Daya Cahen

BIRTH OF A NATION
photo series and short film

Fascinated by mass psychology and indoctrination, Dutch artist Daya Cahen visits Cadet School Number 9, a unique military academy in Moscow, where girls aged 11-17 learn how to become the ideal Russian patriot and the ideal Russian woman. The project “Birth of a Nation” consists of a photographic series (2012) and a short film (10 min., 2010).

In the photographic series, girls in military uniforms, wearing large white flowers in their hair, are photographed from behind. They become an army of girls, which, on the one hand, shows the uniformity of the collective and at the same time emphasizes the power of the individual.

In the short film Daya Cahen investigates the creation of the ideal Russian patriot and the ideal Russian woman. She does not interview anyone, but places as many as six different images on the screen at the same time. We see girls doing their hair, cooking, ironing, marching and learning to use weapons. The footage reveals various aspects of their personalities. While they sing the praises of the great Russian nation, we cannot help but notice the contrast between military indoctrination and youthful innocence.

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Daya Cahen
born in 1969 in Amsterdam (the Netherlands), where she currently lives



Daya Cahen creates photographs, videos and video installations. She studied photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam (2002-2006). Cahen’s work revolves around propaganda, indoctrination and the manipulative powers of the media. She investigates the representation of political icons, symbols of power and the role of the masses versus the individual. In her work, she links the political with the everyday and personal, combines archive material with contemporary images and blurs the border between fact and fiction.

Her work was shown at Moscow Museum of Modern Art, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Nederlands Fotomuseum (Rotterdam), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Wiels Contemporary Art Centre (Brussels), De Appel Arts Centre (Amsterdam), National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Rencontres Internationales, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen and was nominated for a Golden Bear (short film) at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2007.

GROHMAN'S VILLA
Tylna 9/11
opening hours
10.05 (Thu): 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
11.05–20.05 (Mon-Sun): 11 a.m. – 8 p.m.
latest entrance: 7.00 p.m.

opening: 10.05, 6 p.m.
exhibition will be held: 10–20.05