

#SUPERVISOR'S NOTE

Two years ago we launched a pilot venture from within the programme in Modern and Contemporary Art at Christie's Education in London. Our aim was to initiate a student-run publication that would gather together critical writing, features and interviews exploring aspects of the ecosystem that makes up contemporary art and its varied practices. Before you is C#14 -- the third issue in the series.

As in previous years, students formed an editorial board and proposals for submission were received. Designers came forward from within the cohort and copy editors pored over texts, returning queries and suggested changes. Deadlines were set and inevitably bent to the demands of production schedules. As I write here, the C#14 is nearing the final stages before it goes live and reaches out to a global constituency of readers.

This has been a remarkable year for our programme and this particular cohort of students have been largely responsible for creating a supportive and collegiate atmosphere with no small amount of hard work, but a great deal of laughter and fun too. For this and more, they have our thanks. We are very proud of our students in Course C from the year 2013-14 and I hope something of the unique qualities they brought to the collective experience of this year shine through in the writing and design of these pages. As originally conceived, this is entirely their venture and venue. As they make the transition from course work to fashioning their own professional practices, we wish them well and know they go out into the world as excellent ambassadors for Christie's Education, London.

John Slyce

Senior Tutor, Modern and Contemporary Art and Art World Practice



Jemma Harrison
Our Conversations Are All So Boring Who Would Want to Hear Them?, 2014
 42 x 42 cm
 Image Courtesy of the Artist

#STAFF

SUPERVISOR

JOHN SLYCE
 jslyce@christies.edu

PROJECT MANAGERS

ERICA WENNERHOLM
 erica.wennerholm@gmail.com
 ROBERTA GUIDICCI
 roberta.mightyr@hotmail.it

LAYOUT/DESIGN

ARZU KIRANER
 arzukiraner@gmail.com
 TAYLOR JANE LE MELLE
 taylor.le.melle@gmail.com
 ANDREA HERRADA MAIZ
 andrea.herrada@gmail.com

PHOTO EDITORS

JOANNA HATTAB
 joanna_hattab90@hotmail.com
 ARZU KIRANER
 arzukiraner@gmail.com
 ANDREA HERRADA MAIZ
 andrea.herrada@gmail.com

ADVISORS

MICHELE ROBECCHI
 mrobecchi@gmail.com
 KIRI KRAGIN
 kragin@christies.com

MANAGING EDITORS

ANNIE JACKSON
 anniejackson02@gmail.com
 MORAG WALSH BARNES
 morag@demiloart.com

COMMISSIONING EDITORS

HANIA AFIFI
 hania.affi@gmail.com
 MARITZA MELANIA LACAYO
 maritza004@gmail.com
 TONI SLOANE LAWRENCE
 tonisloane.lawrence@gmail.com
 GIULIA TURBIGLIO
 gturbiglio@student.christies.edu
 SORANA SERBAN
 sorana.serban@gmail.com
 NATALIA TAYLOR
 natalia.taylor.009@alumni.ucl.ac.uk
 BINYIN HU
 bhu@student.christies.edu
 BU YI WU
 gwu@student.christies.edu

COPY EDITORS

MARCY KENNEY
 marcy.kenney@gmail.com
 STEPHANIE RAO
 steph.rao@gmail.com
 NINA MALHERBE
 nina.malherbe@gmail.com
 BINYIN HU
 bhu@student.christies.edu

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#COVER IMAGE

MIHUT BOSCU KAFCHIN

Father Energy I, 2013
 Disco Ball Synthetic Beard, Spraypaint, Variable
 Dimensions
 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Sabot Gallery
 Deutsche Telekom Collection

ISBN 978-0-9570054-9-5

#CONTENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS

London:

Martin Creed at Hayward Gallery | Elisabeth Limido | 06-07

David Robilliard at ICA | Natalia Taylor | 08-09

Pangea at Saatchi Gallery | Toni Sloane Lawrence | 10-12

Marina Abramović at The Serpentine Gallery | Alice Surer | 13-15

Marina Abramović at The Serpentine Gallery | Da Eun Back | 16-17

Hannah Maybank at Gimpel Fils | Penny Yeung | 18-20

Henri Matisse at Tate Modern | Roberta Guiducci | 21-23

Trisha Baga at Zabłudowicz Collection | Nick Coombs | 24-25

Italian Colourism at Second Home Britannia House | YuYu Chien | 26-28

Polke/Richter – Richter/Polke at Christie's Mayfair | Hania Afifi | 29-31

Jean Paul Gaultier at Barbican Art Centre | Nina Malherbe | 32-33

United Kingdom:

Andy Holden at Spike Island, Bristol | Arzu Kiraner | 34-36

The Skies Can't Keep Their Secret at Turner Contemporary, Margate | Marcy Kenney | 37-39

Glasgow International Festival | Taylor Jane LeMelle | 40-42

International:

I'm Still Here at Magasin 3, Stockholm Konsthall | Erica Wennerholm | 43-45

Harun Farocki at Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin | Maddie Norton | 46-48

Fake and Loathing in Shanghai | Yingqing Fu | 49-51

Jeannette Ehlers at Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen | Taylor Jane LeMelle | 52-53

Get the Bloom at Shoot the Lobster, Luxembourg | Melanie de Jamblinne | 54-55

C.P. Lin Collection of Ming and Qing Chinese Arts, Hong Kong | Gabriel Chin | 56-58

MUSEUMS & PRIVATE COLLECTIONS

Boros Collection & Hoffman Collection, Berlin | Morag Walsh Barnes | 59-61

Aurora Museum, Pudong, Shanghai | Donna Yuen | 62-64

Perez Art Museum Miami | Maritza Melania Lacayo | 65-66

PROFILE

Ivan Seal | Giulia Turbiglio | 67-69

A Sit Down with Jemma Harrison | Joanna Hattab | 70-72

Interview with Christian Jankowski | Sorana Serban | 73-80

FEATURES

Baltimore's Art Scene: Young, Transient and On the Rise | Annie Jackson | 81-84

New Kids on the Eastern Art Block | Sorana Serban | 85-90

Rethinking Art Social Network | Ahra Cho | 91-92

#CONTENT

Martin Creed

What's the Point of It?

Hayward Gallery, London
29 January - 5 May 2014

by ELISABETH LIMIDO



Martin Creed

Work No. 1092 Mothers, 2011, White Neon, Steel
Martin Creed: What's the Point of It?, Installation View
Image Courtesy of Hayward Gallery, London

Martin Creed's first retrospective at the Hayward Gallery brings together a variety of works from different format and media, which gives a rather complete overview on the minimalist artist's practice over the years. The juxtaposition of paintings, sculptures, lights, installations, music and videos gives the visitor the chance to enter

a different world than the very urban scene just outside the gallery walls.

The spaces at the Hayward seem to perfectly accommodate the works on display, from the adjusted space at the entrance, where the piece, *Work No. 1092*, 2011, turns and fills the room, to the three outside spaces,

making the work of art a link between the gallery and its surroundings.

The curation of the show almost brings the visitor in a meditation about material, and the sense of some commonplace objects. The plurality of meanings, and of ways to experience this exhibition, makes it worth debating around the ideas presented by the artist. The first room for example, with the monumental *Work No. 1092*, can be thought of as a temple, where you can sit and be impregnated by the tone of the exhibition, before moving forward to the rest. However at several points in the exhibition the visitor will re-encounter the installation, it being from the third room, or from the top of the stairs. Each time it will give a new dimension to the work and enrich the general meaning of the body of works exposed.

Creed's minimalist works are also characterized by the spirit within it, his humour and the astounding effect almost present in each piece. The extravagant dimensions of the works, and the way they interact with each other by their medium, content or size gives another meaning to the title of the show; the artist does not seem to name or hint at what 'it' would be in the title of his exhibition, but makes it a playful idea to work around. Although knowingly removed by him, the presence of the artist is striking in each piece, and the result (it being a sound, a movement, an idea) is marked with the artist's identity.

In June 2011, the English artist was selected by the Fruitmarket Gallery to participate in the restoration of the locals of Scotsman Steps, the old headquarters of Edinburgh's news publisher, The Scotsman. To underline

the importance of that moment, they created the Scotsman Steps, an octagonal tower of 104 steps leading to the building. The artist had covered each step with a different colour, to confer an aesthetic aspect to the place. He had also participated in the creation of billboards for the 2012 Olympic Games and had created an extended versions of the podium by painting five of them.

The playfulness in Martin Creed's work is key to the understanding of it. The curation in the Hayward made it even more apparent, by placing works outside the gallery, by blocking the entrance door with a couch, and in the essence of the works of art. For example, the room full of balloons will necessarily engage the visitor, even if he decides not to enter it: it creates an interaction between the visitors themselves, and the experience of the exhibition is shared.

When asked about the retrospective, Creed seems to be removing himself from the ensemble, by giving an insight on the pieces, but with some humour, not totally explaining them. The mystery and individual experience are important parts of how the visitor should encounter the body of work.

The show was initially due to end in April, but has been extended, due to very popular demand, especially towards the end of the show. The family-friendly environment brought together people who might not be the Hayward's usual contemporary shows visitors. There is no right way to experience the show, but it is all centred on the plurality of experiences that Martin Creed offers to the visitor.

David Robilliard

The Yes No Quality of Dreams

ICA, London
16 April - 15 June 2014

by NATALIA TAYLOR

David Robilliard, born in 1952, took the lives and loves of the gay scene in 1980s London as his muse. He was appointed the epitaph 'the new master of the modern person' by Gilbert & George, his greatest advocates, and early employers when he came to live in Hoxton in 1975.

The past eight months have seen the artist's work return to London after a twenty-year hiatus. The ICA's show is preceded by last year's *David Robilliard: Paintings, Drawings and Poems* at Rob Tufnell, an exhibition that recognised that while he was a self-taught artist, his painting, drawings and poetry existed symbiotically. However, the show at the ICA focuses exclusively on paintings from the last few years of his life, which ended suddenly in 1988 as a result of contracting an AIDS-related illness. *Keep Tomorrow Free*, 1988, the first painting to confront the visitor open entering the intersectional corridor in the upper gallery, is an instruction that hits upon the freedom of young adulthood and a defiant attitude taken up in the midst of the AIDS scare.

This freedom is implicit in the confident way pure colour is idiosyncratically applied on the bright white expanse of canvases, all averaging in size at around 150 x 150 cm, and evenly spaced apart in the two rooms:

one lit by daylight, the other artificially. A latecomer to painting, as he only took it up in 1985, Robilliard used acrylic paint: a fast-drying, easy-to-use option.¹ The cheap and simple materials employed by the artist show the efficacy of his visual language: there is no sense of hesitation. Occasional traces of a pencil underdrawing are visible, but rare, and are always followed through. Text dominates the compositions, as does the artist's signature and date, present in the lower third of each canvas. Robilliard's signature is actually his auto-portrait in these images, and in the signature line, the date is marked with equal prominence, suggesting an awareness that these almost-instant drawings were a record of himself in a particular era. The linear profiles of men and women in *A Roomful of Hungry Looks*, 1987, resemble alphabetical characters, showing the fluidity between the artist's relationships with people and with words.

In an age before instant online communication became ubiquitous, the textual and social immediacy in Robilliard's work is evident from the mantra that is the title of the work *Life isn't Good it's Excellent*, 1987, a depiction of a double-headed male figure. Perhaps this image was too literal a metaphor for the artist, who, in a self-effacing manner, wrote 'Robilart'



David Robilliard

Life Isn't Good, It's Excellent, 1987

Acrylic on Canvas

Photo by Paul Knight

Image Courtesy of Collection Michael Neff, Frankfurt am Main

© The Estate of David Robilliard.

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at the bottom alongside his real signature. There is certainly an interdependency between Robilliard's paintings and his written work. He would often send out poems on postcards, eventually publishing them in *A Box of Poems*, 1987, which he used to send to friends in envelopes also marked *Life isn't Good, it's Excellent*.² The title for *Wondering What to Do this Evening*, 1987, similarly grounds the work in carefree immediacy which is typical of youth, and of the later YBAs who would be the most obvious heirs to this irreverent, but sometimes melancholy attitude.

The painting from which this show takes its title, *The Yes No Quality of Dreams*, 1988, appears to particularly play with synesthesia; 'no' is written in red, whilst 'dreams' is afforded a new colour for each

letter. The profile of a face looks back to another in the top third of this square canvas, implying a separation or fleeting glance. The sense of chance and potential present in the subject and aesthetic of the work, shows the romantic sensibility of the artist, living in an open and thriving cultural scene within the capital, but in exile from his past. Although British law decriminalized private intercourse between two men in 1967, it was still considered illegal in the Crown dependency of Guernsey, the artist's place of birth, until 1983. The style of this artist, unschooled and unbound by convention, echoes the freedom presented by the sub cultures of London at this time of great social change.

¹ *A Roomful of Hungry Looks*, What's on in Amsterdam, 1993, p.10

² Benjamin Buchloh, *Why Joseph Beuys is the worst 'The Poignancy of Stuff'*, Kari Rittenbach, 032c, May 2009



David Robilliard

The Yes No Quality of Dreams

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, 2014

Photo by Paul Knight. © The Estate of David Robilliard
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Pangaea

Saatchi Gallery, London
2 April - 2 November 2014

by TONI SLOANE LAWRENCE



Rafael Gómezbarros
Casa Tomada, 2013

Resin, Fiber Glass, Madera, Screen Cotton, Cuerda Arenas, Cerrejón
50 x 20 x 50 cm; Legs 90 x 50 cm
© Rafael Gómezbarros, 2013 (Sam Drake 2014)
Image Courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London

This Spring, the Saatchi Gallery opened *Pangaea: New Art from Africa and Latin America*; ten of the fifteen rooms of the former County Hall in Duke of York square are sparsely hung with large-scale, gritty works from non-Western artists. Upon entering the show there is a work by Rafael Gomezbarros entitled *Casa Tomada, 2013*, which starts the show off in true Saatchi

style: grandiose and eye-catching. The first room of the gallery is filled with sculptures of ants that reach to nearly 1.5m each; upon further investigation it is mentioned that they are, in fact, made of human skulls. Gomezbarros' piece mimics the natural patterns of an ant colony; the insects seem to crawl in a widely spaced, but highly organized set of clusters. The exhibition

guide explains that they represent displaced people and social organization. However, the installation also explicates themes of infestation, colonization and community – not to mention, very literal illustrations of exotic creatures. As the first room in the show, this sets the tone for the exhibition.

The rest of the artists come from various places, both rural and urban, throughout Latin America and Africa. Each of the artists plays with notions of representation, appropriation, identity and space. Boris Nzebo's painting *Auberge du Boulot Noir, 2013*, is reminiscent of Francis Picabia's transparency paintings of the later 1920s – imagery heavy with symbolism painted in layers, suggesting a fragmentary and cinematic approach to assembling the two-dimensional space. Nzebo takes this approach to painting and puts it into a contemporary context; he layers brightly-coloured drawings of urban housing in Douala with portraits of women who have intricate hairstyles, commonly advertised at Cameroonian beauty salons.

Oscar Murillo has become an emblem of currency in today's contemporary art market; his assemblage installations and paintings made of found objects shed light on his Columbian heritage through the eyes of a young man who immigrated to London as a boy. At *Pangaea*, there is an entire room dedicated to Saatchi's collection of his works with the focal point being *Dark Americano, 2013*, which hangs opposite an untitled work that incorporates posters, shelving brackets and broken footballs. Like Nzebo, Murillo's works are an amalgamation of unlikely factors that suggest a multifaceted environment that

is unique to developing urban sprawls. While there has been controversy regarding Murillo's works and their performance in the contemporary art market, the pieces fit within the framework of *Pangaea*; they also identify with the Saatchi collecting aesthetic which includes, but is not limited to, large scale works by young artists, many of whom incorporate the notion of rawness or an anti-aesthetic into their work.

Pangaea comes to London at an interesting time. First and foremost, contemporary Latin American and African art are niches that continue to be neglected by contemporary art collectors. This, in turn, affects the visibility of these artists within an institutional context. Second, Saatchi has a reputation for 'discovering' artists. Although debatable, he does succeed in facilitating shows that seem cutting-edge. This has a positive effect on the visibility of lesser-known artists due to the central London location, international visibility and high number visitors. Third, *Pangaea* is open when the tourist season is in full swing and also coincides with Pinta London, a Latin American contemporary art fair held in central London. Also, it arrives on the heels of the first contemporary African art fair held at Somerset house in October 2013.

The most important questions to ask is does *Pangaea* work? Also, does this exhibition breathe life into an under-valued sector of contemporary art? Not entirely. However, it succeeds in a way that visitors who would have never been exposed to these artists now have the opportunity to see them in a large-scale gallery space. It doesn't because the curation of *Pangaea* suggests that these artists have been plucked from obscurity,



Boris Nzebo

Auburge du Boulot Noir, 2013

Acrylic on Canvas, 150 x 130 cm

© Boris Nzebo, 2013

Image Courtesy of the Saatchi Gallery, London

discovered and now held within the highly esteemed Saatchi collection. These artists represent a microcosmic view of what is happening in non-Western art today; Saatchi has been brilliant at capitalizing on the timing of the show which suggests that his (or his collectors) buying sense remains insightful and cutting edge, even after all these years. *Pangaea* succeeds as a vehicle to feed non-Western contemporary art to visitors passing through the impressively high-ceilings and white walls of the Saatchi Gallery. However, it fails at deconstructing stereotypes – all ten rooms of the exhibition share similar themes.

According to this show, Latin American and African art seems to only include symbols of immigration, war, and poverty. *Pangaea* does give a glimpse into an art world that is just being noticed by Westerner viewers, but it certainly does not tell the whole story.

Marina Abramović

512 Hours

The Serpentine Gallery, London
11 June – 25 August 2014

by ALICE SURER

Four years after *The Artist is Present*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, Serbian artist Marina Abramović is having her first improvised performance in the United Kingdom. Abramović is residing at The Serpentine Gallery in London over the summer – for 512 hours – until the end of August.

Marina Abramović was born in Yugoslavia in 1946. Since the beginning of her career in the early 1970s she has developed the practice of performance as visual art using her body as a medium. Abramović explores her physical and psychological limits overcoming suffering, risk and exhaustion while seeking for emotional and spiritual alteration. Her work has been presented with performances, photography, sound, sculpture and video in exhibitions held in significant institutions all over the globe.

During her three-month happening at MoMA in 2010 spectators were invited to sit silently opposite the artist confronting her gaze for a limitless amount of time. In 1997, she was awarded the Golden Lion for Best Artist at the Venice Biennale and in 2008 she received the Austrian Commander Cross.¹

Abramović's show at the Serpentine offers a departure from what she has done before as

she is performing in a new context; the artist is occupying the gallery six days a week – 10am to 6pm over the course of 64 days – by herself, vulnerable, employing her being as the subject. The entrance is free, however tickets are given out on a 'first-come, first-serve' basis allowing a restricted number of visitors at any one time. After standing and waiting in queue – it is part of the adventure – visitors are guided and invited to leave all of their personal belongings, including bags, coats, mobiles and watches in provided metallic lockers. They may then enter the gallery divided into three illuminated, empty rooms. Spectators rapidly experience a feeling of loss in space and time. They are now becoming 'active', taking part in the so-called creation of the artwork and may enjoy the experience as long as they wish.

As soon as I got into the crowded area, my first impulse was to come upon the 'queen of performance art'. Marina was there: standing and staring at a white wall, wearing a black outfit. People around her appeared nervous, excited and calm. After a short moment, she wandered humbly and interacted silently with the audience. She has the fascinating power of distributing strong energy; some visitors followed every gesture she made. The performance carried on as she selected a young man and took him by the hand to walk around the space. She

Marina Abramović Photograph © 2014
Photo by Marco Anelli



guided him to a second room where they both looked at the wall. The exercise went on with other members of the public.

Furthermore, four to six gallery assistants – dressed in black as well – contributed to the performance as they were supporting Abramović in her improvisation. Their role was to choose individuals, take them by the hand and move around to reach a wall. They would then face it – sometimes with closed eyes – hand in hand. The relationship between the performer and the audience is extremely strong. Each moment is unique and different for everyone attending the event.

