

# Alfredo Jaar – The way it is. An Aesthetics of Resistance

An exhibition of the NGBK

**At NGBK:** 15 June – 19 August, 2012

**At Berlinische Galerie:** 15 June – 17 September, 2012

**At Alte Nationalgalerie:** 15 June – 16 September, 2012



"Lament of the Images", Documenta11, 2002

The Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst (New Society for Visual Arts) presents an exhibition by Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar (\*1956) that will be shown, subdivided into six groups of works, simultaneously at three Berlin institutions. The monographic show offers a retrospective survey of an artistic production spanning close to four decades. It gives insights into the political topicality of the works by the two-time documenta participant and elucidates the critical methods of archiving, research and intervention employed by the artist.

The artist trained as architect and filmmaker works with urban spaces and spaces of the museum. He dissects surfaces and structures, producing artistic statements related to spatiality and society. The main focuses of the show are on the observation of image languages and image programmes, as well as their deconstruction. They address the artistic strategy of refusing images, present Jaar's research work and display his considerations on the presentation and accessibility of various public spheres. Investigations of the visualisation of political and social events and the treatment of the resulting images demonstrate Alfredo Jaar's critical approach to the media and media publicity.

The point of departure and reference point of Alfredo Jaar's art is always formed by the careful analysis of the backgrounds and effects of concrete events and situations. His early works from the 1970s already deal with forms of resistance in public and semi-public spaces, thus criticising the conditions in Chile without becoming subjected to state censorship. After Jaar moved to the United States, which was followed by an international artistic career, he continued to apply the artistic methods developed and tested in Chile.

*Alfredo Jaar - The way it is. An Aesthetics of Resistance* – the title of the show on view in the spaces of the NGBK, the Berlinische Galerie and the Alte Nationalgalerie – refers to two projects that Alfredo Jaar realised in Berlin in the early 1990s. On the one hand, it makes reference to the artistic intervention "Eine Ästhetik zum Widerstand" ("The Aesthetics of Resistance") that Jaar presented at the Pergamonmuseum in 1992/93 (organised by NGBK in cooperation with DAAD). On the other, it alludes to the temporary installation "The Way It Was" that the artist created in 1991 in an empty ground-floor flat in Berlin (in the frame of the show "*Heimat*", organised by Galerie Wewerka & Weiss). Both projects can be regarded as examples of Alfredo Jaar's interest in contemporary history and the possibilities and limitations of image and text systems. Jaar highlights the discrepancy between real and reflected space.

The path that now has to be taken between the three exhibition venues and the time that passes before the next encounter with Jaar's works sharpen the art-goers' ability to relate the artists pictorial solutions and themes to their own present. This allows experiencing in a reflected manner the seriousness, idiosyncrasy and determination of Alfredo Jaar's works.

**At NGBK**, the focus is on Jaar's rarely displayed, early artworks: highly political interventions in public space that were produced in Chile between 1974 and 1981, as well as additional pieces dealing with the country and the times of the military junta.

**At Berlinische Galerie**, four complex groups of works are combined and set in relation to each other: 1) works created in and for Berlin, including the reconstruction of the Pergamon project, "Eine Ästhetik zum Widerstand", and the photo series "A New World", which will be presented for the first time ever; 2) works on themes related to Africa, a key focus of Alfredo Jaar's art, particularly his impressive series on the genocide in Rwanda; 3) installations in which light and glare play a pivotal role, e.g. "Lament of the Images", the reconstruction of his contribution to Documenta 11 in 2002; 4) the so-called "Press Works" in which Alfredo Jaar repeatedly examines in a pointed way the topicality of press coverage and its interests.

**At Alte Nationalgalerie**, the exhibition is complemented by two interventions in the collection of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: "1+1+1", an installation produced for documenta 8 (1987) that made Jaar internationally known. The work will be presented for the first time in 25 years in Germany along with the conceptually similar piece "Persona", also from 1987.

**Neue Gesellschaft für  
Bildende Kunst (NGBK)**

Oranienstraße 25  
10999 Berlin  
www.ngbk.de

Daily 12-7 pm  
Thu-Sat 12-8 pm

**Berlinische Galerie**

Landesmuseum für Moderne  
Kunst, Fotografie und Architektur  
Alte Jakobstraße 124-128  
10969 Berlin

<http://www.berlinischegalerie.de>  
Wed-Mon 10 am-6 pm  
Tue closed

**Alte Nationalgalerie**

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,  
Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
Bodestraße 1-3  
10178 Berlin

<http://www.smb.museum/smb/standorte>  
Tue-Sun 10 am-6 pm  
Thu 10 am-10 pm

After the two monographic shows dedicated to Felix Gonzalez-Torres and VALIE EXPORT, 2006 at Hamburger Bahnhof and 2003 at the Akademie der Künste, the RealismusStudio of the NGBK again makes a seminal, individual position that decidedly integrates the political in artistic work the centre of attention – Alfredo Jaar.

The show is accompanied by a series of lectures and talks at the NGBK and the Berlinische Galerie, as well as by guided tours at all venues. Alfredo Jaar's films ("Muxima" (2005), 36 min. and "The Ashes of Pasolini" (2009), 38 min.) will be screened at the opening in the Berlinische Galerie and repeated several times during the course of the exhibition.

A bilingual **catalogue** (German / English) with text contributions by Lucy Lippard, Chantal Mouffe, Adriana Valdés, and Christian Höller will be published.

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*Further information on the artist and the work groups can be found in the press portfolio.*

*If you have any questions or require image material, please feel free to contact us.*

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