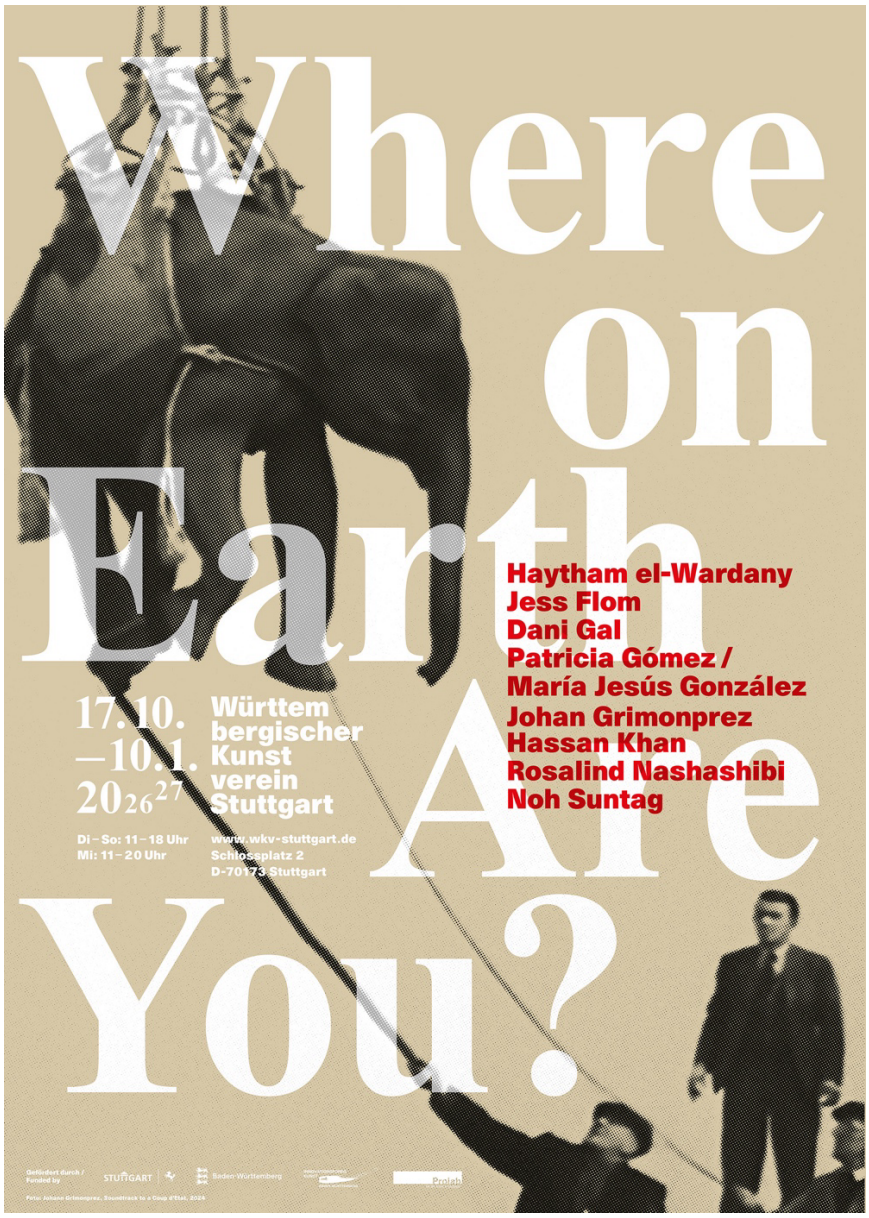
Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart

Where on Earth Are You?

