



REWINDING INTERNATIONALISM

When you press the rewind button and replay part of a song or a scene in a film, something happens. The part that is rewind is distorted, taken out of context and experienced differently.

*Rewinding Internationalism* explores developments, ideas, and stories from the 1990s and their effect on the world today. The end of the Cold War, the AIDS pandemic and increasing globalization caused enormous changes, with art being no exception. What happened to the questions and experiences of that time? The exhibition includes visual and audio material from the past and present, archival material and recently created work.

The curators, collectives, and artists who curated the exhibition invite you to 'rewind' to moments from the 1990s and reflect on them from today's perspective.

ROUTING

The exhibition consists of three sections, each with its own entrance. It does not matter which route you start with. At the end of each route, you have to walk back to the beginning. You go through the galleries again, but this time from the other side. You rewind, so to speak, and meet the presentations from a different point of view. Each of the ten halls has its own subject, its own stories and its own atmosphere. Wander around the exhibition and experience the stories of the past and their effects on the present.

SYMBOLS

The symbols in the floor plan match the symbols to each room text.

■ Lubaina Himid: "There are paintings about cloves, about rain and closed shutters; there are paintings about the sea, fishing nets, death by malaria, and, of course, women's tears."

The series of paintings in this room, created by Lubaina Himid, centre around the journeys she has made. After her father's death in 1954, she travelled with her mother from Zanzibar to England as a four-month-old baby. In 1997, she returned to the island for the first time and discovered that she had always unconsciously painted the surroundings, the sounds and her memory of Zanzibar. She also considers painting the series of works, titled *Zanzibar*, as a journey, which she describes as "an exercise in speed, daring and calm, against panic."

The audio work you can experience in this room is by Magda Stawarska, with whom Himid has previously collaborated. It includes samples of BBC Radio 3 music from the 1990s, radio fragments from the 1950s, and music from Zanzibar. They are interspersed with the sound of water drops and rain. It also features voices reading from a travel guide of Zanzibar that Himid's father gave to her mother.

● Betsy Damon has been fascinated by water for 35 years. Recent work by Damon inspired by water is displayed against the walls of this room. She unearths the relationship between water and the stars, between microscopic droplets and galactic eruptions.

In 1991, Damon founded the organisation *Keepers of the Waters*, dedicated to water management and educating and inspiring groups of people in this field. At the time, awareness of climate issues in dominant discourse was still in its infancy.

In 1995 and 1996, Damon realised projects in Chengdu, China and in Lhasa, Tibetan Autonomous Region. She invited local and international artists to create installations and performances to draw attention to the protection of water resources, especially the Funan and Lhasa rivers. This room features documentation of those activities. Several artists who took part in them also offer personal accounts of their experiences.

*The presentation in this room was developed with Sebastian Cichocki.*

◆ Tony Cokes' black-and-white video *Mikrohaus, or the black atlantic?* consists of music and spoken and written text from the 1990s and early 2000s. The video shows a rhythmic alternation of white and black images. As a visitor, you are

invited to watch, read and listen simultaneously. It has been said of Cokes' work that 'it is a theory you can dance to.' The texts in the video partially originate from music critic Philip Sherburne, who used the term Microhouse for a combination of minimalist techno and house music. Other quotes come from sociologist Paul Gilroy's book *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, published in 1993. In this book, Gilroy introduces the idea of a shared Black consciousness as a legacy of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. By alternating between different texts, the video evokes connections between transnational events and types of music, between German techno and its precursors in the US cities of Detroit and Chicago.

- ▶ This room showcases work of three different artists and collectives in the context of the AIDS pandemic.

Spanish artist, activist and pacifist Miguel Benlloch (1954–2018) responded to various international issues in his work. His series of poetic posters *Epigrams against war* is on display, as well as the video performance *SIDA DA*.

ACT UP-Barcelona was the local branch of the broad international network ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) founded in New York in 1987, where it was highly visible and well-organized. ACT UP-Barcelona emerged more as a confluence of personal contacts and circumstances. Video footage, posters, and other documentary material provide insight into the activities there.

CEPSS (Centre for Studies and Prevention in Health and AIDS) came into being in 1989 on the initiative of Christian Rodríguez. Rodríguez was a left-wing Chilean activist who had studied medical anthropology in France and was active in the local anti-AIDS movements there. This centre considered education, training, and prevention as core tasks. Papers referring to the history of CEPSS are presented here.

*The materials in this room have been selected from the AIDS Anarchiv by Equipo re (Aimar Arriola, Nancy Garin and Linda Valdés). This research project has been investigating the ongoing HIV/AIDS crisis, with a focus on 'the South', and particularly Chile and Spain.*

- susan pui san lok / lok pui san delved into the archives of the Gate Foundation for her multimedia installation *REWIND / REPLAY*. This archive was moved to the Van Abbemuseum in 2006, but parts of it remained unopened. The Gate Foundation was set up in 1988 to draw attention to non-Western art for a Dutch audience and to

promote an exchange between different cultures. Typical of the 'New Internationalism' of the 1990s, artists' work was seen in relation to their nationality or ethnic background.

In her work, susan pui san lok / lok pui san wants to move beyond categorizations. For *REWIND / REPLAY*, she digitized VHS and cassette tapes from the Gate archive. A new sound installation includes samples from this material alongside recordings of a script rehearsed with actors. The multi-channel video piece includes stills from the work of Ho Tam. Images, sounds and lights from different sources form a strange, new mix. Magnetic tapes taken from cassettes hang scattered around the room whilst music stands and microphones give the sense of a performance about to take place.

