

Marwa Arsanios (Washington DC, 1978) is an artist, filmmaker and researcher who lives between Berlin and Beirut. Her practice addresses structural and infrastructural issues, such as the transformation of architectural spaces during conflict or artist-led spaces. Using cinema as a form and space to connect struggles, she intermingles issues such as property, law, economics and ecology from specific places. For this season, Arsanios is presenting the fifth instalment of her series *Who is Afraid of Ideology?*, in co-production with the Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo (Turin) and Artium Museoa (Vitoria), in which she explores the history of property in an Ottoman territory to rethink our relationships with the usufruct of land and its legacy.

Her recent shows include those at the Heidelberger Kunstverein (Germany), The Mosaic Rooms (London), Contemporary Arts Centre (Cincinnati), Škuc Gallery (Ljubljana) and Beirut Art Centre. Her work has also been presented at Documenta 15, Kassel (2022); 5th Mardin Biennial (2022); 3rd Autostrada Biennial, Pristina (2021), and 11th Berlin Biennale (2020), among others.

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The audiovisual production *Who Is Afraid of Ideology? Part 5: Right of Passage* by Marwa Arsanios has been co-produced by the Joan Miró Foundation and Artium Museoa



For additional information:



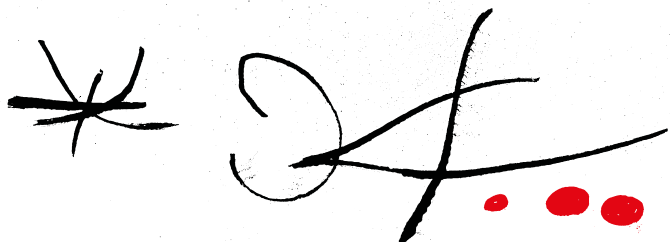
how from here
Exhibitions series
curated by
Carolina Jiménez

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Marwa
Arsanios
Who is Afraid
of Ideology?
Part 5: Right
of Passage

14.11.2025 –
18.01.2026

With the collaboration of:

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Marwa Arsanios

Who is Afraid of Ideology?

Part 5: Right of Passage

‘For Marx, what separates human from animal is not language, but labour,’ says one of the rodents in the film. Moments later, the other rodent replies mockingly: ‘Marx says, Marx says, Marx says...’ This exchange may somehow condense one of the most significant features of Marwa Arsanios’ cinematic work, which adopts its most radical version in *Who Is Afraid of Ideology? Part 5: Right of Passage*, a new chapter that does not conclude, but if anything amplifies much of the research gathered under the umbrella of the project *Who Is Afraid of Ideology?* (2017-ongoing).

The dialectical method not only structures the film’s narrative, but also organises it around multiple dichotomies: animal characters speaking to silenced human characters, the fertile lands of Lebanon’s Bekaa Valley versus the cobbled streets of Berlin, rural environments where the grass asserts its right of passage versus urban spaces designed to host rites of passage, subjects subordinated under the neoliberal model versus ways of life resistant to domestication, the real world of the probable versus the dreamlike world of the possible. Cinema is understood as a place – or, as Marwa herself would define it, a ‘placeholder’ – where points of view, positions of enunciation and modes of listening are constantly confronted and transformed. A provisional interface for antagonism based on the political power of the testimony of those subjects who, despite remaining at the margins of hegemonic narratives, bear the weight of their heritage. Insisting on terms like weight and heritage takes on particular significance here.

The plot of *Who Is Afraid of Ideology? Part 5: Right of Passage* unfolds while animated by two types of characters. On the one hand, some rodents who sound and behave like humans. At first, they confess to feeling somewhat disoriented; they are in a place they do not recognise – or, rather, where they are not recognised. They are in an improper, non-owned territory; a bare ownership. On the other hand, we observe a female character who has somatised the hypothesis that the contemporary world is not only governed by cycles of exploitation

and burnout, but also permeated by a deep logic of fatigue. Her behaviour is drowsy, bowed and limping. She bears the weight of an unbearable heritage and a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Progressively, and perhaps to avoid any Manichaeian temptation, various epiphanies are introduced alongside the contrasts that structure the film, leading the characters to unexpected encounters and metamorphoses. The action unfolds in an internal disruption of space-time order, where a kind of ventriloquism of human-animal identities persists. The ‘improper’ speech of the rodents acts as a distortion. It is in this hiatus – where, little by little, the pieces begin to fall into place – that an inter-part identity emerges: between a fixed one that yields and an unthinkable one that enables.

