

Atiéna R. Kilfa
The Unhomely
27 Jan/28 May 2023



Atiéna R. Kilfa, *The Landlords*, 2022, video still (woman looking down at men walking down II). Courtesy the artist.

The Unhomely marks the first institutional solo exhibition by Atiéna R. Kilfa (b.1990, France) in the UK. Her multi-disciplinary practice includes photography, sculpture, video, and architectural forms to explore personal and cultural memories that conflict and overlap. Her most recent work draws on her interest in the composition of models, dioramas, still lives, and tableaux vivants, which she interprets as sites loaded with inherited narratives and social codes.

Central to the exhibition is *The Unhomely* (2022-23). A newly commissioned work that exists as a site-responsive installation comprising a 4K video, a raised stage that produces transactional sounds, graffiti tags obtained from the location of the video, and a miniature sculpture. These varied elements co-exist in Gallery 3 as a composition that seeks to probe the memory of the “home” as an impossible “virtual” architecture.

Positioned within the installation is an eponymous video work presented on the architectural stage, placing the viewer amidst a cinematic scene that unfolds within an indefinite moment in time on an undisclosed staircase permeated with a combination of signs and signifiers. The camera’s deliberate movement traverses the stairway and functions as a Huis Clos, a never-ending loop whereby the viewer encounters “architectural ghosts” that collapse the distinction between the real and the imagined.

The role of the figures in the video fluctuates between models and actors, engaging the character and audiences to speculate on the inhabitant’s lives - real or fictional - subtly blurring the distinctions between the past and the present. Two additional elements accentuate the viewer’s presence in the production of the work. First, a miniature architectural reconstruction of the video’s staircase - a material quotation abstracted and evidenced as a model - is incorporated into the one-to-one scale architectural construction, which traces the footprint of this anonymous building, including an inverted section that locates the site’s entrance. It exists as an expansive set construction that functions primarily as a platform for audiences to navigate and secondly as a Foley instrument, amplifying the reverberations of the bodies that move across its surface, adding a sonic, spatial, and participatory dimension to the experience of the work.

In addition to Gallery 3, Kilfa's work inhabits the Reading Room, which historically existed as the principal threshold for visitors upon entering the building in its earlier manifestations. Placed within the space is a new work, which consists of a vertical vitrine - a glass display case fabricated in response to the dimensions and spatial characteristics of the room - an object commonly found in commercial retail spaces or museums to showcase valuable items. Inserted into the rear upright panel of the vitrine is a mannequin's dismembered hand, visibly tarnished from repeat mishandling, invoking historical images of decay, decomposition and the uncanny.

Co-produced in partnership with KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin.

Notes to editors

For further information, interviews and images please contact:

Sam Talbot, sam@sam-talbot.com // +44 (0) 772 5184 630

Isabel Davies, isabel@sam-talbot.com // +44 (0) 751 1700 240

Biography

Atiéna R. Kilfa (b.1990, France), currently lives and works in Frankfurt am Main where she recently graduated from Staedelschule. In her practice, Kilfa uses photography, sculpture, video, and installations to explore how personal and cultural memories tend to conflict and overlap. *The Unhomely* at Camden Art Centre marks the first institutional solo exhibition by the artist in the UK.

Camden Art Centre

Camden Art Centre is a place for world-class contemporary art exhibitions and education. Situated in Hampstead, North London (charity number 1065829) Camden Art Centre is a place for art and artists; a place for the curious, the novice and the expert alike. It's a place to see, to make, to learn and to talk about contemporary art, whether in our building, attending off-site projects or via our digital forums. Founded by artists in 1965, the Centre continues to be a space for the most vital and diverse mix of practices and ideas and is dedicated to supporting artists at every stage of their careers.