collage of apparently unconnected finds. It is a collection of little observations or curiosities. I like having them around me, and look at them every now and then because I believe that in the daily flood of information, they manage to encapsulate something. As if the media stream had stopped, condensing into individual moments or thoughts, for me they illustrate and concentrate something of the dynamism of the social, political, and cultural reality that surrounds and affects me. At the same time, pinned side-by-side on my bulletin board, these fragments illuminate and intensify one another. Suddenly, connections or differences I might not otherwise have noticed become evident.

Two weeks ago, one of the German daily newspapers published a long article about the recent fighting on Tahrir Square, with photos of demonstrators between the columns of text. The pictures show six Egyptians wearing improvised masks – a ski mask, protective goggles, and gas masks. Among them are two women in headscarves, a man in a suit and tie, a man with paper stuffed into his nostrils and one with the left side of his face heavily bandaged. Another man has put a metal bucket over his head, with only the gas mask showing, making him resemble Darth Vader from the movie “Star Wars.”

The photos ended up on my collage wall, next to a press photo that has been hanging

there for a year. It shows half a dozen old men from Germany, sitting in supermarket shopping carts between the cars in a parking lot. They are naked except for their under-pants, and their pale, skinny legs hang down over the metal frame. The picture comes from a television entertainment programme in which poor and unemployed people allow themselves to be humiliated for a few euros and a few minutes of dubious attention. The faces of these people look almost slavishly submissive.

I kept the photo at the time because it seemed to embody, in exaggerated form, an image of the human being that has spread through the European democracies in recent decades under the influence of neo-liberalism, and with the energetic support of the mass media. These elderly men, who have climbed half-naked into shopping carts for the camera, seem to me to be a macabre reflection of the state of a society in which the ideology of unfettered markets and consumerism are increasingly reducing everything, and ultimately also human beings, to commodities.

Next to the photos of the masked demonstrators from Tahrir Square they appear doubly naked. It is their passivity, their obvious lack of awareness of the humiliation they have submitted to that really jumps out at me and shocks me. These men put up no resistance; they are willing to put up with anything. On my pinboard, they suddenly become the antithesis of the Egyptian demonstrators.

2.

With the end of the Cold War, the idea of a free global market economy able to act largely independent of political control began to gain ground in Europe. Politics sought salvation in a sole objective: economic success. Whatever problem arose, the answer was always the same: the market. The aftermath of reunification in Germany saw the privatization of previously state-owned property and an extension of the principles of competition and economic efficiency to all sectors of society, including the universities and local administration. There was little chance of critiques of this development – for instance by intellectuals and artists – being heard, since any resistance was automatically assumed to be ideologically motivated. As if humanity, after the failed utopias of the twentieth century, had finally ascended a lofty, unchallengeable lookout high above ideology which – as we are gradually recognizing amidst today's financial crisis – itself represents an ideology, and a limited and dangerously simplistic one at that. People are fond of citing the eighteenth-century Scottish economist Adam Smith and his famous phrase concerning the “invisible hand” of the market, according to which “self-interest” – that is, the pursuit of pure profit – is more conducive to the common good than any altruistic institution could ever be. This phrase became the watchword of a new economic immorality that stopped at nothing, and certainly not at the business of culture.

At the same time, market thinking seeped into the minds of cultural producers themselves. Books, for example, were increasingly viewed as consumer goods. Not that authors were no longer writing literature critical of the times, or that such books were banned. They were, however, pushed to the margins, and public awareness of them slowly stifled, and replaced by an all-encompassing cultural program of entertainment.

It is sad, but true: At the moment, at least in the German literary landscape, it is hard to speak of a relationship between culture and politics. Given the conditions in today's literary scene, writers are either mere service providers to the entertainment industry, which

both meets mainstream needs and provides backward-looking pseudo-elitist fare for those who have settled for a sort of neo-bourgeois way of life. Or, if they insist on clinging to a political understanding of their work, they are relegated to a small subcultural audience.

What is new and surprising about this disappearance of a group of authors writing critically about their world, and of the audience that follows them, is that it cannot be attributed to censorship in the narrower sense of the word. There is no dictatorship in democratic Europe that seeks to silence all criticism and, where it refuses to be silenced, persecutes the protagonists. The new and surprising quality is, rather, the creeping nature of the process, the tacit acceptance, the fact that simply taking no public notice of them when they do dare to raise their heads suffices to banish them from societal consciousness.

The photos of Tahrir Square on my pinboard reveal the people's outrage, their courage, and their will to stand up against a regime of violence, repression, and inequality. They know the enemy, and they can fight against it. People in Germany resemble the old men in the shopping carts. The mood in the population has been bad since the financial crisis, and since entire states have been in danger of going bankrupt, but fear and apathy have tended to increase. There is no political regime that one could hold directly and exclusively responsible for the miserable situation. In recent months, politicians have quite rightly repeatedly noted that the financial sector and industry are driving politics before them. The financial crisis is a crisis of the system. Politics is responsible to the extent that in the past, it opened the floodgates for the erosion of democracy by unfettered capitalism. In the meantime, the erosion process appears quite advanced, and the power of democratically legitimated governments has been undermined to such an extent that they seem scarcely capable of closing the floodgates again.

But what is missing is not only a clear enemy, but also a serious intellectual debate that could face this precarious process of de-democratizing democracy. Instead, we have television talk shows where the moderators ensure that the discussions never go beyond a superficial approach to isolated symptoms. Nowhere are the symptoms put in context, but only spread around in the scattershot manner typical of the mass media, so that nobody knows what really happens. The prerequisite for a living democracy, however, is that people understand societal and political processes, and that an interest in them is kept alive. The so-called disenchantment with politics (known in German as *Politikverdrossenheit*) that has been lamented in Germany for a number of years now is in fact the expression of a deep cultural crisis.

3.

This cultural crisis is doubtless closely connected to the abovementioned seeping of market thinking into the cultural scene, which is now thoroughly permeated by it. The Italian writer and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini was one of the first to observe and describe the transformation of the western democracies into consumer societies as a historically new form of a repressive system in his "Pirate Writings" of the 1970s. He observed this transformation among other things in a "cultural mutation." A single type of culture, he wrote, was about to replace the traditional types of culture in various social strata and milieus. The new type of culture was characterized by "mass hedonism" across class lines and a permissive "pseudo-tolerance" that allowed for no ideology other than consumerism. The only language spoken here was the "language of the whole technological world," that of illustrated slogans. Under this system, according to Pasolini, politics merely engages in mock battles, while "behind the backs of all participants," the new power brokers, an

alliance of the financial industry and the mass media, for whom all that counts is Adam Smith's oh-so-benevolent self-interest of profit, pursue the total reorganization of society and culture.

