

FILM LIVE

HELGA FANDERL



FEBRUARY 27 – APRIL 19, 2015



## CONVERSATION WITH HELGA FANDERL

SF: The title of your solo presentation, Film Live, at **DAS ESSZIMMER** relates to your practice of composing specific film programs consisting of individual Super 8 films and presenting them in different cinema settings. You also speak of *cinema in situ*.

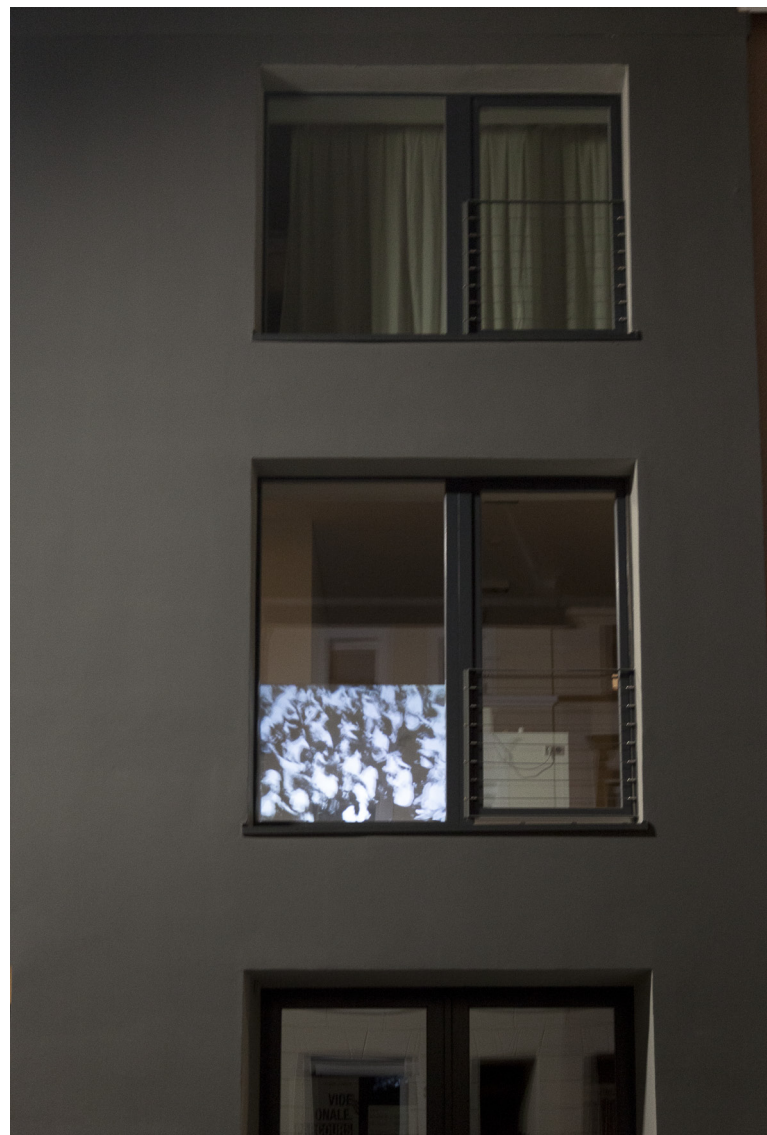
Why do you show your Super 8 films exclusively in the setting of a live projection and when did you begin this practice?

HF: I choose this practice because of the fragile nature of Super 8. Super 8 is not a cinema format, but rather an intimate medium designed for home and amateur filmmaking and it is also used by artists who explore it further. The Super 8 film can be easily scratched and destroyed if the projector is not well-maintained. In a traditional cinema, the distance between the screen and the projection booth is generally too big and the Super 8 lamp does not produce a bright enough image on the screen. For this reason I set up the projector in the auditorium itself, often between the tiers, in midst of the audience. In order for the image to find its proper position from the standpoint of the sloping theater, the projection table needs to be quite high. Therefore I began constructing pedestals out of whatever means I had at my disposal, and this character of improvisation and *bricolage* was simply due to necessity. Later, I learned to appreciate and incorporate this aesthetic into my work. I prefer to present my films in a space that's not a proper cinema, but which I can transform into a cinema *in situ*.

The site specific installation of the projection, the transparency of the apparatus and the projection itself are present in the space, and can be seen and heard. Every film screening becomes a unique event.

This performative quality is relevant to another aspect of my filmmaking: my films record the way I am seeing, perceiving and understanding things in the moment, and as

*The Color Run*, 2013, digitized version, b/w, without sound, projection onto a front window, filmstill





*The Colour Run, 2013, b/w, without sound., 16mm film, filmstill*

such are edited in camera, not later at the editing table. Right from the beginning, I never showed the short film pieces individually, but in composed units. For every program I make a selection of specific films. I consider this selection also to be a kind of film, not one whose print could circulate, but a temporary assemblage of diverse elements representing just one of an infinite number of possible combinations  
So three times: filming LIVE, programming LIVE, screening LIVE.

SF: It seems quite evident that presence is a central aspect of the way you work. Did you ever consider editing your films

or reworking them digitally?

HF: When I started making films I learned to cut and edit. However, the single Super 8 frame is so tiny that I thought it would be impossible for me to make precise cuts and perfect edits. That is why I decided to practice *in-camera* editing. My first experiences helped to develop a sense of structuring time within the single shot, a sequence of images and the entire film as well..

It was essential that I filmed a lot, that I analysed the films I had made in my head and my hands, with the hand-held camera. I spent a lot of time reflecting on whether the films were fine or not. Out of this, I discovered new means of expression that helped me bring my perceptions and ideas into correspondence with the right form.





*The Colour Run*, 2013, b/w, without sound, 16mm film, exhibition view

It's a challenge to concentrate on filming a given situation and record its fugitive moments; but this short, concentrated form suits me. When my perception gets deeper and sharper I can catch facets of reality and rhythms that would otherwise elude me. When I decide that a film is not good enough, I don't make corrections, I simply don't show it. Since I don't screen my films digitally, any form of digital postproduction is out of question.

Editing or postproduction do come into play when I compose programs. For every screening I basically assemble a specific selection of films. Making these programs - either in their entirety or in fragments - is an essential part of my work.

Each composed sequence of films then becomes a unique film. The individual films can be read differently and have different meanings depending on the context in which they

appear.

For exhibitions, installations and performances, I select extracts from the digitised version of my films. Sometimes I create loops or multiple projections.

For my large installation *Marieluise Fleissers Kleider* (*Marieluise Fleissers Clothes*) for example, I had the Italian artist Matteo Pennese create a software that allows 10 pieces of film to be performed in infinite variations on six parallel screens.

I am always fascinated by spaces that have a history of their own. I like projecting on surfaces that have their own materiality, that aren't proper screens, but bear the traces of former use.

For example, I have used walls of a former authorised Citroën workshop from the thirties, a concrete wall of a





*The Colour Run*, 2013, b/w, without sound, 16mm Film, exhibition view

public theatre of the sixties which had traces of rain and graffiti, and high walls of an inner courtyard ( of the Goe-the Institute in Paris), in which pebbles of different sizes created a relief, transforming the film images.

I also like your idea of producing a projection screen on one of the sashes, spreading layers of buttermilk so that, at night, edited images of *The Color Run* could be projected out on the street.

SF: The film medium, whether analogue or digital, has specific technical and spatial parameters, such as the right equipment – or in your case, darkness. For your solo show at **DAS ESSZIMMER** we emphasised this darkness. The exhibition space facing the street was transformed into a black box, becoming invisible to the street. Entering this dark space the visitor finds himself in a kind of mini-

cinema. The projector is illuminated, the screen is empty. After some minutes the room goes dark and the private screening of your 16mm print *The Color Run* begins. Most viewers asked for projecting the film several times. The film lasts for about three minutes, then the light turns on and the screen goes blank again. Passing the *empty* screen, one crosses the courtyard and enters the rear exhibition space, which is filled almost completely with a Super 8 cinema, built right into the room.,

During the entire exhibition this cinema is used only twice, when you present your programs made specifically for the two evenings. For the rest of the time it remains a kind of *cinema torso*, in which the visitors can project their own imaginary films.

