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Cultures in Contact  
Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck

**Exhibition Concept (update: 10-04-2007)**

**„Breaking the Stereotype“** © Veronika Bernard

## **Oriental and Occidental Stereotypes in the Course of Time**

The exhibition project „Breaking the Stereotype“ has been initiated by the cultural studies focus „Kulturen im Kontakt/ Cultures in Contact“ which has been installed officially at Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck by January 1, 2007. The three-stage project has been planned for the period of 2007-2009/2010.

The exhibition project „Breaking the Stereotype“ deals with the connotative changes in the ways Orient and Occident have been mutually stereotyped from a cultural studies point of view. The exhibition aims at documenting the products of stereotyping as well as the mechanisms active in the stereotyping processes and their partial rooting in the cultural system of Orientalism, which has been analyzed by Edward W. Said, and at opening them to de-construction. Therefore the exhibition contrasts the representations of cultural perception concerning the Orient and the Occident against the representations of Oriental and Occidental self-perception as they appear in literature, the media and every day life in order to break the stereotypes. In order to differentiate the problem even further the representations of cultural perception are contrasted against the perception-in return of this perception by the people living in the Eastern Mediterranean and by the migrant perspective on this point.

As the exhibition aims at opening as many aspects of stereotyping to de-construction as possible it presents a well balanced mixture of research findings on the exhibition topic, audiovisual adaptations of research findings and artistic approaches to the exhibition topic. By including the arts into the exhibition also the soft (atmospheric) aspects of Oriental and Occidental stereotyping are considered in terms of de-construction in addition to the hard (factual) aspects of stereotyping.

It is crucial to mind that stereotypes will not to be analyzed on grounds of evaluating whether they are true or false, right or wrong, within the exhibition context. Stereotypes are rather seen as generalizations and simplifications of what has been encountered individually. Stereotypes

are products of intellectual modelling. They are not true or false. They do not oppose what is defined as reality so ever. They rather reduce what is perceived as reality by its varieties and details in order to make individual perception processes more efficient. This is particularly true of cultural perception and cultural representation, although cultural self-perception may also be open to stereotyping.

Stereotyping opens ways of categorizing perception and representation processes aiming at defining one's „Other“ and one's „Self“. In this process the relevant criterion is how well people are able to identify with what they perceive in terms of cultural input, and how well they identify with their cultural „Self“. Resulting from this, there are positive and negative stereotypes. However, positive stereotypes are hardly considered stereotypes whereas negative stereotypes are. Idyllizing, idealizing and romanticizing representations therefore find their way into cultural self-perception and self-representation whereas negative stereotyping (depreciatory, disparaging, demonizing, stigmatizing, criminalizing representations) keeps restricted to the cultural perception and representation of the „Other“. Nevertheless, even positively connotated stereotyping may turn into its opposite if integrated into an intellectual model of overriding importance.

Such an intellectual model in terms of stereotyping the Orient by the Occident is the system of Orientalism as defined by Edward W. Said. The term „Orientalism“ stands for one culture executing power over another one. Stereotyping is a factor in executing power over cultures different from your own. The exhibition takes this aspect into account by using Edward W. Said's terminology and definition of Orientalism in those fields where they are relevant in terms of deconstructing the stereotypes given.

Edward W. Said has pointed out that the concepts of the „Occident“ and the „Orient“ in their opposing qualities have been deliberately designed by occidental minds. According to Said, the Orient has been assigned the part of the „Other“, or rather: the inferior „Other“, within this opposition. The latter has been put into perspective by literary historical research on individual European national literatures and by feminist research. Said's central point of understanding the two concepts as products of occidental intellectual modelling, however, has remained unquestioned.

As both the Occidental and the Oriental concept and the products of stereotyping are to be understood as intellectual working models both are subjects to changing cultural environments. Consequently, they have not been stable but have kept changing in the course of time.

In illustrating the quality of these changes in stereotyping the Orient and the Occident the exhibition starts off with present stereotyping and moves on to more historical ones.

As the exhibition concept is based on reciprocity it is self-evident that in working on the exhibition issues university and non-university institutions and organizations at Innsbruck and Salzburg (Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck, JoinIn/ Zemit, an Innsbruck based EU-funded migrants organisation, and Salzburg based GenderLink) will closely cooperate with colleagues/ partners at university and non-university institutions and organisations in those geographical regions having been defined as „the Orient“ by Occidental thinking. Currently these are colleagues at Bilgi University, Istanbul; Ege University, Izmir; Notre Dame University, Beirut.

As the exhibition aims at highlighting the varieties of self-perception and self-representation (regional/ ethnic varieties, religious/ denominational varieties, ideological/ political varieties, migrants perspectives) the exhibits chosen to illustrate these varieties will be contrasted against exhibits which illustrate the relevant aspects of cultural perception of the Other, of the perception-in-return of this perception by the people living in the Eastern Mediterranean and by the migrant perspective on this point.