An article that appeared about six months ago in another major German daily paper is noteworthy in this context. It laments the disappearance of politically minded authors and calls for their return. This article is remarkable among other things because its author is Frank Schirrmacher. In the early 1990s, Schirrmacher became responsible for the literature section of this newspaper, which is considered Germany's most authoritative venue for literary criticism, before rising to the position of editor-in-chief. He played a correspondingly major role over the past twenty years in crowding critical authors out of the literary spotlight. He even candidly admits that in the article. The language in which he does so is also striking. When Schirrmacher writes that the dominance of critical engagement needs to be broken because "the monopoly of the product is simply too great," it shows how deeply economic thinking has permeated the arena of culture, where it has no business being.

This process of displacement, however, has made Frank Schirrmacher himself a force for defining the discourse within German culture. He and a handful of colleagues from other newspaper publishing houses select writers as intellectual racehorses, according to their own purposes and criteria, and let them run. This has created a pressure for conformism that forces the writers under the control of two to three competing stables. What business and the financial industry are doing to politics nowadays, the cultural scene is doing to cultural producers: driving them before it.

Finally, it is also remarkable that, after de facto abolishing the public existence of a group of critical authors, Schirrmacher now professes to miss them. As if he had suddenly noticed that the complete transfer of intellectual debate out of the heads of cultural producers directly into the cultural apparatus itself now also endangers the existence of that apparatus. The gesture with which he appears in his article is significant, though: Schirrmacher retains his power position as the master of discourse. Behind his call for political literature is the attempt to open up a new wing in his stable, but a political one this time.

Schirrmacher overlooks two essential points, however:

1. He cannot simply reanimate the political in culture by waving his journalist's wand. A culture that has been increasingly trained over the past twenty years to forget the connection between lived social reality and aesthetic reflection leaves its mark on people's minds, where in the meantime, as Nietzsche wrote, "a habit of no longer taking real things seriously" has taken root.

2. The disconnection between the cultural scene and cultural producers and the external control of their functions in cultural politics is itself part of the cultural crisis, which has turned art and culture into an at-once insipid and profitable event and entertainment business.

- 4.

After the Cold War, the differences between democracy and capitalism were flattened out. The two were treated as if they were the same thing – or as if capitalism were the heart of democracy. The heart of democracy, however, is the separation of powers, their reciprocal control and limitation and their equilibrium. In the western democracies, a his-

torically novel marriage of economic and media power has undermined this system of the democratic separation of powers, and its power radiates into all areas of social life. The consequences are evident nowadays.

Democracies require a concept of culture and education whose objective is equipping citizens with the capacity to reflect critically on their social contemporaneity. It is among the indispensable foundations of democracy. Anything that destroys these foundations is anti-democratic. The European democracies thus need to incorporate the new type of domination by economics and the mass media into a new separation of powers, of which Montesquieu could not possibly have conceived. Everywhere, politically aware cultural producers, who naturally continue to exist beyond the attention of the broad public, are trying to foster a more acute awareness of the current crisis of democracy. And yet in order to regain attention in the first place, they must first recapture their place in the public sphere.



Amira El Ahi



Basma El Husseiny

Prof. Dr. Andreas Wiesand
(ERICarts, Bonn)





Marc Jessel, Stephen Stenning
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Alessandro Ramilo Rodriguez (EU
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Philipp Dietachmair

Nevine Shalaby
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Khaled Abdallah
(actor, filmmaker,
Mosireen collective)





Lupe Garcia
Amador Fernández-Savater
Dr. Marilena Simiti

Maria Ruído
Kostas Spiropoulos

FROM SESSION 5: **SOCIAL CHANGE AND CULTURE**

Presentation by María Ruido (Spain)

First of all thanks to the organizers for inviting me to participate in this meeting.

It's not my intention to speak again about the general aspects on the relations between the political context and the different cultural forms that have been developed in the last years in the Spanish state, because my colleagues Amador and Lupe have already done it.

I want to stress the importance of being aware about the relation between cultural production in the last 30 years in Spain and the agreement regarding the transition from the Franco regime to parliamentary democracy. We should also pay special attention to the fact that, what has been called "Transition Culture", is a term deeply contaminated by the agreement that dominated the Spanish Transition. Under this agreement, the Spanish culture translated a representative democracy into a democracy with narrow limits that have been outlined by a silence that buried the crimes of the dictatorship and blurred the unsolved social problems underlying the hard repression of the Franco regime, all under a layer of cynical post-modernity.

Like my colleagues have already pointed, the Spanish culture of the last decades has been a deeply depoliticized culture: during the 80s and even part of the 90, this culture tried to underline the distance between culture and politics as different fields, using again the supposed autonomy of art as a flag, controlling its visibility and also controlling the cultural production (especially the artistic and audio-visual ones that I'm going to refer in my intervention) by controlling the share-out of public funds. In a state where, for historical reasons, the cultural production has been deeply tied to the state and to its institutions, the control of the public money turns into a fundamental strategy of censorship, and what is worse, of self-censoring. In Spain there is an established idea that induces to believe that if you accept public money to do your work, you cannot criticize the institutions, forgetting that the public money belongs to all of us, and also forgetting that this plurality of "all of us" has and "must have" disagreements.

Precisely in this plurality, in these critical contributions to the public sphere and to the social debate lies our wealth, our social knowledge production. To promote, to support and to move this energy, supporting also the group awareness, is an activity everyone should engage in to guarantee a healthy democratic state.

The 15M movement, or better said, the different forms of discrepancy and discomfort coming together into the 15M movement are, precisely, a declaration of this social and political energy that doesn't respect the consensus agreement's limits supported by the Transition Culture. And even more, the 15M supposes a challenge for the political and cultural forms placed in the Transition. The 15M movement challenges the narrow forms of parliamentary representation and the social injustices generated by the inheritance of the democratic institutions, that have been used by new oligarchies to carry out a gradual privatization of public space and enriching them selves due to their institutional influence, while the whole Spanish population see how their public education and their public health system have been gradually dismantled.

From my personal point of view, as a person working with images construction and critique, I think that the most chorused slogan during the different 15M occupations and camps - "they

do not represent us!"- has been addressed directly to this relation between the representative democracy and its limits, but I believe that it also implies a critique towards the representation produced during these years: a critique towards a biased and manipulative imaginary produced by the media, but also towards an art and a cinema that have been absent, loose and forgetful in the face of a more and more complex and tense social context.

Meanwhile the 15-M translates new social movements that question ideologies and the traditional forms of political militancy beyond the left or the right in a parliamentary stage. The produced images seem to be out of focus in relation to the needs of these new social movements. These images forget, in most cases, that their own generation is inherently political.

One of the consequences of the Transition agreement's oblivion in Spain was, precisely, the conscious negligence of the "critical contemporary thought" on the relations between society and its imaginary that begun in Spain in the late years of Franco regime under international influences. When I started working as an artist during the 90s, our absence of genealogy always seemed to me sad and suspicious: all critical work models came from the republican period in the 30s or came from abroad (especially if you were a woman).