- ✳ French philosopher Felix Guattari visited Chile in 1991 and gave a lecture entitled *The Three Ecologies*. This lecture, also published as a book, was prophetic in terms of understanding the connection between our natural, social and personal worlds. This room includes photos from Guattari's visit to Chile, including diagrams by Guattari's friend Miguel D. Norambuena.

There are also a number of issues of the journal *Revisita de Critica Cultural*, founded in 1990 by Nelly Richard. It became an internationally focused platform for artists, writers, and thinkers in Chile after Pinochet's dictatorship. There is also work by artists related to this magazine, including work made during the 1970s during the struggle against Pinochet.

A new film by artist/activist Cecilia Barriga deals with various feminist and internationalist issues. She combines film material from the 1990s with recent material. In this way, Barriga shows how issues from the 1990s are still relevant today.

*This room has been developed with Paulina E. Varas.*

- ▷ Norbert van Onna's photographs show Philips factories and other buildings that became vacant in the 1990s when the company moved its headquarters from Eindhoven to Amsterdam and part of its production to countries outside of Europe. The story of Philips in the 1990s is a story of change due to globalisation.

L'Association pour la Démocratie à Nice (AdN) was founded in 1991 in Nice. Photos in this room show how AdN activists reacted to the rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen and the Front National in France. They were also critical of globalisation. Their story is a local one, but stems from an internationalist vision.

On 30 November 1999, photographer Allan Sekula took to the streets of Seattle, US, and joined the anti globalisation protest marches. At the time, a World Trade Organisation ministerial summit was taking place in Seattle to launch a new round of international trade agreements. From before dawn until long after sunset, Sekula photographed participants in the marches in various states of excitement, anxiety, or boredom. The result is the 14-minute slide show *Waiting for Teargas (White Globe to Black)*, 1999–2000, at the centre of this room. Sekula calls it an anti-photojournalism essay because it goes against the rules of photojournalism of providing a single iconic image.

- ◇ The film *Shokouk (Doubts)* is set around Baikonur Cosmodrome, a space centre and the largest rocket launch site in the world, from which all Soviet manned space flights departed. Also on display in this gallery is Sergei Krikolev's astronaut bed from the MIR space station. He came from the city of Leningrad (today's St. Petersburg) and was launched into space from Baikonur in 1991 before the Soviet Union broke up. He remained there until after the dissolution of the USSR and that is why, back on Earth, he was called 'the last Soviet.'

*Shokouk* opens with a gossiping crowd gathered to observe a televised rocket launch. Viewers then become acquainted with Nikitin Nikifor, a fictional archival character before joining a karaoke event celebrating the inauguration of a Chinese infrastructure company (Skybridge Unlimited) in Uzbekistan. The film ends in orbit aboard the MIR space station. The artists present a constellation of narratives from different time periods drawing on a variety of references. These include the teachings of Italian physicist Carlo Rovelli around the essence of time, their research on the harmful environmental impacts of the space industry on local livelihoods, as well as the works of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century Muslim astronomers and polymaths, Omar Khayam and Nasiridin Al-Tusi.

*Shokouk* is a new video work by Pejvak, a duo that has been researching the relationship between West Asia, present-day Russia, and parts of the former Soviet Union. Typical of Pejvak's work, the film is a mix of historical research and fiction.

- This room includes work by artists who participated in the 1995 exhibition *Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries: Unity in Diversity in International Art*. This exhibition took place in Jakarta, Indonesia, and showed art in different

styles and from all continents. A few years earlier, in 1992, Jakarta hosted a summit of Non-Aligned Countries. These countries did not feel politically related to the superpowers like the United States of America or the Soviet Union.

On display here are paintings, a sculpture, and a collage by artists from the Gorgona group. Gorgona was active in the 1950s and 60s in the former Yugoslavia, which disintegrated in 1991. The Non-Aligned Countries movement was founded in the capital Belgrade in 1961. The conceptual work of the Gorgona group contrasts sharply with Belkis Ayón's figurative prints and Semsar Siahaan's paintings. Archival material refers to the historical relationship between Yugoslavia and Indonesia and the exchange of gifts between the leaders of these countries.

Nadiah Bamadhaj's installation focuses on the role of women in the history of Indonesian Independence, established in 1945 and their role in pursuing women's rights up until 1965.

*This room was developed with Bojana Piškur, Grace Samboh and Rachel Surijata.*

- Olu Oguibes' work *Many Thousand Gone (2000)* consists of 84 painted portraits of unidentified people. It is a monument for the victims of the AIDS pandemic in South Africa. Drugs against this disease were developed as early as the mid-1990s, but these were mainly available in Europe and the US. Like the recent COVID-19 vaccines, they were not distributed equally around the world. Oguibe began his portrait series in Maastricht and continued it as he travelled through Europe. His poem in this room reflects on the loss of so many lives.

Didem Pekün's film *Disturbed Earth (2021)* is based on the 24 hours before the fall of Srebrenica during the 1995 war in Bosnia. During this event 8,000 Muslim men and boys were murdered. For the script, Pekün used transcripts of meetings between UN, NATO and White House officials but any reference to time and place has been removed. Thus, the film becomes a wider analogy for the failure of umbrella organisations when presented with urgent crises affecting many countries.

Van Abbemuseum. Subscribe to the newsletter and follow us on Facebook, Instagram en Twitter. [vanabbemuseum.nl/followus](https://vanabbemuseum.nl/followus)

Supported by:

