

## INTRODUCTION

The first part of «VIDEO WINDOW» presents videos by students from the Escola Nacional de Arte Visuais (ENAV) in Mozambique. The videos are the result of a workshop run by three video artists from Switzerland: Quynh Dong, Christoph Oertli and Olga Titus. The second part features nine videos by these three artists which give an insight into their work and contemporary video art in Switzerland. They also reflect the multicultural nature of society in Switzerland today.

The future belongs to the medium of video with moving pictures and sound. It is omnipresent in our everyday lives on tablets, smartphones, in music videos, advertising, social media and on news sites. Video is also popular among young people in Mozambique. It can be used for animation, filming people and music, recording observations and storytelling. So what will happen when three video artists from Switzerland get together with students from ENAV on a five-day workshop from 5–9 September 2016? It will certainly be an exciting experiment, and we are curious to find out!

Video art has a tradition stretching back over fifty years and is characterised by its mesmerising diversity. Videos and video installations can be seen in exhibitions, museums and galleries, in collections and at festivals. The medium is included in art education. «VIDEO WINDOW» shows works of Quynh Dong, Christoph Oertli and Olga Titus to give an insight into how diverse video art can be, and the different artistic interests and content, forms and expressions which can be applied. The apparently unlimited visual and auditory possibilities are what make this medium fascinating and magical. They surprise us time and again.

Bruno Z'Graggen, curator

## QUYNH DONG

### Biography

\*1982 in Hai Phong nearby Hanoi. She and her family fled from Vietnam and arrived 1990 in Switzerland. First, she lived in Berne. Since 2008, she lives and works in Zurich.

### Education

2008–2010 MA Fine Arts, Zurich University of the Arts

2005–2008 BA Fine Arts, Berne University of the Arts

2000–2004 Graphic design, Berne and Bienne School of Design

Quynh Dong has been exhibiting in Switzerland and abroad since 2004. She stages performances and takes part in screenings and festivals of video art. Dong also works as a video specialist for opera and theatre. She has received awards and has undertaken long residencies, for example at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam from 2013–2015.

Media of artistic work: Video, performance, installation, sculpture (ceramic), painting (water color)

More information: <https://quynhdong.ch>

### Screening

Quynh Dong loves music and is a passionate singer. In "Sweet Noël" she reconstructs an image of the Vietnamese master of traditional lacquer painting, Ngyen Gia Trí, to create a scenic backdrop. In a paradise garden we see eleven duplicated figures of a beautiful Asian woman wearing a long dress. She adopts a variety of poses representing typical Asian gestures of femininity. She sings the famous Vietnamese love song "Hai mùa noel". Enchantingly, it suddenly starts to snow in the middle of the video.

In a music video, her band 7Dong playfully performs another love song, "The star, you and I", in the style of an Asian pop band. With these two videos, the artist draws a line to the Asian cultural sphere and her native country. She invites us to immerse ourselves in that world for a moment. On an emotional level, the exaggerated staging of beauty until it becomes kitsch questions the creation, dissemination and perception of cultural stereotypes. At the same time it raises questions about identity, solidarity and desire that we all carry inside us.

By contrast, five short video poems capture atmospheric images of the wintry cityscape of Zurich, where the artist lives.

#### Videos

"Sweet Noël", 2013; Video HD, color, sound, single channel, image 16:9, 7:39 min

"Ngôi Sao Anh Và Em" ("The star, you and I"), 2010; Video HD, color, sound, single channel, image 16:9, 3:36 min

"Video Poems", 2009/2010; Video SD PAL, color, sound, single channel, image 4:3, 2:57 min

### CHRISTOPH OERTLI

#### Biography

\*1962 in Winterthur. He has been living in Zurich, Paris, Canada and during one year as a cameraman on board of cruise liners. Today, he lives and works in Basel and Brussels.