October 17, 2026 – January 10, 2027

Reader (As of October 29, 2026)



The Project

The question of which side one is on has (once again) taken on enormous weight in recent years: right or left, rich or poor, on the side of Israel or Palestine, in front of or behind the border fence. Some of these positions are a matter of choice, others are not – yet in both cases they can have far-reaching social and existential consequences. National border policies are becoming increasingly restrictive. Those who try to cross these borders risk their lives. An undesirable political stance can cost someone their job, reputation, or funding. While those crossing the borders of Fortress Europe insist, with great courage and perseverance, on their right to something other than a precarious life, on the other side of the fence, the fear of losing privileges causes ethical stance, solidarity, and empathy to fade. **The exhibition *Where on Earth Are You?* advocates for daring to take a stronger stance and embracing greater solidarity and empathy. It presents works by contemporary artists who respond to the increasingly precarious and authoritarian conditions of the present in critical, resistant, and at the same time empathetic ways. At the heart of the exhibition are lines of conflict shaped by the geopolitical reconfigurations that followed the Second World War. The title is taken from the eponymous essay by British author Frances Stonor Saunders (1966–2026) on the technologies and deadly consequences of today's border regimes.**[1]

A starting point for the exhibition is the figure of the refugee: a figure that challenges the nation-state's construction as being tied to the place of birth. Rather than focusing on the dehumanization of refugees, the exhibition foregrounds their insistence on life and a future.

Particular focus is placed on Gaza and other occupied Palestinian territories. Their conditions, marked by violence, displacement, and destruction in violation of international law, despite the deaths of tens of thousands, are met with widespread apathy in Germany. The exhibition presents these sites as threshold spaces between everyday life and escalation, life and survival, isolation and solidarity, violence and care.

The increasing ideological hardening and authoritarian policies are reminiscent, in part, of the atmosphere of the Cold War. North and South Korea are among those national formations whose borders to this day result from the geopolitical conflicts of that era. The exhibition approaches this situation as well as moments within the Cold War when forms of community other than the nation-state seemed possible – as discussed, for example, in the decolonial and Non-Aligned movements of the 1950s and 1960s.

[1] Frances Stonor Saunders, *Where on Earth are You?*, 2016: https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v38/n05/frances-stonor-saunders/where-on-earth-are-you

Display: Overlaying the Previous Exhibition *resistant theatre* by siren eun young jung

The exhibition's display is based on the previous exhibition *resistant theatre* by siren eun young jung. jung generously agreed to let us adopt the exhibition architecture she designed—otherwise, due to budget cuts in the cultural sector, the exhibition *Where on Earth Are You?* would not have been possible.

As one exhibition is overlaid by another, multi-layered echoes emerge, much like in a palimpsest. r*esistant theatre* was an exhibition about protest, resistance, empathy, and solidarity—about their strengths and ambivalences, which are also significant in this exhibition. The space designed by jung—a hybrid of stage, exhibition, public piazza, and gathering place—is also brought to life as such within the framework of *Where on Earth Are You?*

The overlap of the two exhibitions has produced more than a mere adaptation to current austerity policies, which are an expression of an increasingly restrictive (cultural) political climate. *Where on Earth Are You?* also sees itself as a site of resistance against these policies.

Selected Works

Haytham el-Wardany, Berlin, *Gaza, 2035*, 2019
Wall text

The literary work of writer and translator Haytham el-Wardany encompasses fiction, particularly short stories, as well as forms of non-fiction, such as essays and experimental prose. The exhibition presents his short story *Gaza, 2035* in the form of a wall text. The short story takes place in the year 2035, which is also the year that marks 100 years since Brecht wrote *Writing the Truth – Five Difficulties*, a text the protagonist translates from Gaza. The short story was written in 2019 as a response to the long-standing Israeli siege of Gaza.

Jess Flom, Tel Aviv, *Queers in the Front*, 2025–2026
Photo series

Israeli queer photographer and activist Jess Flom has been documenting protests for years against Israel's settlement and occupation policies, as well as against the war in the Gaza Strip, which UN investigators and numerous human rights organizations have classified as genocide. The focus is on the participation of queer communities in demonstrations and protests, as well as on solidarity with and concern for people from Palestine. Queer Israeli and Palestinian activists are equally involved in these communities. Protests against pinkwashing and against military service are also important causes for them.