The excellent documentary and experimental cinema in Spain during the 50s, 60s or 70s, or the best political art coming from the Spanish state, the conceptual art, the critical writings or the most radical positions were ignored by the University and the mass media, while there was encouraged a cinema and an artistic amnesic and formalist production, which was preventing us from articulating an alternative proper history, beyond the hegemony of the mainstream. A film maker known worldwide nowadays, Pedro Almodóvar, boasted in the 80s of doing a cinema "as if the Franco regime would never existed".

Nevertheless, during the last decades also there have existed different forms of resistance that have tried a reconstruction of this critical baggage. A post-modern civil society -fed up with banalities- begun to work towards the recovery of our discrepant memoirs, but also towards the redefinition and the improvement of the forms of the militant art of the 60s and 70s. Although it is important to re-update our heritage, we know that our exercise in the field of the representational critique must take into account today other parameters, since our images are constructed under other premises and under other production and distribution conditions. It is fundamental to keep in mind this question: the images translate the representation system that produces them and distributes them. If we are not conscious of this relation, our works might reproduce the media representations or adhere to the limits of the artistic hegemonic institution or, simply, they can be absorbed by these enormous machineries. Taking into account these premises: how to represent our struggles today?

I want to underline here the crucial importance of recording and distributing images in internet, the importance of this constant action of cameras recording statements, assemblies, and the different "occupy actions" in banks, parliaments, hospitals, universities, streets, squares... This work is fundamental and connects with the intense work of self-generation of imaginary from the TV guerrillas from the 70. It is crucial to demythologize the visual technology and to dismantle the unique and passive communication coming from the TV. But it seems to me also important to practise self-criticism, and to aim that an important part of the video and the current 'activist' cinema reproduces some of the forms and the most well-worn narrative structures of the media representation, as Hito Steyerl explains in her text "The articulation of protest" (2002): Manicheism, construction of militancy as hero, stereotyping the struggle forms... without understanding that the daily and supported struggle of many and many citizens is the only reality. Because as Jacques Rancière says in "The emancipated spectator", "The collective intelligence of the emancipation is never more the comprehension of a global process of subjection. (...) It starts with everyone's capacities, the ones of men and women without attributes", or what is the same, our critical work on the media representation happens, nowadays, neither for the mere confrontation nor for the ingenuous evidence of fetishizing what this representation produces, but for trying a subtle and delicate dismemberment of the production logic of "the real" that naturalizes the imaginary showed in traditional documentaries, showing their material frames of construction

and their fictional quality: the reality -we know it for long- is a construction. The image document is not the reality, but only a partial speech on the reality.

Juan Ibarrodo explained in an article published on July 14, 2011 in the 'Diagonal' newspaper, that for the representation of 15M, it is necessary to think about the different interests that move the different communication groups, a few interests that almost always remain opaque, and in many cases they imply the prevarication of the information: "The big groups of communication, more and more powerful, dispute the audience by the creation of a narrative history, closer to the literary fiction than to a journalistic objectivity that passed by some time ago. From this perspective we can understand the obsession of transmitting images of strong emotional impact: for example, a young girl attacked by the police and crying with a deformed face". Let's not forget, as the author of this article said, that the idea is to get an audience across cinematographic fiction skills, but we must go further and try to discover that what is behind the narrative speech, to discover the subtext.

The reaction of the media before the 15M is very clear in this sense. When the first declarations of the movement arose, they were used for particular wars: the indignant were even presented as ingenuous and idealistic young people who in some way were putting in danger their interests, or that translate discomforts that they try to promote. This would explain the big attention given to the movement -even to discredit it-, for example, from ultra-right groups like the TV Chanel Intereconomía, although this has not been the only communication group trying to discredit the 15M movement.

As the movement advances positions in its claims and its protests, the media answers become more tasteless: after the paternalism and the apparent friendliness they begin with accusations, criminalization, accusing the indignant people of acting in favour of a political party (for the establishment it seems impossible to understand that we -"the indignant"- do not belong to any party). The indignant people aren't any more these good boys, a little impassioned, but perfectly controlled. Far from being demobilized, the movement adds new people with experience in social movements and different dissents, something that although it provokes some differences in its bosom, it makes them also stronger, and especially, infinitely more dangerous. The media react then with the old tactic of "divide and rule", trying to sell us the idea of "indignant good guys and indignant villains". The informative line of the newspaper El País (the newspaper with more readership, and one of those of major prestige of the whole Spain) might be a good example of it.

Images of the eviction in Catalunya Square by the police (27/05/2011), proceeding from the Basque Country Television (ETB): The images that you will see are 'gross' and they were never transmitted in TV. In fact, the parts where the police violence is more explicit only circulated in Internet (13:00 – 17:00).

If we look at the violence episodes in this movement, they are practically non-existent, and this fact gives us insight to verify that the focus of the news displaces towards this claimed violent, very little significant actions, but gradually praised to criminalize the whole enormous diversity of implied persons: the violent eviction Catalunya Square (Barcelona) of May 27 is even justified in the media logic by later actions, like the protest actions in front of the Catalan Parliament, provoked by police infiltrators , as it was possible to verify.

want to comment, regarding to the images of the eviction that you see, the presence of the omnipresent announcements of the Football Club Barcelona and other multinationals presiding the central square. Just as it happened in the Puerta del Sol of Madrid, these announcements were 'customized' critically, and they were renewed from time to time to eliminate these 'appropriations'. I believe that it is important to underline that this eviction of May 27 owed, among other things, to the fact that a public space as Catalunya Square has been considered the place for the celebration of the Champions Ligue victory of the football team Barça, that took place on May 30, 2011. The square was available for this kind of civil celebration, like it is also available now during Christmas time to open an ice rink sponsored by Movistar (the company of mobile telephony), all

inside this increasing logic of normalization for the public space privatization.

Personally, I think that my work as an artist does not consist in registering or gathering events, but in generating reflection. I work normally with film files and television ones. My movies are constructed by dismantling these 'given' and/or 'stolen' images. I would like to share with you a part of my last movie that tries to draw, not only the consequences, but fundamentally some of the causes that have generated the current situation that we are living. In fact, you will see again the images of the police attack that we have seen before. They appear here in the end, re-appropriated and re-important, as the culmination of an increasing violence inside the logic of control and domain over the subjects that the state exercises in very different forms. The chapter that we will see, "Bodies of production", draws enough about the precarious, the privatization of life and privatization of "care services", the degradation of the wages and, finally, the new labour stage that was opened some decades ago in Europe and that degrades with the economic crisis. It is a very recent work, finished in November, 2011; it is a dismantling of television files from the Basque Country Television in collision with other film materials as commercial movies, publicity, own materials and films proceeding from other artists and film makers.