Marina Abramović's interest in 'less is more' is emphasised in this event.² One cannot help but recall Yves Klein's experience of nothingness in his 1958 show *Le Vide* (The Void), Paris where he emptied the gallery space of all its furnishings.³ In contrast to *Rhythm O, Naples*, 1974, where the audience was allowed to abuse Abramović at their will during a period of six hours with diverse instruments that had been placed on a table, *512 Hours* plays with the notion of material absence.⁴ By leaving their effects visitors are liberated and 'nude'; they become subjects, performing simultaneously with the artist. Rather than being tangible and visible, the work of art is born from the connection between the performer and the audience in situ. The experience is ephemeral, yet a trace is left in our minds. Additionally, two video cameras are fixed in the area in order to document the happening.

How far can the interaction take us? Some might interpret it as a journey to a spiritual metamorphosis. Due to the considerable number of people, it may be difficult to

experience the event fully. However, the experience is interesting and worth it.

¹ The Serpentine Gallery, Marina Abramović: 512 Hours (2014) <http://www.serpentinegalleries.org/exhibitions-events/marina-abramovic-512-hours>. Accessed 09/06/14; Sean Kelly Gallery, Marina Abramovic (2014) <http://www.skny.com/artists/marina-abramovi/> Accessed 08/06/14 and Marina Abramovic Institute, About (2014) <http://www.mai-hudson.org/about/> Accessed 09/06/14

² Marina Abramović and Charles Atlas. *Biography*. Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1994, p.41.

³ Sidra Stich. *Yves Klein*. Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1994, p.135.

⁴ RoseLee Goldberg. *Performance Art – From Futurism to the Present*. Singapore: C.S. Graphics, 1999, p.165.

Marina Abramović

512 Hours

The Serpentine Gallery, London
11 June – 25 August 2014

by DA EUN BACK

For nearly 40 years, Yugoslav-born performance artist Marina Abramović has been a pioneer and a legacy in the world of Body Art. In her most recent work, from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm from Tuesday to Sunday for eleven weeks she will dedicate her time to interact freely with visitors at the Serpentine Gallery at Kensington Gardens in the work *512 Hours*.

Visitors are asked to leave all of their personal belongings in a locker before they enter the performance space. This space is divided into three rooms. On the first day of the exhibition, each room had five to six chairs and in the center room there was a low plinth. The first day of the exhibition Marina and her assistants walked through each room and approached various visitors. Holding that person's hand, they would lead the visitor to the wall or plinth, or sit them down on the wooden chair and often whisper things into their ears. This resulted in three rooms of visitors at the Serpentine Gallery quietly sitting, facing walls, and standing.

Marina Abramović graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, Croatia in 1972 and has been creating art, often using the body as her primary form of visual communication, ever since. Marina's work can generally be divided in two forms: the

first involves actions by her, usually involving extreme physical duration, observed by the viewer. In many of her most notable works the body's endurance of physically painful events is exploited as a medium to visualize psychological pain, time, and memory. Marina's performance pieces expose a history of emotional deprivation and distress that are manifested through self-injury in the forms of cutting, stabbing, hitting, scratching, burning, and head-banging. The second form includes installations where there is a physical space that is activated through sound or silence.

Throughout her career Abramović has had an interest in the relational field between herself and the viewer. One of Marina's most memorable performances that includes extensive participation of the audience is *Rhythm 0*, 1975, where she sat in passivity as the audience used seventy-two props to interact with her in whatever way they felt suitable. One of her most popular recent works from 2010 is *The Artist is Present*, at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, where visitors would sit opposite to the artist and they would look into one another's eyes for a period of time.

Much of this most recent exhibition stems from Marina's interest in the relationship between art and 'nothingness.' 'It's the public



Marina Abramović Conducting Rehearsal for 'Bolero', Paris, 2013
Image Courtesy of the Serpentine Gallery, London

and me and nothing else,' Abramović stated, 'I've never done anything as radical as this. This is as immaterial as you can go.' By taking part in the 'radical' exhibition, Marina has managed to create a pseudo-religious experience for visitors at the Serpentine Gallery. Marina and her assistants encourage rooms full of people to turn inward through basic interactions. This sits well with Marina's long interest in creating a dialogue about our need to ritualize the simple actions of everyday life. Some of these actions she describes to include 'walking, standing, sitting, lying, eating, washing, drinking, dressing, undressing, sleeping, dreaming.'

Much of Marina's work can be interpreted as a created genre that is an aesthetic form of prayer that is empowered by her spiritual interests and drives. In 1989, Abramović

predicted that art in the twenty-first century would be 'Art without objects that would directly use energy.' Through this exhibition the relationship between artist and viewer has been transformed into a complex form of energy exchange.

Although the physical endurance in the exhibition *512 Hours* is not as obvious as her previous works, it clearly pursues the same goal. The mental endurance required for this exhibition is commendable. Most importantly, through the deprivation of technology and the uninterrupted interaction amongst individuals, the audience can restore their perspective on the beauty in everyday life. This newest exhibition is a peaceful and spiritual evolution as Abramović approaches seventy.

Hannah Maybank *Bobhowlers and Blooms*

Gimpel Fils, London
29 May – 5 July 2014

Bobhowlers and Blooms. The title of the exhibition sums up Hannah Maybank's new body of paintings which, remaining close to Maybank's practice, concentrate on the beauty of nature. Known for her three-dimensional paintings in acrylic, Maybank decides to explore the breadth of watercolour, instead of using acrylic for her new paintings in this exhibition, together with her trademark use of latex cut-out technique to outline her floral designs. All of the paintings in this new series revolve around the central theme of the beauty of nature, with paintings depicting blooming flowers and outlines of the British Hawkmoth – the Bobhowler as it is called in this exhibition, which very much convey the sense of new beginnings – both in nature as well as in Maybank's works.

'If every petal was a second
If every petal was a year
If every petal was forever...'¹

Flowers and nature have always been Maybank's subject in her work. Echoing her previous paintings *Fontus's Posie*, 2013, with no surprises, this subject of flower blossom is evidently depicted in each painting. In contrast to her previous works in acrylic, the exploration of watercolour

by PENNY YEUNG

in this new body of work certainly creates a different dimension to Maybank's work despite revolving around a similar subject. The three-dimensionality aspect of her works has transposed through the use of latex cut-out technique and her use of watercolour, creating sharp contrasts between lightness and darkness, projecting the exquisiteness and beauty of nature. It also helps to illustrate the delicacy of flowers and of the moths, revealing as much detail as possible, as we can see from the sharpness of the thorns of the roses in *Adeline*, 2014, the luminosity of petals in *Kate*, 2014. Her works signal the dynamic of nature on the one hand, and the fragility of life on the other hand.

One of her larger works, *Bobolla*, 2014 illustrates a British Hawkmoth outlined by her signature floral designs. This large painting has combined the imagery of an insect and floral designs, echoing *Tussock*, 2014, another painting in the exhibition, which also depicts a large moth however with cream and gold colours, illustrating the daintiness of the insect. One may be able to see two moths – as a mirror image in this painting. Interestingly, 'tussock' is a type of woodland moth, and the word also relates to bunch grasses. Maybank's choice of naming



Hannah Maybank
Adeline, 2014
Orasol and Watercolour on Stretched Watercolour Paper Over Polyester, 115 x 100 cm
Image Courtesy of Gimpel Fils

this work can be explained as the type of moth in the painting. In addition, it also helps to express the idea of the relationship between insects and nature.

In addition, worth noting are the titles in most of her paintings, as they are each given a girl's name such as *Angela, Kate, and Catherine. Adeline*, for instance, shows a bouquet of roses painted in two shades of blue. Whether or not the title of the painting relates to the meaning behind the name 'Adeline' – of being noble or not, this painting certainly does stand out amongst the others due to the brightness of the blue colours used to execute the work. The choice of using royal blue in this work as the background does convey a sense of nobility, and the bouquet of roses in the foreground reinforces a perplexing yet mystical sensation, leaving viewers captivated as they proceed onto the show.

Other works in this exhibition are very similar to Maybank's previous body of work *Fontus's Posie*, in terms of their colours, scale and subject. As remarked by the English poet for Maybank's exhibition in 2013:

'But for now, for this moment, this rose is yours,
This painting is your garden,...
This is your story, at this moment
Art and nature walk hand in hand,
Talking to each other, and saying
Isn't it strange, how we reflect each other...'²

Perhaps the purpose of Maybank's work is for viewers to engage themselves with her paintings, to delve into the relation between art and nature. It is about finding, exploring and appreciating the beauty of our everyday encounters, something so ordinary yet

magical about nature. The simplicity of the subject matter presented in these paintings also signals new beginnings, of life and death, also implying the danger of beauty through the use of darker colours in some of her paintings such as *Daphne and Katherine*, 2014.

Maybank's new body of work – simple yet also embeds deeper meanings underneath the beautiful outlines of floral designs certainly unveils the feminine side of the artist as she continues to work with the subject of nature, presenting its beauty to viewers.

¹ An extract of a poem written by Matt Black in response to Hannah Maybank's body of work *Fontus's Posie* in 2013. Matt Black, *Fontus's Posie*, from http://hannahmaybank.com/work/#page_425. Accessed 10 June 2014.

² Matt Black, *Fontus's Posie*, from http://hannahmaybank.com/work/#page_425. Accessed 10 June 2014.

Henri Matisse The Cut-Outs

Tate Modern, London
17 April - 7 September 2014

by ROBERTA GUIDUCCI

'I am for decoration ... I put into it all the acquisitions of my life. In pictures I can only go back over the same ground'.¹

These words written by Henri Matisse in 1945 in a letter to his daughter say almost everything about what is in the show at Tate Modern in London, curated by Nicholas Cullinan and Nicholas Serota, in collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The show presents the works realised in Matisse's 'second life'. After being in a wheelchair from 1941, he was extremely unwell and unable to paint so he started creating his works with paper and scissors.

The book, *Henri Matisse, a Second Life*, written by Alastair Sooke talks about his passion for life, that became even stronger after he almost died in 1941.²

After his illness, he became like the dried leaves he loved, 'able to catch fire as they pass from death to life'.³ There is a mesmerising blaze of creativity in this seemingly effortless new way of making art.

The shift from painting to decoration, through the cut-outs, is also a shift from

nature to language. Matisse's 'first life' was made of nature. In wild colours, he investigated a series of objects around which he built his world for almost fifty years such as interiors, windows, gardens, landscapes, tables, nudes. Then, after 1941, he transformed his final years into his most experimental period yet.

The primary element of the later works is language, art being the moment at which one can become 'aware of an unfolding'.⁴ Language is a game of juxtaposition and balance. Paper and scissors link together colour and form. The cut outs appear simple and easy to do: Matisse cuts the shapes out, freehand with scissors, and saves both the cut out and the remaining paper. He then arranged and rearranged the coloured cut-outs and he stopped at the point when he liked the results. This meticulousness used to calculate number, size, colours and balance of the cut papers make them absolutely ripe. The vastness of scale and the lushness of colour is what makes them so unique.

The artist's technique also represents a connection to his family and his past: descending from generations of French weavers, he appreciated texture and design,



Henri Matisse
The Snail, 1959
 Image Courtesy of Tate Modern

and paper patterns were familiar elements from his childhood.

His intention was that the cut-outs, realised with his young assistant, Lydia Delectorskaya, were 'paintings with scissors' and they gave him a sense of freedom and liberation. Started as an alternative way of painting, they became something totally independent from it. The show is a journey in the world of the cut-outs presented as living creatures, exactly like Matisse used to see them. He was aware of their strong physical nature to the point of leaving them pinned to the wall in such a way that they would flutter in a soft breeze. They are two dimensional and still, but they suggest

movement and growth, with multiple shapes tracing rhythms on the canvas.

They depict exotic animals, leaves, flowers, dancers, mythological figures, Matisse's gardens, cut in pure, matte colours, without brushmarks, and incisive forms. Each shape lives its own life and dances with the others. Together, they are like an orchestra in vivid colours.

The show is also a precious and moving journey through Matisse's studios in Paris and Vence, in the south of France, where he worked on the Dominican Chapel of the Rosary. Here, the cut-outs are transformed

into stained glass windows and the daylight fires up the blue and yellow dynamic shapes.

Over the course of fourteen rooms, the journey is exciting for both the mind and the eye.

Starting from the first approaches to the cut outs, along with films and two rooms dedicated to Matisse's illustrated books, the exhibition shows important late works: *Jazz*, 1947, Matisse's book published by Teriade with his famous hand written notes; the large work *Oceania, The Sky*, 1946, a tender tribute to one of his earlier trips to exotic places, with white paper cut outs floating on beige amber screens; *Zulma*, 1950, which gives a sense of depth in a cut-out, realised when Matisse was eighty years old.⁵

The famous *Blue Nudes* are compared to his sculpted nudes showed in the same room; Matisse created them 'cutting directly into colours', the cutting being bolder and more revolutionary, introducing white space into the blue of the bodies and being at the same time both drawing and sculpture. The large *The Parakeet and the Mermaid*, 1952, is his garden brought indoors, because Matisse wasn't able to move any longer. *The Snail*, 1953, is the most abstract and balanced of his cut-outs.

About *Large Decoration with Masks*, 1953, he said: "it is such a consolation to have achieved this at the end of my life".⁶

This show in its totality is indeed an exciting consolation for the joyous creativity and the boldness of works created by an elderly and unwell man who remained incredibly alive and adventurous.

¹ T.J.Clark, *The Urge to Strangle*, London Review of Books, vol.36 n.11, p.3-6, 5 June 2014.

² Alastair Sooke, *Henri Matisse a Second Life*, Penguin Books, London, 2014.

³ Henri Matisse wrote this phrase in a letter to a friend in 1949. See T.J.Clark, *The Urge to Strangle*, London Review of Books, vol.36 n.11, p.3-6, 5 June 2014.

⁴ Henri Matisse said these words about his work *The Snail*, his most challenging experiment in order to represent 'an abstraction rooted into reality', in *Conversation with André Verdet*, 1952.

⁵ In the same room with *Oceania, The Sea*, 1946.

⁶ In <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/henri-matisse-cut-outs/henri-matisse-cut-outs-room-11>.



Henri Matisse
Blue Nude II, 1952
 Image Courtesy of Tate Modern

Trisha Baga

Engages All Dimensions

Zabludowicz Collection Exhibition, London
27 February – 11 May 2014

by NICK COOMBS

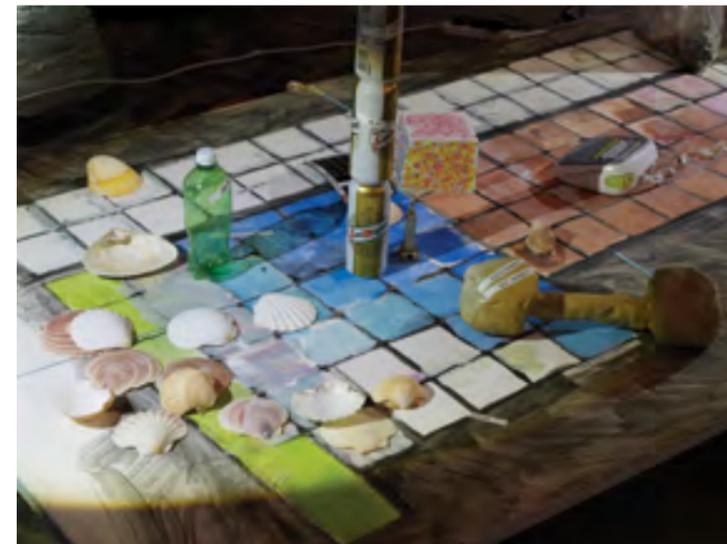
In a society where much of one's daily activity is reliant upon computers and other electronic devices, we often find ourselves immersed in the image on the screen rather than our own surroundings. Trisha Baga's solo exhibition at the Zabludowicz Collection in London investigates how technology impacts one's reception and understanding of their positioning within an increasingly computerized society.

Taking place in the main gallery and the surrounding mezzanine of the former chapel-turned-art gallery, Baga's exhibit involves the installation of ten video works. With dates ranging from 2005 to the artists' most recent work *Freaky Sunday*, 2014, the works use sound as well as mixed media installations to fully immerse the viewer in the content before them.

The Story of Painting, 2012, involves a half-hour 3D video loop (the viewer is given 3D glasses upon entering the exhibit) of fragmentary images and abstract forms of color accompanied by audio of a TV program about the Impressionist masters. The audio and visual loops are accompanied by paint bottles and modeling clay laid at the foot of the projection. These physical items inclusion in the work seem to further

a central theme throughout the exhibition involving three dimensional and sensory immersion of the viewer that many of the other works also attempt to convey.

Baga's most recent work, *Freaky Sunday*, is the end product of the collaboration with fellow artist Jessie Stead. The installation uses 3D loops of video accompanied by audio and mixed-media sculpture shows how the artist has channeled the immersion of the senses found in her previous work into a cross-disciplinary study of the creative mind in fine arts and jazz music. The work employs a similar audio-visual-physical approach to *The Story of Painting* objects featured which are laid out on a table at the center of the installation. The viewer must wear 3D glasses in order to watch the projections, however the soundtracks from the three videos are allowed to bleed together into a reverberation of different audio tracks vying for one's attention while they watch the videos. While the audio appears discordant at first, the viewer soon begins to pick out the sources of each, much like a jazz jam session where the instruments are improvising while keeping to a certain form. This work, while being described in the press release as 'detailing the association of jazz with artistic creation',



Trisha Baga
Installation View at Zabludowicz
Collection, 2014
Photo by Andy Keate



Trisha Baga
Installation View at Zabludowicz
Collection, 2014
Photo by Andy Keate

continues to address the themes of technology and identity as expressed in the artist's earlier work.

Freaky Sunday, along with the other installations in the exhibition, create an environment for the viewer to surround themselves with the works. The exhibition, although fairly uniform in its selection of works, shows how the artist has used her

mixed-media installations to address several different themes regarding life and art in the twenty-first century. As the ten years worth of works in this exhibition show, the combination of the physical with visual and audio elements in Trisha Baga's installations force the viewer to become aware of their own methods of perception and further challenge how technology has become such an integral part of contemporary society.

Italian Colourism

Second Home Britannia House, London

1 June 2014

by YUYU CHEN

This year the London Contemporary Music Festival 2014 was presented from 26 May to 1 June, following the success of last year. The festival encompassed multi-disciplinary events, specialising in contemporary music, art, and performance. This year it was presented in the new space, Second Home, situated in Brick Lane.

The final event was focused on three Italians who kept working on colour and clarity by turns delicate, explosive, and cataclysmic.

The 500-odd keyboard sonatas are Baroque composer Domenico Scarlatti's most famous works, which have been influential for the development of the classical style. The composition reflects the light and movement through each note played out by piano virtuoso Mark Knoop. The programme contains four sonatas, including F minor, which uses folk melodies and changes of harmonies from major to minor to minor, and also E major sonata, a delicate and shimmered vistas.

After 250 years, the application of colour and light takes a completely different direction in the music of Salvatore Sciarrino. The concert contains his sonatas and quartets, including *String Quartet No 9* and *Quartet No 7* which were presented for the first time in the United Kingdom. In his music, one finds oneself in a dark and endless cave without exit while the light

peeps through the holes unexpectedly. The accord comes separately from each string in which, instead of following a traditional composition, the melody floats tentatively, creating a spectral world of string harmonics.

Sciarrino is a pioneer in dismissing the classical tradition. In 1999, Sciarrino took the inspiration from the keyboard works by Scarlatti and transcribed them into the string quartet, presenting three from the *Esercizi di tre stili* ('Exercises in three styles') by Quartetto Prometeo in this concert. However, it cannot be blamed when the first piece of his was finished, one audience left without finishing the rest of the concert.

The second half of the concert starts with Sonata in A minor by Scarlatti, for which the clustered notes shifted with the changes of rhythm. The lifting notes pair with Sciarrino's *Fifth Piano Sonata*, in which the disaccords, percussive rhythm, and the silence hector the audience. The piece had been performed by Mark Knoop, in which the end is called 'definitive' by the composer. The music soon changes back to Scarlatti's sonata, *K159 in C major*, in which Knoop performs in a playful and liberated way. Following the piece, we again enter the darkness with the UK premiere of Sciarrino's *String Quartet No 7*.



