

apexart

UNREST: Revolt against Reason

organized by
Natalie Musteata

On view:
September 12- October 27, 2012

Opening reception:
Wednesday, September 12, 6-8 pm

Featuring work by:
mounir fatmi Tala Madani
Claire Fontaine Ahmet Öğüt
Shilpa Gupta Tomáš Rafa
Iman Issa Alexandre Singh



Ahmet Öğüt, Oscar William Sam, 2012 (video still)

“Revolt against Reason!” stated Herbert Marcuse in his 1972 book *Counter-Revolution and Revolt*. Writing against the backdrop of the escalating Vietnam War, Marcuse contended that the conditions of twentieth-century capitalism have so greatly changed from those of the previous century that a future revolution would require an expanded base, strategy, and direction. Such revolution would necessitate the rejection of “Reason.” Not just of the establishment, capitalism, and bourgeois society, but of Reason itself (in the Kantian sense)—and art, a sphere defined in resistance to reality, he asserted, would be uniquely positioned to provoke the radical transformation of political thought and action.

At the onset of the twenty-first century, the Arab Spring revolutions and the global Occupy movements have ignited a reassessment of the intersection of political activism and creative practice. While a number of exhibitions, including the 7th Berlin Biennale and *DOCUMENTA (13)*, have addressed the complex relationship between art and politics, *UNREST* seeks a focused perspective. The exhibition presents eight contemporary artists who tackle issues of resistance and revision in response to recent historical changes. Some of their works adopt or invert the symbols of protest to probe the formal and conceptual codes of such manifestations, while others use historical precedents to reflect on the shifting nature of the current socio-political climate. These projects provide a platform from which we can begin to debate the “Revolt against Reason.”

Natalie Musteata is a Ph.D. student in Art History at The Graduate Center, CUNY, and an adjunct lecturer at Parsons, The New School, where she teaches *Performance and Participation in the 20th Century*. Last year she presented a paper on artist-curated exhibitions at the conference *The Now Museum: Contemporary Art, Curating Histories, Alternative Models* at the New Museum, New York. Her most recent essay, “Performing Dissent: The Rhetoric of Opposition in Reenactment Performance,” will be presented at CAA in February 2013.

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