



© Natascha Sadr Haghghian

pssst Leopard 2A7+

Natascha Sadr Haghghian

2016, sound installation, German, English, Arabic, Farsi, Greek.
Producer Natascha Sadr Haghghian.

Natascha Sadr Haghghian's research-based practice encompasses a variety of forms and formats, among them video, performance, installations, text, and sound, and is primarily concerned with the socio-political implications of contemporary modes of world-making. Her project *pssst Leopard 2A7+* is part of an ongoing research into the militarization of urban environments. Rather than offering highlights from a CV, Haghghian asks readers to go to www.bioswop.net, a CV-exchange platform where artists and other cultural practitioners can borrow and lend CVs for various purposes.

Contact: many@possest.de
<http://www.possest.de>

One of the products exported by German arms manufacturers is the Leopard 2A7+, a main battle tank specially designed and optimized for pacifying uprisings, protests, and unrest in urban areas. Until now it existed only as a prototype, but the first 62 Leopard 2A7+ tanks were scheduled to be delivered to Qatar in late 2015. The country has ordered a total of 200.

pssst Leopard 2A7+ is a demilitarized, farcical copy of the Leopard 2A7+ realized in LEGO baseplates, a prototype in its own right. It possesses the same base area measurements as the tank, and the position of the turret is adhered to as well. It is executed with the meticulousness of a modeler, adhering closely to measurement and scale.

An ongoing phonetic study of the open secrets around this battle tank is accessible through 60 sound devices built into the model. A set of new sound documents are presented for the Forum Expanded exhibition, some of them made in collaboration with friends, others as independent contributions. The contributors include Joe Namy, Omar Mismar, Jessika Leobaldine Khazrik, erorsmith, and others.

The sound installation *psst Leopard 2A7+* deals with the phenomenon of the public secret, a secret that everyone is aware of.

Simultaneously, *psst Leopard 2A7+* is a farce; it can neither drive combat nor engage in it. Instead of the turret with its pivotable gun barrel, whose bearing is measured by clock position – canon is at 6 o'clock – it possesses only headphone plugs – one per minute. One can sit or lie on it and examine it auditorily via plugged-in headphones. Among the sounds to be heard are field recordings, noises from the inside of the Leopard, echoes from places it was traveling through, and voices that parrot it. On one audio channel, we hear sounds from the official meeting between Angela Merkel and the Emir of Qatar in Berlin announcing their alliance. On another channel, one hears the voices of demonstrators drafting a letter to the Leopard in Arabic. On a third, elephants are compared with tanks. Many sounds focus on the various relationships between animal name and weapon.

psst Leopard 2A7+ aligns itself in a labyrinthine chain of mimetic acts. Its appearance parrots the countless replicas and model Leopard tanks that are being assembled in hobby basements around the globe. In a further mimetic gesture, it tries to approximate itself to the “animal” in the track vehicle. What does “becoming animal” mean within this relation, and why are all German tanks named after animals?

Mimesis is often carried out as part of a magical operation. The sound installation *psst Leopard 2A7+* asks, what magic is needed to unmask the public secret around the Leopard 2A7+ and the rising militarization of urban spaces?

Natascha Sadr Haghighian