The exhibits will be designed, produced, collected and selected by the contributors (for instance in student workshops etc.). The contributors are free to use photos which have been shot by themselves, creative combinations (collages) of photos, texts, statistics etc., texts of fiction and non-fiction (or parts of such texts), book covers (with historical pieces: digital photos of the covers), advertising materials (posters, catalogues, leaflets, brochures etc), film clips (in case there are no copyright restrictions), video tapes of interviews with researchers presenting and discussing their findings on the exhibition topic, video clips, readings by authors (live or as DVD-clips), computer animations, reproductions of historical prints/ illustrations etc. to create their exhibits. All exhibits will be forwarded to the exhibition organisers together with a text both in German or English and the native language (Turkish or Arabic; as a Microsoft-word-for-windows file, current version) which gives all necessary information on the exhibit (including background information), and has been authorized by the contributors to be used in the exhibition.

To ensure that the exhibits can be compared in terms of their messages and, by this, will be fit to illustrate the quality of the very approach the exhibition will concentrate on a limited number of stereotyped fixtures. They are selected by the team of contributors. The leading idea in doing so is to choose those aspects which are considered relevant and significant by the contributors. The list of fixtures selected may be added to if considered necessary (for details see „**Fact Sheet on Handling of Exhibition Matters**“).

To keep the range of exhibits well balanced people from as many research fields as possible have been invited to contribute (for details see „**Fact Sheet on Handling of Exhibition Matters**“).

The exhibition will consist of three succeeding stages spreading over the years 2007, 2008 and 2009/ 2010, each focussing on a different topic within the range of the leading theme. For details see „**Fact Sheet on Handling of Exhibition Matters**“. Please, also visit the Cultures in Contact homepage, following the link on [www.uibk.ac.at/kik](http://www.uibk.ac.at/kik).

The exhibition is designed as an exhibition-in-progress, i.e. exhibits may be constantly added to the exhibition. It will start at a maximum of 10 exhibits per exhibit category at stage no.1 in 2007. The number of exhibits per exhibit category) may be increased to up to 20 for the final exhibition in 2009/ 2010. For details on the exhibit categories see the attached list „**Exhibits 1**“. In 2009/ 2010 the several stages (and their topical focusses) will be combined in one concluding exhibition. An interactive exhibition website on which people can comment on the exhibition or contribute their personal exhibits of the types defined above will be integrated into exhibition stages no.2 and no.3 as a separate exhibit. It can be entered via the Cultures in Contact homepage, following the link on [www.uibk.ac.at/kik](http://www.uibk.ac.at/kik).

Exhibition sites are located at Innsbruck (in 2007, in 2009 maybe at a different place in Austria or abroad near the Austrian border) and at Istanbul (Bilgi University Campus in 2009, in 2010 hopefully as part of the events „European Capital of Culture 2010“).

As exhibition stage no.1 will take place in the second half of 2007 the deadline for all necessary planning activities is the end of March 2007. The deadline for exhibit designing is the end of June 2007. In general the deadline for preparing an exhibition stage is three months in advance of the exhibition opening date.

Exhibition stages no.1 and no.2 will be video-taped. The video tape will be published on the Culture in Contact homepage. It can be visited via the link [www.uibk.ac.at/kik](http://www.uibk.ac.at/kik). An exhibition catalogue which consists of pictures of all the exhibits, the texts going with them and a DVD/ CD showing a walk through exhibition stages no.1-3 will be published for the concluding exhibition in 2009/ 2010, and will be on sale for exhibition-goers.

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BREAKING  
THE  
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# Fact sheet on Handling of Exhibition Matters

Exhibition Title: „**Breaking the Stereotype**“

## Sub-Titles for exhibition stages No.1, No.2 and No.3:

**Part 1:** „Breaking the Stereotype“. Europe’s Image of the Orient and the Orient’s Self-Perception – now and then.

**Part 2:** „Breaking the Stereotype“. The Orient’s Image of Europe and Europe’s Self-Perception – now and then.

**Part 3:** „Breaking the Stereotype“. A Mutual Understanding of Images: the Orient and Europe – now and then.

**Exhibition Type:** exhibition-in-progress

## Exhibition Concept in short

Varieties of self-perception (regional/ ethnic varieties, religious/denominational varieties, ideological/ political varieties, migrants view) ought to be highlighted and contrasted against the mostly simplifying stereotyped perception of the “Other”.

In doing so certain aspects are selected in order to ensure comparability of exhibits and to illustrate positions in a more focussed way.

This is done by the team: Aspects of relevance are listed and can be constantly added to.