This seems to be a radical and insistent way of presenting your work and your attitude towards cinema in the context of an exhibition space, markedly different from the



*Film Live, Super 8 cinema, exhibition view*









*Film Live, Super 8 cinema, exhibition view*

presentation of your work in the context of film festivals or cinema spaces.

Finally, I would like to know when you think that a work - in your case a Super 8 film - is a successful or not.

HF: First I would like to mention something: you refer to the Super 8 cinema in the exhibition space as cinema torso. That goes well with my initial idea that this potential cinema in the exhibition becomes sculpture (and the projection of *The Color Run* becomes an exhibition object). Next to the Super 8 cinema is a poster-size working print of the catalogue raisonné I am currently working on with the Italian film archivist *Karianne Fiorini*. It lists in alphabetical order around 1000 titles. -So my absent films have a silent

presence.

Now back to your last question – which is not easy to answer; since accepting and appreciating a film is often a slow and difficult process.

There is often a difference between the film I have imagined in the trance-like state of filming, and the film that comes back from the lab.

For some films it takes time before I can see them *objectively* or independently from my inner film, perceive and evaluate their strengths or weaknesses.

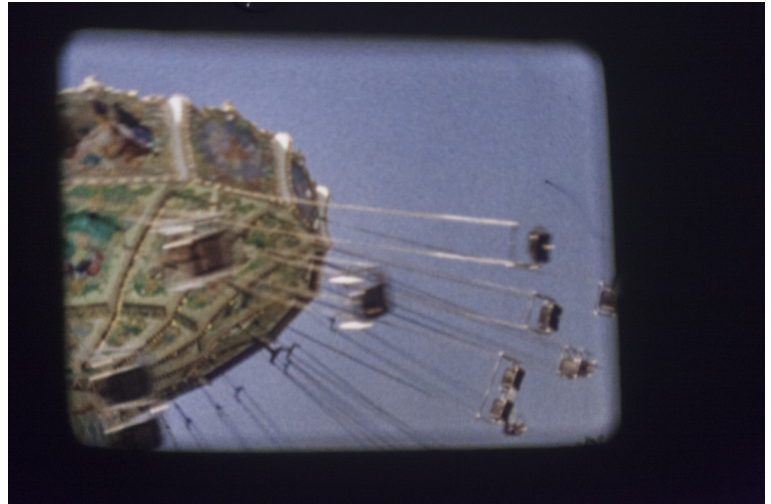
However, there are also films where there is an immediate correspondence between inner and real film. That helps me feel more confident. Finally, it is important, whether the



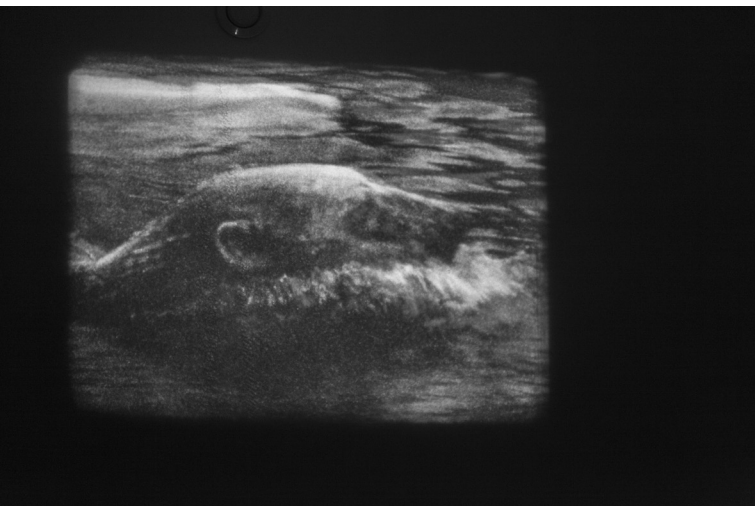
subject matter and means of expression form a unity that makes sense, whether the rhythm works, whether I find my perceptions translated into convincing filmic decisions, whether a film surprises and affects me beyond what I initially wanted to create, and whether I like it and can possibly accept smaller inconsistencies.