Jacques Rancière asserts that politics is not a matter of subjects, but rather of subjectivation. This would be equivalent to saying that politics does not express a latent or preconstituted subject, but rather creates it. ‘Subjectivation is defined not by a prior identity, but by the acts it generates, by the modification these acts bring about in the normal fabric of identities, places, and occupations.’¹ Political subjectivation does not pit one group against another, but one world against another.

This is what the film does: it produces a shared space of subjects where humans and animals can self-narrate and oppose one world to another. They do not claim their own difference, but the capacity to decide over the common – a capacity denied by existing sensible orders and modes of narration.

Zooming out, this contestation of forms of identification gives way to the broader interrogation of the series. *Who Is Afraid of Ideology?* poses a perplexed question: when did the word ‘ideology’ cease to be an operational term in the political struggle to become an anathema of neoliberal enunciation, presenting it as a threat to be eradicated? Untangling the question requires acknowledging the frameworks that allow the term to become the backbone of an anti-movement that seeks to replicate – even parasitically – the logic of that which it confronts. Ideology thus becomes the preferred phantom for legitimising a programme of authoritarian restoration: a patriarchal, fundamentalist, colonial and capitalist alliance.

In contrast, by configuring a constellation of images, testimonies and practices through which ideology is manufactured as a scapegoat in certain bodies, social movements and community policies, Arsanios dismantles the longed-for status of

¹Amador Fernández Savater, «Potencias y problemas de una “política de cualquiera”: entrevista a Jacques Rancière» (Powers and problems of a ‘politics of anyone’: interview with Jacques Rancière), 2016.

invisibility attributed to ideology. What György Lukács defined as ‘reification’:² the process by which ideology stiffens, becoming a compact thing that immobilises processes and stabilises becoming. It is precisely this naturalisation that makes it difficult to perceive. It is so ingrained in everyday life that its presence is mistaken for the *natural* order of things.

From the very beginning of her rigorous investigative trajectory, Marwa has been reinscribing discourse not as a mere abstract exercise, but as the result of the material relations that sustain and structure it. The artist problematises the ideological constructs that shape the gaze – including the very act of filming – while documenting and accompanying forms of organisation that maintain other modes of coexistence alive. Arsanios has woven an ecology of struggles that connects the Kurdish Autonomous Women’s Movement in Iraq and Syria (*Parts 1* and *2*) with agricultural cooperatives in Tolima, Colombia (*Part 3*) and northern Lebanon (*Part 4*), where practices of communal learning, self-governance, self-defence and forms of jurisprudence based on usership rights are examined in relation to land ownership.

Part 5 introduces a new approach to resisting legal abstraction. This involves assembling the juridical form of the right of passage, which is an inherent right of the servitude paradigm (here, the ‘servient’ land benefits the ‘dominant’ land by allowing it to perform certain actions, such as granting passage). For this assemblage, Arsanios composes a mode of filming unusual in her cinematic practice, incorporating characters or *personifications*³ of absolute singularity.

Now that the dehumanisation and *animalisation* of the world-system operate in a lacerating way within the geopolitical repositioning of the Global North, as well as in processes of imperialist neocolonisation, producing counter-characters and dreamlike fictions may be more urgent than ever. Although the success of such an endeavour remains unfathomably uncertain. As the film envisions, it is necessary to simultaneously project an alternative horizon: a long-term abolitionist politics aimed at disidentifying, contesting and dismantling the privileges tied to the legal status of persons – privileges scarcely reserved for a minority and systematically denied to the majority.

Carolina Jiménez, curator of the season

² György Lukács, *Historia y conciencia de clase. Estudios sobre dialéctica marxista* (History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics), 2021 (1923).

³ Sven Lütticken, «Personajificación: La representación del personaje en el arte y en el activismo» (Personafication), 2016.