Across this chapter that we are going to see, one of 7 chapters that compose the film "Electro-Class", I would like to link with the text that yesterday Norbert Niemann read in the first part of the debate: I believe that we must be extremely careful and responsible with our audio-visual production and with the relation of our images with the media. Since we have already verified in many cases that the visibility tends sometimes to turn into an "entertainment industry", and the entertainment is empty of political content in its media re-significance.

The absence of representation of our life forms and of our authentic conditions of work are only symptoms of the already mentioned slogan: neither the parliaments nor imaginary hegemonic: They do not represent us! And they do not represent us because, already it is for sex, class, ethnic group, sexual orientation or any other miscellany of superposed and transverse alterities, we exceed the narrow limits of the representation's agreement : we are 'obscene', we have to remain, therefore, 'ob-scenae', off stage.

Nevertheless, as it aims in "ElectroClass", the fact of been invisible in the hegemonic system of representation is anything necessarily negative and it doesn't reduce neither our political potency: on the contrary, we have a big capacity of political agency because what happens "out of field" is, often, much more important and active than that, what they focus with their camera.

Chapter 6 of 'ElectroClass' (subtitled in English, 7min.)



FROM THE PRESS

SEHNSUCHT NACH ENTSTAUBUNG

Im Goethe-Institut Kairo sprachen arabische und westliche Intellektuelle über Kultur und Politik der Übergangszeit.

Ina Hartwig, Süddeutsche Zeitung - 13. Dezember 2011

WHEN EAST MEETS WEST IN UNCERTAIN EGYPT

Cultural activists and artists from the Arab world and Europe held a two-day meeting at the Goethe Institute in Cairo to discuss openings and challenges in the region's cultural scene

Farah Montasser, Al Ahram Online - 11 Dec 2011

NACHRICHTEN AUS KAIRO

Der Schriftsteller Norbert Niemann ist von einer Tagung des Goethe-Instituts in Kairo zur Rolle der Kultur im politischen Prozess zurückgekehrt. Gibt es Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen den Ländern des "arabischen Frühlings" und Europa?

Bayern 2, Kulturjournal - 18. Dezember 2011

EUPHORIE ABER AUCH DEPRESSION DER KULTURSCHAFFENDEN IN DEN ARABISCHEN LÄNDERN

Konferenz "Forum Culture & Politics" des Goethe-Instituts in Kairo

Cornelia Wegerhoff im Gespräch mit Christoph Schmitz,

Deutschlandfunk KULTUR HEUTE - 7. Dezember 2011

ZWISCHEN EUPHORIE UND ERNÜCHTERUNG: FORUM ARABISCHER KULTURSCHAFFENDER IN KAIRO

Cornelia Wegerhoff, WDR 3, Resonanzen - 11. Dezember 2011

ROLLE DER KULTUR IM ARABISCHEN FRÜHLING

Hildesheimer Kulturpolitikprofessor spricht auf Konferenz

Isa Lange Pressestelle Stiftung Universität Hildesheim - 8. Dezember 2011

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Im Goethe-Institut Kairo sprachen arabische und westliche Intellektuelle über Kultur und Politik der Übergangszeit

Von Ina Hartwig

Süddeutsche Zeitung, 13. Dezember 2011

Das Goethe-Institut in Kairo liegt wenige Meter neben dem Tahrir Platz, und noch immer befindet sich im Souterrain der Kolonialvilla die "Tahrir Lounge" aus den Tagen der blutigen Revolution. Dort waren die Aktivisten des Aufstands willkommen, unter dem Schutzmantel der Bundesrepublik sozusagen. "Eigentlich", sagt Günther Hasenkamp, der Programmleiter des Instituts, "hätten wir hier ein Lazarett aufschlagen müssen". Denn an medizinischer Versorgung fehlte es vor allem, als "hier um die Ecke Krieg herrschte", wie er sich ausdrückt. Inzwischen ist die Lage zwar friedlicher, aber völlig offen.

Zusammen mit der in Kairo ansässigen unabhängigen Kulturorganisation Al Mawred Al Thaqafy hat das Goethe-Institut eine zweitägige Konferenz über "Kultur und Politik" in der Übergangszeit ausgerichtet. Man staunt erfreut, wie gern die Gastgeberrolle der Deutschen angenommen wird. Aus Marokko, Tunesien, Libyen, Jordanien, dem Libanon, Syrien und natürlich aus Ägypten kamen Filmleute, Theaterproduzenten, Graswurzelkünstler, Vertreter arabischer und westlicher Non-Profit-Organisationen. Selbst einige Exzellenzen ließen sich blicken und diskutierten mit, wie der smarte Konsul der EU-Delegation in Kairo, Marc Franco, der an die De-facto-Präsenz der arabischen Kultur in Europa erinnerte, oder wie der illusionslose libyische Kulturminister der Überbergangsregierung, Atio D. Lawgali, der die wahnwitzig hohe Korruption und Brutalität des gefallenen Gaddafi-Systems ansprach, oder der melancholische ägyptische Kulturminister der Übergangsregierung, Emad Abo Ghazy, der nach den erneuten Gewalttätigkeiten gegen Demonstranten im November bereits wieder zurückgetreten ist.

Nach zwei Tagen intensiven Austausches war ein gemeinsamer Nenner kaum noch auszumachen, nur eines war klar: Die Intellektuellen sind sehr besorgt. Zwischen der sich bei der laufenden Wahl abzeichnenden Mehrheit der Islamisten und dem um seine Pfründe ringenden Militärpatronen sehen sie ihren Spielraum schrumpfen. Das Volk habe andere Sorgen als die Sicherung der Archive und historischen Schätze, andere Sorgen, als in der undurchschaubar aufgeblähten, korrupten Bürokratie der staatlichen Institutionen endlich aufzuräumen. Dabei wäre das bitter nötig; man braucht nur die Straße zu überqueren und sich im Ägyptischen Museum umzusehen, wo kostbare Werke aus der Pharaonenzeit im Dämmerlicht verstauben.

Paradoxerweise war (und ist) das Kulturministerium personell trotzdem überversorgt. In den zehn Monaten als Minister der Übergangsregierung sei es ihm nicht möglich gewesen, berichtet Emad Abo Ghazy, die Anzahl der Mitarbeiter des Kulturministeriums auch nur herauszufinden. Ein Jammer wäre es, wenn die von der energischen Mitorganisatorin der Konferenz, Basma El Hussein, ausgearbeiteten Konzepte zur Neugestaltung der

ägyptischen Kulturinstitutionen - die Zauberworte heißen Dezentralisierung, Transparenz, Trennung der Verantwortlichkeiten, Informationssicherheit - im Sande versickerten.

Ein großes arabisches Spektrum zwischen Depression und Hoffnung tat sich angesichts der unterschiedlichen Perspektiven auf, wobei Syrien am Tiefpunkt anzusiedeln ist. Niedergeschlagen berichtete Rana Yazaji aus Damaskus von einer fast erstorbenen Kulturlandschaft unter dem Angstregime Assads. Am liebsten würde sie, die in Paris studiert hat, Syrien verlassen. Aber in Frankreich will sie auch nicht leben, nicht als Exilantin. Am anderen Ende der Skala wäre wohl Marokko anzusiedeln, wo, glaubt man Mourad Kadiri, unter dem reformwilligen König ein Klima moderater Toleranz herrsche. So sei beispielsweise die Sprache der Berber offiziell anerkannt worden, auch lebten immer noch viele Juden in Marokko.

Von einer Koexistenz von Juden und Muslimen kann Hanane Hajj Ali nur träumen, dabei ist die Kopftuch tragende, shiitische Schauspielerin und Aktivistin aus Beirut eine beinaharte Realistin - und eine der beeindruckenden Figuren der zweitägigen Konferenz. Sie ist es auch, der am Ende der Kragen platzen wird, als ihr "das linke Gequatsche" eines jungen Tunesiers, der sich auf Toni Negri bezogen hatte, zuviel wird. Es war der interessanteste Punkt der Tagung, weil die Membran des Konsenses plötzlich durchbrochen war. Auch Basma El Hussein, Spross einer ägyptischen Journalistenfamilie, meldete sich zu Wort: "Wir müssen leider die Europäer verurteilen, die die arabischen Autokraten so lange hofiert haben; dies ist die Fortsetzung der kolonialistischen Erfahrung." Und weiter: "Ohne das palästinensisch-israelische Problem ins Auge zu fassen, können wir gern einen Kaffee zusammentrinken, aber wir werden uns nicht verstehen."

So. Damit war es heraus. Widerspruch kam prompt von Gemma Aubarell, die für die Anna Lindh Foundation auf dem Podium saß: Der Tisch, an den man sich setze, müsse da sein. "Wir bieten diesen Tisch an." Das entspricht der Position des Goethe-Instituts, wie sie die Kairoer Direktorin Gabriele Becker vertritt, indem sie einen "zensurfreien Diskussionsraum" anbiete. Und, ehrlich gesagt, diese Gastgeberrolle anzunehmen, um siedann irgendwie doch zurückzuweisen, hatte schon einen provokativen Touch. Als Zuhörer fragte man sich, warum denn die Wunde der kolonialistischen Erfahrung und die Palästinenserfragen nicht eher zur Sprache gebracht worden sind, sondern erst zum Schluss, als keine Zeit mehr war, darauf einzugehen.

Wichtig ist dennoch die Erkenntnis, dass hier entgegen dem äußeren Anschein keineswegs ein kosmopolitisches Milieu tagte, das unabhängig von Religion und Nation miteinander auf einer sozusagen höheren Ebene vernetzt ist. Das Gespenst des Antikapitalismus verdeckte gelegentlich entscheidende Differenzen. Der Münchner Schriftsteller Norbert Niemann hatte die Konferenz mit einem Statement eingeleitet, in dem er unserer westlichen Demokratie ein schlechtes Zeugnis ausstellte, denn angesichts der "Hochzeit von Ökonomie und Medienmacht" sei die Gewaltentrennung unterwandert worden. Die westdeutsche Selbstkritik, sympathisch vorgetragen, zudem angenehm unkolonialistisch, wurde in Kairo nicht ungerne gehört. Doch mit der Situation der um eine demokratische Zukunft ringenden arabischen Intellektuellen hat unsere Krise nichts zu tun.

Eine weitere Erkenntnis wäre die, dass eine dramatische politisch-historische Übergangssituation theoretisch schwer zu erfassen ist. Die einzige, die eine Theoretisierung versucht hatte, war die so intelligente wie unversöhnliche Hanane Hajj Ali aus Beirut. Gramscis Konzept des "organischen Intellektuellen" versuchte sie für die gegenwärtigen Aufstände zu revitalisieren. wobei es die neuen Kommunikationstechniken Twitter und Facebook seien, die hier die quasi körperliche Verlängerung des Intellektuellen ausmachten. Bemerkenswert, dass just Hanane Hajj Ali an anderer Stelle der Diskussion auf die archaischen politischen Grenzen der körperlichen Bewegungsfreiheit aufmerksam machte: die Visumsfalle. "Warum ist niemand aus Gaza auf dieser Konferenz?", empörte sie sich. An der Grenze, das ist die Erfahrung vieler arabischer Intellektueller, verwandelt sich der Intellektuelle, der auf internationalen Festivals gern gesehen ist, schnell in einen Araber, den die Polizei schikaniert. Fest steht wohl, dass wir weiterhin zusammen Kaffee trinken sollten.

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An Arabic translation of this text is available at:
www.goethe.de/kairo (Dossier: Ägyptischer Frühling)

WHEN EAST MEETS WEST IN UNCERTAIN EGYPT

Cultural activists and artists from the Arab world and Europe held a two-day meeting at the Goethe Institute in Cairo to discuss openings and challenges in the region's cultural scene

Ahram Online, Farah Montasser, 11 Dec 2011

In a two-day conference under the name, "Forum on Culture and Politics", organised by the Goethe-Institut and Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafy, influential culture figures of the Middle East and Europe met 7 and 8 December to discuss how the Arab world can develop culturally after revolutions in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya.

Participants from Arab countries, Greece, Spain and Germany, along with local activists, took part in the forum focusing on three related issues: changes in the national and cultural policies of Arab countries undergoing democratic transitions; the role of cultural and civil society initiatives; and the Arab world's expectations of Europe during this period.

Former Egyptian Minister of Culture Emad Abu Ghazi and his counterpart from Libya, Atia Lawgali, opened up a dialogue with the audience discussing the cultural scene in Egypt and Libya prior to the revolution and the challenges they faced in their posts. "Censorship was the dominant factor in Egypt, monitoring the arts and culture for years, and it was my first mission to abolish censorship and sponsor anyone to present his art as he pleases," said Abu Ghazi.

"I remember when I first became minister, I received a letter from a theatre director somewhere in Upper Egypt ... I can't remember," he recalls. "He was asking me who to get permission from to proceed with his theatre production now that Egypt's State Security Investigations Department was abolished, and he has no one to get the approval from ... That is a catastrophe!" Abu Ghazi commented. "Culture should be independent from politics and it should not serve regimes but the people; and that is why today it remains a challenge to change this mentality in Egypt," he said, praising some of Egypt's independent cultural organisations that present their work in the streets and public gardens, including Al-Mawred Al-Thaqafy and El-Fan Midan.

"As a minister I approved a number of projects that open up public gardens all over Egypt for artists to build stages and perform anywhere they want, and I hope that the new minister continues with such projects to help nurture cultural activities within society," he said.

Lawgali opened up his speech following Abu Ghazi with a sarcastic comment. "Well, I thought we had the monster of the Arab world, but apparently what we had was a turtle next to your giant dinosaur!" he said.



Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schneider



Viola Shafik

Hala Galal





EU Ambassador Marc Franco



Salma Mobarak



Tamer El Said



Dr. Sonja Hegasy



Gemma Aubarell

Lail Hourani



“Our turtle (Gaddafi) took cultural activities out of the entire country completely, and now we are building from scratch. For 40 years we never had galleries, concerts, libraries or anything of that sort,” he explained. “As a minister, I opened up all storages full of books that had been denied the public, and at extremely low prices we want to sell these books so people can be enlightened ... it is a collection of 40 years of publishing,” he commented.

Since Libya didn't have any cultural activities, authorities of the new regime find it easy to spread them now, transforming all governorate headquarters built by Gaddafi to serve as theatre groups, book clubs and concert halls, explained Lawgali.

Egypt and Tunisia have suffered from and the rise of Islamist movements seeking power after their revolutions, which endangers the culture scene. “The revolution is not over and it is our role as independent artists to help educate the public and revive our long heritage and culture like during the days of former Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba,” said Habib Bel Hedi, a prominent Tunisian filmmaker.

As he recalls, “Bourguiba was in love with music and the arts, and Tunisia back then was an artistic haven... Then came Ben Ali who censored everything and only encouraged those who helped strengthen his regime.” Bel Hedi is not afraid of Islamists in Tunisia; however, he emphasised the importance to enlighten the public and fund as many cultural events as possible.

EU Delegation to Egypt Ambassador Marc Franco, known to be very active in the cultural scene of Cairo, also expressed his concerns for Egyptian culture, but said where Egyptians stand today is no worse than Europe. He said culture could only thrive when identity problems are resolved. “In Europe today, after the EU, Europeans have lost their original identities, whether they are Germans, French, Italian, etc. Only when you get back in touch with your identity can you help revive your culture.”

Lebanese artist Hanane Hajj Ali, Moroccan cultural activist Mourad Kadri and Syrian activist Rana Yazaji emphasised the role of education, which must include culture within its curriculum. Artists should devote their work to the street, to combat the remains of old regimes and seek independence, they said. “It is education in schools, in the household and on the streets that can revive culture,” commented German professor of cultural politics Wolfgang Schneider.

Despite the fact that the revolution within the Arab world is far from over, hopeful independent artists and cultural activists from the East and West believe in the importance of culture within those revolutions, and that street protest has helped bring freedom and culture back to the fore.

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NACHRICHTEN AUS KAIRO

Der Schriftsteller Norbert Niemann ist von einer Tagung des Goethe-Instituts in Kairo zur Rolle der Kultur im politischen Prozess zurückgekehrt. Gibt es Gemeinsamkeiten zwischen den Ländern des “arabischen Frühlings” und Europa?

Wo stehen die Gesellschaften Nordafrikas und des Nahen Ostens, in denen zu Beginn des Jahres Revolutionen ihren Anfang nahmen oder sich seit Monaten Protest gegen Autokraten formiert? Welche Rolle wird die Religion im Neuanfang spielen? Was heißt demokratische Mitbestimmung und wie können sich Kulturschaffende in den Prozess der Veränderung einbringen? Lässt sich der Widerstand der Bevölkerung mit Protestbewegungen in europäischen Ländern vergleichen?

Diese Fragen stellte sich zu Beginn des Monats eine Konferenz des Goethe-Instituts Kairo. Zum Auftakt sprachen der ägyptische Schriftsteller Bahaa Taher und sein deutscher Kollege Norbert Niemann. Niemann, auch hierzulande ein genauer Beobachter gesellschaftlicher Entwicklungen, berichtete von den deutschen Verhältnissen und der Rolle der Kultur in der Bundesrepublik. Sie muss sich nicht gegen Diktatoren, sondern im Kräftespiel von Markt und Medien behaupten - und das wird in den arabischen Ländern in nachrevolutionären Zeiten vermutlich ähnlich werden.

Neue Strukturen und ungelöste Probleme

Bisher waren Kultur und Medien dort zentralistisch organisiert. Auch deshalb konnte die frei vernetzte Intelligenz sich in den Protestbewegungen als Gegenöffentlichkeit positionieren. Die neuen Regierungen stehen nun vor der Aufgabe, den Wasserkopf der Kulturinstitutionen abzubauen und zugleich für demokratischere Strukturen zu sorgen.

Allerdings hat die Tagung in Kairo auch gezeigt: Die aktuelle Lage ist in den einzelnen Ländern höchst unterschiedlich. Die Vertreter aus Syrien etwa äußern sich vorsichtiger als Tunesier oder Libyer, wo der Funke der Revolutions-Euphorie noch nicht erloschen ist. In Ägypten selbst sind Stimmung und Situation komplizierter: Gegen die Politik des Militärrates artikuliert sich heftiger Widerstand, die Regierung steht zwischen Demonstranten und Militärrat. Zu Gast beim “Forum Culture & Politics” des Goethe-Instituts war auch Abu Ghazi, ehemals Kulturminister Ägyptens, der kürzlich im Zusammenhang mit der gewaltsamen Reaktion der Sicherheitskräfte der Proteste sein Amt niedergelegt hat. Das Bewusstsein dafür wachzuhalten, dass noch immer viel auf dem Spiel steht, das können auch die Kulturschaffenden leisten.

Der Tahrir-Platz in Kairo ist zum Symbol demokratischen Aufbruchs geworden - auch in Ländern, deren politische Situation weit entfernt ist von der prekären Lage Ägyptens während und nach der Herrschaft Mubaraks. Die Demonstranten an der Puerta del Sol in Madrid zum Beispiel nannten immer wieder den Protest der ägyptischen Jugend als Bezugspunkt der eigenen Aktionen. Natürlich seien, so Norbert Niemann, Ausgangslage und Problematik in beiden Fällen nicht vergleichbar. Eine gemeinsame Klammer jedoch gebe es im Widerstand gegen eine übermächtige Rolle von Medienlogik und Wirtschaft-

sinteressen. Den Staat für die Bürger wiederzugewinnen, muss das Ziel sein, "Reclaiming the State" lautet daher ein wichtiges Stichwort der Debatte.

Auch ästhetisch hat sich der Protest über kulturelle Grenzen hinweg längst vernetzt: Graffiti aus Tunesien etwa können in Themen und Formen stark an die Arbeiten der britischen Street-Art-Legende Banksy erinnern. Dabei geht es nicht um einen einseitigen Wissens- und Kulturtransfer: Dass auch die Mediendemokratien westlicher Prägung in der Krise sind und keine schlichten Lösungen anzubieten haben, ist schließlich kein Geheimnis. Ziel ist ein Erfahrungsaustausch, und für diesen lassen sich unterschiedliche Hintergründe gerade fruchtbar machen.