Michelangelo Pistoletto
Performed by **Lorenzo Fiaschi**
Ten Less One

Image Courtesy of Aaron Halloway-Nahum

The final piece of the concert is *Ten Less One*, to be performed by the Italian artist and Arte Povera pioneer Michelangelo Pistoletto. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, he was replaced by Lorenzo Fiaschi, who had worked closely with Pistoletto and has deputised for this piece before.

Ten Less One is from a series of mirror works; the first, *Twenty Two Less Two*, was performed at the Venice Biennale in 2009. The mirror has always been essential in Pistoletto's work. It not only symbolises the artist's search for his own identity, but also emphasises the mirror's universality. Used as a concept of totality, his mirror contains physical and intellectual extensions

of the capacities of vision and mind. This performance was performed for the first time in the UK. As Fiaschi smashes the large and classical mirror that surrounds the space, the colour burst through into the room. It is conceived as a break from the conventional restraint in Modernist theory. The reciprocal reflection represents the infinite generation of light and life. The fragments of the glass were still impressed, which represents as the memory of a past event printed in the present. He described in an interview, 'Each shard still has the same reflecting quality as a whole mirror, so all mirrors are connected, smashed or intact, just as all humans share the same basic DNA. I see society as a kind of broken mirror.' The interconnection between each



Michelangelo Pistoletto
 Performed by **Lorenzo Fiaschi**
Ten Less One
 Image Courtesy of Aaron Holloway-Nahum

piece of glass symbolises different culture and human races, which is separated by geography and politics.

As a founder of Arte Povera, he does not consider the term as poor art. He explains, 'Povera means the essential energy of art.' He believes that the movement can still

remind us of something even in today's over-consuming society. The movement of using a hammer to smash the mirror refers to the core concept of Arte Povera.

polke/richter - richter/polke

Christie's Mayfair, London
 25 April - 7 July 2014

by HANIA AFIFI

Exploring the different approaches two artists undertook in their art-making careers is nothing new. However, reviewing artworks in light of a friendship between two iconic artists is fresh, insightful and bemusing. The visitor embarks on a journey where he/she is encouraged to mentally map out the artists' friendship status as they walk through the exhibition.

This was the curatorial approach adopted by Christie's auction house for the *polke/richter - richter/polke* exhibition currently on display at their Mayfair showroom in London. With ambitions to embody their slogan and truly become 'the art people', they set-up a chronological display accompanied by an exhibition catalogue rich in archival photographs that enables visitors to trace back the impact that Richter and Polke's waning relationship had on their individual art practices.

Indeed, Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke's work has not been displayed together since their 1966 joint exposition at Galerie h in Hanover, Germany. The display in Room 1 on the ground floor attests to their common artistic vision during the 60s; that of dissecting the painting practice and probing new possibilities within its medium as well as the similar formal qualities discernible in their early works. The muted greyscale blurred painting of Richter's *Flämische*

Krone, 1965, rhythmically echoes Sigmar Polke's black and white *Bavarian*, 1965, oil painting. Whilst Richter's blur style will progress onto his signature smudged photo-realism and Polke's exaggerated raster-dots will evolve into complete abstraction, they unmistakably started from common grounds.

As Francis Outred outlines in the Foreword of this exhibition catalogue, 'these two artists chose this moment to begin a complete and utter deconstruction of painting, to strip it back to its bare bones and rebuild what could be conceived as the 'possibilities in painting.' We may attribute this similar foundation of thought and early practice to their shared learning at the Dusseldorf Kunstakademie where they met in 1962, and their East Berlin childhood upbringing. However, we should also factor in the strong social bond they had developed as evident in the archival photographs.

The shared achromatic painting approach is left behind as the viewer enters Room 3; dominated by 80s artworks where Richter's figurative photo-realistic oil paintings like *Kerze*, 1982, are juxtaposed with Polke's experimental abstract pieces such as *Katastrophentheorie III*, 1983. Yet, one of Richter's *Abstraktes Bild* paintings of 1986 is exhibited in the same room to remind us that he had also embarked on the abstract



Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter

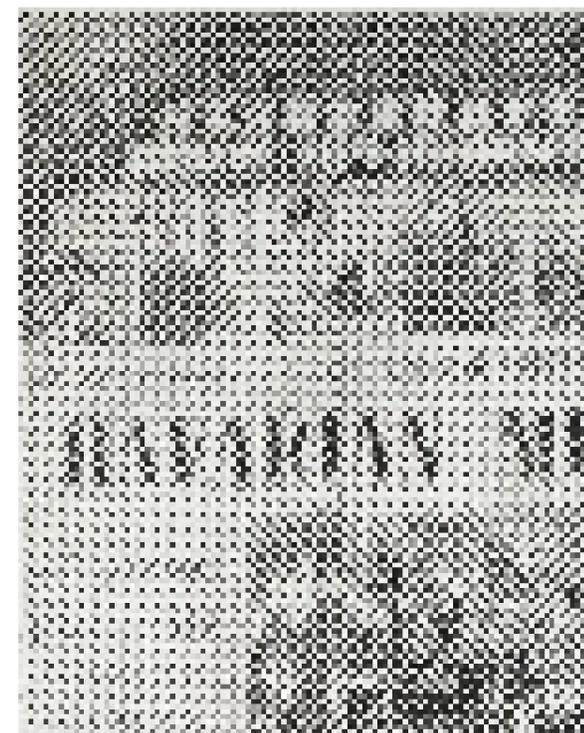
Taking a Bath Together: Sigmar Polke (in the back) and Gerhard Richter (in the front), 1966
Image Courtesy of Gerhard Richter Archive, Cologne

route. Visitor's cannot but compare the gestural green and yellow brush strokes in Richter's *Abstraktes Bild*, 1986, to Polke's black and blue diagonal brush marks in *Untitled*, 1983. To the untrained eyes, they appear to be made by the same hand. However, the *Lanterna Magica*, 1988-1996, *Transparent 10#*, 1988, and *Untitled of 1987 and 1989*, are indisputably Polke's. Occupying a semi-boxed corner in Room 3, two of these paintings are suspended from the ceiling to showcase their ingenious recto-verso hang possibility. Presented as sculptural artworks where the viewer is able to rotate around the paintings, we realise the degree to which Richter and Polke's friendship and painting careers have drifted apart. The anarchic pieces dominated by

rich golden/orange hues demonstrate Polke's passion for experimentation and alchemy.

The upstairs gallery marks a shift in the exhibition tone. On the top floor, there is an explosive riot of vibrant colours, different sizes and varying format pieces of both artists sporadically hung on the walls. The exhibition takes the form of a parade in an art fair where ironically the only figurative paintings presented belong to Polke. One may note that the curatorial aspect of the exhibition is side-stepped to give way to the commercial aims behind the show.

Arguably, the jewels of the show are displayed in Room 2 in the basement gallery, where the curators chose to paint the walls in a regal



Sigmar Polke

Bavarian, 1965, Dispersion on Canvas, 159.4 × 124.5 cm
Image Courtesy of Christie's Ltd., London

mauve to create a vault-like surrounding in the enclosed space. The room is dedicated to Polke and holds pieces from a large period span. One of the enticing creations is *Untitled*, 1988, where Polke demonstrates his painterly abilities from the controlled brush strokes that manifest in a uniform wallpaper-like pattern in the background to the fluid swirls reminiscent of marble paper.

The underlying commercial layer of the exhibition – this private sales exhibition was skilfully conceived to coincide with Polke's grand collaborative retrospective held at MOMA, New York, Tate Modern in London and Museum Ludwig of Cologne respectively – does not undermine its cultural significance. As Christie's Specialist, Darren Leak, remarked: 'the exhibition has two functions;

a financial side but it is also an interesting exhibition.'

Indeed, the explorative journey undertaken by these two friends is presented to us by Christie's - the very auction house who favoured, a year ago in March 2013, the fast financial returns of its private sales department to the slow artist-nurturing business of Haunch of Venison; its subsidiary primary gallery they had acquired in 2007. This profit-seeking arm, which evolved from their former gallery, chose to continue Richter and Polke's philosophic dialogue about the medium of painting and engage with the art world on a cultural level.

The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk

Barbican, London
9 April – 25 August 2014

by NINA MALHERBE

The predicament of the museum is its tendency to fall into the realm of a mausoleum. Too often objects on display depart from their purpose, a matter especially pertinent to fashion-items that are to be worn and lived, completed by their bearer. The triumph of *The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk* lies in its vitality. The exhibition at the Barbican brings Gaultier's creations to life, celebrating the French couturier's four-decade long career and exuberant persona.

An expansive show, the curation is dramatic and indulgent. Custom-made mannequins are given facial features and expressions by means of projections. These almost-alive catwalk figures smile, laugh and talk, generating a highly evocative and immersive atmosphere. Sketches, video footage and photography champion and substantiate the couture pieces on show while sound and lighting are used to create a sense of the theatrical. Mirrors allow for multifaceted viewing and the open plan, split-level spatial configuration results in the exhibition reading more like a superfluous fashionable installation. Organised by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in collaboration with Maison Jean Paul Gaultier, Paris, the show pushes the boundaries of traditional

exhibition curation into the realm of multidisciplinary spectacle, a concept which has allowed the chief curator, previously unknown Thierry-Maxime Lorient, to shoot to fame.

The viewer is taken upon a complete thematic journey of Gaultier trademarks and house codes. From Breton stripe to the conical bra, through distressed double denim and fantasies of science fiction, the garments on display have become icons of their time. Self-taught and often referred to as fashion's enfant terrible, Gaultier revels in notions of counter culture and an alternative beauty. This rejection of the accustomed in favor of the unorthodox is a defining principle of his work and an ideology that can be strongly felt throughout the show. The full scope of his oeuvre is emphasized and revealed through the referencing and inclusion of archival material in relation to numerous collaborative endeavors. The important roles of photographers such as Richard Avedon, David LaChapelle and Mario Testino as well as models and muses (Dita Von Teese, Madonna, Naomi Campbell to name a few) are highlighted in explanatory texts while the film and stage costumes on display demonstrate Gaultier's ceaseless, boundary-pushing design aesthetic.



Jean Paul Gaultier
Gaultier Conical Bra
Image Courtesy of the Author

Despite the playful and humorous spirit of the exhibition, an appreciation of skill and technique is also brought into play. Closer inspection uncovers exquisitely made garments of which the hand embroidery and pleating, as well as the many hours of work, are purposefully acknowledged. In Gaultier we see a catwalk informed by the sidewalk whereby high fashion appropriates the low and transforms subculture into luxury and haute couture.

Superficially, *The Fashion World of Jean Paul Gaultier From the Sidewalk to the Catwalk* is about clothing, but as Nathalie Bondil (Director of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts) notes: 'It is not really about fashion, it is about his (Jean Paul Gaultier's) humanist vision.' Exuberant perhaps, the substantial contextual depth behind the exhibition exemplifies a social awareness that extends Gaultier's designs beyond vogue. Fashion, art, craft, design all seem to merge into one, a notion congruent with the heterogeneity of the now.

Andy Holden

*Maximum Irony! Maximum Sincerity 1999-2003:
Towards a Unified Theory of MI!MS*

Spike Island, Bristol, UK
3 May - 29 June 2014

MI!MS, Maximum Irony! Maximum Sincerity, is an art movement established by Andy Holden and his friends between 1999 and 2003. More than a decade ago, living in the East part of England in a county town called Bedford, these teenagers were studying in high school and taking art classes. They were ready to experience what they had been learning from the four years of intense discussions and creating artworks, and finally ended up writing a manifesto.

In the following years, they moved on with their lives and their art-making process got detached from each other. Yet, seeing this project today, I believe Holden has not entirely been separated from his past. He still appreciates looking back and getting inspiration from his youth and his old friendships.

The main interest of these teenagers and MI!MS was to realise the relationship between post-modernism and art, and how artists must communicate themselves in this deprived moment in time without being engaged with it. Their suggestion was that with the arrival of post-modernism, honesty and sincerity in art communication had replaced itself with a cynical and ironic attitude. In order to make art, the artist must maintain both irony and sincerity in

by ARZU KIRANER

equal measure, while guarding oneself not to fall into disbelief from the effects of the late-capitalist world.

Holden's curiosity in this project follows the formation and interaction in society, the use of dialogues within the groupings, as well as the idea of collective memory and how to bring this memory together and present it. The decision to create this personal and genuine project was taken when he acquired the Zabłudowicz Collection Annual Commission for 2013. It took him eighteen months to prepare this large-scale installation, which incorporates a film project, photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, text and music. There are also life-size copies of the environments that they used to spend time in, such as James 'Pups' MacDowell's bedroom, a member of the MI!MS, whose walls were covered with collage materials that acted as a source for MI!MS, and the Poppins Restaurant, where they used to meet and have long discussions about art, books, philosophy, and human relations.

The film part of the project consists of seven videos, with a combined length of eighty-five minutes that recreate the formation of MI!MS. The story of the film has two different narratives: one is presented by young actors selected from Bedford, acting



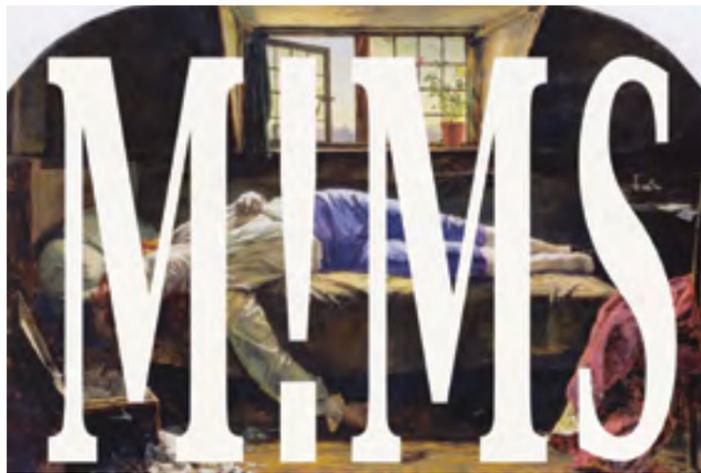
Andy Holden

Maximum Irony! Maximum Sincerity, 1999-2003: Towards a Unified Theory of MI!MS, Film Still, 2013
Image Courtesy of the Artist



Andy Holden

Maximum Irony! Maximum Sincerity, 1999-2003: Towards a Unified Theory of MI!MS Installation View
Photo by Stuart Whipps



Andy Holden
MI!MS Logo (Death of Chatterton), 2013
 Image Courtesy of the Artist

the MI!MS members' youth, re-staging the crucial moments of the movement; and the parallel story follows the original members making the project, shot as behind-the-scenes, while they put up an audition to find the actors to play their teen-selves.

There is another level to the film production: the original soundtrack consists of the songs written by the two members of the team. In the film, these songs were performed by a children's chorus and a school orchestra. Holden believes that these songs, such as *A Love Song* by Johnny Parry and *For Your Troubles* by Roger Illingworth, are key to understanding what MI!MS was and is. They possess the most sincere, as well as ironic, lyrics about 'Love' and symbolise what it is to write a song that is emotional and personal. In addition to this, there are excerpts from the concert footage of the reunion of Holden and MacDowell's band *Brave Soldier*.

In the installation there is another section where MI!MS' work *Last Stop for the Good Old Times (after The Age of Innocence), 1999*

2003, is displayed. This work is composed of collected reproductions of emotional paintings of children that you could buy from any charity shop. MI!MS' interest in romantic and clichéd imagery, as well as the idea that representation itself can change, an ideal is not predetermined and could be easily operated, inspired this work. Holden tries to regenerate the forgotten feelings of these objects while presenting these images to bring out both the sincerity and the irony in them by the play of time and re-staging.

Holden points out that the aim of the exhibition is not to bring back the manifesto or to readdress these concepts as a challenge to art today. Instead, as the title of the exhibition puts forward, it tries to take us back in time to a specific place in their lives, and link us to his youth where many genuine and honest ideas originated. While doing that, his challenge was to make a work of MI!MS, as well as about MI!MS, a work about youth and adulthood while celebrating both the ridiculous and the cliché.

The Skies Can't Keep Their Secret

Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK
 24 May – 21 September 2014

by MARCY KENNEY

The Skies can't keep their secret!
 They tell it to the Hills –
 The Hills just tell the Orchards –
 And they – the Daffodils!

A Bird – by chance – that goes that way
 Soft overheard the whole.
 If I should bribe the little Bird –
 Who knows but she would tell?

I think I won't – however –
 It's finer not to know;
 If Summer were an Axiom –
 What sorcery had Snow?

So keep your secret – Father!
 I would not – if I could,
 Know what the Sapphire Fellows, do,
 In your new-fashioned world!

The Skies Can't Keep Their Secret, Spencer Finch's major retrospective at Margate's Turner Contemporary, takes its title from the first line of Emily Dickinson's 1896 poem. The first solo exhibition in an English gallery in over five years, the American artist worked closely with the museum to bring together new and old work, taking inspiration from the changing light of the coastal English town. In a short video placed outside of the gallery, Finch mentions his use of Dickinson's words: 'I like this idea of

the skies revealing themselves to someone or something and trying to understand the secret within the skies.' It is no secret that light plays an important role in Finch's work, carefully studying the effects of light and colour and distilling natural phenomena through an earnestly scientific approach. Finch's best-known work, *The River that Flows Both Ways*, was commissioned for New York City's High Line in 2009, sublimating the light of a 700-minute journey along the Hudson River.

Visitors enter into the North Gallery and are immediately confronted with one of Finch's large-scale suspended 'cloud' sculptures. For first-time viewers the effect of *Passing Cloud (After Constable), 2014*, borders on the sublime as translucent filters recreate the light emitted by a cumulus passing across the sky. However, those more familiar with Finch's work will discern a certain generic-ness to this installation; *Sunlight in an Empty Room (Passing Cloud for Emily Dickinson, Amherst, MA, August 28, 2004), 2004* and *Passing Cloud (394 L Street NW, Washington, DC, July 20, 2010), 2010*, both refer to a specific light on a specific day in a specific place. The cloud passing in Margate lacks this particular precision, leaving the viewer yearning for more substance.



Spencer Finch

Passing Cloud (After Constable), 2014

Light Fixtures, Filaments, Monofilaments and Clothespins

Thank You, Fog, 2009

60 Archival Inkjet Photographs

Image Courtesy of Turner Contemporary; Photo by Stephen White

Curated as part of the 'Summer in Colour' series at Turner Contemporary only two of Finch's works actually contain any specific reference to colour. *Atlantic Ocean (Coney Island), 2014*, is a light box of abstracted forms articulating the ever-present horizon line of the Margate Coast. Finch speaks of Turner's influence on this work, noting how his painterly abstract forms slowly morph into subject matter. Arguably the strongest piece of the show, *Back to Kansas, 2014*, pays homage to the 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*, by conceptually reversing the film's shift from black and white into technicolour; all of the colours except for twelve shades of grey are taken directly from the film. In this work Finch is interested in how colour disappears when one is sitting in a room at dusk due to the eyes' sensitivity to different wavelengths in different darkness levels. The colours with short wave lengths, blues and purples, disappear first, followed by long wave-length colours, orange and red, which disappear twenty-five minutes later. Conceptually, this piece stands high among the rest, however the execution falters: viewers can only witness this visual change once a month when the gallery is open until nine in the evening.

Fittingly, Turner Contemporary uses only natural light in the gallery, heightening the effects of *Passing Cloud (After Constable)* and *Back to Kansas*. However, this causes the rest of the works to fade into the background, unable to compete for attention with the larger works that rely so heavily on the windows overhead. *Thank You, Fog, 2009*, takes selections of Finch's sixty-piece photographic work shot from a static camera at one-minute intervals as a fog moved over the densely wooded landscape in Sonoma County, California whose relationship to

the other works feels tenuous. *Sunlight in an Empty Room (Studio Wall), 2014*, is a continuation of Finch's ongoing series recreating the changing natural light on his studio wall over a period of time using watercolour and pencil. These two series, along with *Wave Study, 2014*, crowd the gallery space that already feels too small to hold the cloud suspended in the centre.

