

DON'T YOU
KNOW
WHO I AM?

ART AFTER
IDENTITY POLITICS

13 . 06 . 14

14 . 09 . 14

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ANTWERP

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION . . .

Hello. Nice to meet you, and thanks for coming. Well... We've been wondering how to introduce something without it being a mere elevator pitch? This is our task here in describing an exhibition that touches on the complicated relations of representation and identity. By way of introduction, we'll have to bite our proverbial tongues a bit and summarise for you. How are you, anyway?

We've made this exhibition, and given it the title *Don't You Know Who I Am? Art After Identity Politics*, to bring together around thirty artists in relation to a question. Is 'identity politics' still relevant or necessary in art? We wanted to see how and why artists today address issues of identification and subjectivity in their work. We've focused specifically on emergent practices, because we think they might help us, and our audience, to understand the here-and-now of art and to speculate on its future.

In the not-so-distant past – for instance at the Whitney Biennial in 1993 or even at Documenta 11 in 2002 – there was something like a broad agreement on the ultimate goal of identity politics in art. The answer was to show 'the public' (in itself a questionably generalising and universalising notion) that any lingering belief in universal aesthetics or universal values is based on lies and (self-) deception, on a monopolisation of perspectives on culture and on history as written by the victors, from a position of power. Despite these good intentions, or perhaps even because of them, identity politics rather quickly ran its course as an innovative approach to the practice and discourse of art. Too often, the message became the medium, in a way. Too often, the desire to get out of the ghetto (of various subaltern conditions to do with race, class, gender, sexuality etc.) was stronger than the resolve to broaden and deepen the aesthetic range of 'identity art'.

We could point the (also proverbial) finger of blame in numerous directions, but perhaps that's not so important here. What matters is that there's little desire, among artists today, to repeat such mistakes. We probably don't need to remind you that there has been an explosive increase in access to information in the last twenty years. Today's emergent artists are clued in, aware and in-the-know to an extent that was unthinkable in 1999 or even in 2004. This can be a mixed blessing – the 'digital natives' are sometimes also referred to as the 'short attention-span generation' – but for our purposes it's mainly a good thing, since an abundance of stimuli appears to have enhanced the acceptance and understanding of complexity.

The 'I word' that is embedded in the exhibition title was also embedded in our approach to this project. What might identity mean today? What purposes does it serve? What does it 'look' like? How does it function? Can it reflect or cause radical change? Many questions, we know. But we've taken the lead from what artists are doing, and it seems obvious to us that there's a new urgency to looking at the work produced today as part of a new identity paradigm, particularly if we also consider the consequences of capitalist globalisation.

It also seems obvious to us that there's a new desire, among artists and their audiences, for more supple and more relativistic approaches to existence and how it selves within the art community, often in defiance of the market logic, and is manifested in concrete practises, such as those included in this exhibition. 'Our' artists might be characterised as dealing with the complexity of lives rather than the anecdote of biographies, with experimentation on many levels rather than with telling a story or delivering a message, with articulating subjectivity rather than submitting to the unspoken

hegemonic claims of the art system, which is already global. Furthermore, these practitioners don't agree that the representation of identities can be a face value. Rather, they question the connection between identity and identification. And this, for us, adds up to a radical reorientation of what was referred to not so long ago as 'identity politics'. Are you still with us?

We wanted the exhibition to reflect these new attitudes. We've invited twenty-seven individual artists and duos, wishing to offer each of them a substantial presence. We're glad to have been able to help produce new works and projects, as well as re-contextualising and revitalising numerous existing ones. We've wanted to treat each artwork itself as a subject or being, allowing a level of self-determination in their display rather than using overarching conceptual or visual principles that homogenise. With this approach to the works, we've wished to facilitate the experience of dialogue, not just between the works but also, crucially, with their viewers. The relationship with the artists has been an active and discursive one, and we're glad to have found them appreciative of our thoughts and ambitions. We thank them all for their participation, insights and energy.

We've aimed to be particularly ambitious in our endeavour, and for this we'd also like to thank the numerous supporters and collaborators for *Don't You Know Who I Am?* Our partnership with AIR Antwerpen has allowed several of the participating artists to be present in the city for a number of months and has given them the valuable time and space to develop major new works. Working together with CAHF (Contemporary Art Heritage Flanders), we have realised an ambitious programme of events, titled *Just Who Do You Think You Are?*, on 14 June 2014. It has enabled many of the participating artists to present significant performance

works, alongside some dynamic invited speakers. We're also grateful for the support of the Permeke Library and the Hendrik Conscience Heritage Library in Antwerp. We've found the collaboration with these organisations particularly fruitful, and we really look forward to deepening our relationships further in the future.

Moreover, *Don't You Know Who I Am?* is presented within the framework of *L'Internationale*, the confederation of European museums and other art institutions of which M HKA is a member. The other partners – using the ubiquitous logic of alphabetisation – are MACBA in Barcelona, Moderna Galerija in Ljubljana, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid, SALT in Istanbul and Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. We are grateful to the Culture Programme of the European Union for supporting the confederation and this exhibition.

We also want to thank the Evens Foundation in Antwerp for supporting our project. Other institutions and organisations have been equally invaluable, particularly for the production of new works. We'd like to thank funders such as the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, the Embassy of Portugal in Brussels, Frame Visual Art Finland in Helsinki, the Lithuanian Cultural Council in Vilnius, and the Mondriaan Foundation in Amsterdam. We'd also like to thank our coproduction partners Galleria ZERO in Milan, the HISK (Hoger Instituut voor Schone Kunsten) in Ghent, Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler in Berlin, Kunsthalle Lissabon in Lisbon and Wilkinson Gallery in London for working with us. Many thanks to everyone; we appreciate it very much.

We'll leave you here to carry on yourselves, if that's OK? See you again, we hope.

Anders Kreuger and Nav Haq, M HKA

OUT OF THE PICTURE:
 IDENTITY POLITICS
 FINALLY TRANSCENDING
 VISIBILITY
 (OR: THE INVISIBLE AND
 THE VISIBLE, PART TWO)

Following its rapid expansion, the art world has become a more complex place than it ever has been. This new 'complexity', we should hope, has its positive traits, and it is this notion – the aesthetics of complexity – that we will return to later. To attempt to summarise, hopefully not too ingenuously, where things stand: there are seemingly many more artists circulating, exponentially more institutions, significantly more cultural metropolises, a massively expanded audience, and a delirious art market economy. At least in the western world, neo-liberalism has gripped the public sphere of the cultural industry, changing how audiences, finances and even creativity are addressed. Furthermore, the West has opened the door to much more of the globe, and has held up a distorted mirror to globalisation, celebrating difference with its own brand of 'internationalism'. And then there are the theorists, offering much curious speculation as to where the broad thrust of art and culture is heading, much somewhat fetishistically latched onto the perceived legacy of modernism – think of altermodernism, metamodernism, etc. This overall 'mash-up' is in itself rather interesting, as heady moments can take you somewhere unexpected. But in the midst of things, a rather surprising question may have surfaced – is it worth re-evaluating the painfully unfashionable, seemingly anachronistic idea of 'identity' in art?

The discourse of 'identity politics' in art for a long time looked like it really wasn't worth resuscitating, and for very good reasons too. With few exceptions, it was something that had rather stifled aesthetic limitations, with its clichéd images of the self or the body holding forth a marginalised status – a kind of figurative portraiture of one's 'otherness' if you like. Ultimately though practitioners of identity politics art also became aware that this practice was actually a form of systemic ghettoisation within the parameters of the art world. So the transition at the time was only from marginalisation

(on the outside) to ghettoisation (on the inside). 'Identity politics' art, arguably, may even have caused more problems than it set out to resolve. It became embedded in the political correctness of institutional practices, as well as even being the basis for whole new multiculturalist institutions that followed – think InIVA in London, for example. The 'identity' paradigm also became a kind of strategy device for some individuals to find success in their careers – using the kind of 'self-othering' found in the work of many well-known but unmentionable artists. Thus there is a certain amount of baggage that comes with 'identity politics', and not all of it is helpful. At least there is one realisation that may be helpful – the situation for the context of internationalism in art today mirrors that of 1970s and '80s institutional multiculturalism in the Anglo-Saxon world.

Whilst the western world of art has expanded the geographical horizons of its map, it has legitimised new, previously marginalised entrants in a similar way to how it eventually legitimised those that were socially marginalised in the 1970s and '80s. Previously, the constituencies of identity were vis-à-vis race, gender and sexuality most visible, which could here be replaced with the regionalism – nationality, race and ethnicity rolled into one – of those practicing in the non-western context. Whether artists are aware of this mirroring, or even care, is unclear, but the broad apparatus is largely the same. Artists are allowed access to the art system, once again on the condition that they have to act, or be framed, as socio-cultural representatives of the place/people they "are from". In this situation, the role of biography is used to essentialise individuals, meaning artists are expected to portray, artistically, their own social and political culture. This condition of celebrating difference is within the universalist understanding of cultures in art using the traditional imperialistic modern western perspective for constructing a shared sense of humanity and 'dignity' in all its vagueness – something

prominent in exhibitions in art institutions as well as other exhibition platforms such as biennials. The fact is that the conditions for accommodating 'others' – their identities, and the accepted strategies for the constructs of their identification – has pre-defined parameters.

The discourse about representation of the 'othered' self is massively synthesised in the case study of Renzo Martens' much-discussed film *Episode III: Enjoy Poverty* (2008). As a project, it holds up a mirror, reflecting the art world's blunt attitude towards marginalisation, its associated politics of visibility and economies of reproduction. It focuses on the lucrative business of poverty journalism that caters for a western media that consumes images of people that have been exploited once through heavily unbalanced socio-economic conditions, and who can therefore be exploited again through pictures. In the film, Martens attempts to train people from an under-privileged community in the Congo to benefit themselves by taking images of their own status as impoverished (yet complicit) people. They portray themselves as what Giorgio Agamben would refer to as "bare life" – mere biological subjects with little in the way of choices or rights. The project fails of course – they simply do not have access to the same channels of distribution for catering to the demand. In their attempt at visibility through representations as marginalised selves, portrayed as a kind of universal basic human subject, the tiers of legitimisation for their work to be able to succeed remain invisible. It is also worth exacting here that the connection between figuration of the human subject and a perceived universality is as much an issue in crisis journalism as it is in global contemporary art.

Numerous artists today produce art in a way that is quite conscious and complicit with how the art system accommodates the politics of identity, which though successful, also highlight the problems. We might think of the work of the collective Slavs and Tatars, who present an ethnic marketing of Eurasian regionalism for a western audience through the use of ethno-centric motifs, identifiers and ironic wordplay. Or the post-colonialist self-othering in the work of Danh Vo that plays heavily off the artist's personal and family biography as displaced migrants to Denmark from Vietnam. (It inadvertently informs us that some parts of Europe are only just having their first multiculturalist moment in the art context.) Then there is the recycling of the US civil rights era themes in the work of artists like Theaster Gates, who appropriate the same perspective of black minority artists from the previous generation, perhaps at least partially because they see it as being a recipe for their own success as artists. The global acclaim of artists such as these has been rapid, combining classic 'self-othering', a *savoir-faire* of the art world, and much charisma. Others thankfully work more progressively.

So we return to the proposition of what may well have emerged out of the 'mash up' that the art world finds itself in. It is indeed evident that artists are reconsidering the politics of identity once more. Identity returns as an important subject precisely as a way to make sense of our lives under the conditions of this mash-up. It argues for the reasonable – for plurality, for visions beyond the mimetic criticality and legitimation of the art world, and for the possibility of new aesthetic directions. Some, as I already mention above, are operating in the old paradigm of the 1980s, but some are raising legitimate prospects of a wholesale shift for the consideration of identity and subjectivity in the artistic realm, working in a way that is more complex than the system has been able, or willing, to accommodate. Simple observation

can tell us that figurative representations of the self and its false universality have been rejected, and they have been replaced by the potentials offered by the likes of abstraction, performativity and fiction amongst many other approaches. And in doing so, they bring significant experimentation towards dealing with identity without the essentialist necessity of identification.

Identity becomes something multi-faceted and flowing in the expansive practices of an artist such as Haegue Yang. The compound nature of her works fuses numerous notions of identity together, forming layers and dimensions that co-exist. It appears for example through the works acting as a form of portraiture, often of figures working for inclusivity, including from feminist histories such as Petra Kelly or Marguerite Duras. This is in turn synthesised with other ideas – of social class, migration and co-habitation, coming mainly through the symbolic use of objects. Her renowned use of venetian blinds in installations, for example, as well as their function of obscuring your vision, symbolising what the artist has referred to as "communities of absence" – communities hidden from mainstream culture. All of this, poetic and elemental, functions on a formal level of abstraction in Yang's work. The role of the viewer is also operative in works by Iman Issa, whose installations possess the key characteristic of a kind of democratic offer. Whether it is her *Material* (2009–2012) series, or her installation *Thirty-three Stories about Reasonable Characters in Familiar Places* (2011), she provides sets of abstract propositions and fragments that avoid the pitfalls of identification, instilling a deliberate anonymity to the representation of specific places, people, events and emotions, sometimes simultaneously, with which you can associate and narrativise. These artists themselves work with an implicit sense of self, as well as a critical distance from the politics of visibility. They are just two influential examples amongst numerous that exemplify where things are going.

It is difficult and probably even inappropriate to describe this as an actual movement for dealing in appropriate and progressive terms with identity politics per se, but still, it is a transition that is in its own way redefining the parameters of art. Maybe it could be described as being a generation, as long as this generationality is defined in terms of practice rather than biography. The relations of these artists to their works is not one of the figurative economy of reproduction, but something more urgent and experimental, mirroring more relational or intersectional understanding of identities formed through the interactions between biological, social and cultural spheres. Each of the artists working with this mindset adopts a more relativistic attitude, foregrounding the self-determination of their practice, and an attitude towards identity and identification that defies traditional socially-coerced beliefs that they possess a stable, identifiable core. Rather than being stuck between the old dichotomy of the *invisibility* of the legitimating bourgeois art world and the strategy for attaining *visibility* for the traditionally marginalised subject, they have created the conditions for allowing themselves the freedom of floating between both, producing a new kind of cognitive space. There is, as always, the risk that it may only be the moments before something that could potentially cause broad change is recuperated by the art system, inevitable even, but then again it is hard to catch something without a fixed identity, especially when it is steps ahead.

Nav Haq

This text is a follow-up to the text "The Invisible and the Visible: Identity and the Economy of Reproduction in Art", also by Nav Haq, published in the exhibition catalogue *Kerry James Marshall - Painting and Other Stuff*. Antwerp: M HKA and Ludion, 2013

THE AFTER OF THE TITLE

An honest way to characterise the artists I have collaborated with for this exhibition and written about in this catalogue would be to say that they represent thirteen different views on a movement that cannot be seen or shown as such. They might also be described as thirteen 'multiverses' growing from an invisible spine.¹ It goes without saying that they are individuals with their own interests and concerns and agendas, yet they all contribute meaningfully to a greater whole, together with the fourteen artists invited by my colleague Nav Haq.

How can I make sense of such unity-in-diversity? I will try, but let me begin by pointing out that this is not a thematic exhibition. One important motivation for making it happen was the desire to open our mid-sized Western European contemporary art museum to a new generation of artists from all over the world. Convinced that this requires a generously sized group manifestation, we accepted the condition of "speaking in many voices" as a chance to achieve polyphony rather than the risk of sliding into dissonance. Both of us then set out to find the right participants.

We gave our joint venture the half-serious title *Don't You Know Who I Am?* and the more earnest subtitle *Art After Identity Politics*, thinking that the first reference (to subjectivity, arguably always a timely notion) would productively offset the second one (to identity, which we felt was a bit tainted by its own history, but nevertheless pertinent). These terms should be understood, above all, as points of departure. The exhibition itself should be able to move on from both subjectivity and identity.

I have argued before that the various dilemmas of identity (and of identification, self-identification or

other variations on this theme) become interesting only if they can be turned into an unanswerable question. "How do we feel about being who we think we are?"² Any attempt to formulate the question as a statement of fact or intention risks stumbling on the underlying pretence: that we know what we are and what we wish to become.

For me the keyword of our exhibition title is *after*. The seemingly innocuous preposition stands for movement and development. It is capable of pointing both forward (as in "what happens after something has exhausted itself") and backward (in phrases such as "a reproduction after Fragonard"). We like to think that all exhibitions in our museum are somehow about the future, but this one is special. The twenty-nine participating artists can, I believe, give us a glimpse of what is likely to happen after the here-and-now.

'My' thirteen artists in the exhibition describe different movements: from redeploying the language of identity politics for self-reflective analysis (Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Donna Kukama, Wu Tsang) to re-embodying it as reflective visuality (Patrizio Di Massimo, Maria Taniguchi); from constructing pictorial and discursive spaces that support criticality (Pedro Barateiro, Maria Safronova) to producing image-objects that appear to undermine meaning and interpretation (Nadezhda Grishina, Eloise Hawser, Katja Novitskova); from actions best labelled as political provocations (Oleg Ustinov) to processes best understood in social or even spiritual terms (Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen, Augustas Serapinas).

These characterisations are neither exhaustive nor very precise; other conceptual cuts could be made through this 'material' or 'body'. I could speak of the artists'

strong commitment to performance (Abu Hamdan, Barateiro, Di Massimo, Grishina, Kukama, Laakkonen, Ustinov, Wu Tsang) that sometimes overlaps with an equally strong co-mmitment to painting (Di Massimo, Safronova, Taniguchi, Ustinov). I could speak of their ambiguous attachment to the object or thing (Barateiro, Di Massimo, Grishina, Hawser, Laakkonen, Novitskova, Safronova, Taniguchi) in relation to their equally ambiguous embrace of language (Abu Hamdan, Barateiro, Kukama, Laakkonen, Novitskova, Safronova, Ustinov), which again sometimes are overlapping phenomena. Or I could speak of how their practices focus on concrete physical, mental or political space (Abu Hamdan, Grishina, Kukama, Laakkonen, Safronova, Serapinas, Ustinov) or on subjective, self-reflective time (Barateiro, Di Massimo, Laakkonen again, Taniguchi).

Anders Kreuger

Indeed, I could apply any number of such rather blunt abstractions to what is shown in our exhibition. I could make targeted efforts to claim a theoretically elaborated position. But I choose to leave that hanging. Instead I have tried to articulate the interests and concerns and agendas of the thirteen artists in a series of autonomous texts. They are dispersed throughout this catalogue but can also be read together as a multifocal statement on what the exhibition and its title are about.

1. The word 'multiverse' expresses the speculative idea that there might have occurred an infinite series of foundational and expansive cosmic events ('Big Bangs'), each giving rise to its own world. See, for instance, Clive Cookson, "Andrei Linde on the Big Bang and the biggest discovery of all time", article in *Financial Times*, 11 April 2014. <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/9a306276-bf03-11e3-8683-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2zPZfSv7P> (last accessed on 1 May 2014).
2. Anders Kreuger, *Savigarba/Self-Esteem: Lithuanian Art 01*, catalogue for exhibition at the Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius, 2001. Vilnius: CAC Vilnius, 2002, p.9: "But how can you justify yet another exhibition about 'identity', not to mention the even more problematic notion of 'national identity'? You can't, really. Self-Esteem was therefore conceived as an inquiry into how people in Lithuania feel about themselves rather than as a statement on who they think they are."

A N T H E A

BORN IN LONDON IN 1978; LIVES IN LONDON

H A M I L T O N

Often playfully appropriating images of famous people and popular culture from across recent decades, Anthea Hamilton's sculptural works and installations bring together a variety of props and characters in situations that resemble theatre-like settings. The installations propose a kind of alternative reality where gender roles, sexuality, domestic life and the traditions of different cultures become notions that oscillate between cliché and fluidity. Working with the male and female subject alike – from Jane Birkin to John Travolta, via food, advertisements, furniture and clothes – along with references to the artist's own body, the works become like personalities that co-exist, forming curious hybrid relationships, exuding sexiness and wit.

CUT-OUTS

2007–ongoing

Referencing the spaces used for creating the special effects of film and media imagery, two sculptural works are presented within the chroma key blue *Cut-Outs* room. Often focusing on female legs, which are based on the artist's own, these fragmented bodies are them-

selves cut-out, occupying these spaces in various states of activity, perhaps dancing, parading or occasionally sitting, all with correct postures. Reflective of everyday experience under the conditions of patriarchy, the installation is also typical of Hamilton's way of creating experiential settings, where viewers occupy space with the anthropomorphic presence of the works.

MANBLIND #5

2011

LEG CHAIRS

2009–ongoing

Each work from Hamilton's *Manblind* series appropriates a different image of a rather retro-looking male pin-up and turns it into a vertical blind, suspended in space. Commenting on the dominant perspectives in society, we can look through the blind, with our vision partially obscured by the male filter. Alternately, we can also just enjoy their classic good looks.

In an interplay with the *Manblinds* are Hamilton's *Leg Chair* series of furniture sculptures, which are also based on the artist's own legs. Each of them has the same pose, with their Plexiglas legs akimbo, but they are also unique, possessing their own themes and embellishments. Some are themed on famous individuals, some on common phrases, and some on lifestyle cultures and pastimes including 'exotic' foods or smoking. Sexy and funny, the *Leg Chairs* toy with our experience of domestic furniture.

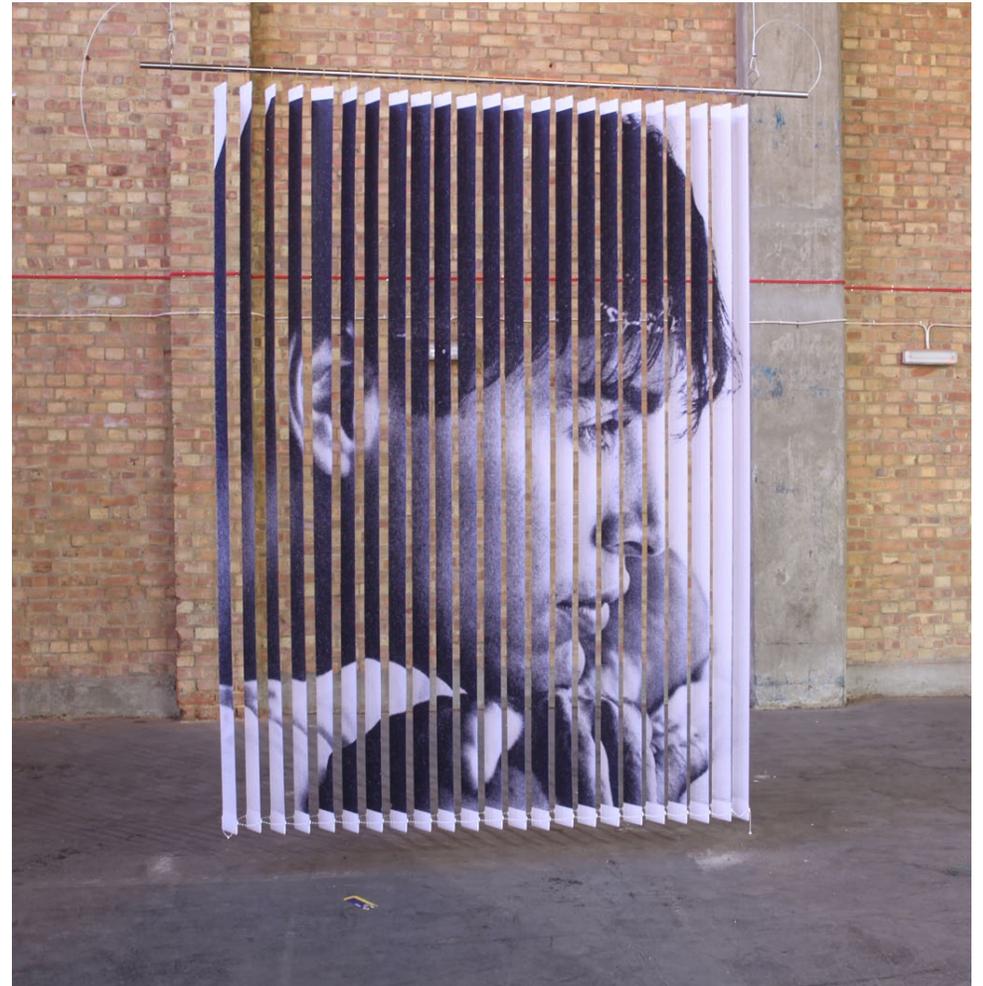
CUT-OUTS
2007–ongoing (installation view)
Photo: Andy Keate



LEG CHAIR (JANE BIRKIN)
2009
Photo: Doug Atfield



MAN BLIND #5
2011
Photo: Doug Atfield



AUGUSTAS

BORN IN VILNIUS IN 1990; LIVES IN VILNIUS

The youngest participant in this exhibition is actively interested in the societally immersive and non-material practice of previous generations of artists, most recently the one that emerged around the time of his own birth. The early 1990s saw the rise of the 'relational' approach to practicing art with, for and through other people. This could also be a good definition for 'curating', another term dating from the same period.

Augustas Serapinas' experiments with social interaction – he has acted, for instance, as a guard in an open-air market in Warsaw (*Guard*, 2013) and helped produce a theatrical performance in an old people's home for former Siberian exiles in Vilnius (*A Play about a Prince and a Princess*, 2014) – start from an openness to the encounter, which, as philosopher Alain Badiou points out, differs from the experience because it is always based on improbability! The encounter (as a possibility, an act or, if we like, a manifestation of free will) is also fundamentally opposed to the notion of identity (which is essentially an instrument for regulating sameness) and certainly to any further instrumentalisation of identity as identity politics.

Badiou says: "[...] the encounter is reducible neither to rationality, nor experience, but represents an element of contingency, and philosophy has no love for contingency. We must, therefore, accept that some things occur within existence that are neither calculable nor experienced."²

Yet Serapinas is not exclusively concerned with the non-material, nor is his roaming through society predicated on dreams of being a disembodied free agent in search

of 'daily life' (another 1990s notion that hasn't aged very well). Instead, he has busied himself with the construction of 'secret spaces' or pockets of subjectivity carved out of the rational infrastructure that society tries to build for itself: a passage through a building that is supposed to remain off-limits to the local children (*Playground*, 2012), a site for meditative loneliness and enlightenment inside a drain pipe under a highway along a river in the Old Town of Vilnius (*By the Illuminator*, 2013), a hidden and inaccessible coffee-break room in the Vilnius National Art Gallery (*Secret Space in the National Gallery*, 2014).

GEORGES
2014

Serapinas has been on a residency at AIR Antwerpen, during which he collaborated closely with Georges Uittenhout, M HKA's chief technician, to identify hidden or forgotten spaces in the museum. The result is new work titled *Georges*. Serapinas cut a hole in one of the walls in the exhibition halls on the ground floor, allowing the public to enter a narrow, long and very tall shaft. This is an otherwise unused space between two walls that allows the entire height of the building to be experienced in one gasp.

In preparation for this time-consuming physical action, which adds no objects to the exhibition that were not already in the building (if we don't count some small alterations to the space made for reasons of health and

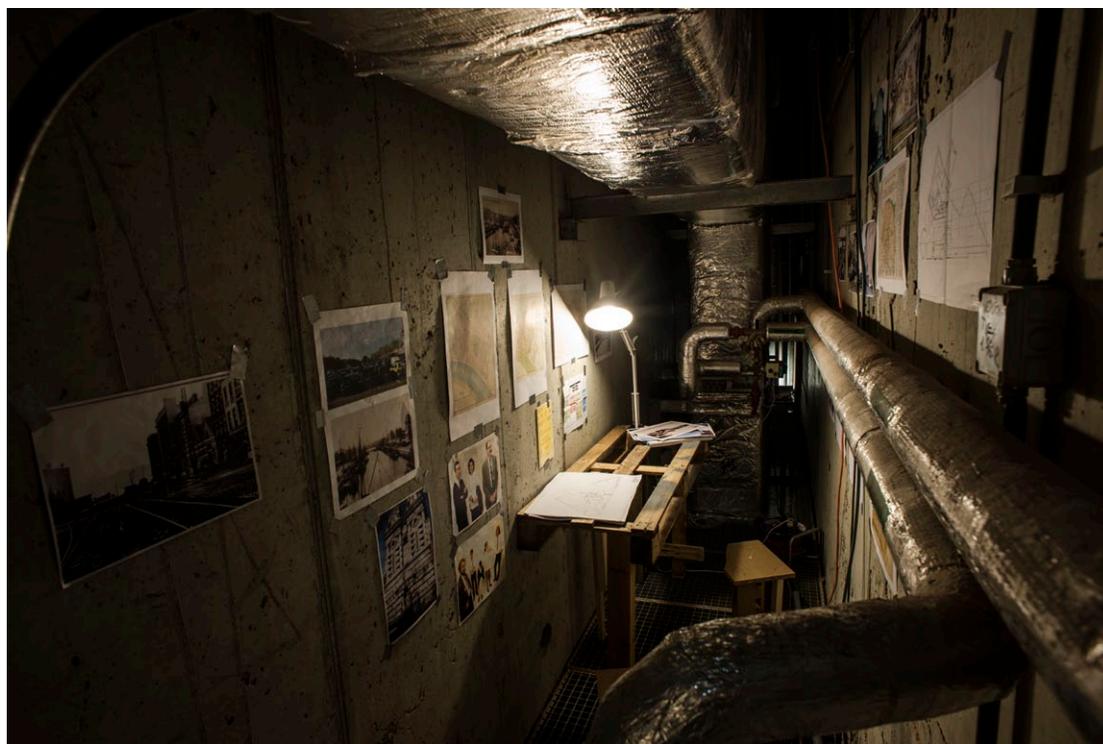
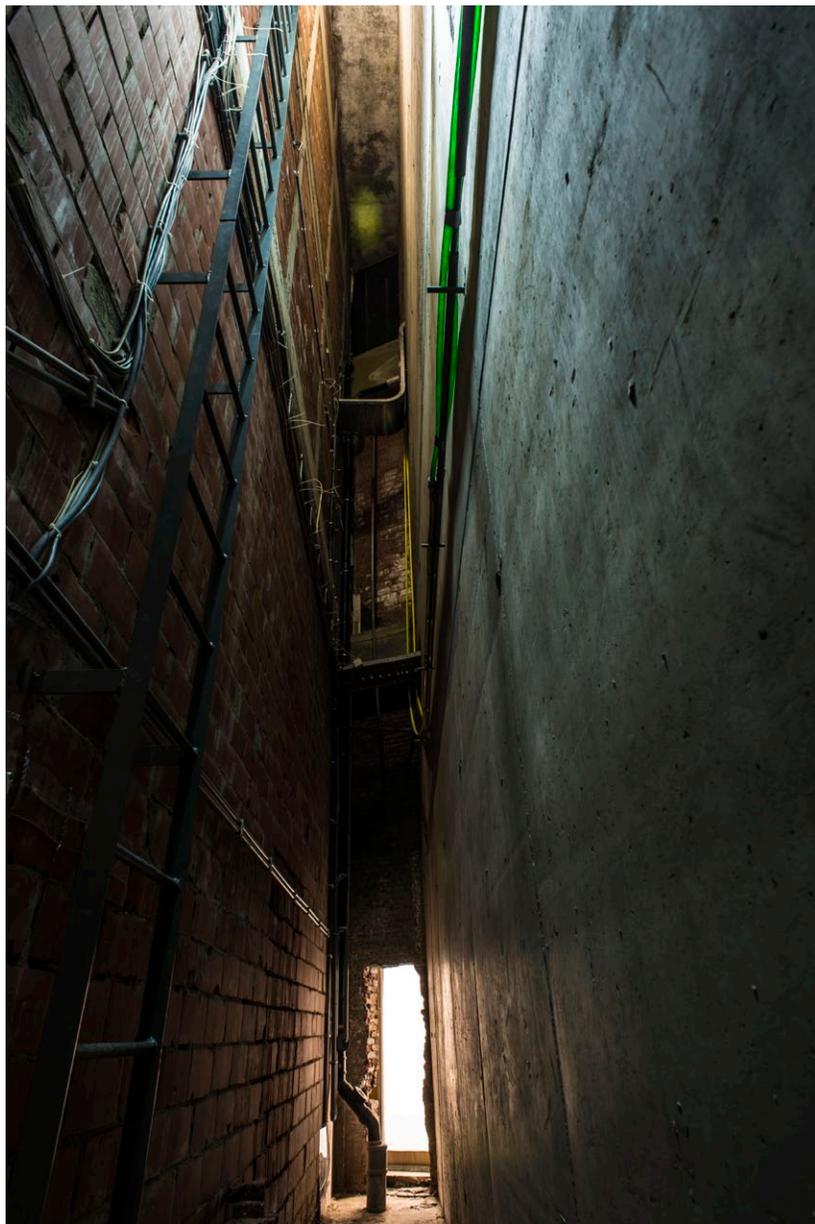
SERAPINAS

safety) and puts the museum on display as a place with its own secrets, Serapinas studied the history of the site and its immediate surroundings. The Antwerp South area was redeveloped in the 1870s and '80s and was a transport hub with docks and a large railway station until the mid-1960s. Part of the visual research material (made available by the Heritage Library Hendrik Conscience) can be seen on these pages. The images will also be displayed in an area inaccessible to the public, some seven–eight metres above the ground floor, and activated in a series of 'appearances' that Serapinas will stage in his recovered space throughout the summer.

AK

1. Interview with Alain Badiou by Clement Petitjean on the Verso Books website, published on 14 April 2014. <http://www.verso-books.com/blogs/1557-alain-badiou-people-cling-onto-identities-it-is-a-world-opposed-to-the-encounter> (last accessed on 19 April 2014).
2. Ibid.

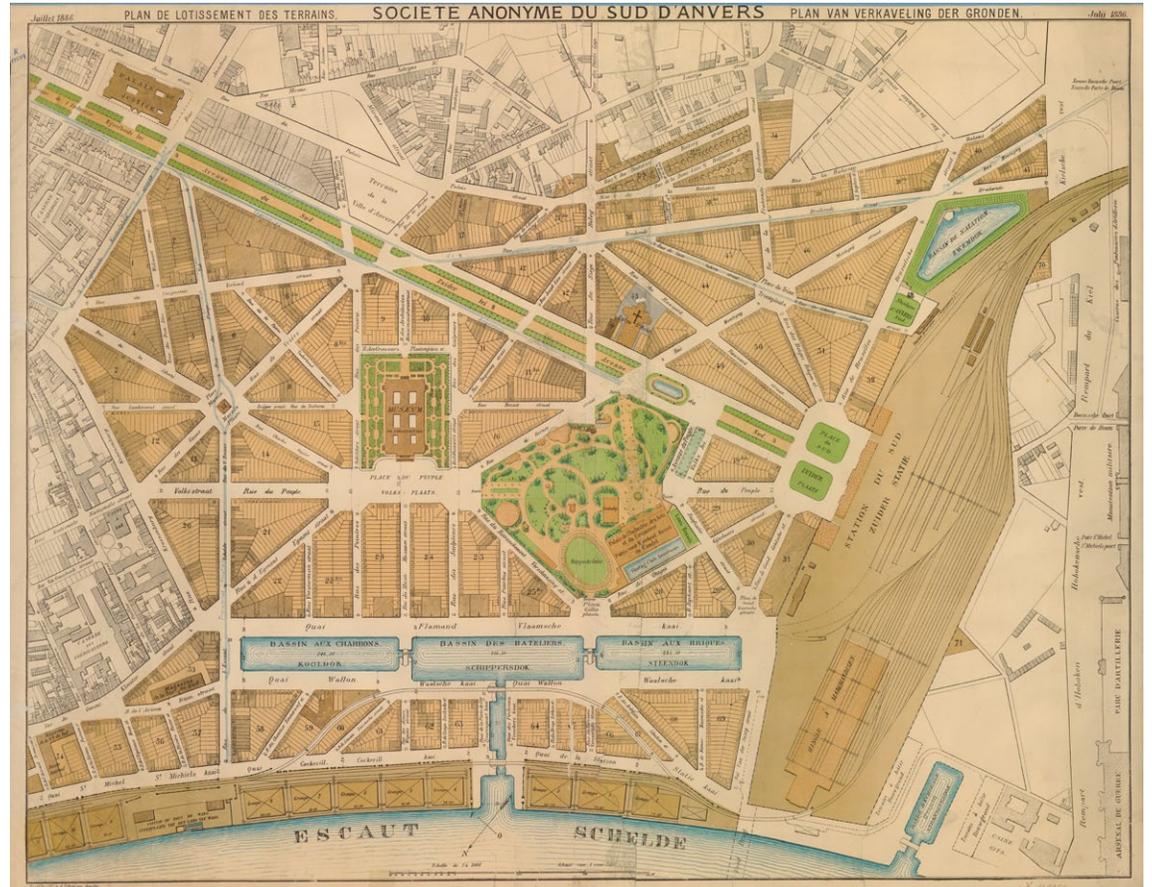
GEORGES
2014
Photos: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



GEORGES
2014
Plan for the Antwerp South Area, 1870 (not realised)
Image courtesy: Heritage Library
Hendrik Conscience, Antwerp



GEORGES
2014
Map of the Antwerp South Area, 1886
Image courtesy: Heritage Library
Hendrik Conscience, Antwerp



D O N N A

BORN IN MAFIKENG, SOUTH AFRICA, IN 1981; LIVES IN JOHANNESBURG

In one of his undated notes, Marcel Duchamp writes: "The *possible* is only a physical 'caustic' [vitriol type] that burns up all aesthetics and callistics."¹ Arguably, this ambiguous approach to the visible (and other forms of sensorial enjoyment) has defined and represented 'contemporary art' for a century. Yet this only means that artists are continually challenging Duchamp's anti-retinal stance. He himself, of course, repeatedly contradicted it in practice.

Joining this tradition of productive self-contradiction, where the aesthetic never quite acknowledges the primacy of the ethical, Donna Kukama uses performance – actions that cannot be conceived and choreographed without intimate knowledge of the art system – to articulate the movements, tensions and emotions of contemporary society. To diagnose and perhaps even heal society, we might say, if that weren't such a stereotypical statement about South Africa. Kukama's own country is her main arena, although she also works elsewhere in the African continent and in Europe. She performs in 'real' spaces with 'real' people in them, but she introduces a significant specification: "Half of the time it's real spaces and real people, and the other half it's kind of imagined somewhere in the past or future."²

THE SWING (AFTER AFTER FRAGONARD)
2009

At its most efficient, Kukama's art creates signs of a powerful iconic nature and an equally potent openness to socio-political interpretation. She is trying to combine solidarity with non-alignment. Her works become meaningful not only as commentary on people's expectations of and frustrations with social reality, but also as a response to the framework she has chosen to work in: art history in its 'universal' western-dominated form. The performance *The Swing (After After Fragonard)* is a case in point. Dressed in white and perched on a swing suspended from a highway flyover, Kukama swung leisurely back and forth, dropping ten-rand notes onto the street below, where people quickly scrambled for them. Perhaps it was poetic justice that the swing broke and she fell to the same inferior level, painfully breaking her leg.

NOT YET (AND NOBODY KNOWS WHY NOT)
2008

This is another work that may be termed 'classic', because it sets a standard for creating live images pregnant with agency that can be fed back into the environment where it takes place, as embodied knowledge of the political situation that it addresses. Kukama is standing in an open field in Nairobi as participants are leaving

K U K A M A

a meeting celebrating Kenya's Mau Mau uprising against its British colonisers in 1952–1960. At first it appears that she is putting on lipstick, which may or may not be signalling respect for the elderly passers-by. But gradually, as she paints outside the accepted area, her whole face becomes blood red, and the retiring freedom fighters may read this as allegory, or even illustration, shedding light on their mostly unfulfilled political expectations.

AK

1. Hand-written note, probably 1913, in the collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris: [...] *Le possible est seulement un « mordant » physique [genre vitriol] brûlant toute esthétique ou callistique.*
2. Interview with Donna Kukama by Matthew Krouse in *Mail & Guardian*, Johannesburg, published on 16 October 2013. <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-10-16-chatting-to-standard-banks-young-artist-winner-donna-kukama> (last accessed on 19 April 2014).

NOT YET (AND NOBODY KNOWS WHY NOT)
Public intervention in Uhuru Park, Nairobi, 2008
Production photos: Justus Kyalo



THE SWING (AFTER AFTER FRAGONARD)
Performance in Johannesburg, 2009
Production photo: Matthew Burbidge



E L O I S E

BORN IN LONDON IN 1985: LIVES IN LONDON

Eloise Hawser's work might be characterised as 'sculpture'. She is concerned with objects that have at least three dimensions and, in particular, with the various protocols and processes that must be mastered to make such objects appear out of the thin air of imagination. She is probably more concerned with infiltrating the industrial estates on the outskirts of big cities, and appropriating the knowledge concentrated there, than with taking a stance in the discussion about physical and social space, representation and theatricality that have defined sculpture as a field for at least half a century now.

Another way to describe Hawser's work would be to call it a visual representation of how the categories of form and function may be collapsed and merged. She often uses industrial methods, which address specific needs with maximum efficiency, to produce forms that are almost obsessively non-functional. Of course they always have some kind of function – such as convincing us that a roller blind needs to have a painstakingly engineered paunch (*Haus der Braut*, 2012) or letting fragile celluloid cylinders convey the abstract notion of a conveyor belt (*Untitled*, 2013) – but they rarely make much common sense. Is there, in fact, something quintessentially 'English' about Hawser's quiet but persistent subversion of rationalism and pragmatism?

SAMPLE AND HOLD
2013

INTERVOLAMETER
2013

Her works in this exhibition also prompt another question. Do these manufactured objects possess a subjectivity of their own? It is almost as if the thinking she applies to them has made them capable of expressing their own thoughts. The installation configured around the film *Sample and Hold* is perhaps her most coherent statement on the self-reflection that some inanimate objects appear capable of. The title is borrowed from the name of the East London company where Hawser's father was body-scanned, which is the action we see performed in the film. The captured data was used to manufacture a clear acrylic optical lens that repeats the contour of his belly. It is rather dysfunctional as a device for focused viewing, but it does become a synecdoche ("a part standing for the hole") of the father figure. The installation is completed with the video *Intervolameter*, where the viewer finds herself persecuted by paparazzi. It is shown behind a custom-made horsehair screen.

H A W S E R

VELOPEX
2014

100 KEV
2014

In a new installation Hawser allows seemingly arcane objects and images to speak of visibility, a notion often routinely associated with identity and identification. Shrink-wrapped white plastic canisters with the logo of a maker of X-ray developer fluid are stacked on the floor of the circular space (*Velopex*). On the curved wall there is an almost life-size print of a large truck scanned for its contents: more stacked bottles, a pile of car tyres, a suspended bicycle, a standing figure that looks like Venus from Milo. The scan was kindly provided by a company that wishes to remain unnamed, whose representatives Hawser recently met during the Counter Terror Expo at Olympia in London.¹ She has given this new work the title *100 keV* in reference to the 'hard' X-rays necessary for industrial scanning, for instance at border crossings where trucks are checked for the commercial content (and also for possible stowaways, who might be illegal immigrants).

AK

SAMPLE AND HOLD
2013
Photo: Sylvain Deleu



INTERVOLAMETER
2013
Photo: Sylvain Deleu



100 KEV, VELOPEX
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clincx, M HKA



ERMIAS

BORN IN ADDIS ABABA IN 1974; LIVES IN BRUSSELS

KIFLEYESUS

At the core of Ermias Kifleyesus' practice are the ideas of trace and transience, people and places. For a number of years, the artist has been working on an ongoing project located in the international telephone cabins found in most cities, where people make overseas calls to family and friends. Often frequented by migrants, they are sites for connecting to other places around the globe, reflecting how societies have transformed more rapidly by the flow of people than at any other point in history. Kifleyesus installs folded posters and sheets of paper on the walls and tables within these cabins, which over time become covered in the interactive notations, markings, scribbles and drawings by individuals using them while making calls. The artist visits the cabins on a weekly basis to collect the sheets, which when unfolded are covered in these dynamic traces and markings.

ENDLESS CITIES 2009–ongoing

This series of works is the core of Kifleyesus' socially-engaged practice, produced in international telephone cabins around Brussels, Antwerp and Ghent. Many are produced using folded paper posters and advertisements that portray some of the world's most renowned and photogenic celebrities of western culture. Yet, following their exposure to the daily flow of visitors to the cabin, their images become slowly obliterated, often to the point of unrecognisability. Images of idealised beauty are erased by the build-up from the combined abstract mark-making of many.

THERE IS NO ZEBRA CROSSING IN BERLIN 2014

This mural has been produced in situ at M HKA, covering an entire wall using a technique the artist has developed for transferring images onto different surfaces. Some of the artist's many works produced in phone cabins are transferred to fabric, which are then transferred directly onto architecture, gradually building up a highly-detailed 'all-over' composition. This technique of transferral can be seen as emblematic, with visual forms migrating across terrains.

I CALL AND CALL, NOBODY RESPONDS

2009

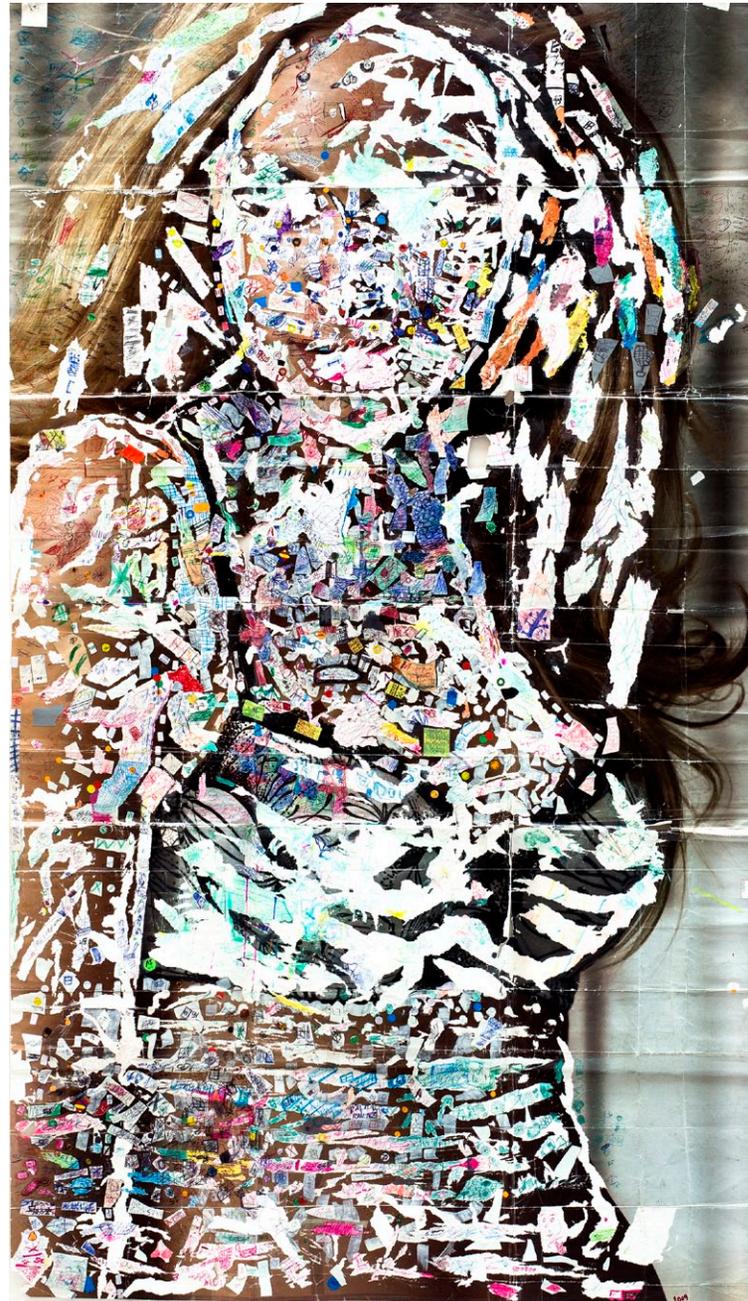
Photo: Ermias Kifleyesus



I AM BECAUSE WE ARE; WE ARE BECAUSE I AM

2009

Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



THERE IS NO ZEBRA CROSSING IN BERLIN
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



G U A N

BORN IN CHONGQING, CHINA, IN 1983; LIVES IN BEIJING

X I A O

The question of the individual is central to Guan Xiao's art, particularly the challenges of how one should not only navigate but harness the logic of time, the speed and influx of technology, the changing understanding of materiality, and the burden of history. The complex and vivid aesthetic of her works in various media, including sculpture and video, could be considered as deliberations on these conditions, where instant knowledge about the world can provide a myriad of inspirations and influences. Looking to represent the artist's own liminal space as being locally rooted and globally connected, Guan's highly experimental work functions as an abstraction, formed by synthesising numerous references from across time and geographies.

COGNITIVE SHAPE
2013

The video work *Cognitive Shape* is a meditation on the production of knowledge under the conditions of rapidly developing science and technology, and an overabundance of information. Guan has collaged together numerous short found video clips, all covering the broad spectrum of her interests, including from YouTube, television and DVDs, along with more narrated video sequences the artist has produced herself. She is also present in the video, performing as herself, describing, in somewhat abstract terms, how she has developed her own world-view through filtering the over-exposure to images and information, and then articulating it as artworks. Accompanied by an ambient soundtrack, also produced by the artist, it displays a calm maturity towards the rapidly changing conditions of life and work.

THE DOCUMENTARY: GEOCENTRIC PUNCTURE
2012

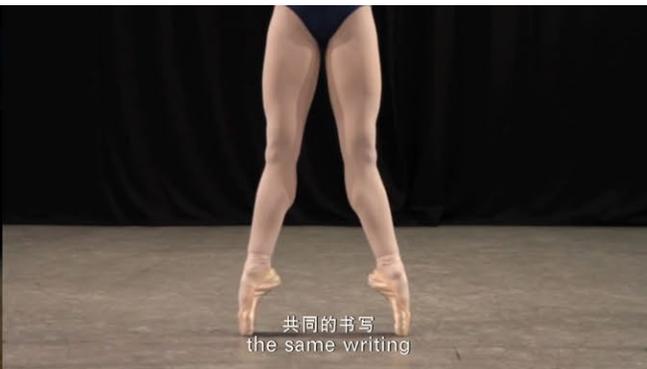
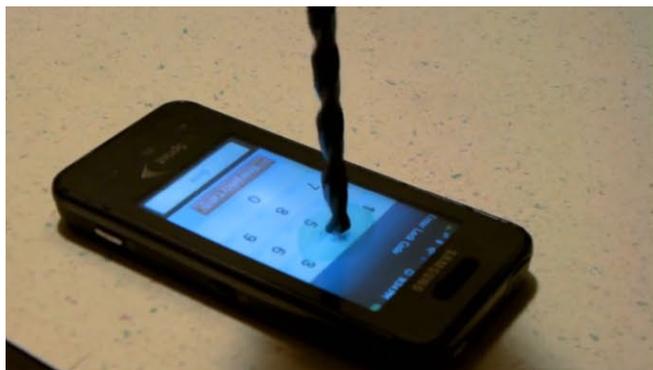
Merging multiple visual languages to form something graphically vibrant, the sculpture triptych *The Documentary: Geocentric Puncture* reflects broad changes in how our perception of physical materials and their 'materiality' has changed to something more simulated. The work combines sets of artefacts or totems, all displayed in front of large free-standing screens, each possessing a kind of snakeskin camouflage. The deliberate use of overly-vivid camouflage occurs regularly in Guan's works, drawing us closer to readings of surface. These artefacts, some notionally representing renowned historical artefacts – such as an Easter Island Moai statue or an Ancient Egyptian Ouroboros snake biting its own tail – are all positioned alongside camera tripods, signifying firstly our knowledge of them via secondary sources, as well as the boundless idiosyncratic "museums" we can create ourselves from the various means at our disposal.

THE DOCUMENTARY: GEOMETRIC PUNCTURE

2012

Photo: Guan Xiao





H A E G U E

BORN IN SEOUL IN 1971; LIVES IN BERLIN AND SEOUL

Y A N G

One of the most prolific and influential artists of her generation, Haegue Yang exemplifies the paradigm shift that has taken place in terms of the intelligence artists are using to redefine questions of identity. Using art as a form of poetic activism, Yang entwines numerous understandings of the notion of identity, from feminist discourses to ideas of migration, social class and displacement. This 'intersectionality' describing the relations between experiences, power structures and society, operates in her multi-faceted practice on a formal level of abstraction. Combining numerous items traditionally found within domestic spaces – such as furniture, lights, stands and blinds – different materials, natural and artificial, are encouraged to co-exist. Often the works even adopt some anthropomorphic characteristics, allowing the viewer to take on an implied role in forming subjective relations to works, as well as to each other, via the experiential settings she creates.

VIP'S UNION
2001–2014

VIP's Union is one of Yang's formative works. Its premise lies in bringing together chairs and tables borrowed from numerous people who are considered 'important' within their own professional fields as well as being connected to the exhibition's city, in this case, Antwerp. These items, which have travelled from the various domestic or work spaces of their respective owners, form a temporary community in the gallery space, portraying the different stylistic expressions and social conditions of these individuals' lives, activities and their aspirations. Here, Yang creates a space of collectives and engagements where the traditional distinction between functional design and the art object become obsolete, performed through the generosity of the lenders in agreeing to share and offer their items.

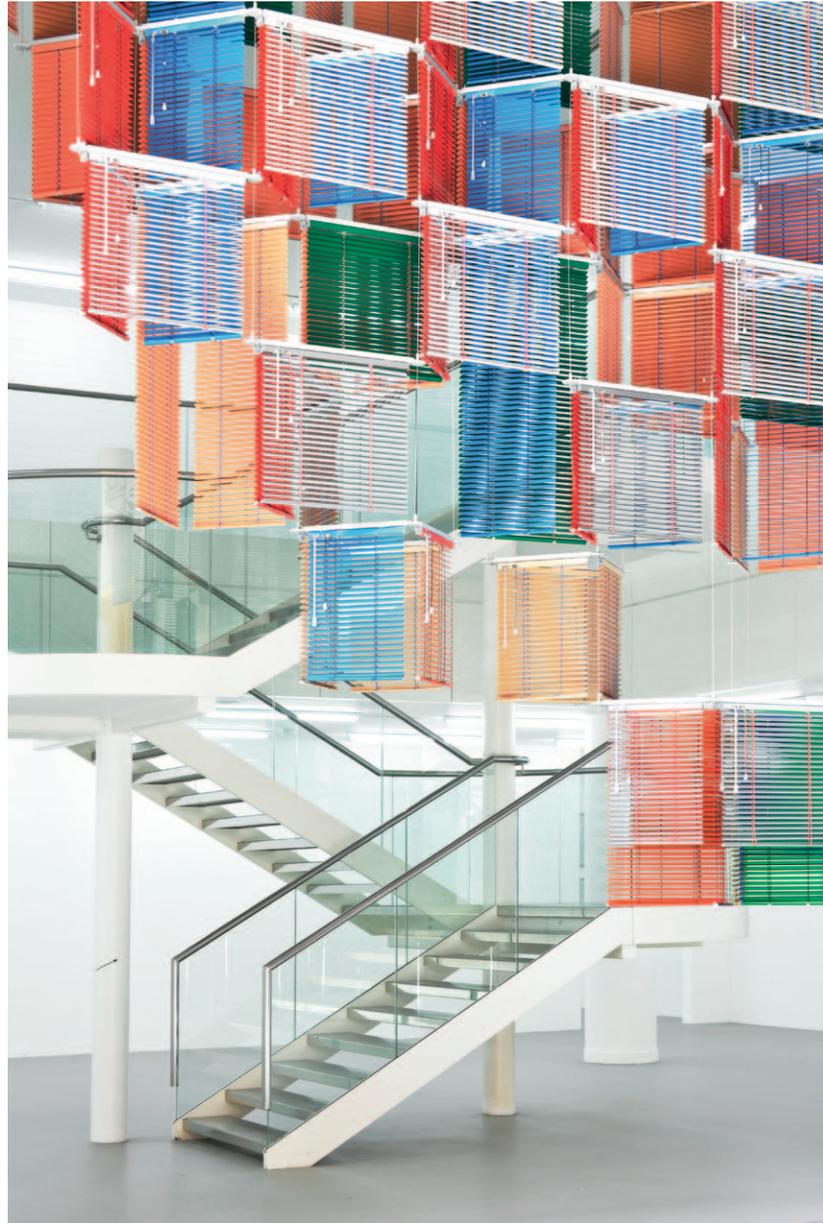
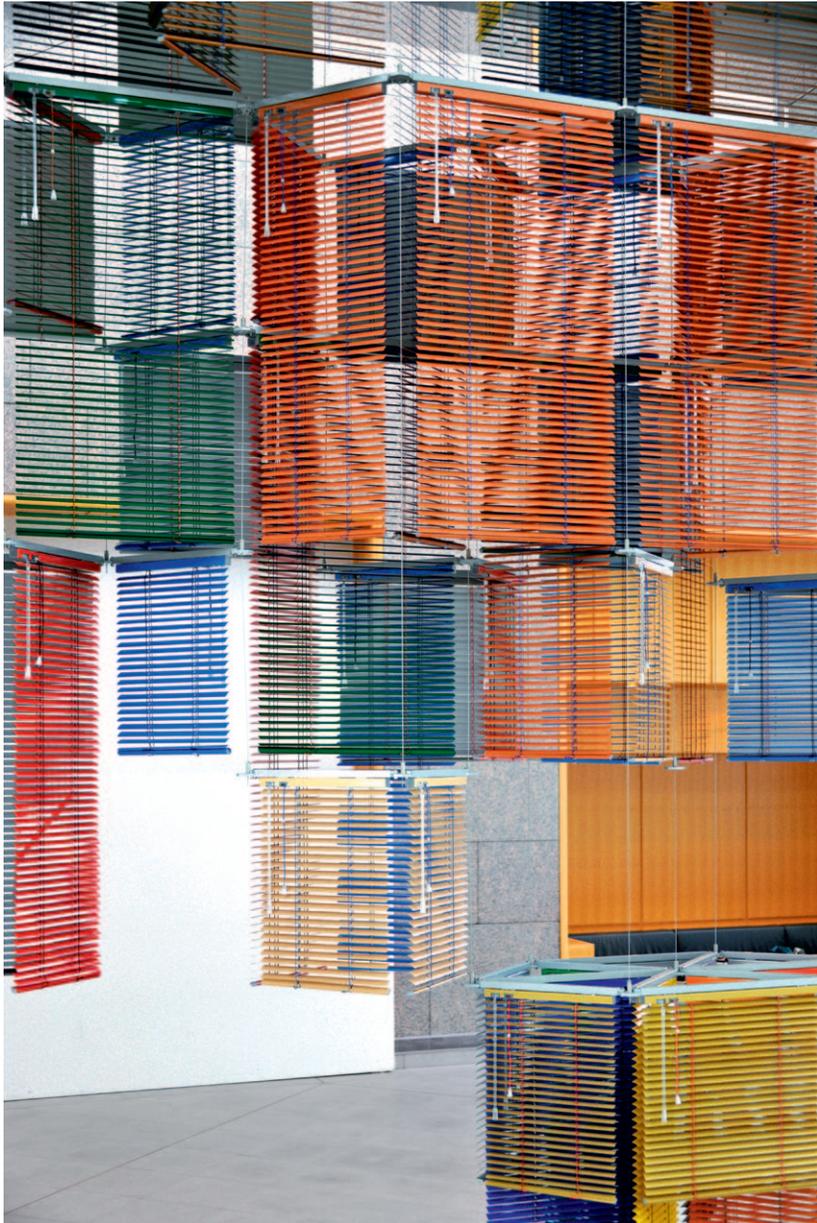
BLIND CURTAIN – FLESH BEHIND TRICOLORE
2013

This large-scale installation is one of the most recent of numerous works by Yang incorporating venetian blinds, which are perhaps the works she has become most renowned for. The use of the venetian blind, offering experience of obscured vision, has a significant presence in Yang's practice. She has on occasion discussed the idea of "communities of absence" – communities of people that exist outside of the dominant thrust of society, often living out of sight – which the blinds allegorically serve to address. Presented in the large 'puntaal' (pointed hall) at M HKA, visitors to the exhibition will experience the work from the different perspectives of the ground floor and the first floor balcony. *Blind Curtain – Flesh behind Tricolore* has a distinctive 'inside' and 'outside' in terms of its composition as well as colour, staging a scenario of "organic and skin-coloured inside" and "geometric and primary coloured outside" within the existing architecture.

VIP'S UNION
2001-2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



BLIND CURTAIN – FLESH BEHIND TRICOLORE
2013 (details)
Photos: Mathieu Bertola, Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg



H E D W I G

BORN IN BOXTEL, THE NETHERLANDS, IN 1983; LIVES IN BRUSSELS

Hedwig Houben's performance-based works consider the complex relations between objects and their makers, looking to deconstruct the identities of both. Can you really tell something about an individual persona through something that they have made? To what extent do our relations to objects play a role in the formation of self-hood? Can an object also have a biography? Considering notions of identity formation from more phenomenological and psychoanalytical perspectives, her videos document performances that often present the artist talking from the perspective of the third person in narrative dialogue with herself the artist and the sculptures she has made. Often this dialogue happens whilst she is even in the process of making or transforming the object. This 'relational' understanding between each – the narrator, the artist and the object – becomes the subject of the work, opening up ideas for identities beyond the traditional hermetic biography of a person.

PERSONAL MATTERS AND MATTER OF FACT 2011

This work comprises a video and a selection of objects. It is a work documenting a conversation between a self-portrait sculpture, a Rietveld chair and the artist. The two objects and the artist search for a possible way to create a meaningful picture together. Doubts, beliefs and concepts are discussed and interrogated from different perspectives in their dialogue towards the attempt to make the picture. The video is displayed in a sculptural combination with the chair and the self-portrait sculpture.

THE HAND, THE EYE AND IT 2013

The Hand, the Eye and It documents the performance lecture the artist made as part of the major conference at M HKA on 14 June. In the talk, a plasticine replica of the artist's own hand takes on the role of the mediator in a collaboration between the performer, the creator's eye,

H O U B E N

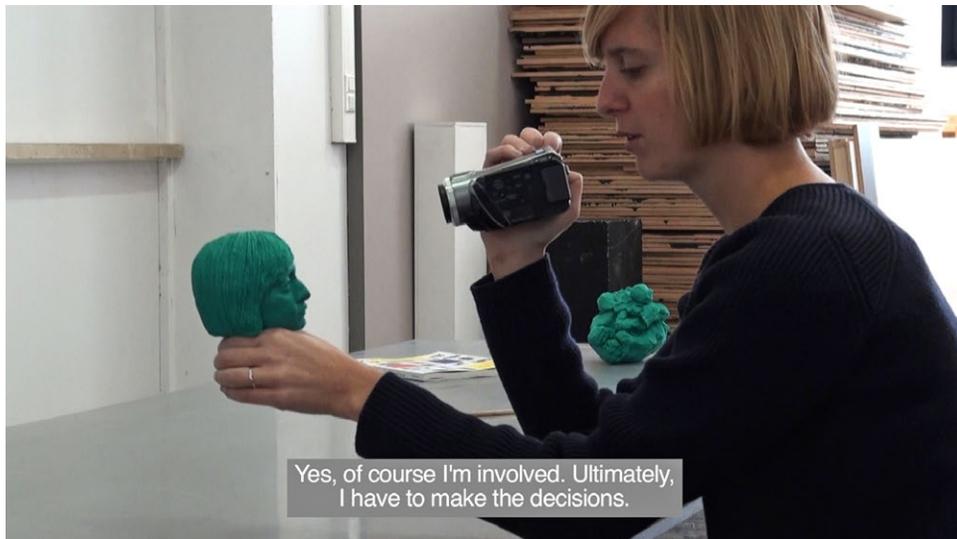
and the elusive 'it' – the thing that wants to be made, which is present here as an amorphous flesh coloured plasticine object. Describing the complex relations at play, Houben foregrounds the way the various elements take on both literal and symbolic roles, the lines between subject and object, performer and creator, hand and eye.

RETROSPECTIVE ACT 2012–ongoing

Retrospective Act is a sculpture produced by kneading the used plasticine from all of Houben's previous works into a large ball. The sculpture grows as the artist produces more works for performances, and could be considered as a sort of performative archive of Houben's practice.

NH

PERSONAL MATTERS AND MATTER OF FACT
2011 (video still)
Image courtesy: Hedwig Houben



RETROSPECTIVE ACT
2012–ongoing
Image courtesy: Hedwig Houben



THE HAND, THE EYE AND IT
2013 (video still)
Image courtesy: Hedwig Houben



I M A N

BORN IN CAIRO IN 1979; LIVES IN NEW YORK

I S S A

Iman Issa's practice seeks to pick out experiences of the personal from the collective. Her narrative-based works function through taking stories out of the specificity of a context, and opening them up to the associative potential of the viewer. Combining sculpture, photography, text, sound and video, Issa wishes to privilege the subjective, giving deliberate anonymity to the places, events and characters she portrays, allowing people to bring something personal to these things that seem as though they come from elsewhere. The components of her installations are characteristically both abstract and familiar – an aesthetic facet that forms a sort of democratic offer for producing new narratives.

MATERIAL
2009–2012

Material is a series of ten displays, each of which is presented as a study for an alternative form to an existing public monument known by the artist. Each of the displays combines a sentence-long written description of the original monument, along with a model of what its proposed form would potentially look like. In contrast to the concise descriptions that also act as the titles of each display, the models themselves are more abstract in character, playfully reflexive of the traditional forms of identification as well as the changing symbolisms that public monuments have tended to have over time. As is characteristic for Issa's artworks, her propositions are never determined as being for specific places or people, allowing strong interpretive qualities for the viewer.

THIRTY-THREE STORIES ABOUT REASONABLE CHARACTERS IN FAMILIAR PLACES
2011

The multi-faceted installation *Thirty-Three Stories about Reasonable Characters in Familiar Places* functions like a book written in three dimensions. It is an installation in three parts – the first containing a book of stories, the second a set of different objects and videos that act as an epilogue to the book, and the third an index on a text panel. The installation provides a set of fragments of experiences, individuals, emotions and locations, but significantly without any key markers of identification for allowing any kind of specificity. It is a set-up suggesting we pursue more complex understandings of place based on our relationship to it, allowing for the incidental, the poetic and the personal.

NH

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE REPRESENTING A BYGONE ERA OF LUXURY AND DECADENCE

2012 (from the series MATERIAL, 2009–2012)

Image courtesy: Iman Issa and Rodeo, Istanbul



MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE RECALLING THE DESTRUCTION OF A PROMINENT PUBLIC MONUMENT IN THE NAME OF NATIONAL RESISTANCE

2011 (from the series MATERIAL, 2009–2012)

Image courtesy: Iman Issa and Rodeo, Istanbul



THIRTY-THREE STORIES ABOUT REASONABLE CHARACTERS IN
FAMILIAR PLACES
2011 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



I M R A N

BORN IN HYDERABAD, PAKISTAN, IN 1972; LIVES IN LAHORE

Imran Qureshi was trained as a painter specifically in the styles and techniques of the traditional figurative miniature painting of the Indian Subcontinent, which remains the dominant tendency for contemporary artists in Lahore, where Qureshi teaches miniature painting at the National College of Arts. In recent years, his practice, which contains a distinct socio-political charge, has focused on the formal expansion of this strict and rigorous style of painting towards abstraction, conceptualism and site-specificity. Recent installations have been made in-situ, being worked directly on to the specific architecture of a place, often in the public realm. These installations possess a certain perceptual threshold – close up, they have the 'look' and beauty of the traditional miniature, whereas from a distance they can resemble the aftermath of a bloodbath. Though these works are no longer strictly speaking figurative, in many of them the human body is implicated in a different way through symbolic use of the colour red.

I WANT YOU TO STAY WITH ME
2013

The exhibition at M HKA includes two installations by Qureshi based on his recent technique of expanding the miniature aesthetic into a spatial practice. *I Want You To Stay With Me* is a painting installation produced in-situ. Qureshi produced these sets of paintings on the floor, splashing red paint, and then working more intricate details into the image. The paintings are then positioned on the wall, with the trace of his painting remaining on the ground beneath. Combining chance with control, the work is simultaneously representational and non-representational, balancing beauty and repulsion, wishing metaphorically to find optimism out of the effects of catastrophe.

Q U R E S H I

AND THEY STILL SEEK THE TRACES OF BLOOD...
2013

And They Still Seek the Traces of Blood... is an environment filled with 24,000 large sheets of paper. Each has images of Qureshi's previous floor paintings printed on both sides, crumpled, and together used to fill a space that people can enter. Civilisation and its capacity for destruction and oppression based on perceived differences between human subjects is a central theme in Qureshi's work. Together the sheets might be seen to represent the numerous incidents of conflict and violence taking place at any one time, and the act of crumpling suggesting ignorance of such events.

NH

AND THEY STILL SEEK THE TRACES OF BLOOD...
2013 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



I WANT YOU TO STAY WITH ME
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



J U H A P E K K A M A T I A S L A A K K O N E N

BORN IN HELSINKI IN 1982; LIVES IN HELSINKI

Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen's art aims at a zero-degree of visibility, where a spiritual reward might be expected. Some of his works are excruciatingly meticulous exercises that take place with no one else present and can therefore only be validated by their author. He may choose to let us know about them or he may say or write nothing. There is opulence to such frugality, and pretence to such simplicity. Other works yield objects poised between two modes of being. They are carefully crafted artefacts but also indexical traces of action, which may even wear them out.

WALKING FROM YAKUTSK TO HELSINKI IN 5.3 MILLION STEPS
2009

For this work Laakkonen spent 176 days walking in and around the city of Yakutsk, the capital of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) in eastern Siberia. The number of days corresponds to the number of verses in Genesis from the Creation to the Great Flood. The number of steps stipulated in the title would have taken him all the way back to Helsinki, but it also referred to the size of Finland's population. Throughout the entire performance, in temperatures varying from -50° to $+40^{\circ}$, Laakkonen wore the same pair of reindeer hide boots, which he had sewn together before taking his flight out.

What is the *real* importance of the object and the image – in relation to action and process – in Laakkonen's art? The tattered boots have been preserved, but do they become a 'strong' image? Yes and no. They evoke the intensity of the action and the context where it took place, but they don't elaborate on or exhaust its meaning. Are they instead meant to be a 'weak' image (i.e. deliberately non-intrusive and open-ended)? Perhaps, but they are a powerful physical and auratic presence.

TSIMTSUM
2014

Another 'travel piece' where all the constituent parts (the hand-made leather case, its wooden handle, the felt and paper wrappings) are carefully accounted for, except the objects that have left their imprints on them when the author sat on the stuffed case as he journeyed to the exhibition. The title refers to the kabbalistic notion of reduction or presence-in-absence. What is the *real* importance of the word in Laakkonen's idiosyncratic practice, which as we see does not shy away from religious metaphor?

ESTRAPADE
2014

Laakkonen's new work, still in progress, also began with a journey: one that connected his country's two indigenous linguistic communities. He first cut a tree and purchased wool from a farm in almost exclusively Swedish-speaking Korsnäs by the Bothnian Sea. Then he repeated the process in almost exclusively Finnish-speaking Ilomantsi near the border with Russian Karelia. The wood is carved into a traditional standing loom, the wool hand-spun to become the woof of a future weave. Laakkonen will walk the distance between the two settlements (where Finland is at its widest) to collect smaller batches of wool from different farms, which will become the warp threads, and to find objects to weigh them down. He will fashion the resulting fabric into a garment and wear it as he retraces his steps a third time to return the borrowed objects. As this schematic description of the projected process indicates, the work is based on Laakkonen's interaction with the people who live and work along his route, and ultimately on their knowledge of their own land.

AK

WALKING FROM YAKUTSK TO HEL-
SINKI IN 5.3 MILLION STEPS
2009
Photo: Terje Östling



TSIMTSUM
2014 (installation view)
Photo: Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen



ESTRAPADE
2014
Production photo: Jessica Sanderheim



ESTRAPADE
2014
Production photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



K A T J A

BORN IN TALLINN IN 1984; LIVES IN AMSTERDAM

N O V I T S K O V A

Katja Novitskova speaks of looking at the sky from her window in a high-rise block in a suburb of Tallinn, where the inhabitants felt weighed down by being negatively defined. Like the stars in her telescope, those 'Russian-speakers' didn't quite belong where they had ended up; they no longer appeared to others as what they imagined themselves to be, or perhaps they were not yet what they might still become. Having experienced the politicisation of identity in 1990s Estonia, Novitskova searched for ways out, which were also, inevitably, ways in: with self-study astronomy, academic semiotics, graphic design and the more dubious but also more efficient knowledge acquired by someone who uses the Internet to become an artist.

Post Internet Survival Guide 2010 is organised into chapters according to the first page of Google search results for 'survival guide': "SIZE UP THE SITUATION, USE ALL YOUR SENSES, REMEMBER WHERE YOU ARE, VALUE LIVING, IMPROVISE, VANQUISH FEAR AND PANIC, ACT LIKE THE NATIVES, LEARN BASIC SKILLS."¹ A manifesto as good as any, with the added benefit of being an *objet trouvé*, or perhaps rather an *objet recherché*. The book that made Novitskova's reputation as a sophisticated 'digital native' deserves to be taken at face value as a useful introduction to contemporary life.²

It would be simplistic to assume that post-internet art (a term her book helped launch) aspires to become liberated from its natural habitat, or seriously imagines itself occupying the 'after' that this exhibition insists on claiming for itself. Yet Novitskova's work is marked by a strong interest in the organic and the various realms of nature. Visuals of animals and plants play such a prominent role, especially in her installations, that it is sometimes tempting to assume that their hi-tech mediation is an excuse for their inclusion rather than the other way round. Why would she otherwise lavish such attention on making them look disinterestedly random?

APPROXIMATION XIV (ALPACA)
 APPROXIMATION XVI (QUOKKA)
 APPROXIMATION XVII (SNAIL)
 BRANCHING X
 BRANCHING XI
 GROWTH POTENTIALS (STAND ALONE), 1–3
 All 2014

For her ongoing series of cut-out sculptures, Novitskova first sources images from the Internet (as one would expect; any orthodoxy must be subverted from within) and then has them printed and mounted on aluminium. These pieces are supported by flaps similar to those on the back of old-fashioned photo-frames stood on desk-

tops, and they are therefore easy to arrange and rearrange in a space. For M HKA, she has conceived a new installation of individually titled cut-outs that she combines with five free-standing sculptures of red 'diagram arrows' titled *Growth Potentials (stand alone)*. The deliberate meaninglessness of this ensemble, constructed around the pseudo-rationality of the high-gloss indicators, is finely balanced against the emotional overtones of the imagery, which the industrial production process can never fully eliminate.

AK

1. Katja Novitskova, *Post Internet Survival Guide 2010*. Berlin: Revolver Publishing, 2010, pp.4–5.
2. It begins with an essential piece of information, borrowed from a project by the American artist Damon Zucconi: the first .com domain name ever registered was symbolics.com (on 15 March 1985).

APPROXIMATION, BRANCHING, GROWTH
POTENTIALS (STAND ALONE)
Installation view at M HKA
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



L A W R E N C E

A B U

H A M D A N

BORN IN AMMAN, JORDAN, IN 1985; LIVES IN LONDON

Lawrence Abu Hamdan, whose background is in DIY music, has re-purposed the format of the radio documentary for the contemporary art context as a form of text–sound composition enlarged with live performative elements and graphic and three-dimensional visualisations. In a series of works he has addressed such topics as the use of phonetic analysis by immigration authorities (*The Freedom of Speech Itself* and *Conflicted Phonemes*, both 2012), and the voice as a means of constituting national borders (*Language Gulf in the Shouting Valley*, 2013).

Abu Hamdan connects the fundamentals of how the human body conveys meaning by setting airwaves in motion – tone, voice, words and what makes them begin and end – with the demands and pitfalls of legal systems. His recent lecture *Contra-Diction: Speech Against Itself* (2014) explores the linguistics of *Taqiyya*. This piece of jurisprudence among the esoteric sects of Islam allows believers to deny their faith and break other laws when they are at risk of persecution or in a condition of statelessness. Abu Hamdan indicates how such minor speech acts can help us re-appraise the precision of speaking, and of remaining silent.

Such concerns also underpin the research he is doing as a PhD candidate at Goldsmiths College in London,

where he is part of the Forensic Architecture team. The word ‘forensic’ etymologically derives from the word *forum* of Roman antiquity. The art of public speaking is to turn narrative into fact and then into a shared truth supported by proof everyone can agree upon. Abu Hamdan analyses fundamental concepts – the oath, the right to silence, freedom of speech – as micro-political acts of forensic listening, demonstrating that the battle for free speech is now about control over the conditions in which we are being heard.

DOUBLE-TAKE: OFFICER LEADER OF THE CHASSEURS SYRIAN REVOLUTION COMMANDING A CHARGE
2014

This new work by Abu Hamdan is a sound piece enlarged with visuals. A contemporary version of Théodore Géricault’s painting *Officer of the Chasseurs Commanding a Charge* (1812, in the Louvre) was commissioned by a wealthy London-based businessman of Syrian origins for his country house. He explicitly instructed the artist to replace the French imperial officer with Sultan Pasha Al-Atrash (1891–1982), a prominent figure famous for his secular Syrian nationalist stance and for leading the Syrian uprising against the French in 1925–1927. A repro-

duction of the Géricault is shown alongside its recent adaptation and another painting, which depicts French colonial forces being battered by Al-Atrash’s army. There are also ‘installation views’ of all these paintings in the country house.

The sound piece appropriates a traditional mode of storytelling set to music that in fact often features Al-Atrash. Abu Hamdan speaks of the successful businessman and the ‘ensemble’ he has created. Anglophilia, he argues, is the reason for his paradoxical use of anti-colonial imagery impregnated by the aesthetics of the coloniser. Abu Hamdan uses the double nature of the story told by the paintings (the beginning and end of French imperialism) to map the Arab post-colonial subject. Everything fits perfectly into the genteel setting, apart from the incongruous image of an Arab as the colonial conqueror. The two hundred years separating Géricault’s painting from its perversion are condensed in one moment of a double-take into which a whole history of the colonial project can be read.

AK

DOUBLE-TAKE: OFFICER LEADER OF
THE GHASSEURS SYRIAN REVOLUTION
COMMANDING A CHARGE
2014
Photos: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



DOUBLE-TAKE: OFFICER LEADER OF
THE GHASSEURS SYRIAN REVOLUTION
COMMANDING A CHARGE
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



L I E S B E T H

BORN IN MALLE, BELGUM, IN 1989; LIVES IN ANTWERP

D O M S

Working reflexively on how the art system likes to construct and foreground the biography of artists in relation to their artworks, Liesbeth Doms uses this as the impetus for her artistic practice. The subjects of persona, biography and artistic genealogy are pointless burdens that Doms playfully and humorously turns into conceptually useful veils for herself. Biographies tend to be particularly emphasised for 'young' artists as well as those from the non-western world, as there is a desire to locate them socio-culturally as individuals, as well as within an art historical lineage. Doms constructs different means and situations for displaying temporary bio-graphies to hide behind that are at once credible alternatives and even seductive, yet border on the absurd.

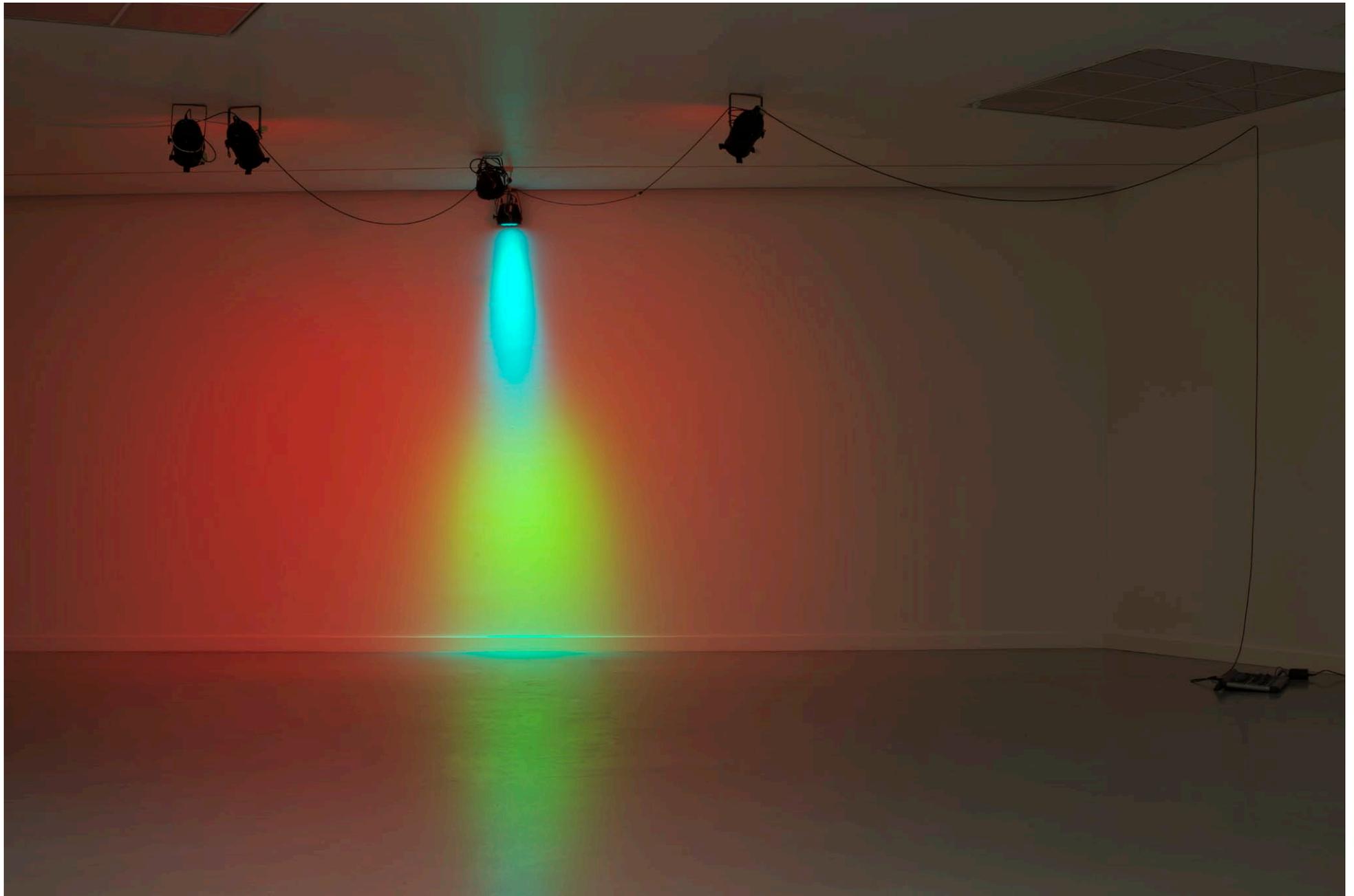
ARTIST'S AURA
2013

As its title suggests, this installation is the result of a collaboration between Doms and the professional aura reader Bart Vanwynsberghe, translating a reading of the artist's aura into a display of coloured light. On various occasions the colours change, based on new readings of the artist's aura at any one moment. The light fills the space yet it also remains empty, suggesting the inadequate anecdotal nature of biographies, questioning the desire and false necessity to make connections between the biography and content of an artist's work.

CAMOUFLAGED AS A CONCEPTUAL WORK OF ART
2014

Doms has produced a product that would give every existing artwork the veil of conceptualism, literally. Reflecting on the teaching of art and its history, and the burden of expectation for artists today to follow in the lineage of modern and conceptual art, Doms has used images of key historical conceptual artworks from renowned books on the subject, and appropriated their colours to produce a stealth camouflage patterned fabric. The fabric can be used to cover any artwork to give it a more acceptable public face, whilst freeing the artist to make the kind of artwork he or she desires, free of the burdens of expectation and history.

ARTIST'S AURA
2013 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



CAMOUFLAGED AS A CONCEPTUAL
WORK OF ART
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



M A R I A

BORN IN RZHEV, RUSSIA, IN 1979; LIVES IN MOSCOW

How can classical techniques for creating a fictional pictorial space be used to construct a reality that reflects and critiques contemporary society? This is what Maria Safronova sets out to do in her recent series of paintings, accompanied by three-dimensional props (which are both indexical and symbolic objects). The 'freedom' to adapt to norms and routines is a recurrent theme, as is the complacency and even enthusiasm that such processes of socialisation may inspire in the individual.

Safronova's images are hybrids, borrowing features from Russian life today, with its neo-Soviet, neo-imperial demands on the collective and individual psyche, and from fifteenth and sixteenth century painting in the Low Countries and Italy. In the paintings (oil on canvas, in relatively small formats), Safronova contrasts stylised empty backgrounds with patterned surfaces that enhance the central perspective. Both devices create stages, which she populates with allegorical compositions of human figures, based on studies from live models (and purposely made photographs). It is in the nature of allegory to be semantically fuzzy – forever sliding up and down the scale from index to symbol – but as so often in art history, such calculated ambiguity actually bolsters viewer confidence in the painterly idiom and the story it tells. The props are a continuation of this policy by other means. Despite the miniature likenesses of use-objects, they are not dolls houses – just as the paintings are not children's book illustrations, despite Safronova's liberal use of didactic attitudes.

Under what circumstances might her figures, so constrained by the constructions they inhabit, become characters? Could they ever become individual subjects? The two series exhibited give different answers, but neither leaves much room for optimism, since they are conditioned by a reality that Safronova knows well.

DAILY SCHEDULE

2012–2013

This is a series of eleven paintings of routines and activities in a mental hospital, evoking the 'genre scenes' of the Dutch and Flemish baroque, a model of the interiors depicted and a text board with the inmates' daily schedule, from waking at 7am to going to bed at 9pm, and a psychiatric questionnaire that would unsettle anyone's notion of mental health. "78. If you had to act on stage, would you be able to enter your role so well that you forget it's a game?"¹

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW

2013–2014

This new series illustrates the models for behaviour and social interaction that children must internalise if they are not to be ostracised in kindergarten or at school. The series consists of six paintings and four three-dimensional, polychromous 'situations' (*Storage,*

S A F R O N O V A

Classroom, Building, Playground) displayed in a custom-made cupboard. The title refers to the Nash Equilibrium, named after game theorist John Forbes Nash and describing a set of strategies where 'players' can do no better by unilaterally changing their strategies. Safronova writes: "This establishes a standard model of an infinitely repetitive game, the Game of the General View, where coordinating one's own point of view with others, changing positions or seeking real gain is possible only within the given rules. Stable equilibrium becomes the most beneficial condition, and any change is only for the worse. Imagination and liberation from obstacles become unnecessary."²

AK

1. Maria Safronova, *Распорядок дня/Daily Schedule*, text board, 2013 (translation by the author).
2. Maria Safronova, *Игра общего вида/The Game of the General View*, as yet unpublished project description, in Russian, 2014 (translation by the author).

DAILY SCHEDULE: 1.15PM: LUNCH. CANTINE
2012
Photo: Maria Safronova



DAILY SCHEDULE: 7.40PM: TELEVISION. CANTINE
2012
Photo: Maria Safronova



THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW: NEW YEAR
2013
Photo: Maria Safronova



THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW: CELEBRATION
2013
Photo: Maria Safronova



M A R I A

BORN IN DUMAGUETE, THE PHILIPPINES, IN 1981; LIVES IN MANILA

T A N I G U C H I

Maria Taniguchi's point of departure is individual, subjective time – not least for her untitled, black monochrome acrylic paintings on stretched canvas. Their unified visual grid is based on the simplest repeating pattern in masonry, the so-called Stretcher Bond (or Runner Bond) that creates a wall too thin to stand alone, but is often used in modern construction to create the 'skin' or 'face' of a building. Yet, at the same time, the surface of each individual painting visibly disintegrates into patches of irregular shapes and sizes. Echoing the *giornate* of late medieval fresco painting, they bear witness to the painting process by indicating (literally, as an index finger or pointer) the limit of one day's work.

UNTITLED
2012–2014

Unlike the Italian masters, who had to plaster a segment of wall in the morning and finish painting it by evening, Taniguchi makes no effort to efface these borderlines and absorb them into the overall composition. Her composition *is* these visualised differences between the various dimensions of time where she herself lives and works. When she started working on this series around

five years ago, she would play with images-within-the-image, turning the masonry pattern 90 degrees within delineated circular or elliptic areas of the canvas. Then she dropped all such gesturing towards pictorialism and these earlier paintings now look like first attempts. Today she admits only the variation caused by the contingencies of the working process as such: the variable ratio of pigment to medium, atmospheric conditions that influence drying time, the occasional external disturbance (when someone happens to walk across a work in progress lying on the floor, or when a dog rests for hours on the tautly stretched canvas).

There is no real contradiction between masonry as a unit for measuring work-time and as a reminder that we are encountering a constructed space, in the most straightforward sense possible. The restriction of the grid helps the artist to realise – and viewers to appreciate – the freedom that even minimal variations of touch and tone lend to any chosen format.

UNTITLED (DAWN'S ARMS)
2011

In her videos Taniguchi also portrays processes of making (and seeing – that the two must go together is something her art always thematises), but this format allows her to be a curious bystander rather than reporting from inside her own laboratory. The *pars pro toto* approach, where the part stands for the whole, can be made more explicit when someone or something else is in front of the camera. For instance a body part, as in the video installation *Dawn's Arms*, which shows a stone-carver in the Philippine marble quarries on the island of Romblon replicating the arms of the statue (titled *Morning*) that mirrors itself in the stagnant fountain of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's Barcelona Pavilion.

AK

UNTITLED, UNTITLED (DAWN'S ARMS)
2011–2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



UNTITLED (DAWN'S ARMS)

2011 (video stills)

Image courtesy: Maria Taniguchi and Silverlens,
Manila and Singapore



M A S S I M O

BORN IN TARANTO, ITALY, IN 1974; LIVES IN MILAN

Much of Massimo Grimaldi's artistic practice holds up a mirror to the economies in place for producing and circulating images in western mass media, particularly towards our mediated relationship to foreign, underprivileged, 'other' cultures. It engages directly in sanctioned activities that intervene in the lives of victims of crisis and exploitation in places such as sub-Saharan Africa, Cambodia and Afghanistan, looking to foreground the usually suppressed ethics of such intervention, as well as of so-called "poverty journalism". Whilst considering the role of artists and the limitations of art, Grimaldi has invented a possibility for art to have a profound effect on people's lives.

EMERGENCY'S PAEDIATRIC CENTRE IN NYALA, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO APPLE IMAC CORE I5S
2011

EMERGENCY'S SURGICAL CENTRE IN GODERICH, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO APPLE THUNDERBOLT DISPLAYS
2013

EMERGENCY'S MATERNITY CENTRE IN ANABAH, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO APPLE IMAC QUAD-CORE I5S
2014

Grimaldi regularly collaborates with Emergency, an independent, neutral NGO that was founded in Italy in 1994 to offer free, high-quality medical and surgical assistance to the civilian victims of wars, landmines, and poverty. On several occasions, Grimaldi has proposed projects to public institutions and private collectors that were based on donating the funding involved in an art project towards supporting Emergency's healthcare facilities. This activity then becomes the subject of photographic essays for display as slideshows in gallery

G R I M A L D I

spaces, documenting the patients being rehabilitated by Emergency, and exhibited on the newest model of Apple computer available at the time. These image-reportages, which portray their subjects very much in the high resolution of advertising media, are displayed as synchronised slideshows across sets of Macs, creating a contrast between the computers with their stylised images and the social reality of the geographic locations where the works begin.

EMERGENCY'S PAEDIATRIC CENTRE IN
NYALA, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO APPLE
IMAC CORE I55
2011
Image courtesy: Massimo Grimaldi and
Galleria ZERO, Milan



EMERGENCY'S SURGICAL CENTRE IN
GODERICH, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO
APPLE THUNDERBOLT DISPLAYS
2013
Image courtesy: Massimo Grimaldi and
Team, New York



EMERGENCY'S MATERNITY CENTRE
IN ANABAH. PHOTOS SHOWN ON
TWO APPLE IMAC QUAD-CORE I55
2014

Image courtesy: Massimo Grimaldi
and Galleria ZERO, Milan



N A D E Z H D A

BORN IN MOSCOW IN 1983; LIVES IN MOSCOW

Nadezhda Grishina links live performance to the moving image and makes works of absorbing visual fiction within the tradition of social commentary that is a hallmark of Russian art. Her video installations are both theatrical (because they hinge on movement, pace, rhythm and other expressions of physical intensity) and critical (because they diagnose and satirise the reality that they reformulate as spectacle). In this sense, Grishina's work draws strength from some of the most powerful streams of Russian culture: the art of narration and the art of acting. Nevertheless, she rarely uses dialogue or professional performers, preferring to work experimentally with the semi-articulate, emotionally stunted reality of the 'digital life' that many people have taken on board today. Significantly, she achieves this not by engineering virtual avatars, but by putting real people into real spaces and shooting their actions in real time. She has invented a new coming-together of edited footage and mechanical or electronic props where it can be difficult to separate men from machines.

NO-GO MACHINE 2013

It is no coincidence that the machine-like quality of Grishina's works is reflected in their titles. The best example of her exacting method is *No-Go Machine*: a chilling, but entertaining, analysis of how breakdown looks and sounds today. The 'system' she presents appears to be built precisely for breaking down those who agree to perform a function within it.

Grishina writes: "The No-Go Machine is a space where theatrical action is inverted. The stage is the hierarchical pyramid of the system of government, with agents in their proper places. Each level of the pyramid corresponds to a level of the game. The uppermost level controls the lower ones – everything is done by the book. But the players lack their own will; their actions are based on primitive stimuli and reactions. Absorbed in the game, they hammer at their keyboards and stare at their screens. In their irritable behaviour – reflecting the plasticity of contemporary movement – we see the simulated tension of anti-efficient action concentrated."¹

Grishina's theatrical machines may be absorbing and entertaining for us, but they are not to be taken lightly. They inflict real violence on those who volunteer to go inside, such as the three young women in *No-Go Machine* whose heads are displayed in a box with red padding and who are apparently subjected to an overly-strong current before being unceremoniously disposed of.

G R I S H I N A

POINT 2014

The male protagonist in Grishina's latest work fares only slightly better. He is seen on a flatscreen and on a projection as he struggles to assert himself over an imperious and unpredictable prosthetic head. Connecting theatrical performance to psychoanalytical speculation, again through bodily movement and 'spoken voice' rather than through words that need to be translated, Grishina appears to be telling us: "The man is in the head, and it may or may not be his own head, but the head wants to govern him just as he is struggling to take control over it and himself."

AK

1. Nadezhda Grishina, project description, in Russian, of *Срывмашина/No-Go Machine*, 2013 on the website of the Kandinsky Prize (translation by the author). <http://new.kandinsky-prize.ru/nominees/2013/nadya-grishina/?lang=ru> (last accessed on 20 April 2014).

NO-GO MACHINE
2012–2013 (video stills)
Image courtesy: Nadezhda Grishina



POINT
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



N Á S T I O

BORN IN HUAMBO, ANGOLA, IN 1981; LIVES IN LUANDA AND GHENT

M O S Q U I T O

There is a curious provocation in Nástio Mosquito artworks in how he directly confronts the viewer. His performances and videos place the artist himself centre stage, adopting different personae, and taking attitudes from his other experiences of working as an actor, presenter, singer and media impresario. His work is often described as confronting stereotypes of Africa and its people, which, while not untrue, is only part of the complex encounter we experience with his work. Mosquito plays with charisma and exoticism, with being funny and scary, and with being entertaining and awkward. We are always left never quite knowing if we are meeting the real Nástio Mosquito, and yet the works offer a glimpse of a future where we may have a certain freedom to be what we feel, beyond political correctness and the desire to be consumers of cultural difference.

3 CONTINENTS (EUROPA, AMERICA, AFRICA)
2010

The video *3 Continents* presents Mosquito delivering three consecutive speeches addressing the three continents of the title, each time with a homespun map of each place attached to a wall in the background. The delivery of the speeches are through an adopted persona that possesses a sort of confident naivety, pronouncing that he has “bought Europe” or “bought the US of A”, and then ending somewhat comically by giving up prematurely on the last speech, saying dismissively “fuck Africa”. The work offers a surreal reversal of the hegemonic gaze and its lingering imperialistic legacy towards the non-western world, in a way that is darkly ironic, funny and playfully confounding.

NÁSTIA'S MANIFESTO
2010

The video *Nástia's Manifesto* offers us seventeen points to success. *Adopting an alter ego named Nástia*, a rather cocky Nástio Mosquito talks to us, offering advice points that are a confusing mix of profundity, misogyny and pseudo-managerial rhetoric. It is a sort of experimental mantra, bluntly telling us to either dismiss or follow some of the main social constructs in society, from aspiration, status and leadership, to education, religion and history. As Nástia proclaims at both the beginning and end, it is “hypocritical, ironic, and do not give a fuck.”

NH

3 CONTINENTS (EUROPE, AMERICA, AFRICA)
2010 (video stills)
Images courtesy: Nástio Mosquito





O L E G

BORN IN ROSTOV-ON-DON, RUSSIA, IN 1984; LIVES IN MOSCOW

IDM
2013–2014

How can the same mental energy and will-to-form find expression in streams of creative consciousness so different that they appear to have nothing in common? Oleg Ustinov's paintings are upbeat and a bit dumb. The naïve curlicues of the series *IDM* (2013–2014) twirl around the logos of the protective paper, stripped from the back of large advertising stickers, that became his 'found support'. The simulated childishness of these paintings (with too many colours, as if a whole box of crayons had to be used, and with clumsy gestures towards figuration) somehow fails to disappoint. Perhaps the 'intelligent dance music' from the 1990s that plays in Ustinov's studio is still pumping through them.

THE ADMINISTRATION
2013–2014

Ustinov regularly experiments with sound, music and installations of various kinds. But this is a work of another order. Conceived as the first in a series of 'provocations' on current political topics, it targets the infamous law against 'encouraging non-traditional sexual orientation among children and the young'. In August 2013 he stuck leaflets up in housing estates in the southern Russian city of Rostov-on-Don. They were printed to look like regular announcements, but proclaimed that 'the administration' had the gays and lesbians in the building (their

numbers specified in handwriting) under surveillance and asked inhabitants to be vigilant and report anything suspicious to a provided telephone number.

"Please note that persons of non-traditional sexual orientation may propagate homosexuality not just directly – by describing the advantages of homosexual life or even suggesting to you or members of your family to have sexual relations with them – and not just by wearing extravagant clothes or behaving unconventionally, but also indirectly, gradually, carrying out their propaganda work in the building for many years."¹

This text was quickly met with earnest disapproval all over the more or less western-orientated (urban professional, 'hipster', liberal, in rarer cases left-leaning or even gay-friendly) Russian-language Internet. The NTV television channel picked up the story and spun two news items around it, on 29 and 30 August 2013, discussing whether neighbours should denounce each other and calling for the arrest of the leaflet's authors for spreading lies. "But first they must be found."²

The two television clips and selected on-line reactions are shown in the exhibition along with the leaflet. Ustinov did well to appropriate them. The best satire is often just playing back the original. His work probes the resistance of Russian society (both the 'intelligentsia' and 'ordinary people') to the subversion of values systematically undertaken by the authorities through propaganda, mostly through television, but also in the supposedly less regulated blogosphere and social media.

U S T I N O V

This undertaking could hardly be more different than the paintings, at least on the surface of things. Yet Ustinov says that he thinks of the various strands of his practice as downloading several heavy files onto his computer at the same time. One process can happen independently of the other, but in the end variety reinforces the agency of the host organism. Art as experimental agency with a capacity to infiltrate and embarrass the 'Powers that Be': that is exactly what Russian cultural policy is being re-engineered to discourage right now.

AK

1. Oleg Ustinov, *The Administration*, leaflet text, in Russian, 2013 (translation by the author).

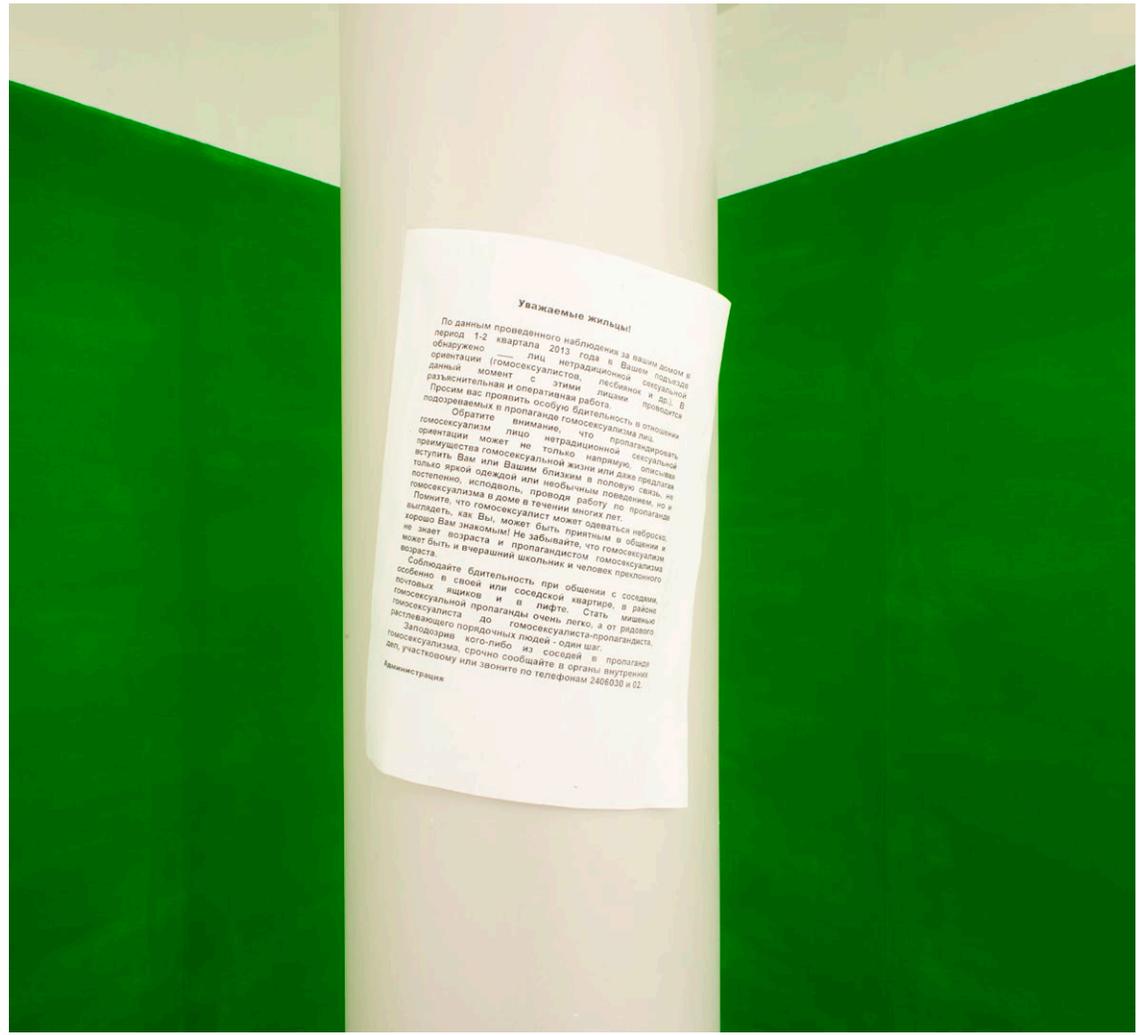
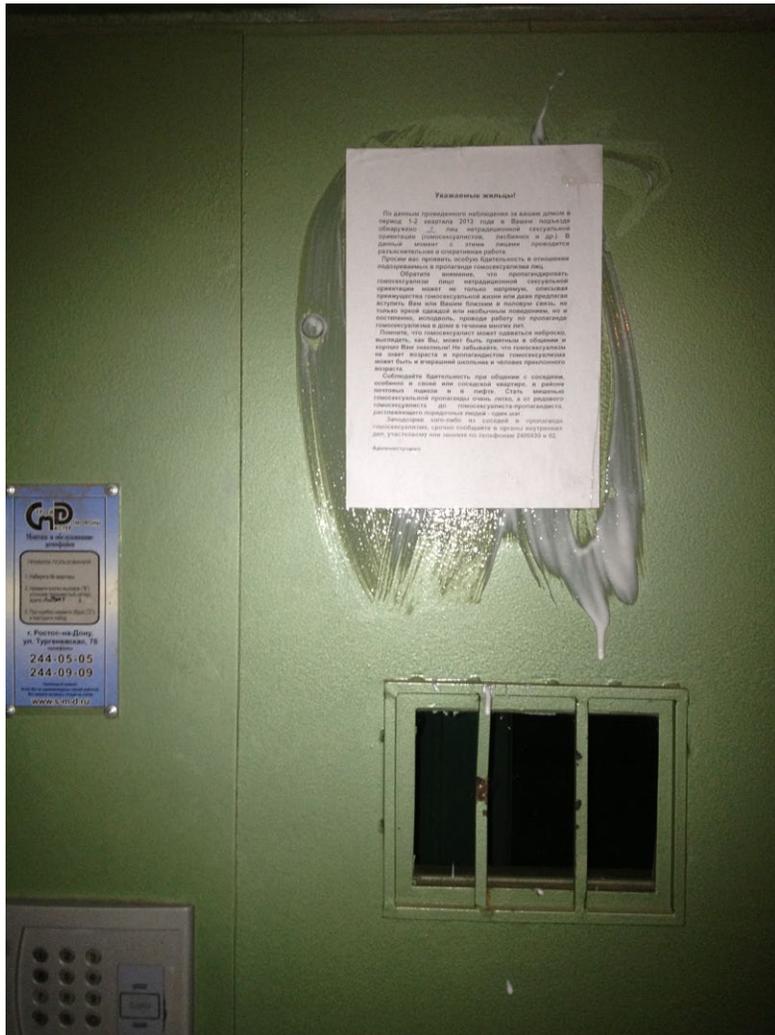
2. The abbreviation NTV stands for 'Independent Television', but this hasn't actually been the case since soon after Vladimir Putin took power in 1999.

IDM #10 3EANAЕ
2013
Photo: Oleg Ustinov



IDM #11 IF RIV ER WHE RE ARE
2013
Photo: Oleg Ustinov





ONKAR KULAR & NOAM TORAN

ONKAR KULAR WAS BORN IN HUDDERSFIELD, UK, IN 1974 AND NOAM TORAN WAS BORN IN LAS CRUCES, USA, IN 1975; BOTH LIVE IN LONDON

Often working from the perspective of contemporary design practice, regular collaborators Onkar Kular and Noam Toran have produced a number of research-based experimental projects that consider the relationship of objects to human subjectivity. Through installations and archival-style displays, they examine how our relationship to objects in our daily lives plays an important role in the formation of our memories and our sense of selfhood. They employ a distinct narrative approach that is filmic in style, portraying fictional or semi-fictional characters who develop the capacity for unusual subjectivities and stories told through the inextricable relationships they have with numerous particular artefacts.

I CLING TO VIRTUE 2010

I Cling to Virtue constructs a historical narrative describing the intricate trajectories of the Lövy-Singh clan, a fictional East London family of mixed Jewish and Sikh descent. The project uses the grand historical, literary and cinematic traditions of the family saga, and was developed by the artists mixing their own genealogies along with those of affluent 20th century families, both real and fictional, such as the Kennedys, the Magnificent Ambersons and the Rothschilds. Alongside two short videos, a museological display of ghostly objects are the focus points for the narrative, each possessing a short

written description of their role in a significant memory. Narrated by the youngest-born Monarch Lövy-Singh, the work proposes not a single, coherent story of his family or the century through which they lived, but rather one that is multiple and fragmentary.

NH

I CLING TO VIRTUE
2010 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



I CLING TO VIRTUE
2010 (detail: DENTURES)
Photo: Onkar Kular & Noam Toran



I CLING TO VIRTUE
2010 (video still)
Image courtesy: Onkar Kular & Noam Toran



O S C A R

BORN IN LA PAILA, COLOMBIA, IN 1986; LIVES IN LONDON

Oscar Murillo's practice mobilises painting, sculpture, installation, video, and situation-specific events, to explore notions of making – as a practice, as a form of both work and leisure, and as a means of living within and beyond aesthetics. Informed although not limited by the biographical, Murillo explores the circulation of labouring bodies, material resources and capital across geographies and systems of value, drawing attention to the tangible traces that result from acts of work and exchange. Reflecting on a cultural metropole such as London and the processes of movement and migration that such places have come to be defined by, Murillo's works often function as repositories of time harvested and spent, generating indexical objects that bear witness to their own production and displacement. One of the dynamic generation of artists living in the UK, Murillo has a human approach to art-making, its subjectivity possessing the intelligence to be interrogated and redefined.

A BASTARD CLASS
2014

Murillo has developed a new project for M HKA that approaches the exhibition space as a production site for a functioning factory of ceramic coconuts, like those often found in places such as Columbia and Mexico. From a family of factory workers, he, and occasionally his father, will occupy this space, initially to set-up the factory, and then to run it on occasional days throughout the duration of the exhibition. In turning part of the museum into an operational production space, Murillo opens up questions of labour and globalisation, as well as more relational subjects of community and family, whereas the ceramic coconuts comment on the marketability of 'exotic' cultural identities.

M U R I L L O

Murillo will be in residence at AIR Antwerpen – the city's international artist residency programme – where he will spend a month to develop his work.

A BASTARD CLASS
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



A BASTARD CLASS
2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



P A T R I Z I O

BORN IN JESI, ITALY, IN 1983; LIVES IN LONDON

D I

M A S S I M O

Where does the urge to create images lead us now? How does it take shape, and what shape does it take? Patrizio Di Massimo first made a name for himself with work in various media (video, performance, drawing) that offered a personalised approach to politically charged topics, such as the lingering taboo on discussing Italian colonialism in Africa (*The Negus Said: "Give Me the Lion, Keep the Stele!"*, 2010) or the counterintuitive role of historicist interior design in overcoming Fascism (*Flight from Disorder*, 2010).

For the last couple of years Di Massimo has been gravitating towards a rather different kind of image-making. He keeps revisiting the history of figurative painting and persistently uses opulent upholstery and garish visual effects. In this way, he has begun to reinvent a form of surrealism for today's viewer. This is an experimental practice requiring visual risk-taking, unprejudiced curiosity for things that tell stories and active disobedience towards the dictatorship of good taste. None of this is self-evident in global contemporary art, incidentally. Di Massimo's recent work explicitly eroticises the decorative object, as a three-dimensional prop or as the subject matter for painted tableaux or digital manipulation. His objects stand in for figures. Sometimes they literally come to life, thanks to surreptitious stagecraft.

THE LUSTFUL TURK (HABERDASHERY)
THE LUSTFUL TURK (BANG BANG)
THE LUSTFUL TURK (SALON)
All 2013

The Lustful Turk is an ensemble of works that began its life at the Villa Medici in Rome in 2012. Its various paintings, drawings and objects are all based on an erotic epistolary novel with the same title, published anonymously in England in 1828 and well-known, if not infamous, as an example of Orientalism, Europe's perfidiously proactive 'othering' of the people it was about to colonise. Three large paintings are shown in this exhibition, presented on a new version of the wallpaper created for the second and final stage of the project at Gasworks in London. These four elements display the visual emblems Di Massimo gradually substituted for more faithful illustration of the somewhat repetitive activities described in the novel. Like the wallpaper, *The Lustful Turk (Haberdashery)* suggests that cushions and tassels and candles might be a transparent code for certain body parts, whereas *The Lustful Turk (Bang Bang)* upsets the Orientalist agenda by introducing African sculptures and *The Lustful Turk (Salon)* offers a self-indulgent retrospective view of some previous paintings in this series.

ME, MUM, MISTER, MAD
2014

The latest indication of the shape and direction that Di Massimo's art is taking is this family portrait in three parts first shown at Kunsthalle Lissabon in Lisbon, which it co-produced with M HKA. All three installations contain something alive, contrasting with crafted soft objects that unambiguously refer to Di Massimo's own family members. They have all been assigned the 'M' in celebration of the first person singular accusative (and, presumably, of Mum's appearance as a resplendent red oversized tassel). Part of the ivy that fringes the pelmet for her skin-coloured hosiery curtain is real, and there is a live canary bird in the cage next to the somewhat flaccid bolsters that have collapsed in a mikado-like formation on the floor, embodying Dad. The denim cushions look like those in Sister's bedroom in the family house. There is a secret space inside the pile where a female performer can crouch and poke her extremities out through the tassels and fringes.

AK

MUM
2014 (installation view at Kunsthalle Lissabon)
Photo: Bruno Lopes



MISTER
2014 (detail)
Photo: Bruno Lopes



THE LUSTFUL TURK
2013–2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



P E D R O

BORN IN ALMADA, PORTUGAL, IN 1979; LIVES IN LISBON

“To navigate is necessary, to live is not”, Fernando Pessoa wrote.¹ One way of understanding Pedro Barateiro’s art is to read it – yes, artists often decide to play legibility against visibility – as a similar kind of undercover radicalness posing as stylised poetics. This, after all, is one possible interpretation of what Marcel Duchamp was doing after he “stepped out of art” some 90 years ago.

What kind of identity can an artist make for himself when he lives and works in an ocean of readily available data? When there is no good reason for not processing as many stimuli as he thinks he needs, why should the artist avoid making ‘art about art’, or even ‘art for art’s sake’? To state it excessively, in conditions of information overload the artist may become either a hoarder (someone who assembles a library but doesn’t read books) or a hermit (someone who feeds off his own flesh rather than allow foreign bodies into his mind). Barateiro navigates these two extremes with necessary precision. The real difficulty is to admit references (to others outside) in your practice without letting them interfere with your inner compass. You need to keep things simple so that complexity can find its own way back into them.

During the forum *Just Who Do You Think You Are?* at Cinema Zuid on 14 June, Barateiro screens the film *We Belong to Other People When We Are Outside* (2013). The work exists in two versions, on 16mm film and in high-definition video, and juxtaposes a text read in Portuguese by a male and a female actor with images of artworks that Barateiro has been collecting for some time. His ‘director’s cut’ of the collectivity that is modern and contemporary art history – in the form of a virtual slide archive – brings it together as an image of individual memory. The text, on the other hand, splits a con-

sciousness into at least two speaking characters. The process of editing was a work of navigation: between different visions of authorship and different readings of subjectivity.

THE ACTORS 2014

Objects and images as subjects. That is something Barateiro also addresses in his lecture performances, artist books, installations, paintings and drawings, which bleed into each other both conceptually and formally. *The Actors* is his latest animated film, based on a recent series of drawings in Indian ink on white paper. Technically, the animation consists of making these drawings twirl in and out of our view. But the film also animates the purposely flat images of cartoonish ‘backgrounds’, ‘clowns’ or ‘pizzas’ into scenarios or characters that take on a real agency. When we watch them dance, we see them act.

CURFEW 2013

This work is at the same time sculpture and installation, three-dimensional image and visual commentary. The beastly figure is based on a similar one made by the Luena tribes of Dundo in what is now north-eastern Angola. The original is kept in the Museum of Dundo, built by Portugal’s colonial National Diamonds Company in 1936. The work and its title reflect two of the roles that Barateiro plays as an artist: that of the connoisseur

B A R A T E I R O

(of art history and contemporary mass culture) and that of the commentator (of colonial histories and current politics). The word curfew is an English corruption of the French *couvre-feu*, ‘cover your fire’. It is a moment of enforced quiet in an imposed state of exception, such as the austerity politics that Portuguese society is now being subjected to. The half-animal on the glass table, with its intense gaze, might represent a short-circuiting of what we think we are seeing.

AK

1. In his poem *Os Argonautas* (‘The Argonauts’), which inspired Caetano Veloso to write a stylised fado song with the same title, included in his famous *Álbum Branco* (‘White Album’) from 1969. The sentence is supposedly a quote from Pompey: *Navigare necesse est, vivere non necesse est.*

CURFEW
2013–2014 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



THE ACTORS
2014 (video stills)
Image courtesy: Pedro Barateiro and Galeria
Filomena Soares, Lisbon



P E N N A C C H I O

A R G E N T A T O

PASQUALE PENNACCHIO WAS BORN IN CASERTA IN 1979 AND MARISA ARGENTATO WAS BORN AND NAPLES IN 1977; BOTH LIVE IN LONDON

The collaborative duo Pennacchio Argentato make art based on their considerations of the role of technology and mass media in society today, and the impact it is having in redefining our sense of identity, community and morality. Understanding identity on both collective and subjective levels, their works look to portray the means for harnessing the collective conscience of the public through communication media. Creating environments that incorporate graphically vivid sculptural and video works, they focus on the human subject, simultaneously reflecting on the construction of our virtual selves through today's communication technologies, where biographies can be temporary, fluid, disparate and multi-faceted. Analysing medium, message and affect, Pennacchio Argentato adopt a position that is neither for nor against such technological advancements, but remaining critically aware.

YOU WILL NEVER BE SAFE
2013

LEG #1, ARM #1 AND FEET #1
2013

EYE VS. EYE
2014

TI 222, TI 22, TI, 32, TI 1, TI 2 AND TI 11
2014

Two installations combining clusters of sculptures and video focusing on the body have been arranged by Pennacchio Argentato for the exhibition at M HKA. Both include sculptures of fragmented bodies produced in Carbon Kevlar or Titanium, materials that have a military use for protective combat equipment, which here are strewn around the floor like a skin that has been shed. Resembling discarded prosthetics, they hint towards our post-biological selves, imagining logical extensions or

improvements to the body. An animation of an eyeball *Eye vs. Eye* floats in space, observing us observing. The text "YOU WILL NEVER BE SAFE" serves as a screen for a hypnotic, animated screensaver type image. The words paraphrase a statement intended for and circulated by the media, by one of the two men who killed and disembodied a soldier on the streets of London in May 2013, spoken at the scene of the incident. Reflecting on the main intermediary between events and society, Pennacchio Argentato look to portray how the media exercises its ferocious appetite for consuming and re-gurgitating crises.

NH

YOU WILL NEVER BE SAFE
2013
Photo: Max Reitmeier



LEG #1; ARM #1
2013
Photo: Max Reitmeier



EYE VS. EYE and 22 TI series
2014 (installation view at Wilkinson Gallery)
Photo: Peter White



S H I L P A

BORN IN MUMBAI IN 1976; LIVES IN MUMBAI

Shilpa Gupta creates artworks that examine the place of subjectivity and human perception in relation to themes of desire, conflict, security, technology and censorship. Her work is multi-faceted, utilising sculpture and text, also displaying a mastery of audio and visual technologies. Considering technology as an extension of body and mind, Gupta possesses a sharp political consciousness towards the role, psychology and aesthetics of different media forms, particularly towards their complicity in the effects of fear. Though her works could be interpreted as being based on the social or political situation in particular cultural contexts, Gupta keeps their specificity decidedly open, allowing their themes to be interpreted differently wherever they are shown.

SINGING CLOUD
2008–2009

UNTITLED
2008

Singing Cloud is an installation that takes the form of a large amorphous shape constructed using 4000 microphones. The work considers the psychological impact of today's highly mediated information landscape, where fear and suspicion are cultivated. The work, developed through a collaboration with Mahzarin Banaji, a professor of psychology at Harvard University, considers the power of media images as expressed by the behaviour of individuals. In particular, Banaji's research considers the multilayered alterations that take place in human

perception following exposure to images when there is a drop in consciousness of one's self, down to the level of our collective conscience. Gupta has subsequently interpreted and extended this research into a soundtrack made from hypnotic fragments of speech. The microphones have had their function reversed, so rather than being used to record sound, they emit this soundtrack, designed to "sing" and ripple over its surface.

Produced at the same time as *Singing Cloud*, *Untitled* takes the form of a flap-board, used traditionally to announce arrivals and departures. The 29 characters of the board's display generate a series of short lines that change every few seconds. The texts appear in an open and associative style, changing rhythmically rather than randomly. Written by the artist, the lines also reference readings and exchanges Gupta had with scientists, philosophers and historians on the divisive nature of information media.

SOMEONE ELSE
2011–2013

Someone Else is a work by Gupta that is presented in two parts at M HKA and at the Permeke Library in Central Antwerp. The work is based around the idea of a library of 100 books that have been written either anonymously or under a pseudonym. The books have been selected from around the world and from across centuries, including books by Emily Bronte (who used the pseudonym Ellis Bell) and Herman Hesse (who used

G U P T A

the pseudonym Emil Sinclair). The reasons for authors deciding to do this varies greatly, from "Fear of not having a Christian name positively masculine" to "fear of not being able to return home", together offering an insight into the issue of censorship as well as social prejudices in different cultural contexts. At M HKA, 100 metal surrogate book sculptures are presented on shelves. Each is etched with the title of the books as well as the reason for the author's anonymity, and each is empty to signify the absence of the author's real identity. At the Permeke Library, a selection of the books have been inserted into the shelves, including many new additions to this list originally written in Dutch, and are available to read or borrow.

The Permeke Library is located at De Coninckplein 25–26, close to Antwerp Central station.

NH

UNTITLED
2008
Image courtesy: Shilpa Gupta



SINGING CLOUD
2008–2009 (installation view at M HKA)
Photo: Christine Clinckx, M HKA



SOMEONE ELSE
2011 (detail)
Image courtesy: Shilpa Gupta



SOMEONE ELSE
2012–2013 (detail)
Photo: Jamie Woodley



W U

BORN IN MASSACHUSETTS IN 1982; LIVES IN LOS ANGELES

When Wu Tsang emerged as a performance artist and filmmaker some five years ago, he was also visible in works by other artists, such as Andrea Geyer or Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz. He is a distinctive yet versatile performer who works with the relationship between voice, character and subjectivity. In particular, he has developed a technique he calls ‘full body quotation’, which evolved from his training in bel canto opera. It allows him to re-constitute and re-embody a text in real time, as he receives it through an invisible earpiece, but with a voice and movements that take mimicry as far as it is possible in order to defy any notion of authenticity or authorship.

Wu Tsang’s work consists of many such acts that may be linguistically defined with the help of the prefix trans- (‘across’): transposition (of elements and processes from one context to another), translation (in the wider sense of ‘movement across modes of articulation’) and transgression (demonstrating the violent arbitrariness of ‘red lines’ by overstepping them). His own experience of being transgender underlines this ‘acrossness’, but at the same time it demonstrates something else: the need to insist on certain things as long as there is widespread resistance against taking them for granted, and to challenge the roles that language and legibility play for who is recognised as human. In this sense, Wu Tsang’s art might be seen as a re-tooling of identity politics for our times, as something we shouldn’t discard until it is safe to do so.

Perhaps his best-known work is the feature-length film *WILDNESS* (2012). It documents a weekly party and performance night that he organised with DJ/Producers Total Freedom (Ashland Mines) and NGUZUNGUZU (Asma Maroof and Daniel Pineda) at the Silver Platter, a bar frequented by the Latin LGBTQ community in Los Angeles. While celebrating the resilience and determination of the regular clientele, which includes many immigrants from Central America or Mexico, the film also stages a number of self-reflective ‘trans-actions’, from the performance crowd’s interventions into a delicate social fabric to the personification of Silver Platter by the actor Mariana Marroquin’s voice.

SHAPE OF A RIGHT STATEMENT 2008

The work shown here was also recorded at Silver Platter. It formulates one of the ideas behind full body quotation: that new insight can be communicated through the de-subjectivation and re-contextualisation of existing statements. In 2007 Amanda Baggs, an activist for the recognition of autistic people’s rights, posted a manifesto on YouTube.¹ *In My Own Language* has, to date, been watched more than one-and-a-quarter million times. Wu Tsang reperforms the second part of this video, in which a Speech Generation Device reads out in English what Baggs has been saying all along in her own language. In his rendering the subject speaks not *for* itself but, as

T S A N G

it were, *through* itself. The performer becomes a mere device, but tears keep coming to his eyes. The message speaks for itself, but at the same time it speaks up for others.

“I find it very interesting, by the way, that failure to learn your language is seen as a deficit, but failure to learn my language is seen as so natural that people like me are officially described as mysterious and puzzling, rather than anyone admitting that it is themselves who are confused, not autistic people or other cognitively disabled people who are inherently confusing.”²

AK

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnylM1hl2jc>
2. Ibid.

SHAPE OF A RIGHT STATEMENT
2008 (video still)
Image courtesy: Wu Tsang and
Clifton Benevento, New York



BECOMING SUBJECT: CONSIDERATIONS OF VEHICULARITY AND 'WILD WRITING'

At the root of it, we have the struggle of imposition – that rapedance that language does which is a gesturing towards containment, a process that can never be completed. Nietzsche complained of it in *On the Genealogy of Morals*: that version of morality wherein the aristocracy coins a word for a thing, and in so doing, effectively gains possession of it. Of course, in doing so, the aristocracy is also lying to itself, because in point of fact meaning-formation takes place on quite other terrain – it is more subterranean and hence geological than anything that might be inferred by a mere word. The sign winds up being, despite our best efforts, wrong; but the meaning is wrong as well – at best speculative; the only thing we may cling to is the fact that certainty is an illusion. Rather than considering this a depressive force, we should see it as the life force that it is; indeed, a total divorce from meaning – were such a thing possible – might be the closest we get to the experience of 'freedom', as it is often posited.

Visual artists working outside the domain of spoken and written language have known this for some time, and now that writing is beginning to enter into the domain of art, the 'art world' as it is now known, then it stands to take the trouble – for it is a troubling thought – to articulate the stance once again. There are four things: there is image there is word there is sound there is gesture. We favour the last, gesture, because it is so fleeting. If there is a semiotic equivalent, then it is the scrawl – the mark of gesturality that posits itself somewhere between word and image, yet is markedly asignifying. It is that thing that can be inferred, but hardly captured.

We could conjure a 'wild writing', a writing to come, that positions itself within a cognisance of language's ultimate failure, its impossibility to truly *mean*, and

that frees language from its increasingly endangered position as a vehicle for conveying forms of meaning acceptable to the masses in the so-called information age, and rather utilises language as a medium for creating new sounds, new meanings. Language *against* the law, against information. Wild writing would then be part of a tradition that includes the Russian Futurists, the American L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets, asemic writing... The Stein of *Tender Buttons*, the Joyce of *Finnegans Wake*, The Guyotat of *Eden Eden Eden*.

Who would create this. That is a question. We might conceive of a new means of picturing the creating being. The being-as-object. The subject. The machine... A model that reverts to a physicalist standpoint, refuting the body–mind division of the Cartesian. For mind is but an *extension* of body, and vice versa. A wild writing would first of all be a writing of the body. One in which body takes precedence over mind, and thus: the body–mind vehicle. But what does it mean to become a body–mind vehicle? It means, first of all, that you *program yourself*. When we speak of programming the self, then we leave behind the norms of human psychology and begin speaking the language of the mechanic, the language of the machine. But a vehicle is a very particular sort of machine, a machine that is defined by *movement*, by constant motion. That is what it is designed for; not staticity, not the contained motion of, say, the blender. So: a vehicle is a machine, but a specific kind of machine. Program yourself before someone else does it for you. This should be the ultimate pedagogical aim.

As human beings, we have a quality that distinguishes us from other objects. It is our remarkable ability, not just to create things outside of ourselves but to self-program. Self-programming, one becomes an object with agency, a subject. Subjectivity is rooted in the

awareness that creation is not merely a mental process, but a physical, bodily one, as well. No Cartesian splits are acknowledged by the subjectivist, the automaticist – by the wild writer. Instead, the principle of extension rules, wherein mind is but an extension of body, and vice versa. The subjectivist is constantly trying to evade the frame, to go outside the territorial entrapments of the socius. Subjectivity concerns itself with the mechanics of the body–mind machine, rather than the results; hence the machine's *vehicularity*. That is to say, the purpose is the process, the movement, the action – not what it completes. Never the final product. Which is not to say that the final product has no value. But due to the way the rest of the socius has been programmed, and the fact that the automaticist's gesture is a *contra*-programming, the socius's natural reaction to the final product is one of revulsion and rejection; hence, *bad art*, a 'wild writing', is produced as a critical reaction to the conditions of meaning-formation outlined above.

For a 'wild writing', a boundary-less etching into the future unknown, a writing that is inherently frameless, it becomes all about extension – the self no longer a self but a vehicle, the writing a trajectory *extending* always outwards in countless directions – projective pathways melded to the earth. The earth is alive and all life ultimately sprang from the inanimate. If we are to accept this as a fact of evolution, then it follows that we can't really tell what is alive anymore and what's not. Wild writing would be a part of the hylozoic revivalism that is happening in other fields, such as philosophy (object-oriented ontology) and ecology. No longer any differentiating boundaries erected between the self and the art object, the ground and the sky, the creator and the created. Consider the object as a thing, no different than you, the subject. Your goal is to infest it with agency, even if it does not resemble verbatim the agency through which you perceive and mold perception. In going, the subject, self-object, I-object,

gives off pollution, which then becomes the art object. It is not the final destination, but a result of the ceaseless movement.

Identity politics was perhaps the last major mainstream attempt to cling to established categoricals as a means of affirming the significance of the subject. With a reconsideration of the universe from the standpoint of the being-object, we begin to see the fruitlessness of identity politics' quest of instance-finding, yet can still find and fight against the systematic forms of discrimination that human objects must combat in their daily peregrinations. Wild writing is programatically against this, all systems. This is what it means to operate *framelessly*. A robotics of the self need not exclude the political, social dimension, but the tactical considerations will be different for each subject. There is no army here. Nor can we declare that the subject has no thoughts, no emotions. But why anyway give thoughts and emotions primacy over the physical and spectral qualities of a subject?

Becoming subject is a way out: a method of leaving behind the old trappings of the self. Subjectivity goes beyond mere thingness in its necessity to claim a spectral identity, as well as a concrete body-form. It considers that the object, beyond being mere thing, *is* vision, a perceptive device – a surface filled with ego eyes. The writing that shoots out of us thus forms a scape that runs parallel to the terrain we occupy. A being without the frame, without the law. A ground where wild gesture, constant movement is able to thrive – as this new ground is made out of gesture itself.

Travis Jeppesen

Travis Jeppesen is a novelist, art critic and poet who has developed what he terms "object-oriented writing". His critical writings on art, film, and literature have appeared in the leading international art journals. In 2014, his object-oriented writing features in the Whitney Biennial and in a solo exhibition at Wilkinson Gallery in London.

At some point in the year 2011, Donelle Woolford adjusted her date of birth from 1980 to 1954. It was an act of instantaneous aging on the one hand – she went from being 31 to 57 years old, and simultaneous acceleration on the other – enhancing her status as an emerging artist to that of a mid-career one. A record of this resolution appears at the end of a graphic timeline (by no means definitive) in which Woolford had (already) been born in Detroit, right after the release of *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols*, which was in 1977 (and so not in 1980, as mentioned above). In any case, some of these factual upheavals (and subsequent re-assemblages) concerning Woolford's early beginnings were triggered on May 1, 2008 when she discovered a review of her (neo-Cubist) work in *frieze* magazine which declared her biography as “over determined”. She was not sure exactly what that meant.

On May 4, she contemplated changing her address and moving from Brooklyn (or Harlem) to Astoria, or Riverdale, or some other part of town less “determined”. Maybe Tribeca or the Lower East Side, maybe Bushwick. It was true that Woolford knew many people who shared part if not all of her story – black, raised in the American South, educated at an Ivy League university, living in New York. Two weeks on, on May 19, she re-scripted her place of birth from Conyers, Georgia to Detroit, Michigan, and resolved that her family only moved to Conyers when she was eleven (elsewhere twelve) years old. She had realised that the critic responsible for the *frieze* article, Melissa Gronlund, was right. Just because something had happened, whether it had happened once or a thousand times, (or in the South where she was originally from), was no justification for its being integral to a work of fiction. (Presumably Woolford was alluding to the legacy of slavery and its automatic relevance to her

quasi-mythical practice as an African-American artist.) Actually she had known this all along. After all, and at least initially, Donelle Woolford had been conceived as nothing but a biography.

It all began in 1999 when Joe Scanlan – an artist who was everything Donelle Woolford was not, that is a middle-aged working-class Caucasian male – found himself in his studio with a bunch of scrap wood paintings he had crafted. He stood back and looked at them. He liked them, but then as he tilted his head to one side, he felt they would be more interesting if someone else had made them, someone who could better exploit their historical and cultural references. It occurred to him that he knew no artist of African descent to have taken on and reclaimed the origins of Cubism. After much consideration – it was now 2005, Scanlan cast his assistant Namik Minter as Donelle Woolford, the creator of his collages, and cut and pasted factual details from Minter's real life to compose an online fiction of Donelle's biographical constitution. He wondered what would come of it.

Just a few years down the line, Donelle Woolford was making appearances on the international art circuit – travelling to places like London, Paris and Sharjah, attending her own openings, staging herself alongside *her* practice, at times setting up her studio in the gallery as part of the piece. Scanlan would be present on most of these occasions as well, and as the artist engaged the audience about the nature of the work, it was never entirely explicit who was why and what was not. By outsourcing authenticity and (re)attributing authorship to his assistant in this way, was Scanlan merely (mis)appropriating black identity to advance his own career?

Then one day Minter moved on from the job. And the character was left without its corporeal counterpart. Scanlan set up a series of auditions. And recruited not one, but two actors (then three and four, then five) for the task. This is how, along the course of her development, Donelle Woolford divided and multiplied. At times emerging in the double: two of her, “talking to (her)self” at an opening; and at other times performing a split: turning up for her solo shows, in two different cities, on the same night. Having thus proliferated, both personally and professionally, Woolford was ready to make a public proclamation. During a Q&A, with the then ICA Director of Exhibitions Mark Sladen and writer Claire Bishop, which took place in London in 2008, Woolford declared that she was but a persona being portrayed by an actor and therefore not ‘authentic’ in the conventional sense of an ‘artist’ who ‘made’ work.

2.

Of artists that don’t make work, there is also Robbie Williams.

Robbie Williams (“the artist, not the singer”) is a fictitious figure born in conversation between Natascha Sadr Haghghian and Uwe Schwarzer, who first met each other in the run up to the Sharjah Biennial of 2005. Haghghian was there installing her own artwork, and Schwarzer someone else’s. Haghghian found herself perplexed by the fact that Schwarzer had produced the piece he was installing, but he was not the artist.

Schwarzer turned out to be the director of mixedmedia berlin, a company contracted by artists to produce their artworks. What Haghghian was surprised to realise was

not just that many established artists outsource entire projects to specialised companies like his, but also that they do so on an implicit understanding that this aspect of the process would remain confidential. Schwarzer expressed no inclination towards feelings of ownership over any of the art he had been paid to produce – his approach accepted a clear split between the idea and its fabrication, and Haghghian found that his professional expertise was double due to his discretion. By and large, the employees of his company remained concealed, receiving no creative attribution for their participation, and once they completed something it was standard procedure that they had nothing more to do with it. The illusion of the solo artist as a singular operator was to be maintained by keeping in(di)visible the multiplicity of labour that goes into the process of artistic production.

Haghghian invited Schwarzer to work on a project together so that she could better understand what he did and how he did it. For instance, she learned that it was crucial for Schwarzer that mixedmedia berlin could account for every choice made with regards to material used for any given project, all the way down to screw type, so as to ensure that the work emanated with the artist’s personal style and professional biography. The main concern was then the artist, not the fabrication. And it seemed what Schwarzer took on, as part of his responsibility, was to always keep the bigger picture of the artist’s body of work in mind. Lest that picture get destroyed. But Haghghian, who on one hand was entirely impressed by Schwarzer’s capacity for this, felt a f(r)iction. She pointed out that there are no manuals for what Schwarzer was calling personal style, indicating that a given artist would use this material based on his biography and not that. If you add to that the fact that companies like mixedmedia berlin produced virtually all the works of some artists, how could it be that there was something definitively personal left about that style?

Robbie Williams’ project *SOLO SHOW* debuted in 2008. It was the outcome of a two-year research-based collaboration between Haghghian and Schwarzer and raised the issue of where, in this age of outsourced labour, industrial processes, and custom fabrication, authorship (is th)ought to lie.

The first part of *SOLO SHOW* comprised five objects resembling obstacles for horses arranged in the space as if for a show-jumping contest. They were made of all kinds of materials, and came in all kinds of shapes. They fell over easily, just like real show-jumping obstacles. The objects had been conceived by Haghghian and produced by Schwarzer’s company, but they were presented to the audience as the work of the Turkish-American artist Robbie Williams, whose voice was heard in the press release, the publication and on the wall, admitting that he had not made the work, but insisting that he was still the author. The choice of mixed media, rather than making a more classical wooden structure, was declared as a way of extensively referencing his biography and of playfully quoting from the history of modern and post-modern art.

The second part comprised an empty gallery with some speaker boxes playing an eight-channel sound installation of a horse galloping and jumping over (imaginary) obstacles. The access to this second space was separated from the first. On the wall was the title of the exhibition, *SOLO SHOW*, but instead of the name of Robbie Williams, it was followed by a list of all the people, there were fifty or so in total, who had contributed in some capacity or other to the production of the project, which is to say to the production of the solo artist Robbie Williams himself.

X.

The notion of authenticity has shifted around significantly through the course of contemporary art history. But while the introduction of the readymade complicated the relationship with the fake and countered some of the obsession with the handmade, it did not incite the death of the author. The role of the signature still operates through the aura of the artist, a sovereign individual acting on his own and bound by his name.

The fundamental conceptual category of the stable unitary subject has always been essential to an art world that does not necessarily know what art is or how it could be. This non-knowledge is a feature of the system that renders it an actual space of potentiality. But the fixation with a narrow formal selfhood, fostered by way of a continuous affirmation of the artist as an exceptional aesthetic hero, ultimately insists on ascribing value through a restrictive system of identification between the figure of the artist and the object that is made. In a world where the name to which an artwork is attributed continues to be central to the reception of it, the 'fiction' of who made the work has to be upheld.

Nida Ghouse

Nida Ghouse is a writer and a curator. Her ongoing projects include *Emotional Architecture* and *Acoustic Matters*. She is currently publishing a monthly series called *Lotus Notes* that traces a partial history of a multi-lingual Soviet-funded literary magazine.

LIST OF WORKS

ANTHEA

HAMILTON

MANBLIND #5
2011
Digital print on paper, vertical blind
mechanism
285 × 205 × 5 cm
Courtesy of the artist

CUT-OUTS
From a series, 2007–ongoing:

CUT-OUTS (ROOM)
2012
Chroma key blue paint and vinyl flooring
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

GATE
2007–2012
Wood, masonry paint, clamps, cut flowers
146 × 248 × 26 cm
Courtesy of the artist

I AM A CAPABLE WOMAN
2012
PVC waste pipes, rubber, elastic, steel,
PVC vinyl, zips
260 × 180 × 100 cm
Courtesy of the artist

LEG CHAIRS
From a series, 2009–ongoing:

LEG CHAIR (CUT THE BULLSHIT)
2011
Perspex, brass, paper, wax
84 × 87 × 47 cm
Private collection, London

LEG CHAIR (JANE BIRKIN)
2011
Acrylic, brass, photographic
reproductions, 7" record cover, nylon
stockings, wax
81 × 92 × 46 cm
Courtesy of the artist

LEG CHAIR (SORRY I'M LATE)
2011
Acrylic, brass, newsprint, plaster
81 × 92 × 46 cm
Courtesy of the artist

AUGUSTAS

SERAPINAS

LEG CHAIR (SUSHI NORI)
2012
Acrylic, brass, plaster, wax, sushi nori, rice
cakes
81 × 92 × 46 cm
Courtesy of the artist

LEG CHAIR (CIGARETTE LEGS)
2014
84 × 87 × 47 cm
Acrylic, wax, plaster, brass
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist

GEORGES
2014
Site-specific installation, building materials
Dimensions variable
Produced by M HKA with support from the
Lithuanian Cultural Council, Vilnius, and
the Heritage Library Hendrik Conscience,
Antwerp
Courtesy of the artist

DONNA

KUKAMA

NOT YET (AND NOBODY KNOWS WHY NOT)
2008
Video
04'56"
Courtesy of the artist and blank projects,
Cape Town

THE SWING (AFTER AFTER FRAGONARD)
2009
Performance documentation, video
15'10"
Courtesy of the artist and blank projects,
Cape Town

ELOISE

HAWSER

SAMPLE AND HOLD
2013
Optical lens, screen with horsehair fabric,
projection screen
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and VI, VII, Oslo

INTERVOLAMETER
2013
Video, 3'
Courtesy of the artist and VI, VII, Oslo

VELOPEX
2014
Plastic bottles, screen print
108 × 51 × 150 cm
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist, VI, VII, Oslo, and
Balice Hertling, Paris

100 KEV
2014
Digital print on cellophane
Dimensions variable
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist, VI, VII, Oslo, and
Balice Hertling, Paris

ERMIAS

KIFLEYESUS

ENDLESS CITIES
From a series, 2009–ongoing
Courtesy the artist and Kusseneers
Gallery, Brussels:

A TALL TREE ATTRACTS THE WIND
2009
Pen on paper
29.5 × 42 cm

I AM BECAUSE WE ARE; WE ARE BECAUSE
I AM
2009
Mixed media on found poster
111 × 193 cm

LOVE ISN'T COMPLICATED, PEOPLE ARE
2010
Mixed media on poster
100 × 70 cm

EMOTIONS AND FACEBOOK
2014
Mixed media on paper
95 × 128 cm

I CALL AND CALL, NOBODY RESPONDS
2014
Mixed media on paper
29.5 × 42 cm

NEVER WASTE A MINUTE THINKING
ABOUT THINGS YOU DON'T LIKE
2014
Pen on magazine page, contact paper
22 × 30 cm

UNIVERSAL WELCOME
2014
Transfer of found poster image and mixed
media on paper
42 × 60 cm

UNSEASONAL (2)
2014
Mixed media on poster
171 × 118 cm

GUAN

XIAO

THERE IS NO ZEBRA CROSSING IN BERLIN
2014
Pen and images transferred onto wall
Dimensions variable
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist

THE DOCUMENTARY: GEOCENTRIC
PUNCTURE
2012
Mixed media installation
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

COGNITIVE SHAPE
2013
Three-channel synchronised video
8'12"
Courtesy of the artist

HAEGUE

YANG

VIP'S UNION
2001–2014
Installation consisting of borrowed chairs
and tables
Dimensions variable
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist

BLIND CURTAIN – FLESH BEHIND
TRICOLORE
2013
Aluminium Venetian blinds, powder coated
aluminium frame
460 × 700 × 150 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal
Crousel, Paris

HEDWIG

HOUBEN

PERSONAL MATTERS AND MATTER OF
FACT
2011
Video, plasticine self-portrait, Rietvelt
chair
Dimensions variable, video 22'
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Fons
Welters, Amsterdam

RETROSPECTIVE ACT
2012–ongoing
Plasticine
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Fons
Welters, Amsterdam

THE HAND, THE EYE AND IT
2013–2014
Video documentation of performance,
plasticine object, table
Variable dimensions, video ca 20'
Courtesy of the artist, 1646, The Hague,
and Galerie Fons Welters, Amsterdam

IMAN

ISSA

MATERIAL
From a series, 2009–2012:

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE PROPOSED
AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO A MONUMENT
THAT HAS BECOME AN EMBARRASSMENT
TO ITS PEOPLE
2010
Two light bulbs, wooden structure, vinyl
text on wall
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE RECALLING
THE DESTRUCTION OF A PROMINENT
PUBLIC MONUMENT IN THE NAME OF
NATIONAL RESISTANCE
2010
Wooden sculpture with black tassel, plinth,
vinyl text on wall
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE ACTING
AS A TESTAMENT TO BOTH A NATION'S
PIONEERING DEVELOPMENT AND
CONTINUING DECLINE
2011
10 seconds sound in 5 min interval,
speakers, vinyl text on wall
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE
COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF A SOLDIER
WHO DIED DEFENDING HIS NATION
AGAINST INTRUDING ENEMIES
2012
Four painted wooden sculptures on plinth,
blank book with four-colour inserts on
shelf, vinyl text on wall
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE
REPRESENTING A BYGONE ERA OF LUXURY
AND DECADENCE
2012
Brass sculpture, pedestal, vinyl text on
wall
Dimensions variable
Collection of the Servais family, Brussels

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE
REPRESENTING A MONUMENT ERECTED
IN THE SPIRIT OF DEFIANCE OF A LARGER
POWER
2012
Wooden sculpture, plinth, vinyl text on wall
Dimensions variable
Collection of the Servais family, Brussels

MATERIAL FOR A SCULPTURE
COMMEMORATING A BLIND MAN WHO
BECAME A GREAT WRITER, OPENING
UP AN UNPARALLELED WORLD OF
POSSIBILITIES TO THE PEOPLE OF HIS
NATION
2012
Video on loop, tube monitor on painted
white plinth, vinyl text on wall
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul

THIRTY-THREE STORIES ABOUT
REASONABLE CHARACTERS IN FAMILIAR
PLACES
2011
Three-part installation (BOOK,
EPIOLOGUE, INDEX), mixed media
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul

IMRAN

QURESHI

AND THEY STILL SEEK THE TRACES OF
BLOOD...
2013
Installation comprising 24,000 printed and
crumpled sheets
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Corvi-Mora,
London

I WANT YOU TO STAY WITH ME
2013
Paint on gallery floor and paper
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Corvi-Mora,
London

JUHA PEKKA

MATIAS LAAKKONEN

WALKING FROM YAKUTSK TO HELSINKI IN
5,3 MILLION STEPS
2009
Pair of reindeer hide boots, postcard
35 × 28 × 24 cm
Courtesy of the artist

TSIMTSUM
2014
Handsewn leather case, maple stick, felt
and cotton paper
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

ESTRAPADE
2014
Wood, wool
Dimensions variable
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist

KATJA

NOVITSKOVA

APPROXIMATION XXI (ALPACA)
2014
Digital print on aluminum, cutout display
146 × 180 × 35 cm
Co-produced by M HKA and Kraupa-
Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin
Courtesy of the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany
Zeidler, Berlin

APPROXIMATION XXII (QUOKKA)
2014
Digital print on aluminum, cutout display
146 × 275 × 35 cm
Co-produced by M HKA and Kraupa-
Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin
Courtesy of the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany
Zeidler, Berlin

APPROXIMATION XXIII (SNAIL)
2014
Digital print on aluminum, cutout display
220 × 144 × 35 cm
Co-produced by M HKA and Kraupa-
Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin
Courtesy of the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany
Zeidler, Berlin

BRANCHING X
2014
Digital print on aluminum, cutout display
250 × 70 × 35 cm
Co-produced by M HKA and Kraupa-
Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin
Courtesy of the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany
Zeidler, Berlin

BRANCHING XI
2014
Digital print on aluminum, cutout display
250 × 69 × 35 cm
Co-produced by M HKA and Kraupa-
Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin
Courtesy of the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany
Zeidler, Berlin

GROWTH POTENTIALS (STAND ALONE) 1-3
2014
Digital print on film, polyurethane, display
stands
Each 150 × 50 × 20 cm
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany
Zeidler, Berlin

LAWRENCE

ABU HAMDAN

DOUBLE-TAKE: OFFICER LEADER OF
THE CHASSEURS SYRIAN REVOLUTION
COMMANDING A CHARGE
2014
Installation with audio, slides, paintings
and a print
Audio work, 11'10"
Production supported by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist

Painting, oil on canvas, 120 × 160 cm
Painting, oil on canvas, 160 × 120 cm
Print, 43 × 30 cm
Private collection, Wales

LIESBETH

DOMS

ARTIST'S AURA
2013
LED spotlights, DMX mixing board
Dimensions variable
Co-produced by M HKA and HISK, Ghent
Courtesy of the artist

CAMOUFLAGED AS A CONCEPTUAL WORK
OF ART
2014
Printed fabric
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

MARIA
SAFRONOVA

DAILY SCHEDULE
A series, 2012–2013
Collection of the Moscow Museum of
Modern Art:

DAILY SCHEDULE: 7AM: WAKING UP. WARD
2012
Oil on canvas mounted on board
55 × 85 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: 7.20AM: WASHING.
TOILET
2013
Oil on canvas mounted on board
40 × 30 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: 8.30AM: ANALYSES.
PROCEDURES ROOM
2012
Oil on canvas mounted on board
55 × 50 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: 1.15PM: LUNCH.
CANTINE
2012
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
55 × 70 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: 4.20PM: REST.
CORRIDOR
2012
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
55 × 60 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: PROCEDURES.
BATHROOM
2012
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
55 × 50 cm
Collection of the Moscow Museum of
Modern Art

DAILY SCHEDULE: 5.45PM: HAIRCUT.
BATHROOM
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
40 × 30 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: 7.40PM: TELEVISION.
CANTINE
2012
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
55 × 75 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: 8.35PM: FIGHT.
CORRIDOR
2012
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
55 × 70 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: 8.50PM. INTRAVENOUS
2012
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
40 × 30 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: DREAM. GARDEN
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
55 × 90 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: TEXT
2012
Print on paper, mounted on board
55 × 75 cm

DAILY SCHEDULE: MODEL
2012
MDF, foamboard, tempera, metal wire
55 × 60 × 30 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW
A series, 2013–2014
Courtesy of the artist and Paperworks
Gallery, Moscow:

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
NEW YEAR
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
47 × 68 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
COMPETITION
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
47 × 52 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
KINDERGARTEN
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
45 × 57 cm
THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
CLASS
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
47 × 60 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
CELEBRATION
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
47 × 47 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
GAME
2013
Oil on canvas, mounted on board
45 × 54 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
STORAGE
2014
Cardboard, metal wire, plaster, sand,
rubber
56 × 48 × 45 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
CLASSROOM
2014
Cardboard, metal wire, plaster, sand,
rubber
56 × 57 × 45 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
BUILDING
2014
Cardboard, metal wire, plaster, sand,
rubber
82 × 43 × 42 cm

THE GAME OF THE GENERAL VIEW:
PLAYGROUND
2014
Cardboard, metal wire, plaster, sand,
rubber
75 × 40 × 40 cm

MARIA
TANIGUCHI

UNTITLED (DAWN'S ARMS)
2011
Two-channel video installation, HD video,
colour, sound, monitors, plywood
23'07"
Courtesy of the artist and Silverlens,
Manila and Singapore

UNTITLED
2012
Acrylic, canvas, wood support
304.8 × 457.2 cm
Collection of Isa Lorenzo and Rachel Rillo,
Manila

UNTITLED
2013
Acrylic, canvas, wood support
304.8 × 457.2 cm
Private Collection, Manila

UNTITLED
2013
Acrylic, canvas, wood support
304.8 × 213.4 cm
Collection of Rina Ortiz, Manila

UNTITLED
2013
Acrylic, canvas, wood support
304.8 × 137.16 cm
Collection of Mitzi De Dios, Manila

UNTITLED
2013
Acrylic, canvas, wood support
228.6 × 114.3 cm
Collection of Alice Lung, Hong Kong

UNTITLED
2013
Acrylic, canvas, wood support
304.8 × 137.16 cm
Collection of Howard Tam, Minnesota, US

UNTITLED
2014
Acrylic, canvas, wood support
304.8 × 137.16 cm
Private Collection, Berlin/Singapore

MASSIMO
GRIMALDI

EMERGENCY'S PAEDIATRIC CENTRE IN
NYALA, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO APPLE
IMAC CORE I5S
2011
Two Apple iMac Core i5s, double
slideshow
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist and Galleria ZERO,
Milan

EMERGENCY'S SURGICAL CENTRE IN
CODERICH, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO
APPLE THUNDERBOLT DISPLAYS
2013
Two Apple iMac quad-core Intel Core i5s,
double slideshow
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Team, New York

EMERGENCY'S MATERNITY CENTRE IN
ANABAH, PHOTOS SHOWN ON TWO APPLE
IMAC QUAD-CORE I5S
2014
Two Apple iMac Quad-Core i5s, double
slideshow
Dimensions variable
Co-produced by M HKA and Galleria
ZERO, Milan
Courtesy of the artist and Galleria ZERO,
Milan

NADEZHDA
GRISHINA

NO-GO MACHINE
2012–2013
Video installation, flash with video, electric
red bulb, adapter for bulb
7'18", Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

POINT
2014
Video installation, multimedia sculpture,
video
Video 4'20", sculpture 75 × 45 cm
Production supported by M HKA and
LABORATORIA Art&Science Space,
Moscow
Courtesy of the artist

NÁSTIO
MOSQUITO

NÁSTIA'S MANIFESTO
2010
Video
4'10"
Courtesy of the artist

3 CONTINENTS (EUROPE, AMERICA,
AFRICA)
2010
Video
7'45"
Courtesy of the artist

OLEG
USTINOV

IDM
From a series, 2013
Courtesy of the artist:

IDM #5: 22 2 11
2013
Mixed media on paper
2.15 × 1.59 cm

IDM #9: BI(OA)RD-5-5
2013
Mixed media on paper
2.14 × 1.59 cm

IDM #10: 3EANA E
2013
Mixed media on paper
2.140 × 1.59 cm

IDM #11: IF RIV ER WHE RE ARE
2013
Mixed media on paper
2.13 × 1.59 cm

IDM #12: MOUNTAINSIDE
2013
Mixed media on paper
2.14 × 1.59 cm

IDM #15: FIITSH
2013
Mixed media on paper
2.14 × 1.59 cm

THE ADMINISTRATION
2013–2014
Leaflet in Russian, English and Dutch,
news clips from NTV Television (Russia),
text, chipboard, plastic tube
Dimensions variable
Produced by M HKA
Courtesy of the artist

ONKAR KULAR
&
NOAM TORAN

I CLING TO VIRTUE
2010
Ceramic resin, texts, video
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artists and Keith R Jones

OSCAR
MURILLO

A BASTARD CLASS
2014
Mixed media installation
Dimensions variable
Co-produced by M HKA and the artist
Courtesy of the artist and David Zwirner,
London

PATRIZIO
DI MASSIMO

THE LUSTFUL TURK
From a series, 2012–2014
Courtesy of the artist and T293, Naples/
Rome:

THE LUSTFUL TURK (SALON)
2013
Oil on canvas
200 × 270 cm

THE LUSTFUL TURK (BANG BANG)
2013
Oil on canvas
200 × 270 cm

THE LUSTFUL TURK (HABERDASHERY)
2013
Oil on canvas
200 × 270 cm

THE LUSTFUL TURK (WALLPAPER)
2014
C-prints
Dimensions variable
Produced by M HKA

ME, MUM, MISTER, MAD
A series, 2014
Co-produced by M HKA and Kunsthalle
Lissabon, Lisbon
Courtesy of T293, Naples/Rome:

MAD
2014
Bolster in green wool with piping, bolster
in pink suede, bolster in brown velvet with
rabbit fur, birdcage, canary, logs, stones
Dimensions variable

MISTER
2014
Cushions in denim, cotton and raw canvas,
piping, trimmings, tassel, live performance
Dimensions variable

MUM
2014
Tassel, cord, hosiery net, pelmet, velvet,
ivy
Various dimensions

PEDRO
BARATEIRO

CURFEW
2013–2014
Wood, metal net, plaster, terracotta, paint,
glass and metal table
157 × 170 × 120 cm
Produced by M HKA with support from the
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
Courtesy of the artist and Galeria
Flomena Soares, Lisbon

THE ACTORS
2014
One-channel video installation, HD video,
colour, sound
11'
Produced by M HKA with support from the
Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon
Courtesy of the artist and Galeria
Flomena Soares, Lisbon

PENNACCHIO
ARGENTATO

YOU WILL NEVER BE SAFE
2013
Video projection on text-shaped screen
115 × 69 cm
Courtesy of the artists and T293, Naples/
Rome

ARM #2
2013
Carbon-Kevlar, resin
54 × 10 cm
Courtesy of the artists and T293, Naples/
Rome

ARM #3
2013
Carbon-Kevlar, resin
54 × 10 cm
Courtesy of the artists and T293, Naples/
Rome

CHEST #1
2013
Carbon-Kevlar, resin
51 × 41 cm
Courtesy of the artists and T293, Naples/
Rome

FEET #1
2013
Carbon-Kevlar, resin
42 × 29 cm
Courtesy of the artists and T293, Naples/
Rome

LEG #1
2013
Carbon-Kevlar, resin
42 × 17 cm
Courtesy of the artists and T293, Naples/
Rome

EYE VS. EYE
2014
Plexiglass, digital projection
50 × 50 × 1 cm
Co-produced by M HKA and Wilkinson
Gallery, London
Courtesy of the artists and Wilkinson
Gallery, London

SHILPA
GUPTA

SINGING CLOUD
2008–2009
Microphones with multi-channel audio
152 × 457 × 61 cm, audio 9'30"
Courtesy of Louisiana Museum of Modern
Art, Humlebæk, Denmark
Acquired with the funding from the
Augustinus Foundation

UNTITLED
2008
Motion flapboard
25 × 180 × 21 cm
Collection of Louisiana Museum of
Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark
Acquired with the funding from the
Augustinus Foundation

SOMEONE ELSE
2011
100 stainless steel etched books,
stainless steel shelves
488 × 22 × 190 cm
Collection of Juan Pablo Carranza, Mexico
City

SOMEONE ELSE
2012–2013
Printed paper in black frames, library
books
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Galleria
Continua, San Gimignano/Beijing/Les
Moulins

WU
TSANG

SHAPE OF A RIGHT STATEMENT

2008

One-channel video installation, HD video,
colour, sound, iridescent gold curtain

5'15"

Courtesy of the artist and Clifton
Benevento, New York

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Don't You Know Who I Am? Art After Identity Politics is organised by M HKA within the framework of 'The Uses of Art', a project by the European museum confederation *L'Internationale*. *L'Internationale* proposes a space for art within a non-hierarchical and decentralised internationalism, based on the value of difference and horizontal exchange among a constellation of cultural agents, locally rooted and globally connected. *L'Internationale* comprises six major European museums: Moderna Galerija (MG, Ljubljana, Slovenia); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (MNCARS, Madrid, Spain); Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA, Barcelona, Spain); Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium); SALT (Istanbul and Ankara, Turkey); Van Abbemuseum (VAM, Eindhoven, the Netherlands). The confederation also includes associate organisations from the academic and artistic fields.

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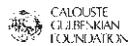
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'internationale



frame visual art
Finland



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Anthea Hamilton, Augustas Serapinas, Donna Kukama, Eloise Hawser, Ermias Kifleyesus, Guan Xiao, Haegue Yang, Hedwig Houben, Iman Issa, Imran Qureshi, Juha Pekka Matias Laakkonen, Katja Novitskova, Lawrence Abu Hamdan, Liesbeth Doms, Maria Safronova, Maria Taniguchi, Massimo Grimaldi, Nadezhda Grishina, Nástio Mosquito, Oleg Ustinov, Onkar Kular & Noam Toran, Oscar Murillo, Patrizio Di Massimo, Pedro Barateiro, Pennacchio Argentato, Shilpa Gupta, Wu Tsang

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Present Perfect, London

M HKA

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A F T E R I D E N T I T Y . M U H K A . B E

DON'T YOU
KNOW
WHO I AM?

1 3 . 0 6 . 1 4 ART AFTER
IDENTITY POLITICS 1 4 . 0 9 . 1 4

M HKA
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M HKA

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