Hybrid Peace

The very basic idea of the project of a united Europe was to establish peace on the continent — where there is Europe, there is peace. This task remains urgent on the political agenda. The dominant type of EU governance today is to externalize problems beyond the European borders, pushing conflicts to the outside to keep the interior safe and punishing the peripheries for a crisis of its own making.

As a result, we are observing the return of the repressed — the EU is actually surrounded by a belt of wars at its south and east, unavoidably accompanied by huge influxes of migrants and people escaping warfare. The logic of borders is being multiplied inside what was supposed to be a free, borderless EU zone — new European tribalism is on the rise and defining national political agendas. Nation-states are behaving like gated communities or Dogvilles, and migrants are made out to be scapegoats of both the former crimes and the collective guilt of the nations where they arrive.

In today's populist Orwellian newspeak, peace becomes war, as the maintenance of the former transnational status quo has ceased to be attainable. Peace is not war — peace is politics, and war starts where politics ends. Politics exists to prevent war, exactly in order to avoid it. The current political vacuum, however, is being occupied by militarism, violence and terror. Never-ending hybrid civil war of a global scale, newly emerging anti-migrant walls and the necropolitics of memory are the basic stones that are defining life within our societies.

One of the main features of this transnational hybrid war is that its machinery operates in absolute fusion with the factory of imagination and enjoyment, where real social life itself increasingly resembles a staged media spectacle. Contemporary esthetics become part of war, and image production today is inseparable from the war machine — we are dealing with the war-entertainment complex. We are violently placed in a Hollywood-like terrorist representation which contaminates different political contexts like a deadly virus through military blackmail.

In times when authoritarian and fascizoid pathologies are cynically pretending to be the new norm, "Hybrid Peace," developed with Stroom Den Haag, explores the politicality of truth through visual art and forensic knowledge. From wars and walls in the EU's borderlands to the migrants' state of exception and the far-right populist surge at its core, the project examines the power relations, ideological divides and international frictions at play across the whole of the continent.

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