

Zones of conflict and pain - online media witnessing and its affective dynamics

Discussion between artist Reza Aramesh and art historian Kerstin Schankweiler

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"Denkraum" in the exhibition "Uncertain States", Halle 2

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, 10557 Berlin



Reza Aramesh: Action 117. Viet Cong Prisoner, Thuong Duc, January 23rd 1967. 2011. © Courtesy the artist & Ab-Anbar gallery Tehran

Images of conflict, war, and escape are omnipresent in our daily life. Although media witnessing is not a new phenomenon, the internet era has significantly intensified the affective dynamics of images from zones of political conflict.

On the basis of their artistic and scholarly work on images from the internet and social media, Reza Aramesh and Kerstin Schankweiler discuss the de- and recontextualizing of iconic images of violence. How can one approach and engage with these affecting images, and what role do we play as the spectators? What is the political of affectivity? How can media witnessing be aesthetically reflected in the arts? And which new perspectives can be offered by artistic practices remediating images from zones of conflict and pain?

Reza Aramesh is a painter, photographer and sculptor, born in Ahwaz (Iran), lives in London. He draws on war photography taken from the internet that report on historical and contemporary political conflicts in Vietnam, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan or Korea.

Kerstin Schankweiler is an art historian and postdoctoral research fellow in the Collaborative Research Center "Affective Societies", where she is researching the affective dynamics of images in the era of social media.