

ART from ESLEWHERE: Mexico City
The MOMENTUM Collection at LAGOS

AMIR FATTAL



***ATARA* (2019), HD Video, single-channel version of 2-channel installation, 15'20"**

ATARA is both a science-fiction film set to contemporary opera music, and a reflection on the collective memory of architecture and its symbolic representation in public space. Shot on location in Berlin, it tells the story of two vastly different, and ideologically opposite, buildings that used to stand upon the same place: the Berliner Stadtschloss and the Palast der Republik. The Stadtschloss, the imperial and royal palace, was built between the 15th and 18th centuries, damaged by Allied bombing in

WWII, and in 1950 was finally destroyed by the GDR as a symbol of Prussian militarism. The Palast der Republik, built in its place, was in 1973 opened as the seat of government of the German Democratic Republic (GDR, communist East Germany). This was closed upon German Reunification in 1990, and was destroyed amid much public controversy in 2006-2008 to make way for the rebuilding of a contemporary copy of the Stadtschloss in 2013-2020. In 2021 this new (re)building was opened to the public as the Humboldt Forum Museum. The decision to resurrect the Stadtschloss in order to move and consolidate all Berlin's ethnographic and history of science museums, is a highly contentious one, interpreted by many as Germany's willful erasure of its GDR past and a dangerous rewriting of history. This controversy is keenly felt in a city still building over its bomb craters, nearly 80 years after the end of WWII - a city perpetually treading the fine line between never forgetting its painful past, and reinventing its future.

Shot at several stages during construction of the new building, *ATARA* imagines a ceremony that takes place in the Palace during a moment when one building is being resurrected and the other building is dematerializing into a ghostly memory. In a sci-fi synchronicity of timelines, the film follows an astronaut wandering through the construction site of the new Stadtschloss, carrying an iconic lamp from the destroyed Palast der Republik - like an explorer in an alien land where past and future merge. The haunting score is based on the opera *Tristan and Isolde* by Richard Wagner, together with original music by Boris Bojadzhiev. Starting with the Liebestod aria, sung by Isolde after Tristan's death, the score was made by copying the last note of each line of the musical score as the first note, and proceeding in this way until a new 'mirrored' piece was formed. Like travelling backwards and forwards in time, the recording of this piece is then digitally reversed backwards to become the soundtrack to *ATARA*, forming another play on the idea of resurrection.

Amir Fattal (b. 1978 in Tel Aviv, Israel. Lives and works in Berlin, Germany.)

www.amir-fattal.com

Fattal is a conceptual artist whose practice is one of historical reflection grounded in the history of aesthetics and cultural schisms. Working in the media of video, photography,

sculpture, and installation, his work forms a focused response to the diverse questions raised by his adoptive city of Berlin, where the memory, culture, architecture, indeed every thread in the fabric of this city is problematized by its history. Alongside his art practice, Amir Fattal is the curator of Tape Modern Berlin, an acclaimed series of group exhibitions featuring emerging and established artists, which he founded in 2008. Since 2020, Fattal is the Founding Director of Geisted, the platform for digital art, new media and immersive experience.

Amir Fattal was distinguished with the GASAG Art Prize in 2008 and graduated from UdK, Universität der Künste, Berlin, in 2009. Acclaimed solo exhibitions include: *Mesopotopography*, Anna Jill Lüpertz Gallery, Berlin, Germany (2015); *From the End to the Beginning*, Kunstquerier Bethanien, Berlin (2014); *Parallel Lines*, Teapot Gallery, Cologne, Germany (2013); Goral Ehad, St-art, Tel Aviv, Israel (2012); *Shadow of Smoke Rings on the Wall*, Artitude Kunstverein, Berlin (2011); *Tomorrow Gets Me Higher*, Wilde Gallery, Berlin (2010). Selected group exhibitions include: *Gender-Bender Time Traveller*, Geisted, Berlin (2022); *Points of Resistance*, MOMENTUM, Zionskirche Berlin (2021); *Floating Presence*, Humboldt Carre, Berlin (2020); *Connections and Fractures*, RMCA – Redtory Museum of Contemporary Art, Guangzhou, China (2019); *Bonum et Malum*, Villa Erxleben, Berlin (2019); *Future Life Handbook*, Redtory Museum of Contemporary Art, Guangzhou, China (2017-18); Collection Enea Righi, Museo Fortuny, Venice (2016); *ID Festival*, Radialsystem, Berlin (2016); *Interior / Exterior / Sculpture*, Belenius/Nordenhake Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden (2015); *A Naked Singularity*, Studio Garaicoa, Madrid, Spain (2015); *Wo der Ort beginnt*, Kunsthaus Dahlem, Berlin (2015); *Fragments of Empires*, MOMENTUM, Berlin (2014-15); *A Letter From Dr. Faustus*, Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Israel (2014); Fundación Botín, Villa Iris, Santander, Spain (2014); Dahlstrøm & Fattal, Beers Lambert Contemporary, London (2013); *III Moscow International Biennale for Young Art*, Moscow, Russia (2012); *Body Without Body*, Georg Kolbe Museum, Berlin (2011); and many more dating back to 2007.