



Eric Baudelaire  
FRMAWREOK  
FAMREWROK  
FRMAEOWRK  
FOMARERWK

The films, photographs and installations by Eric Baudelaire (born 1973) investigate the very framing conditions of documentary and historiographical narration. How do the production processes underlying a film image, a story, a portrait or a document themselves shape the reality they depict? In Baudelaire's research-based practice, the transactions that create images, the relationship between author, subject and media become a central concern and visible component of the work itself. Baudelaire's first institutional solo exhibition in Germany presents three chapters of his work dealing with the strange encounter between Japanese New Wave cinema and the Japanese Red Army, between revolutionary filmmaking and terrorist armed struggle, between Tokyo and Beirut. In collaboration with Masao Adachi, who was a key figure of Japanese avant-garde filmmaking and an ideologue in the Japanese Red Army, Baudelaire realised two films exploring the interconnections of militant politics and aesthetics: *The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu*, *Masao Adachi and 27 Years Without Images* and *The Ugly One*.

With *FRMAWREOK FAMREWROK FRMAEOWRK FOMARERWK*, Baudelaire has produced a new chapter to these recent works, a layer that quite literally brings into the foreground the origins of his interest in these issues. Having trained as a political scientist, Baudelaire presents a new wallpaper piece composed of 413 figures and tables collected from academic journals—illustrations that social scientists fabricate to grasp the elusive phenomenon of terrorism. Whether it is to map out and make visible the origins of the Japanese Red Army, the statistics of suicide bombings after the Palestinian uprising in September 2000, terrorist activity in Western Europe from 1980–2003, or behavioural styles in aerial hijacking, social science produces a wide-range of imagery in order to create models and seek out predictability within a particularly opaque field of study. What is the status of these diagrammatic images? Do the visuals in theoretical texts function as a semiotic body of evidence? And how do they differ from artistic images with the same concerns? Dividing the rooms across all floors of the tower, *FRMAWREOK* oscillates between fore- and background. Baudelaire juxtaposes these surprisingly varied social-scientific images to those produced with similar aims but different tools in his current practice as an artist.

## 1. FLOOR

- *Fusako Shigenobu Family Album* 2012, 27 photographs, circa 1900 to 1973
- *FRMAWREOK*, 2014, 413 figures and tables on wallpaper
- *AKA Serial Killer*, 1969, by Masao Adachi, Sasaki Mamoru, Matsuda Masao, Yamazaki Yu, Nonomura Masayuki, Iwabuchi Susumu, 20 min. excerpt from a 89 min. film

With *Fusako Shigenobu Family Album* and Masao Adachi's film *AKA Serial Killer*, Baudelaire introduces the protagonists of his project *The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi and 27 Years Without Images*. These pieces also present two central ideas permeating the entire work: the absence of images and the filmic "landscape theory".

Baudelaire assembles the remaining family photographs of Japanese Red Army founder Fusako Shigenobu until the moment she went underground and gave birth to her daughter May Shigenobu. Fusako and May went on to live for 27 years under constantly changing false identities. During these years, family pictures became dangerous evidence that was regularly destroyed.

Masao Adachi, a key figure in the Japanese New Wave cinema movement, joined Shigenobu and the Japanese Red Army in Beirut in 1974. A few years earlier, in 1969, with a group of fellow critics and filmmakers he had directed the film *AKA Serial Killer*, a manifesto for *fukei ron*, or "landscape theory". The film is a portrait of a young criminal in which the camera and the voice-over methodically reconstruct the itinerary of the protagonist's life, depicting the landscapes he must have crossed, while never showing the serial killer himself. *Fukei ron* seeks to reveal within the landscape the oppressive power structures that shape a person's character, and thus explain their criminal behaviour.

## 2. FLOOR

- *Pictures of Documents (Lod Airport, Tel Aviv, May 31, 1972)*, 2011, Silk screen on paper, 60 × 80 cm
- *Pictures of Documents (Fusako and May Shigenobu, 1976)*, 2011, Silk screen on paper, 60 × 80 cm
- *FAMREWROK*, 2014, 413 figures and tables on wallpaper
- *The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi and 27 Years Without Images*, 2011, Super 8 transferred to HD video, 66'

The film portrays two people intimately linked to the Japanese Red Army: May Shigenobu, daughter of the founder of the organization, who was born into the movement without any choice in the matter, and Masao Adachi who left Tokyo and avant-garde cinema behind to join the group in Beirut as a theoretician and spokesperson in 1974. In the voice-over of the film, we hear their oral histories. These are accompanied by grainy Super 8 images shot in Beirut and Tokyo, scanning urban landscapes and their rural surroundings, streets, buildings with bullet holes, poor interiors and mountainous landscapes where terrorist training camps may have existed. Adachi's "landscape theory" is turned back towards its author.

Today, Adachi is confined to Japan and barred from travelling abroad. Since he is no longer allowed to visit Beirut, Adachi offered Baudelaire a deal: In exchange for telling his story, Adachi required Baudelaire to film images of Beirut to be used in Adachi's own film. Baudelaire mixes up shots from Beirut and Tokyo, but also intersperses excerpts from Adachi's New Wave cinema and some TV news footage. By using this geographical and temporal confusion as a filmic device, Baudelaire evokes a wandering journey. This so-called *anabasis* depicts the circular exile of May Shigenobu and Masao Adachi, and raises the question of where and what "home" actually is. Questioning the relationship between the here and the elsewhere, Baudelaire's film reinvestigates how Adachi's generation sought to reconcile art and revolution, the militant image and armed struggle.

### 3. FLOOR

- *Pictures of Documents (Fusako Shigenobu's transfer to Tokyo police headquarters, Nov 8, 2000)*, 2011, Silk screen on paper 60 × 80 cm
- *Pictures of Documents (Prisoner/Terrorist, 2006)*, 2011, Silk screen on paper, 60 × 80 cm
- *Pictures of Documents (Wanted poster, Tokyo, 2010)*, 2011, Silk screen on paper, 60 × 80 cm
- *FRMAEOWRK*, 2014, 413 figures and tables on wallpaper
- *Adachi Prison Drawings (1997 to 2000)* 2014, Slides of 15 drawings by Masao Adachi made in Beirut prison

In his printmaking works on paper, Baudelaire reproduces documents using a silkscreen technique that causes the image to be revealed either as a negative or as a positive depending on the direction of the light. The documents are not animated by colour or pigment, but only by varnish on matt black ink, turning them into obscure pictures. All of them revolve around particularly contested events or situations and the radically different experiences and interpretations thereof.

In 1997, Masao Adachi was arrested in Beirut and spent a couple of years in prison fighting extradition to Japan. Baudelaire presents Adachi's colourful prison drawings from this period as a slide projection. Intended as letters to communicate with the outside, these drawings represent prison life, Adachi's Japanese comrades, his future bride-to-be, and his visions of escape.

### 4. FLOOR

- *Beyond Memory*, 2013  
Original screenplay by Masao Adachi
- *FOMARERWK*, 2014, 413 figures and tables on wallpaper
- *The Ugly One*, 2013, A film by Eric Baudelaire adapted from a screenplay by Masao Adachi, HD video, 141'

Beirut 2013, a loving couple, Lili and Michel, struggle with an obscure past. Did they participate in a terrorist operation? Did they kill a child? Was her name Elena? Was Elena Lili's daughter? Did this operation actually ever take place? Their memories remain fragmented and drive a wedge between them. With their comrades, all former members of the Lebanese Communist Party, they discuss the state of current militant activism. Estranged and paralyzed by the impasse of Syria's civil war, they are neither able to analyse the past nor conceive of the future. And at times it seems as if they are lost in a space between reality and filmic fiction.

As a sequel to *The Anabasis*, Baudelaire asked Masao Adachi to write a new screenplay, his first commissioned script since the 1972 "pink film" *Ecstasy of the Angels*. In the resulting film, *The Ugly One*, Adachi also acts as a narrator. However, the screenplay (displayed on the wall) and Adachi's voice-over do not correspond exactly to the images we see in the film. Who is it that constructs the fictitious story of Beirut's present? The Japanese screenwriter who speculates on the next generation of militant activists? The French director who has obviously deviated from the instructions in the script? Or the improvising actors (among them Rabih Mroué as Michel) who are, for the most part, former Lebanese communists? A polyphony of narrative layers is reinforced by a mix of languages (Arabic, English, French and Japanese). Thus, Baudelaire and Adachi's specific kind of confrontational collaboration raises unresolved questions about filmmaking, revolution and regret and what these terms mean to different generations in different contexts.

## COLOPHON

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