Stonewall Alternative Pride Parade. March Against Pinkwashing, Juni 27, 2026, Tel Aviv

Dani Gal, Berlin, *A Woman of Valor*, 2015
Video, HD, color, sound, 42 minutes



Hedy Epstein (1924–2016), a Holocaust survivor and eyewitness, human rights activist, and writer, was born in Freiburg im Breisgau. She grew up in Kippenheim, Baden, and fled to Great Britain in 1939 on a Kindertransport. Her parents were murdered in Auschwitz. After returning to Germany in 1945 to work as a translator for the Nuremberg Trials, Epstein emigrated to the United States in 1948. Politicized by the Vietnam War, she remained committed until well into her old age not only to addressing the crimes of the Nazi regime but also to promoting peace between Israel and Palestine. She fought against racism and violence in numerous organizations and advocated for the rights of the Palestinian people. Even at the age of 90, in 2014, she took part in a sit-in protesting the shooting of 18-year-old African American Michael Brown by a white police officer in Ferguson and was arrested on camera. The film follows Epstein during her visit to Kippenheim that same year, during which she stayed in the house from which she and her family had been driven out in 1939. She speaks about her childhood in Nazi Germany, her experiences during the Nuremberg Trials, the Palestinians' right of return, her repeated attempts to enter the Gaza Strip, her activities in the West Bank, hunger strikes, and much more. The title *Woman of Valor*, *Eshet Hayil* in Hebrew, is a biblical term referring to a good, devoted wife. Epstein, on the other hand, has repeatedly ruffled feathers with her political stance.

Patricia Gómez, María Jesús González, Valencia
***A tous les clandestins*, 2014–16**
This artistic research project focuses on the route from the West African coast to the Canary Islands, which was one of the most frequently used migration routes in the 2000s. The focus is on drawings, inscriptions, and messages left by refugees on the walls of two former deportation centers—one in the Mauritanian port city of Nouadhibou and one on Fuerteventura—where they were detained. Both facilities were located at key departure and arrival points along the route. Like numerous other camps, they had been set up during the so-called Cayuco crisis. The Spanish term "Cayuco" refers to the boats in which people undertook the dangerous crossing to the Canary Islands. At the time of the project, both deportation centers were already empty. The goal was to recover, preserve, and publish the numerous traces and messages left by the migrants—to ensure they remain visible and heard in the long term. In addition, the project turns

its attention to the cemeteries of Fuerteventura, where hundreds of migrants who lost their lives during the crossing are often buried without names.

***¿Quién nos volverá!*, 2014**
Video, HD, color, sound, 2:14 minutes



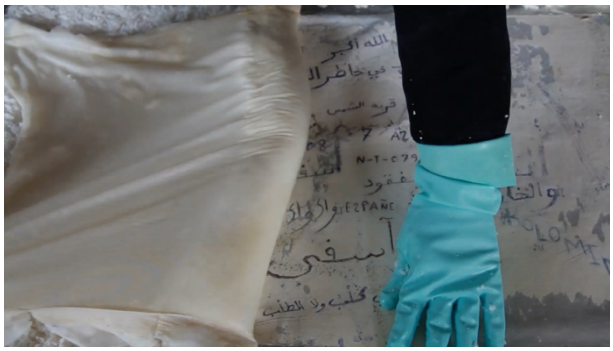
The video shows footage of the cemeteries in Gran Tarajal, Pájara, La Oliva, Puerto del Rosario, Morro Jable, and Cofete on Fuerteventura. Since the first shipwreck involving a boat carrying refugees in 1999, the bodies of hundreds of migrants have been recovered off the coast of the Canary Islands. On the memorial plaques in these cemeteries, often all that remains of them is a number and the date of death.

***CIE El Matorral, Fuerteventura. Patios y celdas*, 2014**
Video, HD, color, sound, 3:19 minutes



The first part of the project *À tous les clandestins* was created in May and June 2014 on the grounds of the former El Matorral deportation center on Fuerteventura. The images show interior and exterior views of the camp, which operated from 2003 to 2012 and was once one of the largest facilities of its kind in Spain and within the European Union. Although it no longer housed any migrants at the time the photographs were taken, its infrastructure continued to be maintained. It is currently being converted by the Spanish government into a “Center for the Temporary Care of Foreign Nationals” (CATE).