Seven works on paper by JMW Turner accompany the exhibition, all selected by Finch. Placed in a dark, narrow hallway outside of the North Gallery, the works go against the key component that makes Emily Dickinson's poetry so great: show, don't tell. An unnecessary addition, the selection of Turner works provides a stale end to an already underwhelming exhibition. And as for the skies' secret that the artist has placed at the centre of the show? Following Dickinson's poetic advice, perhaps 'it's finer not to know.'

Glasgow International

Various Locations, Glasgow, UK
4 – 21 April 2014

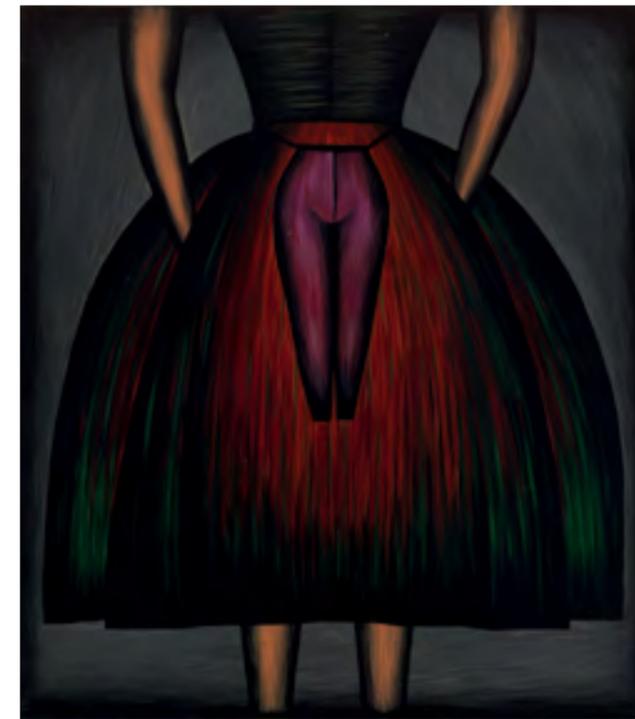
by TAYLOR JAYNE LeMELLE

Recently it seems as if those who want to prove they are 'in the know' talk about the Glasgow art scene. As has been the case, microcosmically, in neighbourhoods like Bushwick, Brooklyn or Bethnal Green, London – the city of Glasgow seems to be breeding a thriving art scene under the radar – in spite of, or perhaps because of, the lack of economic wealth in the area. This year's Glasgow International, therefore, might be seen as one of the signifiers of the impending so-called cultural renewal that might be on the horizon in Glasgow (the Commonwealth Games, which will be hosted in the city this summer, might be another attempt at this).

Thought it is a biennial in the sense that it happens every two years, Glasgow International is actually not technically a 'biennale' as we have come to know them. Rather, the sixth edition of the 'festival' (as it is officially called) is set up like a citywide open house. Almost frustratingly egalitarian in structure, the GI program gave equal billing to larger institutions like Tramway as it did to smaller independent projects. One of those small projects was 42 Carlton Place, run by artist-collectors Carol Rhodes and Merlin James in the ground floor of their townhouse. The couple mounted a strikingly sensitive, archival exhibition of small works by Christina Ramberg (1946-1995), a Chicago Imagist whose schematized

depictions of corseted and bound female figures appear as a sort of feminist art deco. The only hierarchy in the festival program is provided by the "Director's Programme" label, which denoted exhibitions that were specifically commissioned for GI. Among these was a survey of Jordan Wolfson's video work from the last decade. I almost didn't go, having been so repulsed by excitable spectators dubbing the exhibition as the young artist's 'retrospective' (are you kidding?), but actually – his reductive 16mm films such as *Forest from Above in Reverse*, 2006, provided an interesting context for his well-known recent video animations such as *Raspberry Poser*, 2012, also on view and most recently shown in London's Chisenhale Gallery.

At The Modern Institute's Aird's Lane gallery space, Anne Collier's solo exhibition of critically self-aware photographs was aesthetically restrained and packed a conceptually dense reflection on photography and the gaze. Another Glasgow-based commercial gallery, Mary Mary, hosted an off-site project by Alistair Frost in a nail salon. The exhibition, 'AZQ < \$@L.^', was simultaneously a show of paintings based on archetypal clip-art images and also a functioning nail salon that decorated viewers' nails in these said archetypal images. The meaninglessness of these graphic images was hyperbolized



Christina Ramberg
Untitled (Torso with Pants) 1982, Acrylic on Masonite 33 x 29 cm
Image Courtesy of Merlin James and Carol Rhodes



Alistair Frost
Installation View of *Alistair Frost 'AZQ < \$@L.^'*, at 32 St Andrews Street, 2014
Image Courtesy of Mary Mary

as they were dislocated from painting and supplanted into the beauty industry.

Many of the compelling independent projects conceived for the festival were situated in disused public edifices. *Le Swimming*, for example, was a group exhibition presented by an organisation called Underground Car Park, named for the abandoned structure within which they present exhibitions and independent film festivals. For the show, the car park is re-imagined as a different type of communal space: a public pool. This re-imagining of disused public infrastructure was both an engaging fantasy and evoked the (mis-guided?) utopianism of modernist urban planning.

For someone not as familiar with the Glasgow art scene as the cool kids are, it was eye opening how much compelling work was on show. I went armed with a map, a notebook, and a bus pass and still wasn't

able to conquer Glasgow in a day. Although the egalitarian set-up made the festival less navigable, it felt fresh seeing Anne Collier in the same context as 'overlooked' artists (such as Michael E. Smith's show at Tramway), emerging artists employing a variety of practices (Avery Singer's monochrome cubistic paintings at McLellan Galleries), and artists who are, quite frankly, unknown (Becky Sik, who doesn't seem to have a gallery or a website, showed an amazing architectural installation at the Pipe Factory that called for participants to add corrugated plastic pieces to the ever-expanding work).

After the festival I'm left wondering: is this what an art scene looks outside of art market pressure (to be fair, Wolfson's show barely escaped the stifling hype-beast)? Perhaps not for long, as after the success of this year's GI cultural tourists will probably flock, with good reason, to Glasgow in 2016.



Philippe Murphy

Composition in Blue, Red, and Yellow (detail), 2014, Mixed Media Installation
Image Courtesy of the Artist

I'm Still Here

Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall
15 February - 14 December 2014

by ERICA WENNERHOLM



John Bock

Im AtomeiterzinsKonflikt mit einer EierstockCapitalSaint, 2001
Mini-Max-Version, 2014

Photo by Christian Saltas, Image Courtesy Collection Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall

One of John Bock's headless figures is placed in the ceiling above the staircase leading down to Pipilotti Rist's large installation *Gravity Be My Friend*, 2007. The placement indicates a shift of perspective as Rist invites the viewer to experience her video installation projected in the ceiling by taking off their shoes and lying down on an artificial island. The installation creates a space to lose oneself in, forget about all the social constructions that shape us, dare to let go and reflect on the fact that it is all about you.

The exhibition 'I'm Still Here', is particular in the sense that it is compiled solely from Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall's own collection.¹ This privately run space – located in a 1930s warehouse in one of Stockholm's free ports – was founded in 1987 and has collected works of art since, often by letting the artists produce new works in connection to an exhibition or through acquisitions. Today the collection contains around 800 artworks.



Pipilotti Rist

var min vän (Gravity, Be My Friend),
2007, Video Audio Installation, Music by
Anders Guggisberg and Pipilotti Rist
Photo by Johan Warden
Image Courtesy of Collection Magasin 3
Stockholm Konsthall

In 'I'm Still Here', the curators Richard Julin and Tessa Praun have decided on showing works of twenty artists – both Swedish and international – with varied practices, some shown before but most of them exhibited for the first time. The media represented in the show is also evidence of the broad range of works in the collection as it consists of installations, videos, photography, sculptures and works on paper.

Overall the mix of media is well balanced, however some works like Laurie Simmons and Allan McCollum's *Actual Photographs*, 1985 and Tom Friedman's *I'm Not Myself*, 2009, an inkjet print on paper, end up being slightly forgotten in the crowd of three dimensional works and sound-spilling videos. This is a challenge the curators have to face when assembling works that are expressive and ground-taking with more quiet contemplative works.

While experiencing the exhibition, one realises that a large amount of thought has been given to the curation of the show,

in terms of the architectural layout of the rooms, as well as the hanging of the actual works. As a viewer, one encounters the works on a sensible level, however in different ways. Lars Nilsson's *The Triumph of Style*, 1998, exposes the viewer to strong light and heat from a chandelier; it is impossible to neglect the impact it has on one's immediate encounter with the room and the other parts of Nilsson's installation. In a narrow corridor – partially claustrophobic – a part of Bock's work *Im AtometerzinsKonflikt mit einer EierstockCapitalSaint*, 2001, is presented by misshaped headless figures in various textiles pushing themselves off the wall into the viewers' space.² The space on the other side is occupied by anonymous figures in black coats and tilted desk lamps indicating a head and forward motion. They resemble contemporary versions of Alberto Giacometti's walking bronze figures. However, Christian Boltanski's figures in *Être et Avoir*, 2008, will present you with a statement about themselves – 'I have beautiful memories' – but yet remain undistinguishable as the information is general and could apply to anyone.



Lars Nilsson

The Triumph of Style, 1998
Photo by Christian Saltas, Image Courtesy of
Collection Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall

There are many intriguing conversations between the artworks in this exhibition. The exhibition questions what it is to be human, dealt with through works that examine identity, memories, social construction and hierarchies. Especially strong is the one carried out between Sam Taylor-Johnson's *Brontosaurus*, 1995 and Aernout Mik's *Flock*, 2002. These two works reflect on our cultural traditions and ideals as well as basic needs. *Brontosaurus* is a video of a naked man dancing in his bedroom. When performed, the man listens to upbeat techno; when displayed, the motions have been slowed down and applied with classical music. This private moment that Taylor-Johnson

is inviting us to is a strange and puzzling encounter and at the same time beautiful. If familiar with Immanuel Kant and his theory of Ideal Beauty one can clearly see the references made in this work. It is fascinating to watch the man jump up and down and exposing his body in different positions, resembling a moving Greek sculpture with explicit anatomy.

The theory of the ideal beauty of the body is an old construction of mankind; even so, these ideas are highly relevant today. As are questions around basic needs and what happens to us when the elements that construct our identity and existence in relation to other people are taken away. These questions echo in the video installation *Flock*, where a group of people with their belongings gathered in something that looks like a worn down parking lot. They just sit there, passive and mentally isolated from each other, without anywhere to go. They have been stripped bare of what they once were and struggle with how to identify themselves. It reminds me of Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, where we have to fulfil the basic need before successfully reaching the higher ones, however if something changes within our environment we will fall back down again and have to start all over. Reflecting on these two works as well as the rest of the show, one realises how fragile we are as humans to external influences. Even so, we often choose not to ponder upon it.

¹ The exhibiton includes works by Santiago Sierra, Lars Nilsson, Christian Boltanski, Sofia Hultén, John Bock, Sam Taylor-Johnson (before Sam Taylor-Wood), Tom Friedman, Moonspoon Saloon, Aernout Mik, Lara Schnitger, David Hammons, Andrea Zittel, Erik Aalto, Geraldine Swayne, Oscar Guermouche, Laurie Simmons & Allan McCollum and Pipilotti Rist.

² The exhibited work is a part of the original work, a Mini-Max-Version, 2014.

Harun Farocki Serious Games

Hamburger Bahnhof - Museum Für Gegenwart, Berlin
6 February – 13 July 2014

by MADELEINE NORTON



Harun Farocki

Ernste Spiele I: Watson ist hin, 2010, Videostill

© Harun Farocki 2010

Serious Games, on show at the Nationalgalerie in Berlin (6 February – 12 July 2014), is a four-part video installation by German artist Harun Farocki. It focuses on the use of video games and virtual realities in US military training and rehabilitation. *Serious Games I: Watson is Down*, 2010, shows young military recruits on large computer screens, practicing combat in a desert-like virtual reality. *Serious Games II: Three Dead*, 2010, shows footage filmed during a 'real' military exercise conducted in a built set in California, with scenery resembling that of a movie set. The third film in the series, *Serious Games III: Immersion*,

2009, depicts an American war veteran undergoing psychological exposure therapy by recounting a traumatic experience whilst wearing a virtual-reality headset, which shows images controlled by a therapist on a computer screen next to him. However at the end of the film we discover that this 'therapy session' was a marketing demonstration for the United States Air Force psychologists and the war veteran in the film was just an actor.¹ Finally, *Serious Games IV: A Sun With No Shadow*, 2010, compares the technology used to prepare soldiers for war (that shown in *Watson is Down*) and the program used to help rehabilitate veterans (as shown in



Harun Farocki

Ernste Spiele I: Watson ist hin, 2010, Videostill

© Harun Farocki 2010

Immersion). Through this juxtaposition we are shown the poorer quality of the technology used to help veterans, as in these games the objects have no shadows.

Born in 1944, Farocki has had an expansive artistic production, which over the course of an almost fifty year career has produced over eighty films.² He is often considered to produce 'critical cinema' which focuses on the manipulation of the image, its uses and abilities to exert control and the often multiple and wide ranges of implications that viewers can draw from his films. We can see these wide and varied implications in *Serious Games*. The range of reactions to this installation are vast and often immediate perceptions can be shallow, such as believing the work is purely about violence or over-consumption of video games or a comment upon the US military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. However Farocki's installation goes far beyond singular thematic agendas. He manages to weave together an intricate range of materials, touching upon broader

themes such as the cinema, technology, transparency and the media (to name a few). Through his meticulous editing and the way in which the films are installed, he creates a cinematic environment that centers on the technologies of imaging and vision. Cinema plays a huge role as our culture's prime story-telling medium and Farocki's obsessive focus with cinema allows him to signal transformations in society in our ways of seeing and imaging.³

The use of technology both in society and in the production of his works, is proliferate throughout Farocki's practice. In *Serious Games* he uses the paradox that the same technology used to train soldiers for battle is now being used to treat their post-traumatic stress. In other works, such as *Eye/Machine III*, 2003, and *War at a Distance*, 2003, Farocki also makes reference to the use of relatively 'new' technology, however he hints that this technology has a history and may reflect a psychological and economic condition that has been forming for quite some time. As Marcus Civin in 'Visibility



Harun Farocki

Ernste Spiele II: Drei tot, 2010. Videostill.
© Harun Farocki 2010

Machines: Harun Farocki and Trevor Paglen' (Afterimage [2013]: 22) mentions, Farocki's portrayal of this technology suggests 'the way that we are going, we have been going for some time.'⁴

Each film in *Serious Games* has multiple layers for the viewer to explore, such as Farocki's subtle mix of real footage he has shot for the purpose of the film with archival footage found elsewhere. He offers a far from transparent view and invites skepticism about the representation of reality in general.⁵ He questions the degree to which our world is formed by recording and image-making machinery and encourages us to realize that our minds organize incoming information into images and narratives that may or may not be true.⁶ This can be quite literally seen through both the soldiers training through virtual screens or the 'therapy' session of the veteran. This skepticism or lack of transparency can also be applied to the media's role in the documentation and representation of war to society. Through Farocki's purposeful deception in *Serious Games III: Immersion*, the viewer is encouraged to also question what the media represent to us as real and consider the element of spectatorship in war.

Farocki doesn't attempt to impress upon his audience a singular position on violence, war, use of video game technology or politics but rather convey a multitude of perceptions and misperceptions. The topic of war (although a favourite of his) is merely a vehicle by which he allows us to see how our collective imaginations are constantly being shaped and reshaped by technologies of imaging and vision.⁷

¹ Henriette Huldish, *Some Games Are More Serious Than Others*, Exhibition Guide: Harun Farocki. *Serious Games*, 2014.

² Antje Ehmann and Kodwo Eshun, *Harun Farocki Against What? Against Whom?* *Cinéaste*, Vol. 36, No. 1, 2010, p.75.

³ Hal Foster, *The Cinema of Harun Farocki*, *Artforum*, 2004, p.157.

⁴ Marcus Cavin, *Visibility Machines: Harun Farocki and Trevor Paglen*, *Afterimage*, 2013, p.22.

⁵ Ken Johnson, *Unfiltered Images, Turning Perceptions Upside Down*, *New York Times*, 2011, p.24.

⁶ Johnson, *Unfiltered Images*, p.24.

⁷ Henriette Huldish, *Some Games Are More Serious Than Others*, Exhibition Guide: Harun Farocki. *Serious Games*, 2014.

Fake and Loathing in Shanghai

Long Museum, West Bund, Shanghai

29 March — 31 August 2014

by YINGQING FU

The recent exhibition of an 11th-century calligraphy work at the Long Museum West Bund in Shanghai demonstrated just how reverse psychology works. Preoccupied by controversy over authenticity, the show only led visitors to more questions.

Imagine this scenario: your current net worth is £535 million. You manage to open two massive private museums to stage artworks you acquired in the past 20 years. But now you have a problem, the artwork you recently purchased for £4.9 million from a renowned international auction house was publicly scrutinised for authenticity. From multiple academic reports, your country's best scholars claim the piece is a fake. What would you do?

For the 50-year-old Shanghai investment tycoon Liu Yiqian, this is now his reality. Most of us could not bear such constant bombardment. But surely Liu is not like most of us. Starting as a street trader of handbags in the late 1970s, Liu was making more than 10,000 yuan when the average annual income in Shanghai was barely 300 yuan. It seems nothing can force him to capitulate. The billionaire and art collector made a bold move to present the artwork in the nation's biggest private museum, his museum, naturally. Then he built an entire exhibiting space packed with evidence to

prove its authenticity. And this is what everyone will see today in the Long Museum West Bund in Shanghai. However, one has to wonder if the need for approval in this case has cost the institution its credibility?

The Long Museum West Bund covers over 33,000 square meters. The newly opened facility sits on a long-ago deserted coal transport site by the upper Huangpu River bank. It is the second location to showcase the enormous art collection that belongs to China's super collector couple Liu Yiqian and his wife Wang Wei. The pair became the first collectors from Mainland China to be included in the ARTnews 200 Top Collectors list of most active art buyers in 2012. The couple lived a typical Chinese dream. Both came from humble working-class families, and they made a fortune in the stock exchange, real estate and insurance sectors. After more than two decades of collecting, they opened their first museum in Shanghai Pudong in 2012.

By local standards, the second venue is in the middle of nowhere, as the closest subway station is almost a half-hour walk. Only a handful of taxi drivers in town could honestly tell you they have heard of the street name: Longteng Avenue (The Soaring Dragon Avenue). After a long walk under the scorching sun, the Long Museum

unveiled itself in front of me as one gigantic concrete white block. It's stunning, yet unapproachable.

Two months after its grand opening, the foul odor of fresh paint still lingers in the air. Inside the facility, the ground floor looked like a much enlarged interior of an interstellar spaceship. The metallic colour tone darkens the mood. Works by much-celebrated modern contemporary artists such as Xu Bing, Gu Wenda and Chen Yifei, spread out on vast curved concrete walls.

The lower ground level is dedicated to ancient Chinese works of art. There, a single wing is singled out to exhibit the 900-year-old artwork. Crowds reportedly have packed the space to see it on display: a calligraphy work titled *Farewell to Gongfu* with just nine characters allegedly by the hand of the politician-poet Su Shi from the 11th century. The prolific Chinese poet was the equivalent to a European Renaissance master.

The scroll is merely thirty centimeters in height. It's mounted with a later calligraphy reproduction and two other commentaries dated to the 19th century. I was surprised to see how small the actual work is compared to the huge space it was given in the museum. In fact, the rest of the space is jam-packed with journals, newspaper articles, digitally enlarged texts and photographs, all presented to prove this tiny piece of calligraphy is genuinely by Su Shi. Never before have I seen a museum so obsessed with the authenticity of one single artwork. Forgery is common in the Chinese art world, but rarely leads to such fierce disputes. And for the first time in China, an open debate took place between public and private museums.

