

In your current research, you are addressing art and propaganda in 21st Century. In your view, do artists' practices inspire the current successful meme and post-truth based online propaganda strategies?

To answer that I think we first must establish how exactly we define the term propaganda. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman famously articulated their propaganda model as a set of filters through which dominant structures of power try to manufacture consent. The closer the domains of politics, media and economy intersect, they argue, the more capacity these gain to construct – perform – reality after their own interests. In that light, I define propaganda as a “performance of power.” But, different from Chomsky and Herman I do not approach power as a homogenous concept. I believe structures of power differ, and thus I believe that the performance of power differs as well – depending on context and intent. Following the work of Judith Butler on popular assembly for example, we can argue that the manifold gatherings of precarious peoples from the Arab Spring to the Occupy Movement and Black Lives Matter are just as well collective enactments – performances – of power: attempts to re-shape reality based on common interests. The performance of power of popular assembly obviously differs from that of the authoritarianism of, say, the Trump administration. In length of Jacques Ellul I therefore propose we should be speaking of “propagandas” in the plural. Different structures of power perform, sometimes conflicting, forms of propaganda. And each of these different propagandas similarly impacts the domain of art and culture in different ways. To come back to your question, the use of online troll armies and memes are to be understood within a larger paradigm of propaganda. The United States is a good example here. Trump's empire reached from political lobbying to media and real estate, and as such he embodies the intersection of power through which it becomes possible to manufacture consent; through which it becomes possible to construct reality after his interests. In this context, old elites – from the New York Times to the American courts – can

be discredited and replaced by new ones. Trump's power mobilizes the troll armies to participate in his endeavor of engineering reality, with the aim to discredit all scientific, academic, and journalistic research that do not correspond to his interests of power. Certain art forms are a victim of that process. Pepe the Frog, a boyish popular cartoon figure conceived by Matt Furie, became a symbol of the alt-right against the artist's will. By the time Trump himself retweeted a portrait of himself as Pepe the Frog, Furie saw himself forced to draw a final cartoon in which Pepe dies: the artist was unable to narrate the cartoon's story any longer, as Trump's alt right online troll army had taken over that narration. Within the history of modern and contemporary art, appropriation and the readymade have been familiar strategies. But one could say that in the new ultranationalist propaganda paradigm set by the Trump regime, this has been taken to a whole new level. The contemporary art world does not yet have the tools to counter Trump's appropriation of the dream of the avant-garde, namely to engineer and construct reality itself as the ultimate work of art. It resonates somewhat with Boris Groys' famous book *The Total Art of Stalinism*, in which he discusses how Stalin appropriated the dream of the constructivist avant-garde, and destroyed them in the process.

Your most famous project, the 'New World Summit' has gathered in various instantiations around thirty unrecognized states which are on the “designated list of terrorist organizations”, letting them discuss altogether alternative forms of world governance. Do you see their condition of being ‘statelessness’ as a status allowing a radically new debate on the form of state? And how propaganda is involved in this process?

The New World Summit took the form of a series of alternative parliaments, constructed in theaters and public spaces, and most recently in the form of a permanent parliament that was commissioned to my organization by the autonomous Kurdish government in Rojava, Northern-Syria. The New World Summit indeed tries to rethink the state institution of the

parliament outside of its current embedment in dominant structures of power. Our parliaments never represented the states in which they were located, but gathered stateless and blacklisted representatives from all over the world. As such one could say we aimed to create a “stateless parliament” that was led by representatives of stateless movements. Particularly our collaborators from the Kurdish revolutionary movement introduced the notion of statelessness not just as a position of exclusion and victimization, but as a precondition of an alternative approach to power and practice of democracy all together. This is what revolutionary Abdullah Öcalan describes as a “democracy without the state”, or stateless democracy. The notion of stateless democracy as Öcalan describes it, is based on local self-governance, gender equality, communal economy, secularism, and the right to self-defense. Essentially, he aims to liberate democracy from the construct of the state, which he terms a “colony of capital”: a colonial construct unable to secure the right to self-determination and collective emancipation. I think this is exactly the kind of proposition that shows that power is not homogeneous, but that depending on the way we conceive political infrastructures and their ideological purpose, different performances of power – different propagandas – become possible. Öcalan's paradigm of power in contrast to Trump's Ultranationalist propaganda, I would say should be understood as a form of Stateless Propaganda. It departs from the condition of statelessness as a rejection of statehood, and thus as a state of being. Kurdish artists in liberated regions like Rojava such as Abdullah Abdul or the Rojava Film Commune, have shown how such a new concept of power also leads to radically new models of Stateless Propaganda Art. Abdul for example, is building something of a stateless museum: reconstructing lost archeological findings through his sculptures, with the aim to narrate a stateless history from ancient Mesopotamia to the present. Through his art, he shows that histories of statelessness and early forms of “stateless democracy” preceded those of the