



Rethinking Identity

EUROPEAN MONTH
OF PHOTOGRAPHY
ARENDT AWARD

Cihan Çakmak
Ulla Deventer
Jojo Gronostay
Livia Melzi
Karolina Wojtas



Rethinking Identity

EMOP Arendt Award 2023

The **EMOP Arendt Award** is a prestigious prize that was created in 2013 for emerging visual artists with strong artistic skills and developing photographic practices. Sponsored by the Luxembourg law firm Arendt, the winner will be announced in May 2023 at Arendt House in Luxembourg during the **European Month of Photography**. All nominated artists will be exhibited and invited to attend the exhibition and award ceremony. On this occasion, monographic booklets will be published.

The jury for this edition consisted of Paul di Felice (Luxembourg), Delphine Dumont (Brussels), Emmanuelle Halkin (Paris), Verena Kaspar Eisert (Vienna), Maren Lübbke-Tidow (Berlin), and Rui Prata (Lisbon). In the jury awarding the prize, Verena Kaspar Eisert, former curator of Kunst Haus Wien, was replaced by Félix Hoffmann, the new director of FOTO WIEN in Vienna.

After **Rethinking Nature** (the 2021 theme of the European Month of Photography), the EMOP curatorial team chose the theme **Rethinking Identity** for its 2023 edition. They proposed and discussed forty artistic positions related to the theme, ultimately nominating the following five artists, all of whom reside and work in Europe, for the EMOP Arendt Award 2023: Cihan Çakmak, Ulla Deventer, Jojo Gronostay, Lívia Melzi, and Karolina Wojtas.

The opening of the exhibition and the presentation of the award take place during the European Month of Photography in Luxembourg.

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- 1 Lívia Melzi
- 2 Cihan Çakmak
- 3 Ulla Deventer
- 4 Karolina Wojtas
- 5 Jojo Gronostay

When we talk about identity, we are referring to a complex set of individual, relational, cultural, social, and even political experiences. The five artists selected question these different concepts of identity through photo and video works that often transcend the two-dimensional frame of the image and require the viewer to engage with the artwork on a personal level.

All of these artists, nominated for the Arendt Award, develop a strong personal vision that goes beyond the usual classic clichés of identity.

Cihan Çakmak, with a more idiosyncratic approach, explores the shared memories of a fractured Kurdish identity by creating dreamlike personal situations that challenge social fragmentation and the resulting isolation experienced by the community.

Ulla Deventer's particular aesthetics which draws both on documentary photography and contemporary art installation considers her body as an instrument of power in order to deconstruct stereotypes about prostitution.

As to **Karolina Wojtas**, her deconstructed self-representations and fragmentary perceptions of the body establish new narratives that challenge the conventional notions of time and space from a social and relational standpoint.

Different in style, **Lívia Melzi's** work approach consists in examining archives and representations pertaining to identity through her research on Tupinambá capes, which were used for anthropophagic rituals by the Tupi warrior tribes of the Brazilian coast.

The question of cultural identity is intertwined with autobiographical elements in the multimedia work of **Jojo Gronostay** (born in Germany with Ghanaian roots). Objects and images of objects and body fragments are decontextualized and presented on an unusual scale, playing on the inter-relationships between colonialism and capitalism.

Generally speaking, the perspectives of all these artists convey a range of different identities, whether they be individual, familial, cultural or territorial.

Paul di Felice