Soon after Liu purchased the work from Sotheby's New York in late 2013, local scholars raised questions about its authenticity. Zhong Yinlan and Ling Lizhong, both from the Shanghai Museum, argued the scroll was traced, based on similarities between the auctioned work and some known problematic items in the collection of the Shanghai Museum. Shan Guolin, head of the Shanghai Museum painting department, considered the scroll's brush strokes unnatural.

All of these issues were carefully defended in the exhibition. The evidence started with newspapers and journal articles supporting the item's provenance. They seem to indicate Xu Bangda, the maestro of Chinese calligraphy and painting of the 20th century, once authenticated the *Farewell to Gongfu* in a written letter. More evidence showed numerous blown-up comparison pictures between authentic and fraudulent Su Shi brush strokes. Other support came from analysis of the seals and paper. Everything looks meticulously done on the surface. The sheer amount of information had a shock and awe effect. I was simply lost in the sea of texts.

However, the Sotheby's original catalog entry was nowhere to be found in the exhibition. Earlier on, the auction house had published a fourteen-page document to authenticate the calligraphy work as by Su Shi. The lack of Sotheby's presence in the exhibition is bewildering. Reports and visual elements from the Shanghai Museum are also missing. For whatever reasons, the curator only chose to show one side of the argument. It's such a colossal mistake. The public is forced to ponder why the counter-arguments are left out.

Most recently, Yang Danxia, a scholar of Chinese paintings and calligraphy from the Palace Museum in Beijing, stated that the calligraphy is 'clearly a fake and anyone with little knowledge on Chinese calligraphy could tell'. Yang also mentioned that Liu once confessed over the phone that he has crossed the Rubicon as the Shanghai government had generously offered to pay for the 23% import tax for the artwork.

Certainly, it was no charity work from the city government. Shanghai has developed a five-year plan to become China's cultural capital by driving massive development in both public and privately owned museums. In an interview with the Financial Times, Wang Wei, Liu's wife, admitted that they received a deal on land cost from the local authorities for their West Bund establishment, on the condition that they turn it into a cultural project. Now the skeletons are coming out of the closet.

Ultimately, the special exhibition of *Farewell to Gongfu* made the Shanghai government a laughing stock. The grand scheme of the city's culture transformation received a big blow. It is unfortunate for Liu Yiqian as he has become the scapegoat in this much-publicised dispute. But we have to ask ourselves, without proper regulations, as Shanghai's culture expansion frenzy continues, who will be the next fall guy?

Jeannette Ehlers *Say It Loud!*

Nikolaj Kunsthal, Copenhagen
15 March – 31 July 2014

by TAYLOR JAYNE LeMELLE



Jeannette Ehlers
Black Bullets, 2012, Still Image from HD Video, 4:33
Image Courtesy of the Artist

Denmark might not be a country that figures prominently in the historicization of the colonial slave trade between Africa, Europe, and the West Indies. Additionally, in the context of contemporary academic engagement with postcolonial theory by the 'African Diaspora,' the Black-Danish voice has not been as far reaching as compared to Harvard University's WEB DuBois Institute or University of Birmingham's Centre for Cultural Studies. However, in her newest sound-flooded exhibition, 'Say it Loud!', Jeannette Ehlers explores implications related to the legacy of colonial global slave trade, amplifying its historical relevance for Danish citizens.

Presented on the ground floor of Nikolaj Kunsthal, the church hall turned gallery space is completely dark save the flicker of eleven video projections of various sizes. Ehlers often depicts anonymous figures but sometimes uses her own body in the works. In this exhibition, as is consistent with her artistic practice, she highlights the political charges embedded in the natural and built environments in Africa and the Caribbean.

In *Three Steps of Story*, 2009, Ehlers' deftly edited video depicts the artist dancing along to a Waltz, gliding about a colonial government house in St. Croix. Her body can only be seen in absentia, through reflections as she dances past the house's many

mirrors. Her mirrored image tells us that she is present but her corporeal body is invisible. This indirect embodiment of the 'present but unseen' legacy of the colonial trade is dramatized by her dancing figure. She also complicates the narrative of how a black body would have performed in such a space during the height of its use in colonial times. Work and servitude are replaced with enjoyment and reverie.

The cinema-sized installation, *Waves*, 2009, is a close up, solarized depiction of waves crashing onto a shore. Upon adjusting to the disquieting scale, the viewer might realize that the waves themselves are actually quite small (perhaps that last bit of ocean that dribbles towards the interior of the beach during high tide), but blown up they seem treacherous, monumental, and strange. The sound, which is thunderous and fills the entire space, pervades the entire space and even leaks into the headphones through which exhibition-goers listen to the other videos. Like *Three Steps of Story*, this work communicates what is not depicted: the cargo (human and otherwise) that was exchanged at the shorelines of several continents.

Overall, Ehlers' seems to speak to the body and how it was both imaged and erased through power structures enacted by the transatlantic trade. The legacy of such structure has yielded peoples in these post-colonial nations that are at once inside and outside of their own bodies. Ehlers proposes a quite poetically rendered synthesis between the body and a collective self-image in *Black Bullets*, 2012, but also shows how this rupture might still be extremely fraught. The inside/outside tension is addressed by works like *Bustin' My Knots*, 2011, in which an unseen narrator delivers a cringe-inducing explanation of how, and why, she has assured that her unborn daughter will have 'good hair', and escalated to a confrontational reckoning in *Whip it Good*, 2013-4.

Laced with Black American historical and cultural references (for example, the title of the show nods both to James Brown and the American Black Power movement), Ehlers demonstrates an engagement that reminds us that the triangle trade and its reverberations, which are still being digested, are not solely an African-American and Black-British history.



Jeannette Ehlers
Installation View, *Say it Loud!*
Image Courtesy of Nikolaj Kunsthal, Photo by Lea Nelson

Get the Bloom

Shoot the Lobster Gallery, Luxembourg

2 June – 26 July 2014

by MELANIE de JAMBLINNE

Get the Bloom groups the works of six artists: Paolo Gonzato, Maurizio Anzeri, Nate Lowman, Dan Colen, Elias Hansen and Georgie Hopton. It is the fourth show at Shoot the Lobster, the newest gallery in Luxembourg, opened by Guillaume Smets at the end of last year. José Martos, New York based gallery owner and partner of Smets, came up with 'Shoot the Lobster' to promote his emerging artists. It's a pop-up gallery that holds show in various cities around the world; only the Luxembourg based gallery is permanent. This show was born from a collaboration with the A Palazzo gallery in Brescia, Italy. It is curated around a few themes: nature, evolution and the intervention of man and his knowledge on natural elements.

Elias Hansen's works are probably the central pieces of the show. In his work I can't put my finger on it, he focuses his attention on glass manufacturing and different techniques used for centuries. In Italy, different families developed and transmitted their knowledge of glass blowing from a generation another. He learned to blow glass and is interested in the fact that some of the techniques will die along with the families. His work is a combination of glass and wood that symbolise on one hand the manmade object (the glass) that will survive the man and the

nature that was and will always be there. Along with Hansen's works, Dan Colen and Nate Lowman's collaboration relates to the idea of evolution and moreover the idea of infinity. Their work consists of two large photographs of a lighter shown next to each other. The idea around this work is infinity: the lighter on the photographs was initially created as advertisement material. By photographing this lighter it gives it a 'new existence' and so perpetuates the existence of the lighter. Colen and Lowman's hope is that someday the photographs could be used as something else such as postcards and so the lighter would continue to exist indefinitely.

Maurizio Anzeri's works deal directly with the concept of evolution. In fact, he explores the possibilities of the human evolution. In order to do so he uses vintage prints he finds here and there and sews directly on them. He sews geometrical shapes on faces, in this case the eye. The geometrical shapes give the impression that the person becomes a robot. The contrast between the vintage print and the robotic highlight the idea of evolution. It widens the gap between 'old' and 'new'.

Georgie Hopton photographs vegetables and flower that she cultivates. They resemble still life painting and in a way are

contemporary still life. Still life paintings are a close reproduction of the flowers and fruits; the photography is a replica of the actual flower and vegetables. The perfection of the details in photography is an evolution of the man made replica in painting. They are faithful to the reality and all details are on the photographs.

The artist's work echoes with each other's. Hansen work echoes Gonzato's work in the common material they use (wood). Then Gonzato's photographs relate to Hopton's interest in nature and flowers. In term of evolution, Anzeri's stitching on photographs answers the idea of perpetual evolution and the idea of infinity of Colen and Lowman's collaboration.

In showing these artists together Guillaume Smets managed to highlight each artists keys ideas and focuses. Indeed walking to the show and viewing the works together raises some questions on nature, evolution and the effect of the human intervention that might not be so obvious if the works were shown separately.

An Exhibition in No Man's Land *C.P. Lin Collection of Ming and Qing Chinese Arts*

Hong Kong Museum of Art, Hong Kong
3 May – 28 September 2014

by GABRIEL CHIN

On a scorching summer's day in the month of May, every art fanatic on the island has flocked to the Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), where the second year of Art Basel Hong Kong took place. Yet on this occasion, a hidden vault filled with treasures from dynastic China is waiting to be discovered. To get there, board a seaborne vessel from Wan Chai or Central harbour, cross the treacherous waters to Tsim Sha Tsui, fending off waves of onrushing commuters while traversing to the Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMA), host of the C.P. Lin Collection of Ming and Qing Chinese Arts, 3 May to 28 September 2014.

The exhibition is not organised chronologically. Instead, the themes are divided into six categories, namely the beauty of hues, the beauty of painting, the beauty of form, the beauty of materials and the beauty of craftsmanship. The first object you would encounter has nothing to do with Ming (1368-1644) or Qing (1644-1912) dynasties. In fact, it is a Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) white-glazed bodhisattva sculpture. It is there simply because it is a captivating piece of sculpture to begin with. The second object you should notice is a Qing dynasty (1644-1912), Kangxi (1661-1722) period bowl decorated with dragons amid clouds

in under-glaze cobalt blue and iron red. The six-character reign mark underneath dates to the late Kangxi and early Yongzheng (1722-1735) period. The character qing was uniquely written so that the right bottom radical yue became dan. The wall text explains that in those days, potters were largely illiterate and the task of writing fell to the hands of a few people. The same stylised writing on porcelain bowls from across two periods indicates that the same craftsman had served two emperors.

Meet Raymond Tang, a 40-year-old, slenderly built, baby-faced curator who on this occasion, doubled as our tour guide. Raymond has a good sense of humour. His aim for the exhibition is to educate art history in an informal way, because not everyone is interested in art and history. While painstakingly trying not to bore every visitor to death, he has curated a show with engrossing tales to tell. For instance, after an assassination attempt on Emperor Jiajing (1521-1567) of late-Ming Dynasty, the emperor began fantasising immortality and spent lavishly on religious shrines and porcelain wares with Daoist occult themes to be used in ritual worships, in hopes that he would become immortal. The pair of square bowls with green phoenixes and cranes



Pair of Square Bowls with
Phoenixes and Cranes Design
Jiajing Mark and Period, 1522-1566
Jingdezhen Ware, Porcelain
with Overglaze Green and Yellow Decoration
H. 9.5 cm, D. 19.8 cm
Image Courtesy of C.P. Lin Collection, TTYCP, 203

on yellow ground is an example of Emperor Jiajing's Daoist ritual bowls invented in this period. Because the square bowls could not be thrown on a potter's wheel, the shaping process was rather complicated as it either involved attaching four slabs of clay together or moulding the clay from bottom to top. It is not surprising that when Emperor Jiajing did not achieve immortality after all, the production of square bowls gradually stopped.

On top of that, we also see Raymond's effort in trying to balance art history with practical information. This is evident in the way several objects were curated, for example, Chenghua doucai bowls. The innovation of doucai was regarded as an important development in the Chenghua (1465-1487) period of mid-Ming Dynasty. The term doucai was, however, coined in the Qing Dynasty. The technique involved painting outlines on the porcelain body in blue, then applying a



Teapot with Stylised Dragons Design and Falangcai Enamels
Qianlong Mark and Period, 1736-1795
Jingdezhen Ware, Porcelain with Coloured Enamels
H. 13 cm, D. 18.7 cm TTYCP, 203
Image Courtesy of C.P. Lin Collection

layer of transparent glaze and firing at high temperature. Finally, the glaze was enamelled with red, yellow, green and purple pigments and fired again at low temperature. In other words, it is a porcelain decoration technique that involves underglaze and overglaze colours. Technically speaking, to translate doucai as 'fighting' or 'contrasting' colours is inappropriate. The correct translation should be 'fitted colours' or 'joined colours', as pointed out in the exhibition catalogue. In my opinion, a more proper translation would be enamels on blue outlines.

Finally, the curator made sure to point out that the major aspect of the exhibition is comparison. 'While Emperor Yongzheng (1723-1735) was upright and honourable, as deliberately shown in the vertical manner his dragons were painted, Emperor Qianlong (1735-1796) was prodigal and indulged a temptation to show his extravagance', he

explained while pointing at a Qianlong-period teapot decorated with stylised dragons and pink enamels.

Everybody loves Raymond. The most humorous yet practical piece of information he delivered was at the end of our session. One classmate asked, "Why doesn't the museum exhibit local art?" Raymond cheekily answered, 'This is Hong Kong Museum of Art, not Museum of Hong Kong Art'. Arts of China had a great time.

There are aspects I love and dislike about the exhibition. The great merit is loads of taxpayers' money have been spent on decoration and lighting. For instance, they fitted an octagonal cabinet onto the wall just to house several curio objects made of jade. The wooden-tone cabinets are undeniably charming. They enhance the exotic appeal of the works of art. The display cases illuminate the objects within from all corners, like artists on the centre stage. Also, I find the narrative structure engaging. At the end of the day, I could appreciate the works of art because I understood their historical significance. In other words, it is 'why they were made', not 'how they were made' that interests me and, presumably, most museum goers. What I do not like is the name of the exhibition which seems to gear towards 'exemplifying various aspects of the collector's exceptional taste'. Nonetheless, because the exhibition consists of objects entirely borrowed from the collector, it is the curator's way of showing his gratitude.

But who is this Mr C.P. Lin anyway? Distinctive economic circumstances in Hong Kong gave rise to the merchant class in the roaring Sixties and Seventies. Mr Lin is a

successful businessman turned collector. He established the illustrious C. P. Lin Collection, of which the imperial porcelains are the most prestigious. In 1992, the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, a distinguished British collection of Chinese ceramics, invited Mr Lin to co-organise the exhibition *Elegant Form and Harmonious Decoration: Four Dynasties of Jingdezhen Porcelain*. It was a great honour for any Chinese art collector on the British colony.

Located in the vicinity of HKMA is the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, which houses the city's Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Hong Kong Space Museum. Developed in the 1980s, the area currently serves as the central arts and cultural hub of Hong Kong. Exhibiting the C.P. Lin Collection and the Xubaizhai Collection of Chinese Paintings at HKMA is an acknowledgement to the achievements of local collectors as part of the city's arts and cultural heritage. With the completion of West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) and the much anticipated opening of the contemporary art museum, M+ in 2017, HKMA will soon be phased out as Hong Kong's main art museum. At the time of writing this article, there are talks to build larger multi-purpose performance facilities at WKCD. In the future, the city's primary art scene will gradually shift towards West Kowloon, far away from HKMA. In this case, what does the future hold for HKMA, the jolly good fellow who works in it, and the city's art heritage contained within? Forgotten.

Boros Collection & Hoffman Collection, Berlin

by MORAG WALSH BARNES

What used to be a dusty waterfront, as though the building required extra fortification, a large solitary boulder stands blocking one of the doorways to one of the most prestigious private art collections in the world. Entering through the adjacent metal door, beautiful driftwood sculptures immediately block our path. In forcing us to step over them, they reinforce the sentiment, that a visit will be not only interesting but almost certainly challenging.

The art collection of advertising mogul Christian Boros and his wife Karen is housed in a former Second World War bunker in Mitte, in the heart of Berlin. It was built on the instructions of Adolf Hitler in 1943 to shelter passengers and staff from the nearby Friedrichstrasse railway station. Grand, imposing and adorned with architectural details deriving from the Renaissance, it was envisaged to become part of his new world capital, Germania. Unmissable from every angle, this is architecture that speaks of power.

With the demise in the forces that created it, the bunker transformed from a place of protection to one of internment as a Soviet prisoner of war camp and then subsequently changed its use again into a warehouse for cold war 'luxury goods', such as tropical fruits. Post 1989, in the early days of reunification, it became a club, hosting fantasy, techno, and fetish parties. Despite the many years and sheer capital

expended in converting the structure, few concessions have been made to the genre of the conventional art space. These are only traceable in the ascetic and sparsely applied whitewash, the industrial strip lighting and the removal of a few internal walls, slightly alleviating the pervading sense of claustrophobia. In this raw, artificially lit space the weight of history is everywhere: from the crude wall signs in Cyrillic script, to the drains and broken tiles that pockmark the floor. Degraded black paint tells of the period during which it earned the moniker 'the hardest club on earth'.

Whether evidenced by the glow-in-the-dark paint once used in case of the frequent power cuts or the room dedicated to the lighting of candles to monitor oxygen supply during its time as a nightclub, lack of light is a constant preoccupation in the virtually windowless space. By contrast Boros, for whom the bunker represents a type of basement like a modern day chateau owner, has a weekend home in the sleek, glassy, modern penthouse at the top of the building. Architecturally incongruent, perched at a vertiginous height, and all but impossible to view from street level, it is accessed by a system of lifts and industrial metal stairs which look impenetrable.

The contemporary art collected by Boros since 1990 is monumental and nothing short of dazzling. From the seductive metallic works of Danh Võ, to the large-



Hoffmann Collection

Installation View 1997/98 with Felix Gonzalez-Torres *Untitled (Arena)*, 1993, 20 Watt Light Bulbs, 60 Lights Bulbs and Sockets on Approx. 18 meter Light String, Dimensions Variable; *Untitled (for Parkett)*, 1994, Poster, Silkscreen on Impregnated Appleton Paper, 317,5 x 690,9 cm max., 30 Sheets
Image Courtesy of Sammlung Hoffmann, Berlin

scale photographs by Thomas Ruff and the monumental arboreal sculpture of Ai Weiwei, this is a selection of trophies to shock and awe. On occasion already provocative and disquieting, the art, when framed with the weight of history intrinsic in the walls, is powerful and intoxicating. Here, as everywhere in Berlin, it is impossible to escape the past.

In the same district, just a short distance away in metropolitan terms, lies the Hoffman Collection, the private collection of Erika Hoffman-Koenige and her late husband Rolf Hoffman. It is housed in a former, once derelict sewing-machine factory, a sandy coloured brick building characterised by an abundance of windows. Situated in a bohemian neighbourhood, set back from the

street and entered through a quiet courtyard the light suffused contemplative rooms could not provide a greater contrast to the cavernous spaces of the Boros Collection. Shuffling over the wooden floors in oversized slippers provides an entirely different viewing experience. There is a sense of intimacy and tranquility, and the elegant space has a museum-like quality to it. Although the original architectural structures have similarly been embraced and left visible, the building has a decidedly more comfortable feel.

This is a collection which tells a story of a marriage, family life and a love of art history: art and life intertwined, and inseparable. Erika Hoffman-Koenige as collector and sole curator enjoys presenting her works according to her 'personal idiosyncratic tastes', even

welcoming guests into her apartment at the top of the building to view the works there.

A Hans Hollein sofa encountered in an early room sets the tone. It is beautiful yet homely objet d'art used by the family over the years: a stain reveals the unmistakable trace of young children. These are not works preserved in climactically-controlled, pristine environments but works to be loved, enjoyed and cherished.

Mutaflor, a 1996 video work by Pipilotti Rist is viewed in a den like space. Installed by the artist herself, a white shag pile carpet is scattered with cushions based on Hoffman family photographs. Contrastingly the Boros Collection presented us with a very different version of a family space, that of the *Teenage Room*, 2009, an installation by Klara Lidén, a stark, humorous, darkly beautiful, cacophonous work.

Through photographs it is possible to see how close relationships and friendships with artists have informed their collecting practice. Nowhere is this more evident than in the monumental work by Frank Stella hung in the private apartment, which unlike any other work remains permanently on display.