Das Goethe-Institut Kairo, das nur einen Steinwurf vom Tahrir-Platz entfernt liegt, möchte für diesen Austausch ein Forum bieten. Dazu hat es die "Tahrir-Lounge" eingerichtet, in der sich Vereinigungen und Kulturschaffende treffen können, und die natürlich auch online präsent ist. Über die Internetseiten des Instituts setzen sich Aktivisten für die Befreiung von Gefangenen ein, es gibt Blogs aus dem Gefängnis zu lesen, inhaltliche Dossiers klären zum Stand der Dinge auf. Die Möglichkeiten der Vernetzung nutzen die Kulturvermittler ebenso wie die Demonstranten auf den Plätzen des "arabischen Frühlings".

Im Kulturjournal-Gespräch mit Martina Boette-Sonner berichtet Norbert Niemann vom "Forum Culture & Politics" im Goethe-Institut in Kairo und den unterschiedlichen Stimmen aus den arabischen Ländern. Zu hören am Sonntag, 18. Dezember 2011, ab 18.05 Uhr auf Bayern 2.

EUPHORIE ABER AUCH DEPRESSION DER KULTURSCHAFFENDEN IN DEN ARABISCHEN LÄNDERN

Konferenz "Forum Culture & Politics" des Goethe-Instituts in Kairo

Cornelia Wegerhoff im Gespräch mit Christoph Schmitz

Deutschlandfunk KULTUR HEUTE, 7. Dezember 2011

Der arabische Frühling hat viele Veränderungen mit sich gebracht, Hoffnungen auf einen schnellen Wandel vielerorts enttäuscht. Im Goethe-Institut in Kairo diskutierten zwei Tage lang Aktivisten, Künstler und Politiker aus den nordafrikanischen und arabischen Umbruchsländern, was sie bewirken wollen und können.

O-Ton Günter Hasenkamp: "Das Jahr 2011 ist ein ganz besonderes Jahr in der arabischen Welt, mit den Aufständen, mit den Revolutionen, und diese Entwicklungen haben enorme Auswirkungen auf den kulturellen Sektor. Die Kulturakteure selber sind treibende Kräfte in der Revolution gewesen. Jetzt aber gegen Ende des Jahres zeigt sich, dass wir im Grunde so was wie eine neue Zeit beginnen."

Christoph Schmitz: Soweit der Programmleiter des Goethe-Instituts in Kairo, Günter Hasenkamp. - Sein Haus hat heute eine zweitägige Konferenz begonnen. Um die Veränderungsprozesse im südlichen, aber auch im nördlichen Mittelmeerraum soll es gehen, wo sich ja überall soziale Bewegungen gebildet haben. Heute ging es in erster Linie um die nordafrikanische Variante. Prominente Gäste aus einigen arabischen Ländern sind dabei.

Cornelia Wegerhoff, Sie haben die Diskussionen verfolgt. Ein kleiner Kreis hat sich in Kairo versammelt, Schlüsselfiguren aus der Kulturpolitik. Wer hat sich wie zu Wort gemeldet?

Cornelia Wegerhoff: Ja, die unterschiedlichsten Figuren. Manchmal waren es Kulturschaffende in direkter Form, sage ich mal so, also Theaterregisseure, Dramaturgen, Schriftsteller, aber auch solche Leute, die in Funktionen sind, zum Beispiel der Mann, der in Libyen im Nationalen Übergangsrat den Ministerposten für Kultur bekleidet hat, Atia Lawgali. Man muss nun sehen, ob er auch künftig der Kulturminister des Landes sein wird, im Augenblick ist es sozusagen ausgesetzt. Er ist auch ein Schriftsteller und er hat mir erzählt, dass es nicht einfach war, unter Gaddafi Schriftsteller zu sein. Er sagte, er hat vor allem Phänomene im Ausland beschrieben, die aber, hätte man genau gelesen zwischen den Zeilen, auch gut anzuwenden waren auf die libysche Situation. Also man musste geschickt sein vor diesen Revolutionen, bevor der Arabische Frühling begann. Und jetzt beschrieb er mir voller Euphorie und auch eben in diesem Forum die Begeisterung, diesen Enthusiasmus, mit dem die Kulturschaffenden vor allem in seiner Heimatstadt Bengasi - da hat er das ganz ausführlich beschrieben - wirklich sprühen vor Ideen und nun endlich alles rauslassen möchten, was so lange da sozusagen gedeckelt war. Er sagt, da werden im Zweifelsfall die Wände an den Straßenmauern angemalt, weil junge Leute einfach, ich sage mal flapsig, Bock darauf haben, richtig Spaß jetzt daran

haben, sich in irgendeiner Form künstlerisch zu betätigen und damit auch politische Aussagen zu treffen.

Schmitz: Also Begeisterung und Hoffnung ist Hauptmerkmal der Äußerungen der Vertreter aus diesen verschiedenen arabischen Frühlingsländern?

Wegerhoff: Da muss man unterscheiden. Die Begeisterung klang aus Libyen zum Beispiel durch, aber in Ägypten ist die Begeisterung unglaublich gedämpft. Da herrscht jetzt eher Depression statt Revolution, wenn man mal so formulieren mag. Ich habe mit einer Filmregisseurin gesprochen, Viola Shafik, die gesagt hat, wir waren auch so begeistert, genauso euphorisch wie die Libyer, und dann kamen die Ereignisse, die im Frühling schon damit begannen, dass das Militär, die Militärregierung Protestierende auf dem Tahrir, die dann nachträglich noch protestiert haben und gesagt haben, wir wollen den Übergang, denkt daran, verhaftet hat. Es gab eine große Verhaftungswelle. Sie erinnern sich natürlich an die Ereignisse der letzten 14 Tage, wo es unmittelbar vor den ägyptischen Wahlen blutige Unruhen gab auf dem Tahrir-Platz mit über 40 Toten, und man ist nahezu geschockt und ist in einer Art Starre, wie diese Regisseurin erzählt hat. Aber trotzdem will man sich nicht demotivieren lassen.

Eine andere Frau, eine Schauspielerin, die eine große Kunstaktion gestartet hat - einmal im Monat ist irgendwo in Ägypten (und wenn es nur in einem kleinen Dorf ist) ein großes Festival, ein Kunstfestival mit vielen politischen Aussagen auch, wie sie sagte -, die sagte, wir dürfen uns nicht stoppen lassen von diesen vielen schlimmen Rückschlägen, wir wollen uns auch nicht beeindrucken lassen davon, dass die ersten Wahlergebnisse der ja mehrstufigen Wahlen, Parlamentswahlen in Ägypten, schon gezeigt haben, die Islamisten werden hier wohl demnächst ein Großteil der Macht übernehmen, das soll uns alles nicht beeinflussen, wir haben die Revolution gemacht, wir waren ein wichtiger Teil der Revolution als Kulturschaffende und wir werden weiter an dieser Revolution arbeiten, die ist noch nicht beendet. Also Sie merken schon: ganz unterschiedliche Stimmung.