#### Education

1992–1995 Audio visual design, Basel School of Design

1983–1987 Graphic design, Zurich School of Design

Christoph Oertli has been active as a performance and video artist since 1995. He has also made documentaries and works as a freelance cameraman and editor. Oertli has been a guest lecturer at the Lucerne School of Art and Design since 2004. He exhibits both in Switzerland and abroad, and takes part in screenings and festivals of video art. Oertli has received awards and has undertaken residencies, including repeated stays in Cairo.

Media of artistic work: video and performance

More information: [www.christophoertli.ch](http://www.christophoertli.ch)

#### Screening

Christoph Oertli's work is characterised by its proximity to performance, dance and theatre, and by his interest in observing public space and people in large cities outside Switzerland. The three videos provide an insight into different phases of the artist's creative work. Two of them are set on the African continent. In his latest work, "Ethiopian Run", Oertli introduces a group of art students at Addis Ababa University to us. He choreographs the group in a hall, showing them trying on new shoes. Symbolically, he lets them put on their shoes and leave the building. They seem to embody a new, self-confident and hopeful generation.

In "Cairo", Oertli takes us on a walk through the city, giving it a dreamlike quality through the use of slow motion and muted sounds. We follow alternate young men by day and by night on rooftops full of rubble, through busy streets, in crowded squares and on hills with an impressive skyline. A mysterious alien metropolitan cosmos reveals itself to us, quite remote from tourist attractions such as the Pyramids.

In "Housekeeping", Oertli shows us his qualities as a performer in the studio with large helpings of drama and irony. His virtuoso dance to jazz music around swinging lampshades and collapsing cabinets ends in disaster.

#### Videos

"Ethiopian Run", 2015; Video HD, color, sound, single channel, image 16:9, 14 min

"Cairo", 2006; Video SD PAL, color, sound, single channel, image 4:3, 11 min

"Housekeeping", 2001; Video SD PAL, color, sound, single channel, image 4:3, 7 min

## **OLGA TITUS**

### **Biography**

\*1977 in Glarus. Olga Titus has a Swiss mother and a father of Indian origin who lives in Kuala Lumpur. She lives and works in Winterthur.

### **Education**

2002–2006 Fine Arts and New Media, Lucerne School of Art and Design

1996–1999 Apprenticeship, Embroidery designer, Union PLC Embroideries, St. Gallen

Olga Titus has been staging exhibitions both inside and outside Switzerland since 2004. She also takes part in screenings and festivals of video art. Titus has received awards and has undertaken residencies, for example in Bangalore, Varanasi and Buenos Aires.

Media of artistic work: Video, installation, photography, objects, drawing, collage, mixed media

More information: [www.olgatitus.com](http://www.olgatitus.com)

### **Screening**

Olga Titus often uses collage-style animation with stop motion technique in her videos. The personal search for identity is a central theme in her work. The artist lives in Switzerland and, through her father, is influenced by Indian and Asian aesthetics. Her first video "I got a small bird's heart" highlights the links to these worlds with virtuosity and ironic ease. She uses cross-fades to let us see symbols of both worlds simultaneously. Bollywood and Indian spirituality merge with Swiss folk dance tradition. The Indian singer Sangeeta Kumar sings the Swiss folk song in Hindi, mimicked by the artist.

In "O My!", Titus again refers to cultural fusion while experimenting with a dramatic composition that uses a theatrical curtain. There are colourful ornaments, masks and symbols, also with links to Africa. The music of Ourania Lampropoulou on the hammered dulcimer featuring pieces from around the world underlines this fusion. The instrument is associated with Alpine countries and is also known around the world.

The scene in "Hybrid" evokes associations with a planet-like landscape. Titus uses a science fiction-style staging to pose questions about the origin of civilisations and conflicts using very simple means. She creates an utopian statement which counters violence with unconditional love.

### **Videos**

"Hybrids", 2014; Video HD, animation, color, sound, single channel, image 16:9, 5:20 min

"O MY!", 2014; Video HD, animation, color, sound, single channel, image 16:9, 4:31 min

"Han äs Herzeli wie äs Vögel" ("I got a small bird's heart"), 2006; Video SD PAL, animation, color, sound, single channel, image 4:3, 2:34 min