

Fawzy Emrany

Born In Gaza / Palestine

Lives and works in Germany

INSTALLATION

Project: ...and before the sea was blue-2010

project context : Konrad Bitterli
Curator art Museum St.Gallen

project images : 3 images
Exhibited at : Forumschlossplatz, Aarau,
Switzerland

This piece created during 3 monthes (artist in residency) in
St.Gallen from February to May 2010.
The residency supported by the Swiss Arts Council Prohelvetia
and Kunst Halle St.Gallen.

„Deaths at the escalade of the Gaza aid ship“ – this was the headline of NZZ online on May 31st, 2010. A convoy of six ships of a fleet of solidarity of the organisation „Free Gaza“ carrying aid goods for the blockaded coast strip had been stopped in international waters by a snatch squad of the Israeli army. According to Israeli information the six ships were boarded because they wanted to breach the blockade imposed on the Gaza strip. The coast strip would be ruled by the radical Hamas, with the blockade, Israel would want to prevent the smuggling of weapons. This is just one of the countless press reports on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, like the ones we have been able to follow in western media since years, and to which we seem to have gotten used to long ago. Hidden behind the curt news, there is a drama of warlike hostilities and human suffering which has been lingering since decades.

Fawzy Emrany, born 1968 in Gaza, today living in Bonn, has certainly not created his installation „revealed secret“ (2010) as an artist’s commentary to the recent events in his homeland. His flottilla, consisting of 350 paper boats, does not try to breach any blockades, the boats folded from paper do not carry any aid goods. They rather move in a simple spiral form in the exhibition room of the „Forum Schlossplatz Aarau“ and rather contain, if they - in the literal sense - contain anything at all, happy memories of an untroubled childhood. Who has not, as a child, himself folded paper boats, and, full of hope, lowered them in close-by waters, eagerly watched them until they were no longer visible, be it because they capsized, slowly went under, or simply disappeared in the distance? The boat from fragile and little waterproof material accompanies us since earliest youth as a hardly consciously known metaphor for the path of life, a journey which ultimately leads into the uncertainty, on which one may fail as well as set off to new shores. So in the child’s game, both desparation and hope are equally present, the game full of relish joins profound meaning, simply folded object joins with century old cultural history.

Fawzy Emrany builds on this basic symbolic power, when he himself remarks on „revealed secret“: „The work relates by its spiral form to the never ending uncertainty. All little ships move in the shape of a spiral, and towards its center they inevitably come closer to each other and almost collide. A cohesion? The tearable material of the folded boats stands for „bereft power“: The own stability, important for survival, becomes lost, and is replaced by a condition in which the danger of destruction indwells.“ In translating the child’s gesture into the exhibition room, and hereby also quasi drying it up, in assembling the individual ships to the strict geometrical form and in letting them at the same time spread into the room, he activates the metaphorical potential in carefree play. Its possible reading of its content he furthermore opens through a short added text fragment and thereby bestows it a time dimension: ...AND BEFORE, THE SEA WAS BLUE. Written on the floor with letters made from sand, the installation finally becomes a memento, a fleeting picture, in which the transitory of the journey of life seems inscribed into an elusive medium, while at the same time, in the armada of fragile folded ships the ancient human longing to go away becomes almost painfully noticeable. But where will this journey lead, if one is locked out from the rest of the world through blockades and barbed wire?



