

G.R.A.M.  
Hohes Haus

## The House

Here we see something coming together that actually does not belong together. When the parliamentarians let off steam in their verbal disputes by means of force, democracy reveals an absurd side. Common sense says that the use of force stands in contradiction to a civilized political culture, which parliaments should seek to uphold. Yet all over the world disputes on different practical issues result in physical confrontations. Pictures of more or less outright scuffles can also be found in parliaments in Asia and Europe, and more recently well-known cases of such incidents have taken place in South Korea, Thailand, Ukraine and Turkey.

Press shots capture these momentary impressions of political agitation – usually displayed by men. What we see are groups of individuals frozen in a certain posture, with parliamentarians being strangled or beaten, shoved, kicked and the like. In such scenes the depictions of heightened passion recall (Baroque) paintings with their religious motifs: light-and-dark scenes, teamed with mannerist poses, pathos-laden arm positions, grimacing or bodies in dynamic contortions.

G.R.A.M., an artists' group from Graz, has singled out ten motifs from scuffles in international parliaments and had extras reenact them in a real-life political location – the municipal assembly hall of the City of Graz. This re-enactment refers to different readings of contemporary pictorial documents, exploring the realism of the medium of photography. The staging of spontaneous acts is both disorienting and unsettling and also raises issues. What are the reasons for aversions among men? Is it a depiction of reality or a performative act?

With the re-enacted series of politicians that have resorted to physical force G.R.A.M. also constructs a thematic link to their project of 1999 *Unschuldige Anarchisten (Innocent Anarchists)*, in which scenes from the slap-stick-style Stan & Olli films were re-enacted.