In composing programs it happens again and again that I rediscover a film that I like in combination with others, and recognise qualities that I have not seen before.

- This is truly exciting.



*Film Live, Super 8 cinema, filmstills*



## Helga Fanderl (www.helgafanderl.com)

- 1947 born in Ingolstadt. lives and works in Frankfurt/Main (GER) and Paris (F)
- 1967-1973 studied German and Romance languages and Literature in Munich (GER), Paris (F) and Frankfurt/M (GER)
- 1987-1992 studied Art at *Städelschule*, Frankfurt/M (GER)
- 1992-1993 Cooper Union in New York City (US)

### Awards and scholarships

- 2014 Funding by Stiftung Kunstfonds (GER)
- 2008/09 Funding by Stiftung Kunstfonds (GER)
- 2000 Hessischer Kulturpreis (GER)
- 1999-2000 Scholarship Hessische Kulturstiftung in Paris (F)
- 1998 German Film Critique's Award / category experimental film
- 1992 Coutts Contemporary Art Award
- 1998, 2003, 2007, 2009 und 2011 funding of 16mm Blow-ups by Hessische Filmförderung

### Solo shows

- 2015 *Film Live, DAS ESSZIMMER* - space for art+, Bonn (GER)
- 2014 *Marie Luise Fleissers Kleider*, Kunstverein Ingolstadt (GER)
- 2012 *Film sur Pierres*, Installation, Goethe-Institut Paris (F)
- 2007 *Fragile*, Städtische Galerie Erlangen (GER)

### Selected film-presentations at Institutions

Deutsches Filmmuseum. Frankfurt (GER) | Portikus, Frankfurt (GER) | Arsenal, Berlin (GER) | Museum für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Basel (CH) | Österreichisches Filmmuseum, Wien (AT) | Stadtkino, Basel (CH) | Anthology Film Archives, New York (USA) | Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (GER) | Centre Genevois de Gravure Contemporaine, Genf (CH) | Musée d'Art Moderne, Strasbourg (F) | Kunsthalle Bielefeld (GER) | Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (GER) | Ausstellungsraum Konstantin Adamopoulos, Frankfurt (GER) | Galerie Agathe Gaillard, Paris (F) | Xenix, Zürich (CH) | Filmpodium, Zürich (CH) | Kino im Kunstmuseum, Bern (CH) | L'Entrepôt, Paris (F) | Centre Bruxelles-Wallonie, Paris (F) | Babylon Mitte, Berlin (GER) | Cineteca di Bologna (IT) | Mal Seh'n Kino, Frankfurt (GER) | Forum des Images, Paris (F) | Studio Galande, Paris (F) | Goethe House, New York (USA) | The New York Public Library, New York (USA) | Theater in der Garage, Erlangen (GER) | Auditorium du Louvre, Paris (F) | Theater am Turm (TAT), Frankfurt (GER) | Centre Culturel Suisse, Paris (F) | Musée d'Art Contemporain du Val de Marne, MAC/VAL, Vitry-sur-Seine (F) | Kino im Museum Ludwig, Köln (GER) | NYFF Views from the Avantgarde, New York Film Festival (USA) | Centre Pompidou, Paris (F) | Media City International Film & Video Festival, Windsor/ Ontario (Canada) | Pleasure Dome, Toronto (Canada) | DresdnerSchmalfilmtage, Dresden (GER) | Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte, Paris (F) | Experimental

Film Festival 3, Osaka (JP) | reel to real, Mousonturm, Frankfurt (GER) | Flexfest, Gainesville/Florida (US) | no.w.here, London (UK) | Goethe Institut, London (UK) | TIFF Wavelengths, Toronto (Canada) | IFFR, Rotterdam (NL) | Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen (GER) | San Francisco Cinemateque, Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco (USA) | Gladstone Hotel, Toronto (Canada) | Sammlung Julia Stoschek, Düsseldorf (GER)

