



BECAUSE THE NIGHT

07.12.2019
16.02.2020

The themed exhibition *Because the Night* is dedicated to the motif of night, with all the promise that it holds. Photographic works by Bieke Depoorter, Georg Gatsas, Thembinkosi Hlatshwayo, Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca and Tobias Zielony present the events of those special hours in a variety of (socio)cultural and topographical settings. The many different forms that nightlife can take, the visual languages of various music scenes and the modes of expression of individual subcultures play a key role, as do the dark tonality and specific lighting that reflect the mysterious atmosphere of the night.

Going out, plunging into a crowd of dancing revelers, fleeing everyday life for a few hours and indulging one's desires: for many, clubs and bars are places of freedom, an escapist paradise, a source of entertainment. The thrill of these visits, however, also derives from the fact that the venues follow their own rules, often finding expression in transgressive and excessive, sometimes even violent behaviour. But, at the same time, they can also offer a place of refuge, safe spaces within which (secret) identities are negotiated or lived out, where subcultures and communities can develop freely outside of the mainstream and away from society's moral norms and value systems.

The exhibition *Because the Night* presents works by Bárbara Wagner & Benjamin de Burca, Tobias Zielony and Georg Gatsas that examine the complex webs of relationships associated with nightlife and the social values and political stances inherent to them. These enter into dialogue with the radically personal perspectives of Bieke Depoorter and Thembinkosi Hlatshwayo, which offer an intimate insight into the nocturnal processes by which the self negotiates with its environment. The international positions presented in the exhibition are reflections of a younger generation of artists exposed to the turmoil of modern life who move through a complex world charged by political transitions and document it unreservedly.

BECAUSE THE NIGHT

THEMBINKOSI
HLATSHWAYO
Slaghuis
2018-

GEORG GATSAS
Signal the Future
2008-2017

TOBIAS ZIELONY
Maskirovka
2017

BÁRBARA WAGNER
&
BENJAMIN DE BURCA
Estás Vendo Coisas
2016

BAR SODA
open during
events

Foyer

BIEKE DEPOORTER
Agata
2017-2019



TOBIAS ZIELONY

German photographer Tobias Zielony (*1973) lived in Ukraine from October 2016 to July 2017. During this time, he came into contact with the underground queer and techno scene in Kiev, which developed out of the Euromaidan Revolution of 2013/14.

The title of Zielony's work – *Maskirovka* – refers to one of the Russian military's traditional tactics: deception. He focuses on the "little green men", Russian special forces that occupied the Crimea and supported the pro-Russian troops in Eastern Ukraine, hiding their faces behind green balaclavas. Masks were also an important safeguard for the Maidan protesters, protecting them from the teargas that was used against them and hiding their identity from the authorities. Importantly, then, the mask operates as a kind of shield. Zielony shot a total of forty-two photographs and made an animated film composed of 5,400 individual images. Together they create a cacophonous visual account of the Euromaidan, captured on the street and in clubs and woven together with material from news reports on Kiev. The multilayered reality of a country in upheaval is narrated through a community that seeks to reoccupy the symbolic and political space of its surroundings and finds its freedom under cover of darkness.

Tobias Zielony(*1973, lives and works in Berlin) studied documentary photography at the University of Wales in the UK from 1998 to 2001 – this underpins his focus on social documentary themes. His colorful single shots and series show youthful subcultures and forsaken urban landscapes, bringing to the fore questions about open and latent violence. Zielony's photographic compositions are a balancing act between artistic and documentary photography. After his first exhibition in 2004 at the Institut français in Leipzig, his works were exhibited at the Centre de la photographie Genève in 2006, Vienna's Kunsthalle Wien in 2010, and the German Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2015. He has also realised a number of different book projects, for which he won the Marion Ermer Prize in 2004.

