

Central Asian Moving Image Screening *by: DAVRA* 12.11.–14.11.2025 *curated by:* Aida Adilbek

For the Tage des Exils, the DAVRA collective has curated a dialogical film programme that deals with exile in terms of forced migration, persecution and displacement, as well as the experience of losing an ideological and cultural frame of reference. The film programme thus also addresses an important aspect of Cora Pongracz's biographical experience. Due to her mother's Jewish background, the Pongracz family, originally from Vienna, had to flee into exile in Argentina and could only return to Europe after the end of the Second World War. Her own experience of exile – Cora Pongracz was born in Buenos Aires in 1943 – therefore also constitutes a formative context that is inscribed in her artistic work.

The DAVRA collective works on the exploration, documentation and dissemination of Central Asian culture and knowledge from a feminist-decolonial perspective and opposes colonial appropriations such as (post-)Soviet foreign interpretations. In this context, the concept of exile refers to forced migration, persecution and displacement, as well as to experiences of losing an ideological cultural frame of reference. The collapse of the USSR led to the emergence of new nation states and, at the same time, to feelings of 'homelessness in one's own country'. A similar moment can be found in the history of the GDR: in East Germany, too, the political upheaval of the (Berlin) Wall falling meant the loss of a familiar social reference system for many people.

The selection of five short films from Central Asia made by different authors from different backgrounds – Aigul Ibray, Saodat Ismailova, Zumrad Mirzalieva, Alla Rummyantseva, and Ermina Takenova – considers the idea of exile more as a form of psychological distancing or isolation in times of change. Each film works just like Cora Pongracz's portraits, giving the audience insights into realities of the region as a whole, or specific places, just like into the authors' backgrounds and also into different roles of women in the ever changing context of Central Asia. The authors question these charged thoughts and contemplations on societal impositions and long standing roles, and reconsider history and customs, overwriting traditional imagery and looking for liberation. It is also this subtle mix of gender policies, and ecological and political dwelling that make these films a reflection of the reality of Central Asian history and contemporaneity.

– Aida Adilbek

Film Program

- 4 Saodat Ismailova, *Her Five Lives*, 2020, video, 13 minutes, Courtesy: The artist.
Zumrad Mirzalieva, *Autonomy*, 2022, video, 7 minutes, Courtesy: The artist.
- 5 Aigul Ibray, *Cage*, 2024, video, 7 minutes, Courtesy: The artist.
Alla Rummyantseva, *Pole of Inaccessibility*, 2013, video, 2 minutes, Courtesy: The artist.
Ermina Takenova, *Mankurt*, 2017, video, 7 minutes, Courtesy: The artist.