### Films in Collections

Hans Bodenmann, Basel (CH) | Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt (GER) | Auditorim du Louvre, Paris (F) | Kinothek Asta Nielsen, Frankfurt (GER) | Centre Pompidou, Paris (F)

### Publications

2006 *Fragil* (E), Buch und DVD, Edition Lowave Paris (F)

### Bibliography

- 1991 Künstlerfilme, Amsterdam/Frankfurt, Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel (CH)
- 1992 Edward Dwurnik, Helga Fanderl, Dan Graham, Coutts Contemporary Art Awards
- 1992 Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation, Zürich (CH)
- 1995 Kunst in Frankfurt 1945 bis heute, hrsg. von Rolf Lauter, Frankfurt/M.
- 1995 Filme, Städel, Kommunales Kino im Deutschen Filmmuseum, Frankfurt/M. (GER)
- 1996 Helga Fanderl, Filme, Katalog zur Filmreihe Drei Kompositionen im Ausstellungsraum von Konstantin Adamopoulos, Frankfurt/M. (GER)
- 1997 Ich etc. TAGEBUCH Filme, FILM Tagebücher, hrsg. von Christiane Heuwinkel, Matthias Müller, Kunsthalle Bielefeld (GER)
- 1997 Helga Fanderl, Film im Portikus, in: Portikus Frankfurt/M. 1987-1997, hrsg. von Brigitte Kölle, Frankfurt/M. (GER)
- 1998 Film – Bayrle, Bott, Breitenstein, Fanderl, Kels, Krüger, Zehetner, hrsg. von Bernhard Uske, Frankfurt a. M. (GER)
- 1999 SCRATCH BOOK 1983/1998, Light Cone, Paris
- 2000 Helga Fanderl, Len Lye + Robert Breer, Film direkt, hrsg. von Hannes Schüpbach, Winterthur (CH)
- 2000 Le Cahier du Refuge 85, Centre international de poésie Marseille (cipM), Marseille (F)
- 2000 La Ville / Le Jardin / La Mémoire, hrsg. von Laurence Bossé, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev und Hans Ulrich Obrist, Académie de France à Rome, Villa Médicis (IT)
- 2001 Helga Fanderl, Film direkt, hrsg. von Hannes Schüpbach, Winterthur
- 2001 Frankfurter Kreuz, Transformationen des Alltäglichen in der zeitgenössischen Kunst, hrsg. von Annette Tietenberg, Frankfurt a. M. (GER)
- 2003 City Views, hrsg. von Katharina Kerpan und Manuel Strässle, Edition M54, Basel (CH)



- 2004 IN SITU, cine experimental, hrsg. von Jeannette Muñoz, Santiago de Chile (Chile)
- 2004 Christine Noll Brinckmann, Experimentalfilm, 1920-2003, Einzelgänge und Schübe, in: Wolfgang Jacobsen/Anton Kaes/Hans Helmut Prinzler (Hg): Geschichte des deutschen Films, 2. Aufl., Stuttgart/Weimar (GER)
- 2006 Helga Fanderl, FRAGIL(E), book and DVD, Lowave, Paris (F)
- 2010 Helga Fanderl, Film Live, Sequence Issue 1, no.w.here, London
- 2010 Nicky Hamlyn, Layers and Lattices: The Super 8 Films of Helga Fanderl, Sequence Issue 1, no.w.here, London
- 2015 *Film Live*, exhibition publication, **DAS ESSZIMMER** - space for art+, Bonn (GER), hrsg. Sibylle Feucht

*Film Live*, Super 8 cinema 2015, exhibition view

#### Thanks

The exhibition *Film Live* was kindly supported by



The possibility for enlargement of *The Color Run* (Super 8 -> 16mm-film) was provided by Hessische Filmförderung

**Hessische Filmförderung**



#### Imprint

Publisher Sibylle Feucht, Das Esszimmer – space for art+ gUG  
(limited liability), Mechenstrasse 25, D-53129 Bonn,  
[www.dasesszimmer.com](http://www.dasesszimmer.com) | 2015