Currently these are:

- + people’s character/ mentality (calm, dignified, phlegmatic, traditional, religious etc.)
- + scarf/ veil/ covering your body in public/ showing one’s body in public/ public nakedness
- + women and men (social status, patterns of relation)
- + mosques/ minarets/ churches
- + means of transport (camels, caravans, ...)\*
- + sceneries (desert, bazars, colours, ...)\*
- + religious belonging (Muslim, Christian)
- + representative places/ cities

\* Aspects marked with an asterisk are not considered relevant by all contributors, and therefore may be eliminated in case there are no exhibit proposals referring to them.

In order to ensure a well balanced range of exhibits colleagues from as many research fields as possible have been invited for contribution.

Currently these are:

- + (national) literatures, linguistics and cultural studies
- + literary criticism
- + media studies
- + gender studies
- + history of arts
- + social and political science
- + history
- + VCD

### **Exhibition Program (topical perspectives)**

#### ***Stage 1 (Innsbruck, Galerie Claudiana, 4<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 1: Europe’s Image of the Orient and the Orient’s Self-Perception – now and then.***

- Europe’s perception of the Orient as its Other (present and past)
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrant perspective of the Eastern Mediterranean (present)
- The perception-in-return of the European perception of the Eastern Mediterranean by 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrants living in Europe and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrants’ self-perception (present)
- The perception-in-return of the European perception of the Eastern Mediterranean by the people living in the area (present and past)
- The Eastern Mediterranean’s self-perception (present and past)

#### ***Stage 2 (Istanbul, Bilgi University Campus, 2008): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 2: The Orient’s Image of Europe and Europe’s Self-Perception – now and then.***

- The Eastern Mediterranean’s perception of Europe (present and past)
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Eastern Mediterranean migrant perspective of Europe (present)
- The perception-in-return of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Eastern Mediterranean migrant perspective of Europe by Europeans (present)
- The perception-in-return of the Eastern Mediterranean’s perception of Europe by Europeans (present and past)
- Europe’s self-perception (present and past)

#### ***Stage 3 (Innsbruck, 2009, Istanbul, 2010, hopefully as part of the „European Capital of Culture“ events): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 3: A Mutual Understanding of Images: The Orient and Europe – now and then.***

- Europe’s perception of the Orient as its Other (present and past)
- The Eastern Mediterranean’s perception of Europe (present and past)
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrant perspective of the Eastern Mediterranean (present)
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Eastern Mediterranean migrant perspective of Europe (present)
- The perception-in-return of the European perception of the Eastern Mediterranean by 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrants living in Europe and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation migrants’ self-perception (present)
- The perception-in-return of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Eastern Mediterranean migrant perspective of Europe by Europeans (present)
- The perception-in-return of the European perception of the Eastern Mediterranean by the people living in the area (present and past)

- The perception-in-return of the Eastern Mediterranean's perception of Europe by Europeans (present and past)
- The Eastern Mediterranean's self-perception (present and past)
- Europe's self-perception (present and past)

### **Exhibition Program (fields of stereotyping):**

#### **Stage 1 (Innsbruck, Galerie Claudiana, 4<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> November 2007): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 1: Europe's Image of the Orient and the Orient's Self-Perception – now and then**

Period of time: 20<sup>th</sup> plus 21<sup>st</sup> century

Fields:

- tourism (catalogues, brochures etc)
- literature (bookcovers, text passages etc)
- media (press photographs, film ads/ posters, film clips etc)
- material individually designed (by students etc) to illustrate self-perception

Period of time: 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century

Fields:

- tourism (travellogues etc)
- literature (illustrations, text passages etc)
- paintings

#### **Stage 2 (Istanbul, Bilgi University Campus, 2008): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 2: The Orient's Image of Europe and Europe's Self-Perception – now and then.**

Period of time: 20<sup>th</sup> plus 21<sup>st</sup> century

Fields:

- tourism (catalogues, brochures etc)
- literature (bookcovers, text passages etc)
- media (press photographs, film ads/ posters, film clips etc)
- material individually designed (by students etc) to illustrate self-perception

Period of time: 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century

Fields:

- tourism (travellogues etc)
- literature (illustrations, text passages etc)
- paintings

#### **Stage 3 (Innsbruck, 2009, Istanbul, 2010, hopefully as part of the „European Capital of Culture“ events): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 3: A Mutual Understanding of Images: The Orient and Europe – now and then.**

Period of time: 20<sup>th</sup> plus 21<sup>st</sup> century

Fields:

- tourism (catalogues, brochures etc)
- literature (bookcovers, text passages etc)
- media (press photographs, film ads/ posters, film clips etc)
- material individually designed (by students etc) to illustrate self-perception

Period of time: 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century

Fields:

- tourism (travellogues etc)
- literature (illustrations, text passages etc)
- paintings

## **Exhibit Types and Exhibit Creation**

### ***Exhibit Types:***

Photos which have been shot by contributors themselves, creative combinations (collages) of photos, texts, statistics etc., texts of fiction and non-fiction (or parts of such texts), book covers (with historical piece, digital photos of the covers), advertising materials (posters, catalogues, leaflets, brochures etc), film clips (in case there are no copyright restrictions), video tapes of interviews with researchers presenting and discussing their findings on the exhibition topic, video clips, readings by authors (live or as DVD-clips), computer animations, reproductions of historical prints/ illustrations etc.