Of course none of this is to say that work displayed in the Hoffman Collection can at times be any less hard-edged, it is simply curated and contextualised in an entirely contrasting, much more personal way.

Political histories are expressed in the large scale and raw work by Adriana Varejão and the beautiful yet potent work of Ernesto Neto. Elsewhere seminal moments in art history are exemplified by works such as *Interior Scroll*,

1975 and 1977 by Carolee Schneemann. The unconventional and even the humble are embraced, evidenced by the small carefully curated cabinet of *Netsuke*, some of great value, others less so. Longevity of passion and immersion in art are displayed for all to see as Erika herself appears in photograph of a performance work, given in tradition as a birthday present to her late husband.

The collectors, all originally outsiders to the city, bounded only by personal taste, are committed and passionate in their support of artists, both in the city and much further afield. Just as the story of Berlin is a tale of two cities, divided by the east and west, so the two collections are equally disparate and polarised, but the city is eminently richer for both of them having been chosen to reside there.

Peeling off that Gold Foil Reveals a Real Gem in Pudong, Shanghai

Aurora Museum

by DONNA YUEN



A Parade of Blue and White Porcelain from 13th and 14th Century at the Aurora Museum in Pudong, Shanghai
Photo by Donna Yuen on May 31, 2014

Private museums in China have been mushrooming as the colloquial saying goes, 'like spring bamboo after the rain'. What should I expect from a skyscraper that glitters in gold? Is this yet another private museum that manifests the ego of a nouveau-riche? The Aurora Museum in Pudong, Shanghai, is part of the glittering gold sky-tower that serves as the head office of a furniture and communication solutions company by day, a giant billboard by night. As I ascended the opulent French-style

staircase to the six-storied Aurora Museum, I anticipated tacky gallery space and dubious art objects beyond the guarded entrance.

A tall limestone chimera sculpture greeted me at the second floor entrance. The label accentuates that the beast was proudly acquired from City of Buffalo's Albright-Knox Museum through auction, in the effort to repatriate Chinese antiques. This can be interpreted as a good-will gesture from a Taiwanese businessman operating in China.

The story of ancient Chinese art begins with pottery figurines and architecture dating from Han (206 BC-220 AD) to Tang (618-907 AD) dynasties. Even if you are not knowledgeable in Chinese art, you will be dazzled by the dramatic showcase of funerary figurines and architectural models. For instance, a painted earthenware figure of a nursing mother on camelback stands under a spotlight. A procession of travelers on camels is displayed at knee-height, animated by images of sand dunes projected from overhead.

In another showcase, a Ming dynasty (1368-1644) pottery model of a residential complex is displayed in conjunction with a video projection on the wall that zooms in and deconstructs each architectural component of the compound. Aurora Museum's use of multimedia creatively animates funerary objects like no other museums I have seen before. The Musée Guimet in Paris is a close comparison with a display of Tang pottery figures on horsebacks set in braces on walls, suggesting a snapshot of polo-players in action. However, the dim general lighting combined with black-coloured display cases and strong spotlighting at Aurora elevates the objects to the status of opera singers on a centre stage.

If the first floor of the exhibit lures us in by our visual sense, then the subsequent floors of jade, blue-and-white ceramics and Buddhist sculpture galleries certainly intrigue and challenge us intellectually. 'How did they make it?' is the question that repeatedly came to mind repeatedly as I ascended through the upper floors. The minimalistic and serene setting also quiets the mind, giving space to both ponder and wonder.

The collection of carved jade objects favoured prehistoric to Han periods and contained some exquisite period examples from the Ming and Qing dynasties. Highlights include a nephrite jade humanoid figure from the Hongshan culture (4000-3100 BC). A crouching figure with folded arms is rendered in the round. Large almond-shaped eyes, a snout as nose, long rabbit-like ears and a four-horned head form perfectly symmetrical features to this humanoid. Fine criss-crossed details on the forehead and a narrow headband decorate these otherwise smooth and rounded surfaces.

In the softly lit gallery set against a robin's-egg background, the pale green nephrite jade exudes a warm glow that beckoned me to examine each jade piece. Another star piece is a Han dynasty burial jade. This suit comprises 2,903 pieces of rectangular jade plaques, yellow-green in colour with the exception of the areas demarcating the eyebrows and hair in brown jade. Red lining and gold wire threads together the pieces into an enclosed suit. Such elaborate and extravagant burial suits have been found in several Han tombs of kings and aristocrats, one of which is Liu Sheng's tomb in Mancheng, Hebei province, now housed in the National Museum of China in Beijing.

As I follow the spiral staircase up the fourth floor, a parade of blue and white ceramics lies in my direct sightline like a lit-up runway. Large pieces of Yuan dynasty blue and white ceramics of different shapes and motifs stand confidently on lighted pillars in encased glass. I was awe-struck by the quantity, breadth and depth of the Yuan jars, plates and vessels showcased here. This collection of forty Yuan blue and white ceramics is amongst the best

in the world, surpassing those found in the Percival David Collection in London. The German-engineered glass case and the special lighting allow you to walk around the object and press very close to see all details (except for the bottom!).

I reckon my experience in this gallery to standing on a Star Trek holo-deck, waiting to touch the ceramics as it materialises in front of me! As you wander through this floor, you can see the evolution of blue and white ceramics in form, technology and motif from Yuan, Ming to Qing dynasties (13th – 20th c.). A rare piece is a 40 cm-high oblate flask with painted dragon and phoenix underglaze blue and four appliqué dragons crouching on the shoulders. It incorporates the shape of Central Asian metal flask, combined with Buddhist-inspired lotus scroll and Han Chinese motifs of double dragons chasing pearl and male and female phoenixes.

As for the question of ‘how do they make it?’ visitors can find their own answers in the research study room found on most floors. Each room is devoted to the analysis of material, technology, tools, forms and decorations of each medium. There is one on the study of jade (3rd floor), blue and white ceramics (4th floor), stoneware and porcelain glazes and marks (5th floor) and Buddhist sculpture (6th floor). Each room has an excellent layout of the analytical component and actual object samples for visitor to compare.

The museum collection is owned by Taiwanese tycoon Chen Yongtai of the Aurora Group, whose business had a humble beginning as a time-stamp machine provider in the 60s. In 2012, the Japanese architect

Andō Tado designed the six-floor museum as part of its social responsibility initiative to share Chen’s collection with the public and to advance academic research and study of Chinese antiquities.

The objects in the Aurora Museum are of such superb condition across the board that I cannot help but ask if they were genuine objects. My biggest criticism is that there is no provenance provided anywhere for any of these objects. We can only refer to mentions of similar excavated objects in the audio guide and published catalogue. Any trust you place in the authenticity of these objects will have to come from your own expertise or on your trust in the reputation of the Museum Director, Chang Lin-Sheng, formerly from the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Luckily, the mission of the museum is one of study and research, so it is possible for scholars to access the collection for hands-on examination. Coupled with the exceptionally-curated study room, each visitor can make up his own mind on the calibre of art objects seen here in Aurora. So beneath that golden façade of a nouveau-rich exterior lies a real gem waiting to be discovered and savoured.

A Little More Culture, A Little Less Crime Pérez Art Museum, Miami

by MARITZA MELANIA LACAYO



Pérez Art Museum, Miami
Image Courtesy of Pérez Art Museum, Miami

What used to be a dusty waterfront construction site on one of Miami’s most expensive lots is now the home of the Pérez Art Museum Miami, or as the locals call it, ‘PAMM.’ Renamed ‘Museum Park’ (with a science museum underway), this area has rapidly transformed itself into Miami’s new center of culture. With the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts just a few minutes away, Downtown Miami has made a radical turn.

Downtown Miami was known for its crime and low-income housing. The City of Miami was looking for ways to ‘clean up’ the downtown area, considering that a large percentage of that land was waterfront, and simply too expensive not to exploit. It

all began with a series of high-rise luxury condos in the late 90s and early 2000s. Although the prices were low and the buildings brand new, locals simply weren’t interested.

The opening of the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts in 2006 came as a bit of a surprise. Located in central downtown and just a few minutes away from Miami’s waterfront Bicentennial Park, people didn’t expect there to be many visitors. Again, despite the fact that it cost millions of dollars to build, its location was questionable.

The city of Miami was attempting to inject culture into parts of a city that were less than well-off, in the hopes of driving out

the residents and making way for new ones. The Adrienne Arsht Center for Performing Arts was just the first step, but a crucial one. This development led to more security in the area, and locals began to realize that if they invested in Downtown, they could get better prices, and the crime would have no choice but to take itself somewhere else.

However, for Miami residents it is hard to remember a time when this area wasn't what it is today. The Pérez Art Museum Miami, located just a stone's throw away from the American Airlines Arena, opened to the public in 2013, just a few years after the opening of the Center for the Performing Arts. Considering the positive impact this cultural center has had on the community and the City of Miami, it seemed logical to continue to pursue the dream of having an internationally renowned art museum.

PAMM has been around since the early 90s, although it was then called the Miami Art Museum. It was previously an exhibition space with no permanent collection, but changed its focus in 1996 when they decided to begin collecting international modern and contemporary art.

Miami's primary focus as an artistic center had always been Latin American art. PAMM's hopes of becoming a world renowned institution played a large part when it came to the kind of art that they would collect. This meant that PAMM would not collect Latin American art exclusively, but instead provide the Miami residents with an experience comparable to that of MoMA and Tate Modern.

The collection currently contains about 1300 works of varying media and from various

countries. With the \$40 million donation from Miami millionaire Jorge M. Pérez, the museum was able to finally relocate to a brand new Herzog & de Meuron waterfront building in Miami's now very trendy Downtown.

There are many new residents in Miami who never experienced the 'old' Downtown. Many visit the museum today and assume it has always looked this way. PAMM's very own mission statement reminds local residents, old and new, that one of their primary goals is to continue to improve the area: The new PAMM transforms Museum Park into a central destination on Miami's cultural map, promotes progressive arts education, builds community cohesiveness and contributes substantially to downtown revitalization.

The museum has gained popularity among Miami residents very quickly. Although PAMM is not internationally recognised just yet, their collection sure seems to suggest that it is trying to compete with the world's famous modern art museums. To walk through its various galleries is to encounter Ellsworth Kelly, Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol, Lygia Clark, Donald Judd, Joseph Albers, and many other modern masters. Although there are Latin American artists within PAMM's collection, it is certainly not its main focus. PAMM's architecture has also made headlines. Herzog & de Meuron, the architect duo responsible for Munich's Allianz Arena and London's Tate Modern, designed PAMM's current building. The glass façade allows viewers to look out onto Biscayne Bay, from nearly any gallery within the museum. The building's white walls and wide rooms remind us that we are in a museum setting but the windows remind us that we are, first and foremost, in Miami.

Ivan Seal – A Profile

by GIULIA TURBIGLIO

Ivan Seal's studio in Berlin is an apartment inhabited by paintings at various stages of their lives. Blank canvases rest in a semi-dark, intimate space, while in the room just opposite, inundated by natural light, a painting on an easel, surrounded by a chaotic accumulation of dirty brushes and encrusted colours, struggles for its self-realization. It will then move next door, joining other unfinished works. They will all start a conversation of contamination: the sedimentation of this exchange may lead to a solution, a final shaping, but also may not.

The Kreuzberg apartment Ivan Seal has chosen to give birth to and raise his paintings in has a homely and intimate feeling that in some sense questions the possibility of a simple and complete realization. There is no sign of that sense of industrial production typical of spacious open-plan artists' studios; this is a place inhabited by living things and memories, and all the complexities arising from the dialogue between the two. To this regard, the physical, almost sculptural presence of the objects depicted becomes strikingly contradictory when compared to the immanent sense of something undecided that continuously reshapes itself under the viewer's gaze. This paradox finds its origin in the conception of the works by the artist, in that pivotal moment when the entrance into the picture plane, into the activity of painting, takes place:

'These starting points for the last few years have inevitably involved somehow memory or more specifically my memories. I remember some one-thing-place-event and then try and focus on one element from that recollection. This often is a single detail which then is used like a tool to carve out an object into the pictorial plane.'

The object/subject of the painting is thus the result of a series of abstractions: it takes form not from a tangible thing, but from the memory of that thing, which is itself a re-elaboration. The artist himself defines memory as a 'parasite' fed by accumulated and contrasting thoughts, and itself originating an uncontrolled flow of suggestions. The sculptural, 'carved' appearance of Seal's paintings hints at the deceiving nature of memory which, even if it is seemingly embodied in a finished entity, is actually based on open associations of thoughts, on an unconscious perversion of reality. This leap towards the irrational is to be found in the notion that the 'original' to which the subject refers remains ultimately untraceable, lost in the overlapping of meanings. A knickknack or a dancing figure can be spotted in *trosmeadmomnetcarteg sasi on tobe*, 2014, a bunch of flowers in *prototype to get out no 3*, 2011, but both are unresolved, 'other', not identifiable notwithstanding their corporeality. Ivan Seal's paintings become then the depiction of the failure of memory as a trustworthy record of reality.



Ivan Seal

rosmeadmomnetcarteg sasi on tobe, 2014

Oil on Canvas, 90 x 73 cm.

Image Courtesy of the Artist

Photo by Adam Reich

This failure mirrors another already widely acknowledged by contemporary art: the failure of painting. If the advent of photography played an important part in questioning the status of painting's mimetic referentiality, it is also true that some artists such as Luc Tuymans and Gerard Richter used photographic images as source material for their paintings in order to stress the impossibility of trustworthy representation in the postmodern era. However, the position of Ivan Seal as a painter seems to divert from those mentioned: the artist does not draw inspiration from physical objects or

from photographs but from that liquid and ephemeral material that is personal memory, a combination of past and present sensations and images reaching towards an unknown future. The deceiving and parasitical nature of memory finds then perfect expression in the flow of painting, in its repeated failure in representation: 'By using these failures as material to work with, I find the paintings stop trying to represent and instead present.'

Failure seems here to overturn its traditional negative connotations and become a synonym of escape and liberation from the

chains of trustful reference and simplistic interpretation. However, painting's liberating power – like in the RPGs' (role-playing games) Seal used to play as a child – is strictly linked to its limitations as a medium, to its rules: 'I need the rules of figurative painting to create things which point towards a meaning but are meaningless.' This dichotomy between the freedom of the open work characterized by a plurality of possible meanings and the bounds of artistic representation is tangible in Seal's paintings, particularly in the way the objects depicted seem to explode the two-dimensional surface of the canvas, the thick peaks of oil paint accumulating on top of the smooth background.

It is in works like *gromop dancen*, 2014, recently exhibited at Frieze New York, that the self-referential aspect of Ivan Seal's practice becomes more evident: the picture plane is repeated and consequently revealed in all its limits, while an uncanny object, familiar but still unrecognizable, breaks this double surface, giving the impression of reshaping itself in front of one's eyes. These objects carry, in fact, also a material memory: since the artist never washes the brushes when painting them they become the result of an extended reworking in which the starting point soon gets lost. Painting generates other painting in a never-ending stream of consciousness that asserts its failure as a sign of freedom.

Ivan Seal's interest in the concept of 'open work', as developed by Umberto Eco and in Roland Barthes' theories about the death of the author, is reflected strongly in his sound works. Here Seal uses cut-up techniques, random sentence generators or found texts,

and creates sound pieces where the spoken word evolves randomly around a topic or a couple of terms. Inspired by the collaboration between Merce Cunningham and John Cage and by their study of chance, Seal exhibits these sound works in an unpremeditated conversation with his paintings:

'My sound works are so far made without the paintings in mind and the paintings are not concerned with the sound works. But when exhibited together, they both act parasitically on each other. One subverts the other whilst the other perverts the other and so on.'

The exhibition space – one of Seal's last sound works was exhibited at RaebervonStenglin in 2013 - thus becomes a place of freedom, conceived as liberation from any attempt to retrace an original meaning. Personal memories are confused and intertwined within each other, letting the viewer choose whether to draw from his own personal story or wander in between these multiple references. 'The function of the objects and words is to create a space with which one can use its features to generate meaning. Yet the space is always left as it was entered, without meaning.'

A Sit Down with Jemma Harrison

by JOANNA HATTAB

On a warm Tuesday afternoon in June, I sat down with artist Jemma Harrison, who is currently studying Graphic Arts and Design at The Leeds School of Art, Architecture and Design. Jemma's practice is presently exploring the realm of typography, which she explains stresses the importance of the process behind a piece of work rather than the finished product. Typography originally caught her attention as it provides fonts and lettering, such as Cambria, Ariel and the infamous Comic Sans a new life and enables words to generate images. Our discussion was focused around three of her most recent works, of which originated from poetry, eavesdropping on conversations and her on going interest in architecture.

Joanna Hattab: What kind of images have you created using these various fonts?

Jemma Harrison: I began my exploration of typography with three poems and set out to make three A3 posters. However, I knew that I wanted to work outside the confines of a sketchbook, so I chose to spell out words from these poems, which I found thought provoking, onto a wall of the building next to my house in sticky tape and then photographed them. I later uploaded the photograph onto an illustrator programme and screen-printed the image in various colours. I also screen-printed it on to a piece of wood because I think wood is a dense material and I like my work to be made up of several layers. I'm really interested in playing with different materials and how

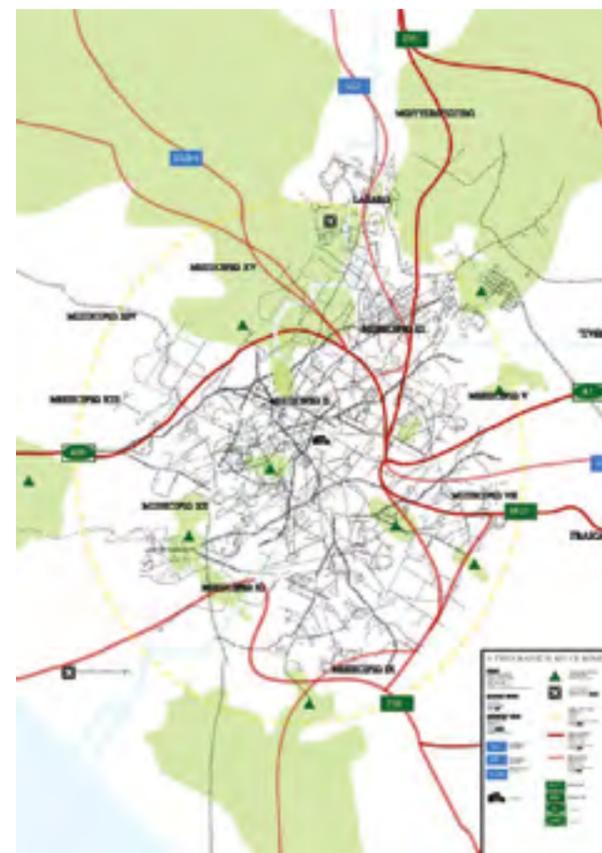
they work along side type. But I'm looking to move away from working on a computer screen and start to work with illustration, so I'd be creating these images by hand as well as creating my own font. Its crazy how many new skills I've needed to learn in order to use these programmes.

JoH: Do you think technology and working with an illustrator programme on a computer is becoming more and more popular in artists' practices?

JeH: Yes, I definitely do. Technology is the future, which I don't necessarily think is a good thing.

JoH: Are you working on a particular project at the moment?

JeH: I've made works based on people's conversations that I overheard, whilst travelling around London. I got the idea by looking at one of Tomato's publications called *Skyscraper I Love You*, which documents conversations and while I was reading this book, it was as though the pages were having one hundred different conversations at once. When I was talking to my friend about this, she said to me 'Our conversations are all so boring, who would want to hear them?' So I made a piece using this quotation and I even created by own font for it. For the other pieces, I wrote down these conversations that I overheard around London onto Illustrator in various fonts in order to make the shape of a



Jemma Harrison
Re-imagined Rome, 2014
59.4 x 42 cm
Image Courtesy of the Artist

building and then I screen-printed the image. This work reminded me of very structural grid like shapes, which gave me the idea of exploring maps. I recently created maps of Rome and New York, which are typographical, re-imagined maps, each with their unique key. I'm thinking about expanding the series and making maps of all different cities around the world and I'm hoping to exhibit them in my upcoming exhibition on 30th August. So for example, the map of New York, every road is made up of type. For Manhattan, the type will be about Manhattan. I wanted them to be visual but if you read into them they are a



Jemma Harrison
Our Conversations Are All So Boring Who Would Want to Hear Them?, 2014
42 x 42 cm
Image Courtesy of the Artist

bit clever as well. I might even take them into animation and have the streets, which are made up of type, moving around and flowing in and out of one another. So it's all a process, which, I guess, is the main idea behind conceptual art. Maybe it's just the modern way.

