


Mustafa Hulusi

SMBA Current Exhibition



Beyond Paradise

Bik Van der Pol, Patricia Esquivias, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Mustafa Hulusi, Arnout Killian, Matthieu Laurette, Sascha Pohle, Lisl Ponger, Erkan Özgen & Sener Özmen

 [nieuwsbrief-no-105-beyond-paradise.pdf](#)
(1.22 Mb)

**20 July – 7 September 2008 Opening:
Saturday 19 July, 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.**

In the exhibition 'Beyond Paradise' tourist image production and narratives, as we know them from travel brochures, postcards, advertisements, films and so on, are appropriated in the works presented. They reflect on the construction of expectations, **experiences** and the social imaginary of places evoked by the ubiquitous and pervasive **culture** of tourism we are living in nowadays.

The starting point of this exhibition also stems from the paradox that tourism still involves romantic, if not paradisiacal imagery, whereas the tourist **experience** is actually shattered by all kinds of forces that haunt our daily lives: commercialism, gentrification, the complex entanglement of migration and tourist destinations, war, and fear of terrorism. But it is also significant for the strength of our tourism-minded **culture** that even such threatening notions and **experiences** can be integrated in a package tour.

'Beyond Paradise' investigates modes of representation and visibility, starting from the mass production of images – a scheme central to the leisure industry – and the idealized imagery of places, and moves away from the familiar Tourist Gaze to construct unexpected fictional or personal narratives. The promises of these idealistic and seductive images are appropriated and eventually shifted in the works presented in the exhibition, to reveal other realities, and take us beyond paradise in order to **question** one of the greatest fictions of our **times**: that of tourism.

Curated by Delphine Bedel and Ayako Yoshimura, in collaboration with Jelle Bouwhuis

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The process of multiplication of mediated travel activities defines the somewhat naive anticipation of the tourist on **experience** and imagination. By borrowing from the stock of propaganda images in Cyprus, in his Elysian and Flower Paintings series Mustafa Hulusi (UK/CY) **questions** the trustworthiness of visual representation. He commissioned a professional painter to produce photo-realistic paintings, based on photographs he had taken on the island. These inviting images of ripe peaches and of an innocent hand reaching for a flower are devoid of the political message usually conveyed by propaganda. Their magnitude and smooth surfaces amplify a sense of unboundedness whereas, on the other hand, they evoke the kind of social realism that we see some**times** associated with nationalism.

Found photographs are a common feature in the oeuvre of Hans-Peter Feldmann (D). The Sunset series (2004) is comprised of nine enlarged postcards of sunsets, multiplying such a perfect romantic **moment** and disrupting its uniqueness. In a similar disrupting vein Arnout Killian (NL) paints artificial, paradisiacal landscapes with no protagonist, where holiday locations turn into a hyper-real world. Fata Morgana (2007) shows an unusually quiet view of the Thousand and One Nights Palace in the Dutch amusement park Efteling. In The Green (2002), Killian presents another non-place, the golf course as a familiar background of holiday dramas. The pictorialism suspends the scenes from their narrative potential, and **transforms** beauty into a hovering uncertainty.

Generic holiday destinations and the utopia of unboundedness also take centre stage in the video projection The Swimmer (2002-3) by Sascha Pohle (D/NL). Inspired by Frank Perry's movie of the same name from 1968, Pohle, re-enacting the film's main character, moves from one Tenerife hotel to the next, plunging into each swimming pool in succession, bizarrely following the order of the Thomas Cook travel brochure, in an endless consumption of leisure.

In her video projection Folklore #II (2008), Patricia Esquivias (VE) uses voice-over **storytelling**, with the help of props such as hand made maps, notes, Internet images and advertisements, to explore unusual links in Spanish **history**. Esquivias juxtaposes two historical figures: of King Phillip II of Spain who in the 16th century exploited a global empire and the Spanish singer Julio Iglesias, who became extreme popular in the 70s. These parallel stories unravel an unexpected tale: the adoration of the sun and the beginning of the mass tourism in Spain, revealing the national economic agenda of both.

In Phantom Foreign Vienna (1991-2004), Lisl Ponger (AT) addresses the invisibility of immigrant communities in Vienna in the early 1990s. There Ponger visited and filmed various cultural ceremonies and celebrations, **questioning** the national agenda.

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