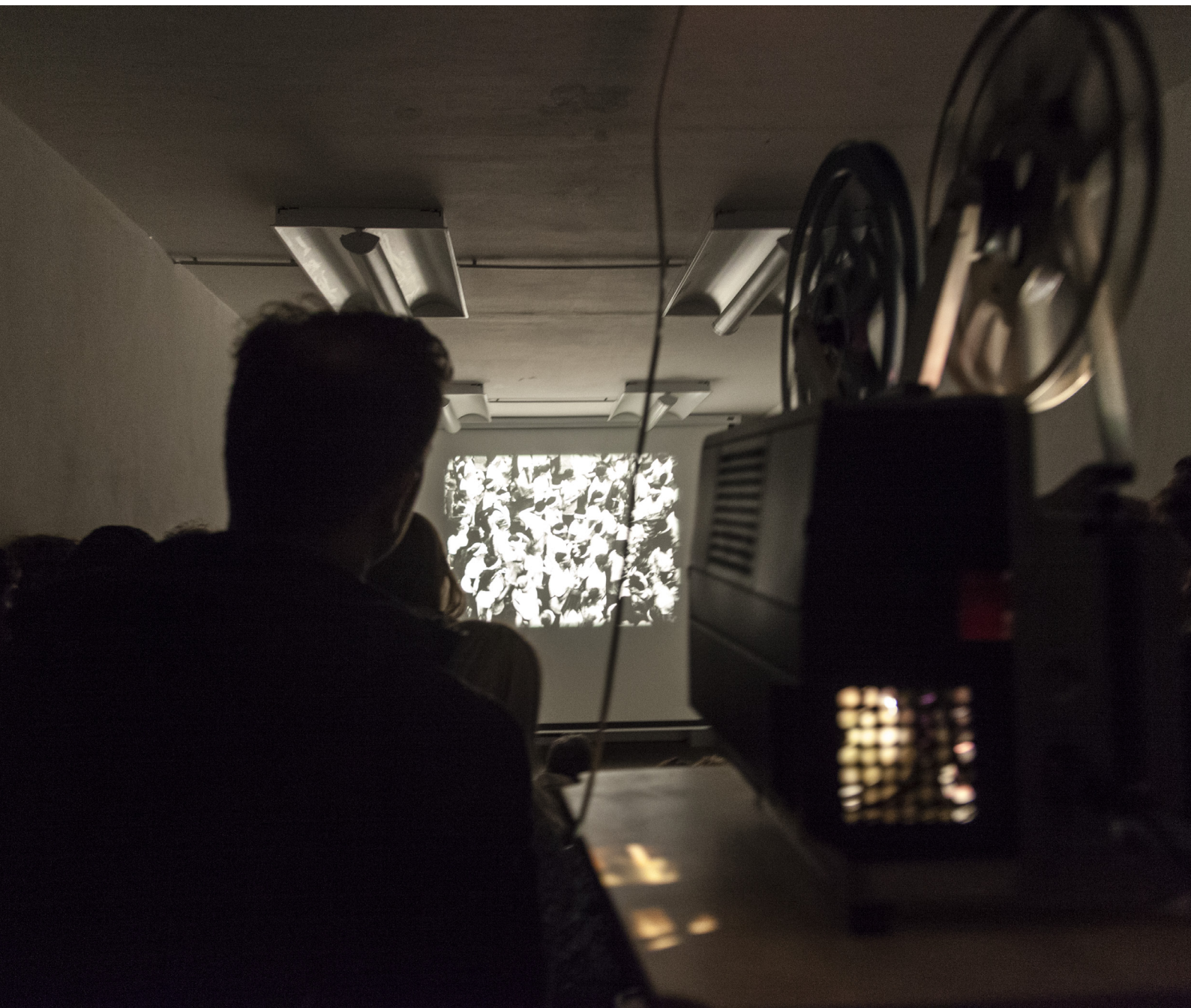
Concept: Sibylle Feucht, Bonn

Design: Sibylle Feucht, Bonn

Photos: Sibylle Feucht, Bonn

Translation D/EN: Helga Fanderl, Kawterina Chatzinikolaou, Becky Mount  
Sibylle Feucht





published by

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