

Statement on the discussion about the lecture "Queering Aesthetics: Unsettling the Zionist Sensual Regime"

After several discussions and also at the request of the Austrian Union of Jewish Students and due to security concerns of the event location mumok, the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna has decided to call off the lecture "Queering Aesthetics: Unsettling the Zionist Sensual Regime", which was to have taken place as part of the *Spring Curatorial Program: Art Geographies* on its originally planned date (30th of May) and location at *mumok* cinema. The text announcing the lecture contains de-differentiations and essentialist exaggerations in relation to Zionism, which were perceived by numerous members of the academy as untenable assertions and an affront; in particular the Austrian Union of Jewish Students understandably pointed out this transgression of boundaries. Among other things, the announcement text speaks sweepingly of "Zionist(s) structure with the aim of eliminating the indigenous population", and thus constructs Zionism generally as an enemy image, so that a discursive and open debate would hardly be possible any more.

This has created a conflict between academic freedom and our task of giving space to diverse social and cultural groups. Yet, there has not been enough discussion about how to deal appropriately with discursive border crossings and academic freedom. We apologise that the lecture will not take place in its originally planned format, as open criticism must always be possible. It is clear that this is not an appropriate form of debate and we regret that this decision was made in the heated situation. We therefore have offered to have the lecture to take place, either hybrid or digital, with the participants of the *Spring Curatorial Program*, together with an accompanying discussion on discursive border crossings, at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

Rectorate and Senate Chair as well as the Head of the Institute for Art Theory and Cultural Studies of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna