

ALFREDO JAAR

Chiaroscuro,

2024

When we received the generous invitation by Salta art to curate an exhibition at the Sorry Square kiosk, the immediate thought that came to our minds and hearts was to present an intervention by the well-known Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar, who, despite his busy schedule with major art institutions, kindly accepted. This gesture undoubtedly reinforces Alfredo's genuine commitment to the arts and his critical spirit.

Alfredo Jaar has always been able to place us in a space of deep reflection through direct, poetic, and powerful gestures. Public space, governed by survival of the fittest, is, for him, the most impactful arena in which to unfold his subversive poetry. In his intervention from 1979, during Pinochet's dictatorship in Chile, Jaar bravely asked, using street posters and billboards: "Are you happy?" If you take a moment to place yourself in the shoes of a passerby, seeing these billboards in the midst of a cruel and authoritarian dictatorship, what would you feel? How do you speak of pain, persecution, fear, authoritarianism, and abuse without naming them? By directly aiming an arrow at the heart of each passerby who, upon seeing such a simple yet profound question, cannot help but grasp the spirit of liberation it carries. Are we happy? We still ask ourselves this today... In a world where civilians die daily in wars, where hundreds of migrants

drown in a hostile sea, where xenophobic and racist discourses are articulated on a daily basis in the streets, the media, and social networks.

Given this proposal and setting (the kiosk, the public square, Munich, Germany, Europe), Jaar suggested presenting the work *Chiaroscuro*, using a quote from Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci, written in prison in 1930 during Mussolini's dictatorship, in which the philosopher describes the rise of fascism at that time: "*Il vecchio mondo sta morendo. Quello nuovo tarda a comparire. E in questo chiaroscuro nascono i mostri*" (The old world is dying. The new world struggles to be born. In this chiaroscuro, monsters are born).

In the actual context in which we are living, as fascist ideas are returning to prominence, Alfredo Jaar confronts us with this phrase and prompts us to reflect on a past that is becoming our present. Can we be happy in a world where we allow hatred and division to emerge? As John Berger once wrote: "Gramsci believed in hope rather than promises, and hope is a long affair."

Espacio Temporal,
Paris, August 2024

Opening Hours: Mon – Fri 1-5pm, Sat – Sun 12-6pm
Address: Wiener Platz 9. 81667 Munich
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About the Project

Salta art invites Espacio Temporal to curate a public intervention featuring the renowned Chilean artist Alfredo Jaar. The work consists of 14 flags presented around the square, as well as a selection of printed posters available inside the kiosk for visitors to take. In addition, the posters are displayed in 78 different U-Bahn stations across the city of Munich during the run of the exhibition. The visual language of the posters is symbolically charged, presented in colors representing different European national flags, the European flag and, in conjunction with the Gramsci quotation, directs attention to a much-needed poetic and political intervention.

About the Artist

ALFREDO JAAR (Santiago, Chile, 1956) is an artist, architect, and filmmaker who lives and works in New York. His work has been shown extensively around the world. He has participated in the Venice Biennial (1986, 2007, 2009, 2013), São Paulo Biennial (1987, 1989, 2010, 2021) as well as Documenta in Kassel (1987, 2002).

About the Editors

ESPACIO TEMPORAL is a dissident, independent, and self-financed platform that promotes Latin American art in Europe, focusing on circulating ideas and fostering critical thinking. Espacio Temporal is an initiative by curator Sofía Lanusse and artist Iván Argote since 2020.

SALTA ART is an independent non-profit arts organization that seeks to foster the exchange of ideas between South America and Germany. Salta art supports residencies, talks, performances, exhibitions and research to encourage a dialogue among artists, curators, cultural producers and art enthusiasts. In that way, Salta art aims to provide opportunities for collaborations as well as to develop mutual understanding.

SORRYSQUARE is a standalone pavilion located at Wiener Platz, nestled in Munich's lively Haidhausen neighborhood. Originally transformed into a bookshop by Sorry Press in the summer of 2023, the space further evolved in 2024 to welcome visiting artists, curators, and friends. While the bookshop remains a central feature, Sorry Square now invites guests to use the space as a public cube, fostering creative exchange.

VARIOUS OTHERS is the "international format" of the Munich art scene. Its key players—galleries, artist-run spaces and various other institutions—welcome guests to discover the rich diversity of the city's art venues. In collaboration with changing international partners, VARIOUS OTHERS offers art lovers from all over the world contemporary art of the highest quality and relevance in the unique surroundings of the Bavarian capital.