JoH: So when you think about exhibiting your art, would you want to display the material you used during the making of the work in order to show the process behind it?

JeH: I was thinking about this the other

day. I don't know if people would want to see the materials I used in order to make the piece. Plus I want my work to be a mystery. I want to encourage the viewers to work out the meaning of the work themselves. I don't want to feed them additional information. For me, my work is visual information that when you peel back its layers reveals a clever state of mind. What I do think is clever about my maps is the key, where I include the font size, colour, opacity and density.

JoH: Are you interested in or influenced by any artists, who use this sort of computer software?

JeH: Tomato, who are a graphic design group, are my obsession at the moment. They do everything from graphic design to film. Their work includes looking at architecture and creating images of buildings through type, which to be honest, is where my initial interest in typography came from. It's really important to be knowledgeable about what artists are influenced by and what they are working with. I always make sure I go to galleries on a regular basis and remain up to date with other practices. There is also a group called Axis, who does similar work to mine, but I only discovered them after I had made my maps and the French artist Armelle Caron splits a map in half and disrupts it's precision and order.

JoH: Have you titled any of your work?

JeH: I have a blog, which is www.jtahdesign.wordpress.com, so you can have a look there! They are all titled but I didn't really think about the titles. I just named them *Skyscraper* or *Typography Skyscraper*, but maybe I will think about giving them titles

with deeper meanings. So clearly architecture is a key theme that runs throughout my work. Even back in the day when I was studying GCSE art at sixteen I did an entire project about buildings. I must be interested in structure and symmetry. Plus, people have always perceived my work as very structural.

JoH: Are you planning on sticking with this theme of architecture or is there another topic you're hoping to explore?

JeH: I'm currently looking into the idea of OCD because the work I'm doing at the moment is very particular and quite obsessive. For example with my maps, every small detail needed to be in a precise order. I think I'm going to stick with typography for these new pieces, as well as go back to screen-printing and photography.

JoH: Do you know what you'd like to be doing once you graduate?

JeH: I know I definitely want to continue my work with graphic design. I'd quite like to have the experience of working in a graphic design firm, which produces work that has been commissioned by other companies. Last summer I worked at ICO Design on Great Portland Street and they had done all the designs for Snog, the frozen yoghurt company. But I'd also love to continue producing my own work and hopefully be represented by a gallery. I want to keep pushing myself and growing as an artist. I've still got a lot to learn.

Saying YES and NO at the same time Interview with Christian Jankowski

by SORANA SERBAN

Christian Jankowski is not afraid of contradictions. Quite the opposite. Whether playing on tropes of the mass media or dealing with the recent past, he explores conflicting feelings and ideas, wittily overturning them. His childhood passion for archaeology has stayed with him, but in contrast to the seclusion of an archaeologist, Jankowski is deeply immersed into various social milieus, always interacting with people, some of whom take part in his projects, becoming both subjects and collaborators.

In *Shame Box*, 1992, one of his earliest works, people sat in a former shop window – part of his then flat/studio in Hamburg – holding cards inscribed with things they were ashamed of. A photo documenting that performance now hangs on a wall in his studio, and seems to have become like an icon for him. As he has momentarily moved back to Berlin and enjoys a sense of space he was longing for in New York, Jankowski also re-engages with the cultural context that informed his practice from the very beginning of his career: the playful approach to art and language of the Hamburg art school.

Sorana Serban: I noticed the poster of your recent exhibition on a wall in your studio. The title – *25 Copies and an anonymous Original* – caught my attention. How do you choose titles?

Christian Jankowski: The title is a huge part of the project. It's part of the artwork. Sometimes I adapt titles or steal titles, but in relation to that I think about the background of the Hamburg art school with its certain ironic look and the influence of people like Franz Erhard Walter, who was very attentive to words, to play. [Sigmar] Polke is another very good example, he was also teaching there. So, it seems something related to a certain Hamburg attitude and a certain Hamburg feeling. And if you look at titles by [Martin] Kippenberger or Polke you understand why titles of shows or titles of artworks play such an important part in reading the artwork. And I know some of my works are happier with titles than others; but it's always useful to spend time to think about the titles. Because even if you think historically; Harald Szeeman was great at finding titles for exhibitions, although at the time there were quite similar shows, presenting the same artists, but nobody came up with such a good title as *When Attitudes Become Form*. So there are different ways of getting your ideas across, making notice, and making a point in the title.

SS: One of your most recent works, *Heavy Weight History*, 2013, deals with the issue of art in public spaces. I think the Willy Brandt Monument is very interesting in particular. Could you explain this project, this symbolic reconversion of history?

CJ: I'm excited that of all these photographs you were drawn to Willy Brandt. I have to say that he was one of the inspirations for this project. I was asked to do a survey show at the Ujazdowski Castle, in Warsaw, but there was also a commission. I tried to find something that on one hand matches my own history, gives the title to the whole exhibition, but on the other hand represents a new artwork. It started as a trip to Warsaw, dealing with the art in the city, its museums, monuments, architecture. I was fascinated by the monuments of Warsaw because they refer to a very recent history, also a very problematic history in the relationship between Germany and Poland. Thinking about the dialogue between these countries I found a performative act from the German Chancellor to kneel in front of the *Ghetto Uprising Heroes Monument*. So this performative gesture impressed me and it immediately started me thinking about forms of forgiveness, forms of dealing with history. It also reminded me of my time as a pupil, when in postwar Germany they spent many hours of history classes teaching us this dark part, this Third Reich part of German history in order not to repeat it. I thought of looking at these monuments from a new angle, and one thing is, if you hold a monument up, if you take it from the ground, you also create a new perspective on it, which metaphorically is quite beautiful. So I imagined heavyweightlifters, strong Polish men, lifting a monument of Willy Brandt, who was represented on his knees. This clicked in my mind and I thought about other monuments, which could be lifted. My starting point was the Polish Association of Heavyweightlifters, who were completely thrilled by the idea. That gave me hope. Then there were other people contacted: politicians,

experts who analysed the possibility of lifting the monuments, what it would mean, how would the public react, veterans...so this whole mess of papers started. I also needed approvals from the German Auswärtiges Amt [Federal Foreign Office] so that an art project wouldn't mess with German-Polish diplomatic relationships. Anyway, you see what kind of resonance even before the performance, the idea stimulated.

SS: So how was it received in both countries, maybe in relation to the mass media, as you use the framework of a television show to present the performance?

CJ: I'm using the mass media format of the sports show because there is no real mass media for monuments. So I used a very familiar type of editing. For example, we also needed slow motion because the monuments were only lifted for seconds, as in sports. In sports you have a moment that is very important, that you put on repeat; that will be shown a second time, the commentator goes over it and makes more comments. So it felt natural for me to document this performance in a similar way to sports events. But it wasn't produced by a real sports channel, it hasn't been aired as a sports event on the Polish sports news or German television even though the commentator was a professional, and the sportmen were also *profis*. But you asked about the reaction. So, in terms of media, the print media jumped on it. The *Spiegel* put a large article about it online shortly after the lifting of the second work, then an Austrian television sent a team to come by, the *Welt Spiegel* made interviews with the sportmen and I while we were filming in Poland. But I also have to say I did not advertise this as a media event for people to come by and cover



Christian Jankowski
The Artist in his Studio
Image Courtesy of the Author

it. I wanted to keep it on a lower, respectful and controllable level. When you involve the mass media some of the representation is out of your hand and I was afraid that it might be in some way disrespectful. I simply wanted to control it in a way. I didn't want the media to mess with the situation, or the sportsmen, or the audience.

SS: It seems you do a lot of research for your projects, interviewing people, involving professionals from other fields. It almost sounds like the work of an anthropologist. How do you relate to that?

CJ: Yes, I have an interest in history, anthropology. I could have been an archaeologist. It was my favourite profession as a child. I actually started to learn Latin, Classical Greek, and realised my strength wasn't learning languages, so at one point I stopped and turned to other fields. For me it is anyway a natural interest. I read books about history, because I think that looking into the future also means looking into the past, and something related to it like digging into the ground and making sense of the objects found. You uncover something, you learn, and something new might be created if you take it out of there. But I am also interested in the collaborative aspect, because in my performances there are never actors acting after a script. They are always individuals that take part in these projects out of their own motivations.

SS: So how does collaborative work influence the whole process?

CJ: I usually work on frames, on certain rules, almost like conceptual artwork that I take as a guideline. But a lot of things do not

only depend on me. For example, the choice of the sculptures in *Heavy Weight History* had to be talked over. There could have been some other sculptures as well, and there are different reasons why they couldn't be part of the project. So, now the ones that are there become part of the artwork. There are many details that are not completely upon me. But the core is performative. In this case [*Heavy Weight History*], if people had told me we should soften the ground around the sculptures, that would have been doable, and would affect the look of the image, but it would be nothing that would harm the project. Or even the sports moderator, who plays a fundamental part in the videowork.

SS: Did he have a script or were those his own comments?

CJ: They were his own comments. He had been informed about the background of the sculptures, artists, historical context, but he came fifteen minutes before we started filming, just as if it were a real sports event. He didn't need to practise a day before. He was very quick, and spontaneous. He's a professional. For many of my projects I trust professionals. Sometimes I do a project, and think that a different person might have been better. Who knows? It could take two years to realise that he or she was the perfect person in this position. But then you realise that you don't want to control it so much. Because it can be beautiful that you pick just the right person out of chance, it opens up the gate that can be surprisingly good for yourself. It's the path you can take as an artist: whether you try to control everything in your studio or not. My working attitude is more performative. And after all reality is not perfect. If you see a live show for a sports event, it can happen that no



Christian Jankowski

Crying for the March of Humanity, 2012, Video, 26:02 min
Image Courtesy of the Artist

camera gets a certain situation during a soccer game, fans are annoyed, and even the referee can't see it again on camera. So he has to choose whether it was a goal or not. So reality appears to be like a mass media image.

SS: And there will always be things left out.

CJ: Exactly.

SS: In *Crying for the March of Humanity*, 2012 you had *telenovela* actors performing in an extreme way. When watching the video, most people in the audience laugh although there is a lot of drama portrayed. Is it an intentional effect?

CJ: I think that I always look for moments that are conflicting. That you don't know exactly how to take something, or for what it stands. It's almost like saying YES and NO at the same time, when your ground is unclear. And I think that is the power of art. I think it's good for an artwork to have multiple messages, to destabilize your own position. Is it ironic, is it reactionary, is it just for the beauty of it? Who is it criticising? Is it criticising the system it talks about, is it criticising your expectations, your distance from it or how you look down on mass media, or because you might think there is high and low art? I think these are all stimulating moments for me. With *Crying for*



Christian Jankowski

Strip the Auctioneer, 2009, Video, 25:24 min
Image Courtesy of the Artist

the March of Humanity I thought about the melodrama genre. Because melodrama is so present in cinema, in television, and because it tells stories about emotions, about people, everybody also has opinions about it, and a way to read it. You think you can read it. You think you know how to read it. Then I thought how about making a meta-melodrama? Not only the actors start to cry. This crying translates to the audience in the cinema. Doesn't happen too often that people start to cry in a gallery. Or to scream. I've never seen people screaming in the gallery because an artwork shocked them. It is a different genre, but it is also fascinating because it relates to performance. It is an immediate reaction I'm interested in. So, my proposal to the telenovela people was to constantly cry, and

replace all parts of the existing telenovela with acts of crying. A dialogical way of crying. It is a serial experience to watch it.

SS: Another unfamiliar situation you placed professionals in was *Strip the Auctioneer*, 2009. You staged this performance in perhaps the most commercial place of the artmarket. Performance started as anti-establishment, as anti-market. How did you manage this contradiction in *Strip the Auctioneer*?

CJ: I am frequently asked to give art for charity auctions. And I believe in the idea of giving and taking. Giving is the start for a dialogue. So I thought why not try to create something right there, with the situation, rather than offering an existing artwork,

and use the auction house as an atelier, to create a performance. And then I got a very spontaneous thought that the auctioneer is the main performer and that he should auction his hammer. So...the initial idea was to sell the hammer. And since he started to take things off, like the hammer, such a fundamental item for the profession, what would it be like to take off his clothes: jacket, shiny shoes, socks, and so on. I realised it's a strip. So, let's strip the auctioneer! And that was the idea. And that's a good example going back to titles, *Strip the Auctioneer* came after a few seconds and got stuck as a formula. It was like a battle call. Then it was great that Christie's got on board with this project although the first reaction was no, do something else, and then suddenly an answer came that he might take his jacket off. This was the status of how it would have been had I not travelled to Amsterdam. Because after that reply, there were only a few days left before the auction, so I flew to Amsterdam, talked to them, and convinced them it was a good thing to do. I think that Arno Verkade would have even gone further than he went, but his boss had drawn a line. It was good anyway, it was a new line that it had been before. Of course, in the final piece, to make it an artwork, you start to manipulate a little bit the reality of how something was, because you are open to put information in and out of an artwork. If you see it now, it isn't mentioned it was a charity auction, because that's not important for the piece. At the end of the day, it's still an auction, and we're talking about a genre.

SS: You mentioned the studio space before. And here we are, in your studio, in Berlin. I was wondering why did you choose Berlin.

CJ: For a long time my atelier was a shop window in Hamburg. And I think that combination of presenting things in the studio, in which I also lived, in which I cooked, exhibited, produced...it was all one thing. And then I had another phase when my studio was my suitcase. I was just travelling. During my student times in Hamburg, I had to pay a certain amount for renting the space, I exhibited other artists that I admired, and not like many other of my colleagues who went for a year to be in Vienna, or to be another year in London, for studies, I always stayed in Hamburg. And then I started to visit all the people that had visited me in Hamburg, so I went around sleeping in their apartments. After that I relocated to Berlin, had an apartment, but I was still travelling a lot. Then, in the next phase I moved to New York, found a small studio space, which was also my living room. In the U.S. it was a very international context, something I wasn't familiar with from Hamburg or Berlin. Now Berlin is very international, but ten or fifteen years ago, it was not. In New York at some point I really missed space. It was great to see, walk, meet a lot of people, but it was too dense for me. Especially after travelling, being back in New York, I didn't find concentration because there was so much happening around all the time. Sometimes you just need a bit of space and time to absorb everything. I came back because here is my culture, and I came back because I was frequently travelling to Berlin, so I realised I want to relocate to Berlin as it had become more inviting to work, live and travel from.

SS: I find it very interesting that for many years the studio was both your creative and living space, but also a place to exhibit other artists's works. And this seems connected to

your practice...integrating life in art. I was wondering if it still works for you like that, as your living quarters are very close to the studio space.

CJ: I mean, you see, the concept of this studio is of something in between. It's a very liveable place. If you look at the projection wall over there, it has a double-function as a fireplace. I just believe in multifunctional spaces and this is a reason why I like spaces that can be a showroom, an atelier, a büro, a living space, a space to host a party all at the same time.

SS: From mass media, to history, sponsorship and the art market – there are issues you've been dealing with along your career, and which seem to reappear. What topics, debates are you interested in right now and maybe you are considering to explore in new projects?

CJ: With some of the things I think I reached a point where I did a lot of artworks about, such as the artworld, so now I'm looking into projects out of the artworld, and maybe also catch up with earlier projects, such as the *Shame Box* project, when people sat in a shop window with cards expressing their shame.

SS: I actually noticed a photograph of that project here, on one of the studio walls.

CJ: Yes, I almost use it as an icon, since it is such an early work, from 1992. I mean, it is part of a series. It's a bit related to the little *Decision Room* – a recent work I have in my studio, downstairs, and showed for the Gallery Weekend. Where people stay in a very nice, fancy hotel, and the space is all cleared up. Then I asked them to furnish those rooms in relation to their lives. It's almost like their portrait. And attach a price to it. Now I also

have the chance to work in different prisons in Berlin. It's not an easy task, and I'm still thinking on the concept. I just had one visit in a prison.

SS: How was it?

CJ: It was already an exceptional context. There was something happening when I was there because they have a soccer team, and they were playing with a team outside of the prison. And this was sponsored by a soda company. And they had a filmmaker there, who told the players to pat the prisoners on the shoulder, and I thought that was a bit far off. It probably was a nice thing, but even the field they chose was in a corner, because of filming reasons. It was already a very loaded experience. I met some very nice people, including some prison employees in charge of cultural programmes. So, I'm still at the starting point. But I wasn't really happy about how the camera was used there.

SS: Would that contradiction, the issue with the company be a source for the project?

CJ: Could be. It's a very powerful company. But that makes it even more interesting.

SS: One last question. What video did you screen in the *16mm Mystery*?

CJ: A...The secret of a happy marriage remains a secret (smiles).

Baltimore's Art Scene: Young, Transient and On The Rise

by ANNIE JACKSON



Nicole Dyer

I Didn't Think I Was Going Home Tonight (It's Just You're Really Pretty), 2012
Acrylic, Oil, Pastel on Paper, 149.9 x 373.4 cm
Image Courtesy of the Artist

It takes place in the front seat of a car. The viewer enters the painting through the perspective of a girl in the passenger's seat. We can see her knees poking out of her short black dress with a pink flower pattern. A cigarette lazily dangles from her right hand. The driver is looking at her, rubbing his hand on her bare thigh. His face is monstrous, with pink and green skin, razor sharp teeth and glowing yellow eyes. This is a work by painter Nicole Dyer entitled *I*

Didn't Think I Was Going Home Tonight (It's Just You're Really Pretty), 2012. It evokes fear and excitement, while revealing the space between lack of control and total control of one's own lifestyle. Dyer puts all of this out there onto paper for people to see. It is honest and personal, sweet and terrifying, which are characteristics found in much of her work. Her paintings are usually very large in scale and depict people and memories of her time in Baltimore:

at parties, in the car, or eating pizza on Wednesday night, usually with bright and sometimes sickly colours.

When I look at Dyer's paintings it reminds me of what it was like to live in this city. Baltimore may be small, but it is incredibly complex. In a five minute drive you could see a row of mansions with large freshly cut lawns leading up to the oversized brick houses and then drive onto a road with abandoned boarded up row houses, with trash rolling down the street and a blinking blue light on the corner signaling that the police are watching this area. I have seen prostitutes getting arrested, every car on a block getting its window smashed overnight, and a man so down on his luck he lives in a wheel chair on the corner of Preston and Charles streets. With all of its weaknesses, Baltimore also has its fair share of strength. The city can also be an incredibly positive and charming place. Baltimore is known for quirky things like big pink flamingos, beehive hairdos, and waitresses that call you 'hon'. It is home to cult film director Jon Waters and supports a large community of artists.

The art scene in Baltimore is largely structured around the presence of one of the top art universities in North America, Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). The university is situated in-between some very poor and violent neighbourhoods, but works hard to have a positive impact on the community. There is a lot of empty space in the city and the rent is fairly cheap, which is very appealing to art students. The concept of artists moving into hard and rundown neighborhoods is not new. But in Baltimore, the area in which this occurs had not yet seen any massive regeneration; instead it stayed

the same for decades. Only recently has the presence of an artistic community seemed to change the neighbourhoods' economic standing and increase the surrounding population.

Typically the artists that live in Baltimore use the city as an incubator, a cocoon to grow, experiment and test out their ideas while they go to school. Some people leave as soon as they graduate; others stay for a few years. But there is not much of a market for art, if any at all. There is some funding and an aim to grow the artistic community through organizations such as Station North; the change is evident but very slow. Even so, there are really interesting events that take place in Baltimore and help to grow the art scene. Every summer Baltimore holds the nation's largest public art festival, ARTSCAPE. The festival brings over thirty-five thousand people to an unbearably hot city for a few days in the summer.

