

PRESS RELEASE

TWO MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT
Yael Bartana

14 January – 11 February 2023

In her work, Yael Bartana investigates image creation and cultural identity, addressing themes of trauma, displacement, and national identity.



Her work *Two Minutes to Midnight* (2021) was initially released as an experimental theatre performance with the emblematic title *What if Women Ruled the World?*. The film was then composed using the filmed material from three of these performances, in Philadelphia (US), Aarhus (DK) and the Volksbühne in Berlin (DE). In the film, an all-female government discusses unilateral disarmament. While peace and disarmament are the main tenets for this government, a hostile country is expanding its nuclear stockpiles, led by self-absorbed President Twittler. During the discussion, a group of actual specialists, including defence advisers, soldiers, lawyers, peace activists, humanitarians, and politicians, join the government, which is made up of actors. Although the setting is a copy of Stanley Kubrick's so-called War Room from *Dr Strangelove* (1964), the film's content is its opposite: In Bartana's Peace Room, it is women who lead the discussion and food is served by men with bared torsos. As the government and experts exchange ideas about war, security and inequality, tensions escalate with the enemy nation. The work is the final part of Bartana's transdisciplinary series, similarly titled *What if Women Ruled the World?*

At a time when international crises coexist with dominant male leaders, a nuclear arms race is still part of geopolitical conflicts, and women come out for the violence inflicted on them by (authoritarian) men, Bartana presents a speculative work in which women rule the world and interdisciplinary cooperation and disarmament are at the centre.

Together with De Balie, Annet Gelink Gallery organizes a screening of the film and an artist talk with Yael Bartana and two experts in (one of) the themes from the film. The event takes place on January 21.

Bartana's work has been shown in numerous leading museums and biennials: Philadelphia Museum of Art (2021, 2018, 2016), Jewish Museum Berlin (2020, 2017), Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast, (2017), Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, Lausanne (2017), The Banff Centre, Alberta (2016), Sommer Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (2015), Petzel Gallery, New York (2015), Capitain Petzel, Berlin (2015), 31st Sao Paulo Biennial, Sao Paulo (2014), 19th Biennial of Sydney, Sydney (2013), PAMM, Miami, (2013), Walker Art Center, Pittsburgh (2013), Carnegie International (2013), Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2012), Secession Vienna, Vienna (2012), 7th Berlin Biennale, Berlin (2012); 54th Venice Biennale, Venice (2011). She studied at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, the School of Visual Arts, New York and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Her work is part of the collection of a.o.: Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague; Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Jewish Museum, New York; Kadist, Paris; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam; Tate Modern, London; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Tel Aviv; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. In 2011 Yael Bartana represented Poland on the 54th edition of the Venice Biennial.