GEORG GATSAS

Georg Gatsas's work cycle *Signal the Future* follows various protagonists from the London club scene from 2008 onwards,

shortly after the British music genre dubstep made a name for itself internationally. Portraits of clubbers that look like snapshots taken in front of brick walls and group shots of dancers abandoning themselves to the bass-driven sound are juxtaposed with architectural perspectives of the metropolis at night. In addition to capturing a dynamic, ethnically diverse community that is closely bonded by the music, the pictures also tell the story of a city in transition. The streets of the South London district of Brixton are nothing like what they used to be at the end of the 2000s. The district has now been largely gentrified; the rawness, the former unused potential has given way to large lucrative real estate projects, and scenes have either evolved from subculture to mainstream or broken up completely.

Georg Gatsas(*1978, lives and works in Basel and Waldstatt) is an ardent traveler whose journeying has given him an interest in how music and musicians can be portrayed in different urban settings. His artistic work draws inspiration from metropolises such as New York, London and Johannesburg and universal themes of globalisation: music scenes that take shape parallel to the mainstream convey an image of present-day subcultures. In recent years, Gatsas's work has been shown in numerous exhibitions both at home and abroad, including solo exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen in 2018 and at the Swiss Institute in New York in 2003. His photos have been shown in a variety of contexts: as part of *Shifting Identities* at the Kunsthau Zürich in 2008 and at the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius in 2009; as part of *Blick – Artists work with the Ringier image archive* at the Aargauer Kunsthau in 2012; as part of *Hôtel Dunkerque* at FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais in 2015; and as part of *Portraits II* at the Oldenburger Kunstverein in 2017.

THEMBINKOSI HLATSHWAYO

In his series *Slaghuis* (slaughterhouse or massacre), South African photographer Thembinkosi Hlatshwayo (*1993) confronts us with the problems attendant upon growing up in a shebeen, an illegal tavern in a Johannesburg township. His photographic collages and mostly minimalist compositions constitute narrative fragments whose dense arrangement conveys a sense of how difficult it must be when one's own home no longer acts as a safe haven but becomes a place whose nights are characterised by a lack of self-control and brutality. High levels of alcohol consumption

coupled with extremely demanding social conditions and a concomitantly high propensity for violence form a toxic structure that over the years dominated the artist's nights. Parallel to the pictures, which are almost devoid of any human presence and show evidence of the excesses such as broken glass, Hlatshwayo shares his inner conflicts with us, the feeling of helplessness and the resulting inability to openly address these issues, mediated by brief streams of consciousness noted down in words. The dialogue of image and text gives a voice to what cannot be voiced.

Thembinkosi Hlatshwayo (*1993, lives and works in Johannesburg) joined the South African photo initiative Of Soul and Joy in the Thokoza township in Johannesburg, which offers a platform to young photographers. It provided the framework for his first project, *Betterment Promised*, which is dedicated to the quest for (self-) improvement – a phenomenon that connects people regardless of their topographical, social, or religious backgrounds. The photo series shows the community in a multipurpose building that housed Muslim immigrants who were seeking to live out their dream for (self-) improvement away from their homeland. The series was first exhibited at the Of Soul & Joy Photo Fest and as part of the Art Africa Fair 2017 in Cape Town. Hlatshwayo is a graduate of the Advanced Programme in Photography (2018) at the Market Photo Workshop in Johannesburg, which brought him into contact with the *Nice* magazine team and Swiss photographer Flurina Rothenberger. In 2019, he was awarded the CAP Prize for Contemporary African Photography. He is also the recipient of a Gisèle Wulfsohn Mentorship.

BÁRBARA WAGNER & BENJAMIN DE BURCA

The video work *Estás Vendo Coisas (You Are Seeing Things)* is the artist duo Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca's take on the Brazilian pop music movement Brega. Brega usually denotes a style of music with sentimental lyrics and often dramatic exaggerations – it is therefore associated with rather bad taste. Nevertheless, the Brega movement should be seen as a complex socioeconomic phenomenon, characterised by sophisticated production and distribution methods. The format

of the music video plays a crucial role here: it gives a voice to a new generation of pop artists operating in the borderlands of northeastern Brazil, who act as role models and are developing a potent image that people can identify with. The film was shot with current figures from the scene and follows two protagonists – a hairdresser and musician whose nighttime moniker is MC Porck and the firewoman and singer Dayana Paixão – on their way from the studio to the stage. In the darkness of the nightclub, melodies about love and success collide with expressive gestures and bright colors – an extraordinary musical.

Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca (*1980 and *1975, live and work in Recife) have worked together as an artist duo since 2013. Wagner was born in Brazil. Her photographic work centers on the "popular body" and its strategies of visibility and subversion, operating in the dynamic zone between pop culture and tradition. Since 2007, her works have been published in book form and appeared in solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally, while also forming part of the MASP and MAM collections in São Paulo. A monograph with an extensive selection of her photographs was published in 2009: *That Which Is Beautiful Must Be Seen (Het Domein)*. Benjamin De Burca grew up in Ireland and studied painting at the Glasgow School of Art. He has a Master of Fine Arts degree from the University of Ulster in Belfast. Together, the two artists have taken part in numerous festivals and exhibitions: the 32nd São Paulo Biennale in 2016, the 5th Skulptur Projekte Münster in 2017 and the Venice Biennale in 2019.

BIEKE DEPOORTER

Bieke Depoorter met Agata at a strip bar during a two-week stay in Paris in 2017 and featured her in the photo series of the same name, which is an ongoing project. In the developing intimacy between the photographer and her subject, a story unfolds that at times has a documentary flavour, while at others it seems to veer into fiction. The night becomes a defining moment that time and again reveals boundaries and processes of interpersonal negotiation. Wherever closeness is palpable, distance is never far away. The power of the dialogue between Bieke and her muse Agata plays out in the background, furtively: Who looks at whom? Who feels more attracted to whom? What constitutes playful altercation with one another? What is the significance of the stern and serious gaze

that is followed by the camera? The images are combined with personal notes, creating an intimate journey into the nights they experience together and the emotional worlds that go with them. Bieke and Agata both agree that the photographic portraits have brought Agata greater self-knowledge – however, after more than two years of working together, the role of the photographer has changed as well. Bieke Depoorter's project Agata is a co-production with FOMU –Photo Museum of Antwerp in Belgium.

Bieke Depoorter (*1986, lives and works in Brussels) became what was then the youngest member of the Magnum Photo Agency in 2016. In her photographic series, chance encounters often act as the starting point, with the photographer taking the opportunity they present to follow particular individuals over an extended period of time. The resulting intimacy often develops an equivocal power on the visual level as well. In 2009, Depoorter completed her master's degree in photography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent. She won a number of prizes for her graduation project *Ou Menya*, including the Magnum Expression Award. Since then, the Belgian artist has shown her work in solo and group exhibitions mounted by renowned international art institutions, such as the Kunsthall in Rotterdam in 2009, the International Center of Photography in New York in 2017, and the Fotomuseum Den Haag in 2018. She has also taken part in various festivals: the Watou Art Festival in Belgium (2010), the photo festivals in Sète and Menotrentuno (both 2011), the Festival of Ethical Photography in Lodi (2012) and Turkey's international photography festival Fotoistanbul (2014).

EVENTS

Dark Is the Night – exhibition tour with the artists
Saturday, 07.12.2019, 16:00

Tour and talk with Nadine Wietlisbach and Andy Mösch, booking and production at Kraftfeld night club, Winterthur, on club culture, urban spaces and nightlife
Saturday, 11.01.2020, 16:00

Tour and talk with Nadine Wietlisbach and Anna Rosenwasser, LGBT activist from Zurich, on queer parties and the importance of safe spaces at night
Wednesday, 29.01.2020, 19:00

zweikommasieben Magazin hosted by Fotomuseum Winterthur – happy hour with talk, music and drinks
Saturday, 08.02.2020, 18:00

During the events the museum's own **Bar Soda** is open.