There are a lot of artists that choose to stay and work in Baltimore. However, it has a tendency to feel like a bubble, cut off from the rest of the art world. Many people move on to a new place to continue their careers and art practices. This is the case with artist Walker Seydell. After graduating from MICA, Seydell stayed in Baltimore where he lived and worked for two years before moving to Brooklyn, not an uncommon story. Before the move, Seydell had a solo show at the Copy Cat, one of the several large warehouses taken over by artists and converted into living spaces, studios, galleries, and even concert and party venues.

The show, entitled *ICE*, revolves around bottles of champagne. Some works are installations with actual bottles while others



Walker Seydell

my bed (graveyard), 2014. Champagne Bottles (Veuve Clicqout, Cristal, Gonet-Medeville), My Bed, Pizza Crusts, Takeout Containers, Natty Boh Cans, Prada Shoes, Comme des Garçons Button Up, Half-Burned Statue of Liberty Figurine, Chandelier, Lamp, Box of Condoms, Sexual Lubricant, Postcards, iMac Box, Nordstrom Box, MICA t-shirt, Wig, Paintbrushes, iHome Playing Soundbites of a Boy Snoring, Change, Plastic Plates, Dirty Silverware, Pajama Bottoms, Trash Bags, Levi's Jeans, Dimensions Variable.

Image Courtesy of the Artist

are photographs of champagne bottles in bed with naked men. The photographs, all digital print on aluminum, only show the models from their shoulders to their knees using the bottle to conveniently cover certain areas of the body. With titles like *tony (with Cristal 2005)* and *patrick (with Daddy's Krug NV)* it is clear who is being photographed without showing their faces. The installations include a bowling alley set up with champagne bottle as the pins, as well as a bottle of Veuve Clicquot 'Yellow Label' placed on the floor in order to prop up a large yellow canvas entitled *yellow label (for Ellsworth), 2014*.

The artist has expressed interest in champagne as a conspicuous choice of drink in both gay and rap culture. The drink acts as a way to signify wealth. Rappers incorporate champagne into their lyrics and pop bottles of it in their music videos. Jay-Z famously endorses Armand de Brignac, which Seydell has included in the work *wet, 2014*. This is one of the most expensive bottles of champagne, seeing as each bottle is dipped in gold. Seydell has placed the bottle on the floor in a puddle of water and surrounded by a shattered ice bowl. A pedestal lays next to the bottle on its side as if it has fallen over.

The show is not simply about the glamour of champagne. There is an aspect of the artist's self-indulgence and display of his personal interests. The bed in the corner of the gallery, with empty bottles of champagne, a chandelier, messed-up sheets, and trash covering the floor, entitled *my bed (graveyard), 2014*, emphasizes a look into the artist's personal life.

The art that is being made in Baltimore is experimental, young, and ever changing. The

artists feel un-restricted in their practice due to the lack of a market presence. It allows them to take risks and produce works outside of the pressure to produce for the increasing demands of the art world. Until there is more funding and more support for the artists living there, it will go on as it has for decades.

The Baltimore I knew only a few months ago is already different. The faces are new and the spaces have changed. There is now, more than ever, a strong push from the city to increase the positive effect that the art community has on the surrounding areas. Within the next ten years this run-down, cheap, and experimental neighbourhood will most likely undergo a gentrification that will make it unrecognizable to those who have been there in the past fifty years.

New Kids On The Eastern Art Block

by SORANA SERBAN



Alexandra Pirici & Manuel Pelmus

An Immaterial Retrospective of the Venice Biennale, 2013

Romanian Pavilion, Ongoing Action Enactment of Tramstop. *A Monument to the Future*, Installation by Joseph Beuys, German Pavilion, 37th edition, La Biennale di Venezia 1976
Image Courtesy of the Artists

Art from Eastern Europe might have been 'trendy' or 'exotic' for the West about twenty years ago, after the fall of the U.S.S.R. but geographical, or even historical tropes are both ideologically loaded, and very restrictive when it comes to explain an artist's practice. Adrian Ghenie, Ciprian Muresan, Marius Bercea, Victor Man, Serban Savu are some of the artists critically engaging with Romania's recent past. Deeply embedded in that context, their work relates to current socio-political or art-related issues, exposing their practice to an international audience.

A new generation of Romanian contemporary artists, most of them in their thirties have moved on from the struggle with the Communist past in an attempt to analyse and, to a certain extent, even create their own reality. They all live in Romania but exhibit internationally, and although much of their practice is rooted in the context of the Romanian society, they address urgent issues of international appeal. Labelling them as the new art kids of the Romanian contemporary art scene would definitely not do them justice. Firstly, because most of them are

no longer kids, despite a fresh subversiveness delineating them from the earlier generation of artists after 1989. Secondly, because they have been active for several years now, participating in major international exhibitions, so their work is yet to be discovered by a broader audience, but could not be coined as new. Thirdly, because their artistic practices are quite different in order to group them together on such terms.

The list below is therefore far from comprehensive, and represents just a quick overview of selected practices, aiming to entice readers to plunge into further research and analysis. This should soon be easier with the launch of plural/mixed – an independent

publishing and curatorial platform for contemporary art dedicated to the East European scene.

A search for new possibilities to reveal art's activist potential is a starting point for choreographer and visual artist Alexandra Pirici. *If You Don't Want Us, We Want You*, 2011, was one of her first attempts to subvert relations of power by involving an enactment of artworks as a strategy to challenge monumentality, whether reflected in massive public sculptures or historical master narratives. She continued to explore and expand this approach in *An Immaterial Retrospective of the Venice Biennale*, 2013, when together with choreographer Manuel Pelmus she represented



Apparatus 22

7 *Uncertain Scripts*, 2014, Installation with Video Projection
Documentation MNAC Bucharest
Image Courtesy of the Artists

Romania, gaining international critical acclaim. Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin, Bass Museum of Art, Miami, Centre Pompidou, Paris, and GfZK, Leipzig are some of the institutions where her works have recently been performed. This year Pirici is participating in the public programme of Manifesta 10, Sankt Petersburg.

Romanian performer, media critical installationist, web archivist of Charlotte Moorman and curator of TAH29 are some of the labels Alex Mirutziu uses to describe his practice. At the age of twenty-nine he set up a collective by associating himself with a hyperobject – an identity he still involves in his progressive approach to performance. In search for the reality of never, Mirutziu consistently navigates between his philosophical readings and explorations of the body in the series of *Pending Works* (2009) and *Scotopolitic objects*. His work has been shown at ZDB, Lisbon, Power Plant, Toronto, The Glass Factory, Boda, Mucsarnok Kusthalle, Budapest, and, most recently, at the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw.

On the backdrop of running the experimental fashion brand Rozalb de Mura,



Alex Mirutziu

Note #3 to *Pending Work* #6, 2012, Wax
Image Courtesy of the Artist and Sabot Gallery

multidisciplinary art collective Apparatus 22 was initiated by current members Erika Olea, Maria Farcas, Dragos Olea and late artist Ioana Nemes in 2011. Appropriating images and texts from fashion magazines, staging performances or creating interactive installations, Apparatus 22 challenges the constraints of the fashion system and its socio-political reverberations. Subversive, yet poetic, the collective employs an anthropological barometer to critically deal with issues of labour, desire, and emotions, sometimes plunging into explorations of utopian programs, such as the TUTA – Futurist artist and designer Thayant's manifesto against fashion. Previous venues for projects include: MUMOK, Vienna, Museion, Bolzano, The Contemporary Art Gallery of the Brukenthal National Museum, Sibiu, MAK, Vienna.

Professional handball player-turned-artist Ioana Nemes (1979-2011) embarked on an introspective quest to document her daily life – *the Monthly Evaluations series*, 2005-2010. Drawing on theories about time and colour, Ioana evaluated her days by using a system of five parameters (physical, emotional, intellectual, financial and the luck factor). Each day would accordingly be associated with a



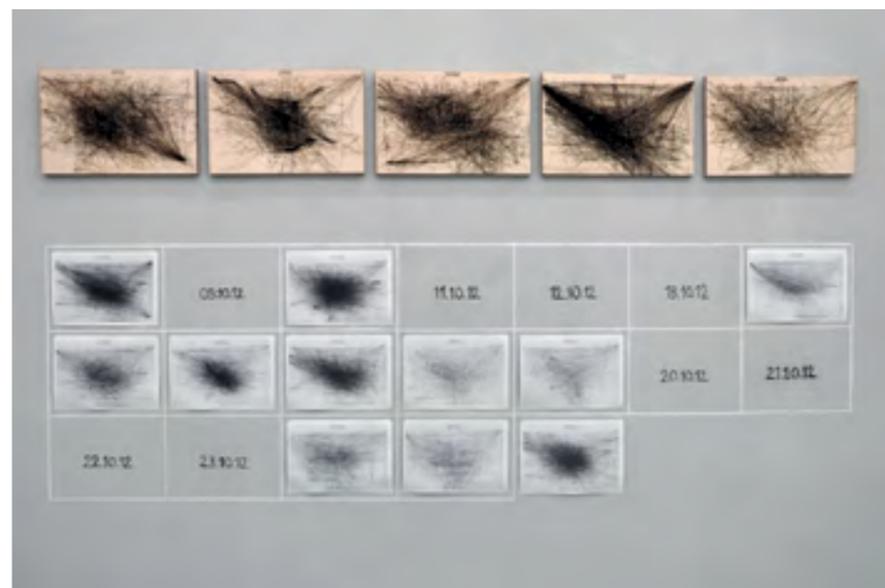
Ioana Nemes

Carpathian Mountains, 2009, Painting
Image Courtesy of Jiri Svestka Gallery

colour and a quotation, and then be archived. Her conceptual practice included critical reflections on the art market, religion, and hybridity of the Romanian rural traditions. Nemes participated in the Istanbul Biennial, 2009, U-Turn Copenhagen, 2008, The Prague Biennial, 2007, and The Bucharest Biennale 2, 2006. Art in General, New York, Secession, Vienna, Smart Project Space, Amsterdam, and Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel, are some of the venues where her works have been displayed, while selected recent exhibitions include: *Report on the Construction of a Spaceship Module*, New Museum, New York (2014), *Sometimes we shouldn't pretend everything is OK*, Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharest (2013), *Ritual without Myth*, Royal College of Art, London (2012), *Desire is War*, The Contemporary Art Gallery of Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu (2011), *Communism Never Happened*, Charim Gallery, Vienna (2011).

KILOBASE BUCHAREST and Ioana Nemes Circle of Friends continue to exhibit her work, the most recent show being 'Monthly Evaluations' at Eastside Projects, Birmingham.

Collaborative duo Anca Benera & Arnold Estefan have been active since 2011, and are co-founders of the Centre for Visual Introspection in Bucharest, an independent platform for research, artistic and theoretical production. Their conceptual practice cuts through complex historical or current events revealing randomness, abusive use of power and the limited resources individuals can appeal to in subverting these processes. Some of their recent exhibitions include: *Der Brancusi-Effekt*, Kunsthalle Wien, 2014, *A few grams of Red, Yellow, Blue*, Center for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, 2014; 13th Istanbul Biennial, 2013; dOCUMENTA (13) within the project *Winning*



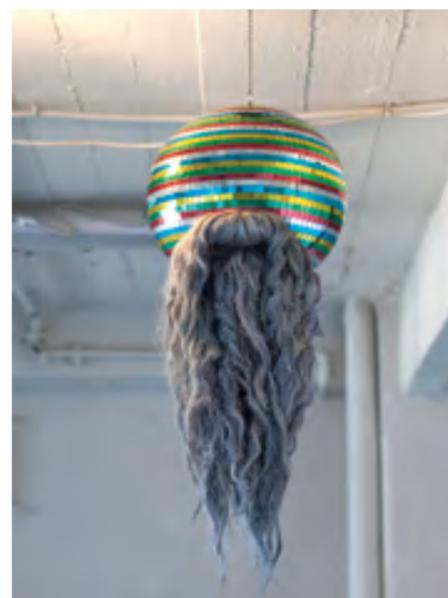
Anca Benera & Arnold Estefan
I Work, Therefore I'm Not, 2012 - Ongoing
Mixed Media Installation (Wooden Boards, Wall Paint, Drawing, A3 Prints), Variable Dimensions
Image Courtesy of the Artists

Hearts and Mind, Critical Art Ensemble, Kassel 2012; *La Triennale*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2012.

Sourcing inspiration from the online cultural detritus and conspiracy theories, Mihut Boscu Kafchin meticulously constructs a post-apocalyptic world of cyborgs, obsolete technology, and above all, what he calls the 'energy character' – a formless character generated digitally. As he works across different media, Kafchin merges details of Old Master paintings with sci-fi iconography into works of utopian aspirations. Some of his recent group exhibitions are: *A few grams of Red, Yellow, Blue*, Center for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, 2014, *Report on the Construction of a Spaceship Module [Museum as Hub]*, New Museum, New York, 2014, *Prague Biennial 6*, 2013, *La Triennale*

| *Intense Proximity*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2012, *European Travellers – Art from Cluj today*, Mucsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest, 2012, *ORIGINAL/COPY II*, Peles Empire, London, 2012.

From sculpture, to installation, drawing, photography, video, computer animation or digitally generated images, Radu Cioca appeals to whatever medium would best communicate his ideas. Playing with scale and materiality, Cioca manipulates small details of everyday life to question reality through a series of connections. By placing the viewer in relation to unfamiliar objects, he aims to generate new meanings linked to his constant preoccupation with language. Selected exhibitions include: *A few grams of red, yellow, blue*. New Romanian Art, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski



Mihut Boscu Kafchin
Father Energy I, 2013
Disco Ball, Synthetic Beard, Spraypaint, Variable Dimensions
Image Courtesy of the Artist and Sabot Gallery
Deutsche Telekom Collection



Radu Coica
Corrupted Symbols, 2013
Vintage Rug, Resin, Paint, Steel, Bronze
275 x 146 x 126 cm
Image Courtesy of the Artist



Razvan Botis
Cold Hands, 2008
 Lambda print, 90 x 55 cm
 Image Courtesy of the Artist and Sabot Gallery

Castle, Warsaw, 2014, “œconomy, an already tumultuous landscape where phantasms cross”, Oberwelt e.V., Stuttgart, 2013, Hotspot Cluj - New Romanian Art, Arken Museum of Modern Art, Copenhagen, 2013, Impossibility vs. Self-Censorship, Center for Contemporary Creation Matadero, Madrid, 2013.

Having recently turned thirty, Razvan Botis has just finished the second series of his work, titled *Normcore*. While his first series ironically explored the absurd in everyday situations, by sometimes merging the functions of disparate objects, as in *Wash&Go*, 2008, *Normcore* involves apparently impromptu scribbles and colour mishaps to play on the obsession of trendiness. Now working on a third series, set at the intersection of lifestyle and visual trends, Botis’s practice is probably the least dependent on the Romanian context. Some of his recent exhibitions include: Hotspot Cluj - New Romanian Art, Arken Museum, Denmark; November Remember September, Künstlerhaus Schloß Balmoral, Germany; European Travelers, Art from Cluj Today,



Razvan Boar
That Generation, 2014
 Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 120 x 100 cm
 Image Courtesy of the Artist

Mucsarnok Kunsthalle Budapest, Hungary; Trying to purchase what I once wanted to forget, Krinzinger Projekte, Vienna, Austria.

Based on the clash between abstract and figurative, Razvan Boar’s paintings revolve around 1950s pin-up imagery and the alienated desires it was made to cater for. After he messes up the canvas by spilling colour and then smearing it, Boar superimposes mostly female figures with a drawn-like quality, emphasizing a general sense of emptiness. Contradicting gravity, the figures appear forlorn, lost in anonymity. In 2011 Boar received the Constantin Brancusi fellowship at Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris.

Rethinking Art Social Network

by AHRA CHO

How are artworks distributed and spread? How are artists discovered? According to Victoria D. Alexander, author of *Sociology of the Arts*, there are several ways, such as for-profit business firms, non-profit organizations, government, etc., and among them are social networks. In a sociological term, social network, which is consistent with the concept ‘social capital’, simply means ‘the pattern of ties among individuals’. Social networks have played a crucial role not only in art production but also its distribution. For instance, avant-garde artists formed their own networks and shared ideas and, additionally, they were often socially supported within these networks. In Tony Bennett’s study on the social connection between musicians and audiences, audiences sometimes play a role in introducing these musicians to a recording company as well as help to discover new artists.

Today, social network has evolved as a much wider form based on the Internet, that is ‘social network service (SNS)’ such as, amongst others, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. And now, we art-lovers have Art Social Network (ASN). ASN here means social platform for art, where a number of artworks from painting to digital photography, particularly modern and contemporary art, are shared as images. What distinguishes ASN from normal SNS is that, first, it mainly targets many young artists and those working in the art industry.

Second, it provides some other functions such as blogging and online sale services. For example, it encourages their users to make their own portfolio or blog within its website and to promote and sell their works on their own. Through these services, ASN aims to make international online connections specifically between artists and curators and art dealers.

However, there is something suspicious about how successfully ASN contributes to artists’ self-promotion and distribution of new artworks. There are many types of ASN but the degree of their success is controversial. For example, one of the most popular ASN, deviantart, provides its service via both website and application available on the smart phone. However, if you visit the website or download the application on your smart phone and use it, it might be difficult to say that most of the works uploaded are ‘artworks’. They seem rather computer graphic works than artworks. Another popular example, Artists2artists provides a similar service to Facebook; artists can make their own profile and group pages with those sharing common interests. In addition, resident curators make comments on artworks uploaded by artists, which are later listed in ‘featured artwork’ page. However, as the number of active artists and curators on the website is limited, Artists2artist seems still and out dated compared to other SNS.

Of course, it is impossible to deal with and analyze all existing ASN. However, based on my visits on some top ASN for several weeks, it seems that they have a long way to go to achieve their goals. Why do they seem not to work well? First, many ASN provide too similar services. In other words, there is no clear identity as ASN. Though Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Tumblr, may all look similar, each has a different specialized field: To say briefly, Facebook begins wide international social networks, Twitter is characterized as exponential far-reaching power, LinkedIn is used as online business networks, and Instagram and Tumblr are a bank of numerous images. ASN, however, seems something ambiguous, something between Facebook and Tumblr. The number of ASN increases but they seem not to know what they are. It might be able to say that ASN can be partly identified as a virtual space for e-commerce of art. However, it is difficult to expect it to make outstanding results. There are many important factors influencing values of artworks, and some of them, such as texture, cannot be confirmed through the online images. In addition, many art experts point out that social platforms should not be considered as sales platforms, and online sales cannot replace offline sales at galleries or auction houses at all. Third, offline spaces are still preferred to online ones in any case. Still many people go to galleries, whether they want to buy artworks or to interact with them, and still many gallerists and curators strongly prefer to meet artists face-to-face.

In spite of several problems with the current existing ASN there are some emerging ASN that are showing some

promise. Artstack being one such example, follows the same basic principles as other ASN but adds 'following' and 'tagging' functions which allow users the ability to easily discover new artworks as well as keep in touch with contemporary artists of interest. The strongest point of Artstack is that most uploaded images have great quality and that there are many pages of popular contemporary artists. In this sense, Artstack is more user-friendly, and therefore constructs more balanced online network between people and those in the art world.

It does not mean that Artstack succeeds as ASN, but means that Artstack at least recognizes the fact that it is basically another form of SNS. The identity of SNS is broad online participation of people, which many of current existing ASN miss. They focus much on constructing networks between those in the art industry for e-commerce. However, there are obvious limits in artwork transactions, since there are too complicated and sensitive issues around them. In addition, though they either expect commercial achievements somehow or want themselves to be identified as another space for artwork transactions, it needs wider public attention as its basis. In a mess society, there is no commercial success in any industry fields without supportive public.

It is true that ASN has possibilities of encouraging the art world as internet-based networks. However, it is true as well that the current direction of many ASN leaves room for questions. Before any attempts to go ahead, it is time for ASN to think of the very basic condition not only for its existence and but for long-term sustainability as well.