Und am faszinierendsten war es zu sehen, wie eine junge Frau aus Syrien sich geäußert hat, Ranah Yersagi, eine Theaterdramaturgin, die ganz vorsichtig und leise sich zu Wort meldete und beschrieb, dass sie versuchten, eine unabhängige, also vom Staat unabhängige Kulturinstitution zu gründen. Das würde nicht davon ablenken sollen, dass auf der Straße der Protest stattfindet, aber sie sagt, man kann auch im Haus, sozusagen in geschlossenen Räumen, da wo Kultur stattfindet, Protest artikulieren. Und die Art und Weise, wie sie sich hier in Kairo artikuliert hat, ganz leise, ganz vorsichtig und behutsam, lässt darauf deuten, dass man in Syrien noch lange nicht so weit ist, dass man ganz offen darüber sprechen kann.

Schmitz: Wurden denn auch Erwartungen der arabischen Welt an Europa formuliert?

Wegerhoff: So unmittelbar formuliert gehört habe ich das nicht, dass die Leute sagen, jetzt helft uns mal dabei, weil man sitzt da natürlich auch im Goethe-Institut, das jetzt über die vergangenen Monate wirklich bewiesen hat, dass man gerne unterstützen möchte. Es haben wirklich auch während der Unruhen Filmfestivals stattgefunden, man

hat gesagt, wir lassen uns auch nicht unterkriegen oder schocken, wir setzen einfach ein Zeichen gegen die Unruhen, die es hier gibt, und die vielen Schwankungen innerhalb der letzten Monate. Aber es wurde deutlich gezeigt: Wir geben ihnen Raum zum Diskutieren, eben anhand dieses Forums. Im Goethe-Institut gibt es eine sogenannte Tahrir-Launch, da können sich Vereinigungen, Kulturgruppen aller Art treffen, und man will auf diese Art und Weise den Bewegungen der arabischen Frühlinge und die Kultur unterstützen.

Schmitz: Cornelia Wegerhoff, vielen Dank für diesen Bericht aus Kairo über ein Kultur- und Politikforum im Goethe-Institut vor Ort.

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ZWISCHEN EUPHORIE UND ERNÜCHTERUNG: FORUM ARABISCHER KULTURSCHAFFENDER IN KAIRO

Ein Beitrag von Cornelia Wegerhoff

WDR 3, Resonanzen, 11. Dezember 2011

Auch in der Kultur treibt der arabische Frühling neue Blüten. „In Bengasi sind die Künstler so aktiv wie nie zuvor“, so der Schriftsteller Atia Lawgali, bis vor kurzem noch Kulturminister des Libyschen Nationalen Übergangsrates. Die Maler würden selbst Straßenmauern mit ihren Kunstwerken verschönern. Es gebe viele Konzerte und immer neue Aktionen der Kulturschaffenden, um die Bevölkerung politisch aufzuklären. Libyens Kulturszene sei nach der gelungenen Revolution in Aufbruchstimmung, berichtete Lawgali jetzt beim „Forum für Kultur und Politik“ im Kairoer Goethe-Institut.

Doch nicht alle Teilnehmer aus den verschiedensten arabischen Ländern gaben sich de-
rart euphorisch. So zeigten sich ägyptische Künstler mit Blick auf die erneuten Unruhen mit zahlreichen Toten Ende November deprimiert. „Die Revolution ist noch lange nicht zu Ende“, glaubt die ägyptische Schauspielerin Azza El Hosseini. Was Kultur verändern kann, wurde beim „Forum für Kultur und Politik“ über die Ländergrenzen hinweg intensiv diskutiert.

ROLLE DER KULTUR IM ARABISCHEN FRÜHLING

Hildesheimer Kulturpolitikprofessor spricht auf Konferenz

Isa Lange, Pressestelle Stiftung Universität Hildesheim, 08. Dezember 2011

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Schneider, Direktor des Instituts für Kulturpolitik der Stiftung Universität Hildesheim, spricht im Rahmen einer kulturpolitischen Konferenz in Kairo am 8. Dezember 2011 zum Thema „Kultur und Gesellschaft – Europa und die Arabische Welt“. Kulturpolitiker aus den arabischen Ländern, der Türkei, Griechenland, Spanien und Deutschland und Vertreter der Zivilgesellschaft diskutieren die Rolle der Kultur im „arabischen Frühling“.

„Künstler und Kulturvermittler haben keinen geringen Anteil an den jüngsten Geschehnissen in der arabischen Welt gehabt, ob nun direkt über ihre künstlerischen Ausdrucksformen oder ihre ganz besondere Art und Weise am gesellschaftspolitischen Diskurs teilzunehmen. Nun heißt es Bilanz zu ziehen und zu diskutieren wer nun welche kulturpolitischen Strukturen als Unterstützung einer demokratischen Zukunft des arabischen Raumes gestalten soll“, so der Kulturpolitikprofessor.

Die Konferenz „Forum on culture & politics 2011“ wird am 7./8. Dezember 2011 veranstaltet vom Goethe-Institut Kairo und Al Mawred Al Thaqafy (Cultural Resource, Kairo). Das Forum ist eine gemeinsame Initiative der Goethe-Institute Kairo (Regionalinstitut Nordafrika und Nahost), Athen (Regionalinstitut Südosteuropa) und Brüssel (Regionalinstitut Südwesteuropa).

Kulturpolitiker aus den arabischen Ländern, der Türkei, Griechenland, Spanien und Deutschland sowie Vertreter der Zivilgesellschaft diskutieren die Rolle der Kultur im „arabischen Frühling“. Themen der Tagung sind unter anderem die Kulturpolitik in einer veränderten Arabischen Welt oder die Rolle europäischer Kulturstiftungen. Fragen sind unter anderem: Wie müssen sich nationale Kulturpolitiken in den „Transformation-sländern“ ändern? Welche Rolle spielen kulturelle und zivilgesellschaftliche Initiativen? Welche Erwartungen hat die arabische Welt an Europa?

Auf der Konferenz referieren auch Emad Abu Ghazi (Kairo, Minister of Culture, resigned), Atia Lawgali (Tripolis, Minister of Culture im National Transitional Council) und Ezzedine Bach Chaouch (Tunis, Minister of Culture).

Prof. Dr. Schneider wurde als Beobachter und Kommentator mit hinzugezogen und wird unter anderem die Podiumsdiskussion „Kultur und Gesellschaft – Europa und die Arabische Welt“ am Donnerstag, 8. Dezember 2011, moderieren.

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