### ***Exhibit Creation:***

Exhibits are designed, produced, collected and selected by the contributors (for instance in student workshops etc.).

All exhibits will be forwarded to the exhibition organisers together with a text both in German or English and the native language (Turkish or Arabic; single exhibit: maximum 50 words; per exhibit-group: maximum 150 words; as a Microsoft-word-for-windows file, current version) which gives all necessary information on the exhibit (including background information), and has been authorized by the contributors to be used in the exhibition.

## **Number of Exhibits and Balancing of Exhibit Types**

***„Exhibition-in-progress“ principal:*** The exhibition starts off at a maximum of 10 significant exhibits (or exhibit groups) per exhibit category (in 2007) and may grow to up to a maximum of 20 exhibits (or exhibit groups) per exhibit category (in 2009/ 2010).

***Stage 1 (Innsbruck, 2007, 4<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> November): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 2: Europe’s Image of the Orient and the Orient’s Self-Perception – now and then.***  
*Maximum number of exhibits: 50 (at a maximum of 10 items each)*

***Stage 2 (Istanbul, Bilgi University Campus, 2008): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 2: The Orient’s Image of Europe and Europe’s Self-Perception – now and then.***  
*Maximum number of exhibits: 75 (at a maximum of 12 items each)*

***Stage 3 (Innsbruck, 2009, Istanbul, 2010, hopefully as part of the „European Capital of Culture“ events): „Breaking the Stereotype“. Part 3: A Mutual Understanding of Images: The Orient and Europe – now and then.***  
*Maximum number of exhibits: 150 (at a maximum of 20 items each)*



**Balancing of Exhibit Types within Exhibit Categories/ Groups:** 1/3 „fact sheet“ material, 1/3 audiovisual adaptations of research findings, 1/3 artistic contributions

### **Gathering, Creating and Forwarding of Exhibits**

Gathering and creating of exhibits and explanatory texts to be used in the exhibition: by contributing universities/ institutions/ organizations.

Exhibits will be identified by names of cooperating and contributing universities and institutions while shown in the exhibition.

Forwarding of exhibits by the Austrian Foreign Ministry's forwarding service.

Costs for transport within Austria and within the country of the exhibition site (up to 60 Euros one way) are paid by the exhibition organizers.

Exhibits will not be insured.

### **Deadlines for Gathering, Creating and Forwarding of Exhibits**

Currently just deadline for exhibition stage no.1 fixed: forwarding of exhibits by end of March 2007.

General deadline for forwarding: 3 months in advance of exhibition opening date.

Forwarding procedures: please contact Austrian Culture Forums for suitable date of forwarding by the Austrian Foreign Ministry's forwarding service to the exhibition sites (please, mind: forwarding by the ministry's forwarding service needs certain formalities which are obligatory and which may take up to three weeks).

### **Exhibition Documentation**

Video-taping of stages no.1 and no.2. Video tapes to be published on the Culture in Contact homepage and to be visited via the link [www.uibk.ac.at/KiK](http://www.uibk.ac.at/KiK).

An exhibition catalogue (including a DVD/ CD showing a walk through exhibition stages no.1-3) with the concluding exhibition in 2009/ 2010.

## **Planning and Responsibilities**

**General responsibility:** Cultures in Contact, Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, Innrain 52, A-6020 Innsbruck, and cooperating universities, institutions and organizations: JoinIn/ Zemit, Innsbruck/ Austria; GenderLink, Salzburg/ Austria; Bilgi University, Istanbul/ Turkey(VCD-Department); Ege University, Izmir/ Turkey (English Language and Literature Department); Notre Dame University, Beirut/ Lebanon (VCD-Department).

**Planning, coordination and final editing:** Ass. Prof. Dr. Veronika Bernard, Cultures in Contact, Leopold-Franzens-University Innsbruck, Innrain 52, A-6020 Innsbruck.

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**Creative team (exhibit and exhibition design; in alphabetical order):** Ass. Prof. Dr. Veronika Bernard (Leopold-Franzens-University, Innsbruck/ Austria), Prof. Dr. İhsan Derman (Bilgi University, Istanbul/ Turkey), Ass. Prof. Dr. Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous (Notre Dame University, Beirut/ Lebanon).

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