***Please, Don't Paint the Wall*, 2014**
Video, HD, color, sound, 11:02 minutes



The messages and drawings that migrants left on the walls of the El Matorral deportation center despite the ban were extensively painted over by the facility and covered by several layers of paint. The video shows the labor-intensive process of uncovering, securing, and documenting these inscriptions from El Matorral's largest cell block. Among other techniques, the video features the archaeological strappo method, in which wall paintings or frescoes are detached from a damaged wall and transferred to a new support.

***Bonne chance,* 2016**
Video, HD, color, sound, 108 minutes



In the video *Bonne Chance*, Ndiaye Cheikh Amadou Tidiane, a Senegalese citizen living in Spain, guides us through the six communal cells of a former deportation center in Nouadhibou. The Mauritanian port city is one of the most important departure points on the migration route from the West African coast to the Canary Islands. At the same time, Cheikh points out the messages left on the walls of the cells, translates them, and films them—messages that bear witness to the dreams, hopes, and experiences of the refugees. Years earlier, he himself had set out by boat from this very spot toward the Canary Islands. In 2015, he was part of the project team that traveled to Nouadhibou to document the migrants' inscriptions.

Johan Grimonprez, Ghent and New York, *Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat*, 2024
Film/DPC, color and black & white, sound, 150 minutes



Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat weaves together historical archives, family home movies, quotes and jazz into a dynamic, nonlinear retelling of the events spanning from the Congo's independence to the overthrow and assassination of Patrice Lumumba. One of the pivotal points is the United Nations, where sixteen independent African states were admitted in 1960, tipping the political balance of power in the General Assembly towards the Global South. The Cold War and decolonization, the activities of the CIA, and the African American civil rights movement shaped the social and geopolitical landscape. With the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as decolonial and Pan-African movements, a historic moment emerges in which political communities beyond the existing imperial and nation-state order become conceivable. Black jazz musicians are deployed by U.S. foreign policy as cultural ambassadors—while others turn their music into protest against racism, colonialism, and the assassination of Lumumba.

Hassan Khan, Cairo, *Little Castles*, 2025
Video installation, color, sound, 10 minutes



Over the course of ten minutes*, Little Castles* (2025) unfolds as both song and video —a composition that builds slowly: layering rhythm, voice, and visuals … castle-like houses in Berlin-Lichtenberg evoke the aspirations of the petit bourgeoisie, while a figure in a gorilla costume dances in a white room. Shot entirely on the artist's phone, the work gestures toward the very device through which the political sphere is mediated. While *Little Castles* resists the directness of protest, it can be read in the history of political songs as it seeks to explore what

kind of cultural content can still be produced in a moment marked by polarization, populism, and the erosion of ideological certainty.
– Carin Bukuts

Lyrics

Little
Castles
Little castles everywhere

Little
Castles
They sure make you stare

Little egos
Little egos everywhere
Some do and some don't care

But if you wanna
Play the game

But if you wanna
Name the name

But if you wanna
Tame the flame

But if you wanna
Break the claim

Just remember
No one takes the blame

This is taking way too long
Tell me how can we go on?
Breaking down falling strong
I'll just play you a funny song
A witty tune for a land
Where a certain people are never wrong
And even as thousands die
Someone will tell you the light is red

And teach you how to make your bed
Coldly stare at your head
Question everything you said
Act like you're not there
And even if thousands expire
Of this supremacy they never tire

You gotta have real will
And let day find day

You gotta stand up
If that's what u gonna play

You gotta know what's true
Or your truth will die away

You gotta find a name
If that will make you stay

Even with a hundred thousand dead
They'll tell you how to swim
Or stand in line not to waste time
How not to snore at the store
And ask with a smile
Have you seen an official order?
That proves a genocide order?
Shall we close the border?
Can we have some order?

You gotta bring it down
If u want it gone away

You gotta bring the words
If you've got something to say

Little
Castles
Little castles everywhere

Little
Castles
They sure make you stare

Little egos
Little egos everywhere
Some do and some don't care

But if you wanna
Play the game

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Rosalind Nashashibi, London, *Electrical Gaza*, 2015
16-mm-film on video, animation, color, sound, 17:53 minutes
Courtesy: Rosalind Nashashibi and LUX, London



Rosalind Nashashibi's film *Electrical Gaza* was shot in June 2014, just a few weeks before the start of the Israeli military offensive Operation Protective Edge. This was among the most violent escalations in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the blockade of the Gaza Strip, in place since 2007. According to UN figures, more than 2,000 Palestinians were killed during the offensive, the majority of them civilians. Even during filming, the Israeli military was carrying out airstrikes, at that time still predominantly targeting uninhabited areas in Gaza.
Shot on 16mm, the film, however, does not show direct images of violence or the impending escalation; instead, it observes everyday life in the streets and on the beaches in Gaza, as well as at border crossings, including the crossing to Egypt at Rafah. These are moments full of ambivalence, oscillating between a charged calm and a latent state of emergency. The camera approaches the various scenes—some more bustling, others less so—at a distance, often from inside a car: streets lined with shops; makeshift markets; a Hamas youth march; crowded as well as deserted border posts; children, adults, and horses bathing in the sea. Time and again, the film crew itself appears in the frame. Alongside the outdoor footage, there are glimpses into private homes: men discussing, singing, and preparing food, women with children. The on-site footage regularly transitions into animated images, and ambient sounds into synthesizer tones. The film intertwines the documentary with the imaginary, the existing with what is impending and what might be possible. Beyond the familiar images of rubble and violence, it portrays Gaza as a threshold space—suspended between the harsh reality of isolation, repression, and escalation and a sense of mythical otherworldliness.
Electrical Gaza was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum in London and premiered there in 2015.

Noh Suntag, Seoul, *Divided Dizziness*, 2017, 2023
Photo series (selection), color



North and South Korea are among those national formations whose division and borders, still in place today, can be traced back to the geopolitical and ideological upheavals of the Cold War. With Japan's surrender and the end of the Second World War, the 35-year period of Japanese colonial rule over Korea also came to an end in 1945. Subsequently, the peninsula was divided along the 38th parallel into a Soviet and an American occupation zone. This artificially drawn military demarcation line, initially conceived as temporary, became a permanent political border in the course of the confrontations between the major powers of the time. In 1948, two separate states were finally established: the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). The Korean Civil War (1950–1953), which emerged from these border policies and claimed the lives of around 2.5 million people in just three years, went far beyond being a purely national conflict. In addition to the opposing Korean factions, the United States, China, the Soviet Union, and troops from numerous UN member states played a major role in the war. The conflict ultimately cemented Korea's division into a largely isolated North and a globalized South shaped by neoliberalism.
Suntag Noh has been engaging with the division between North and South Korea for decades. *Divided Dizziness* is a photographic series that seeks to view the North Korean border regions from the Chinese side.

Courtesy: unless otherwise noted, the artists

Dates + Credits

Where on Earth Are You?
17 October 2026 – 10 January 2027

Artists
Haytham el-Wardany
Jess Flom
Dani Gal
Patricia Gómez / María Jesús González
Johan Grimonprez
Hassan Khan
Rosalind Nashashibi
Noh Suntag

Opening
Friday, 16 October 2026, 7 p.m.

Guided Tour with Artists and Curators
Saturday, 17 October 2026, 1 p.m.

Event Program
www.wkv-stuttgart.de

Curators' Tours
Wednesday: 4 November, 2 December 2026, 7 p.m.; Sunday: 10 January 2027, 4:30 p.m.

Sunday Tours
German: Sundays, 3 p.m. (except October 18, 2026)
English: Sunday: 1 November, 6 December 2026, 3 January 2027, 2 p.m.

Tours by Appointment + Art Education
Info: Anne Volk, volk@wkv-stuttgart.de
www.wkv-stuttgart.de/kunstvermittlung

Curators
Hans D. Christ, Iris Dressler

Coordination and Organization
Anne Volk

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