

Press Release

April 2022

Art to fix a broken world

The selection of three artists from the Philippines, Turkey, and Iraq marks the inauguration of Academy in Exile's Artist-in-Residence Program in Berlin. The project is funded by Allianz Kulturstiftung.

Berlin, Germany - Out of a hundred applications from 38 countries, the International Jury selected the proposals of these three artists: **Liryc Dela Cruz (film), Diren Demir (sound) and Kani Kamil (visual arts).**

"Choosing from an exceptional range of projects", says **Claudia Tazreiter**, jury member and professor at the University of Linköping, Sweden, "was no easy task".

Esra Küçük, managing director of Allianz Kulturstiftung: "In times of war and repression, Academy in Exile's commitment to strengthening open societies and freedom of expression is more important than ever. With the selection of these three exceptional artists, the Academy continues its mission by bringing the arts and sciences into a conversation."

Between late May and early July, they will each take up three-month residencies where they will be affiliated with Academy in Exile's Critical Thinking Program at FU Berlin and work on their projects for the 2022 theme: **Fixing What's Broken**. War, environmental degradation, poverty, and authoritarianism are driving ever more people from their homes, with refugee flows growing exponentially in recent times. Recognizing that authoritarianism and forced displacement are no longer just local, temporary perturbations, **Fixing What's Broken** called for approaches that thought about novel, constructive forms of addressing and interpreting forced displacement and its causes.

Vanessa Agnew, Director of Academy in Exile's Critical Thinking Program, says the program "will allow artists to share their singular visions and inspire new ways of thinking".

The Artists

Liryc Dela Cruz (*1992) is an artist and filmmaker from the Philippines, currently based in Rome, Italy. A representative of the slow cinema movement, his work has been screened in several international film festivals and he was invited to *Berlinale Talents* for the 70th Berlin International Film Festival in 2020. His films and projects are thematically

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Academy in Exile,
hosting threatened
scholars since 2017,
provides support for
people at risk because of
their professional and
personal commitment to
the values of civil society.
Through fellowships,
mentoring, publishing,
teaching, and other
opportunities afforded by
Academy in Exile's
funders and consortium
partners—Universität
Duisburg-Essen,
Kulturwissenschaftliches
Institut, Forum
Transregionale Studien,
and Freie Universität
Berlin—displaced
intellectuals are able to
live in safety and resume
their work in Germany.

The **Allianz
Kulturstiftung** is a not-
for-profit cultural
foundation for Europe.
The aim of the
Foundation is to
strengthen cohesion in

related to his own origins, history, and psychology. They also deal with decolonial practices and the experiences of Filipino migrant communities. His captivating proposal entitled **“To Feel You Again”**, says jury member Çağan Duran, University of Duisburg-Essen, “deals with migrant bodies, an important but under-addressed issue”. Liryc Dela Cruz explains that “the world tends to assume that food, shelter, and opportunities are the only important things for people searching for protection and refuge, especially when they arrive in their so-called ‘host countries’ in the West. [...] We forget that these people also have desires to feel their senses and body again, to feel the warmth of other souls and lovers.”

Diren Demir (*1997) is an interdisciplinary artist and independent curator from Istanbul, Turkey. Demir’s work, articles, and research address toxic masculinity, LGBTIQ+ history, body politics and (de-)gendered memories of place and city. Their proposal **“Story of an Envelope. Participatory Sound Installation”**, according to Andrea Bohlman, jury member and musicology professor from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, “stood out because of its poetic simplicity, as they draw gentle attention to a key piece of infrastructure in open society: the ballot box.” The installation makes the ballot box transparent and accessible to the audience, the content of the envelopes become whole life stories to be heard and shared. Demir addresses how the basic democratic procedure of putting one’s vote in an envelope and the ballot box risks being rendered dysfunctional by authoritarian regimes. During the exhibition period of the project, the ballot box is presented as an interactive space open for the audience to add their own life stories.

Kani Kamil is an Iraqi Kurdish artist and scholar working with photography, installation, and needlework, as well as video and sound. Her work, reflecting on the socio-political circumstances of Kurdish women in Iraq, has been shown in several international art shows and film festivals in the UK, Iceland, Poland, and the US, and was invited to the Kurdish Film Festival in Berlin in October 2021. The subject of her project **“Hanar”** will be Runak, a Kurdish feminist who documented women’s everyday lives in Southern Kurdistan in the 1990s. Kamil’s “powerful proposal focusing on hidden and forgotten histories, experiences and voices”, says Claudia Tazreiter, was most convincing to the jury. Kamil shows Runak and her work as a heretofore “invisible archivist” having assembled an “invisible archive”. With the male view regarded as the only authentic witness to any sociopolitical cause or event in Southern Kurdistan – and elsewhere - a female view has been relegated to female issues alone. Kamil’s project not only represents marginalized Kurdish women but also challenges the patriarchal structures of archival practices. The project therefore fights against the perpetuation of Kurdish women’s invisibility – past and present.

Europe using the tools of art and culture.

The Foundation is committed to translocal art and culture projects in Europe and the Mediterranean region. Over the coming years, it will focus its strategic work on the following thematic areas. It will promote an open society while adopting a decentralised approach to Europe and driving forward digitalisation for the common good.

The Jury

Prof. Vanessa Agnew (AiE/ English Studies, Universität Duisburg-Essen/
Australian National University)

Khaled Barakeh (Artist, Berlin)

Assoc. Prof. Andrea F. Bohlman (Musicology, University of North Carolina at
Chapel Hill, US)

Çağan Duran (AiE/Turkish Studies, Universität Duisburg-Essen)

Ali Hasan (Musician, Berlin)

Prof. Paweł Leszkowicz (Art History, Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań,
Poland)

Çiğdem Mater (Filmmaker, Hamburg/Istanbul)

Prof. Claudia Tazreiter (Migration, Ethnicity, and Society, Linköping
University, Sweden)