

C  
#16



**Art**

**Theory**

**Criticism**

# C#16

## **SUPERVISORS**

John Slyce  
Michele Robecchi

## **PROJECT MANAGERS**

Celeste Baracchi  
Constance Carakehian  
Gretchen Cline  
Claire Durborow  
Edmée Lepercq

## **MANAGING EDITORS**

Giulia Franceschini  
Kaitlyn Kane  
Carmela Tafaro

## **CO-ORDINATORS**

Celeste Baracchi  
Qihao Shao  
Yudaikha Singh

## **COMMISSIONING EDITORS**

Maura Derossis  
Fabienne Maitland-Robinson  
Lucy Middleton  
Ekaterina Ryzhkova  
Constanza Santilli

## **COPY EDITORS**

Gretchen Cline  
Maura Derossis  
Claire Durborow  
Kaitlyn Kane  
Edmée Lepercq

## **PICTURE EDITORS**

Giulia Franceschini  
Constanza Santilli

## **DESIGN & LAYOUT**

Celeste Baracchi  
Constance Carakehian  
Jackie Dreier  
Claire Durborow  
Catherine Harbuz  
Edmée Lepercq  
Qihao Shao  
Constanza Santilli  
Yudaikha Singh  
Luke Strong Doyle

---

Front Cover  
**Felix Gonzalez-Torres**  
*Untitled (March 5<sup>th</sup>)*  
1991

C#16  
ONLINE

## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

---

Some six years ago, with the creative support and enthusiasm of Lizzie Perrotte, who was then Course Director, 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#16 – the fifth issue in the series.

As with previous editions, students formed an editorial board and proposals for submissions 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. Over the years, the magazine has expanded to include writing that represents some of the independent research our students carry out and also now offers material from The Arts of China and that produced by MSc students in Art, Law and Business. As I write here, C#16 is nearing the final stages before it goes live and reaches out to a global constituency of readers.

This has been a remarkable period for our programme and this particular cohort of students will be remembered as a crowning experience. They 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. As a chapter comes to a close, they have our heartfelt thanks for this and more. We are very proud of our students in Course C from the year 2015-16 and I hope something of the unique qualities they brought to the collective experience of the year shine through in the writing and design of these pages. As originally conceived, this is entirely their venture and venue.

I would like to thank my long-standing friend and colleague Michele Robecchi for lending his expertise and charm to C# and joining me in a supporting role across these five issues. As these students 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 Lecturer, Modern and Contemporary Art and Art World Practice

## **INTERVIEW 6**

**TOM HUNTER**  
by *Carmela Tafaro*

## **FOCUS PIECE 10**

**JEAN LUC NANCY**  
by *Edmée Lepercq*

## **GROUP SHOWS 14**

**ELECTRONIC SUPERHIGHWAY  
WHITECHAPEL**  
by *Jackie Dreier*

## **17**

**CONCEPTUAL ART IN BRITAIN  
TATE BRITAIN**  
by *Ekaterina Ryzhkova*

## **20**

**BEN URI: 100 FOR 100  
CHRISITE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON**  
by *Lucy Middleton*

## **23**

**DIGGING A HOLE IN CHINA  
OCT CONTEMPORARY ART  
TERMINAM SHENZHEN**  
by *Lynn Fan*

## **26**

**AFTERWORK  
PARASITE HONG KONG**  
by *Runan Zhang*

## **29**

**TRIPLES  
APPROACH GALLERY**  
by *Luca Santilli*

## **32**

**EMOTIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN  
ZABLUDOWICZ COLLECTION**  
by *Yudaikha Singh*

## **FOCUS PIECE 35**

**ROBERT SMITHSON**  
by *Kaitlyn Kane*

## **SOLO SHOWS 39**

**MONA HATOUM  
TATE MODERN**  
by *Maura Derossis*

## **43**

**GEORGE SHAW  
NATIONAL GALLERY**  
by *Catherine Harbuz*

## **46**

**IN THE AGE OF GIORGIONE  
ROYAL ACADEMY**  
by *Caitlin Playle*

## **49**

**ALEX KATZ  
SERPENTINE GALLERY**  
by *Michelle Mahadi*

## **51**

**ETEL ADNAN  
SERPENTINE GALLERY**  
by *Luke Stong Doyle*

## **54**

**SCULPTURE AS PLACE:  
CARL ANDRE  
HAMBURGER BAHNHOF**  
by *Constance Carakehian*

## **56**

**OLAFUR ELIASSON  
PALACE OF VERSAILLES**  
by *Claire Durborow*

## **FOCUS PIECE 59**

**KENNETH ANGER**  
by *Constanza Santilli*

## **63**

**DANIEL LEE  
TAIPEI FINE ARTS**  
by *Karen Lin*

## **66**

**YAYOI KUSAMA  
VICTORIA MIRO**  
by *Giulia Franceschini*

## **70**

**FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES  
HAUSER & WIRTH**  
by *Shanyu Zhong*

## **73**

**MICHAEL DEAN  
SOUTH LONDON GALLERY**  
by *Celeste Baracchi*

## **76**

**DUBUFFET THE LATE PAINTINGS  
TIMOTHY TAYLOR GALLERY**  
by *Frédéric Maillard*

## **78**

**AEROSCENE: TOMAS SARAS-  
CENO  
ESTER SCHIPPER GALLERY**  
by *Kaitlyn Kane*

## **81**

**'EMPIRES' BY HAUNG YONG  
PING  
MONUMENTA, PARIS**  
by *Gretchen Cline*

## **INTERVIEW 84**

**CULLINAN RICHARDS**  
by *Celeste Baracchi*

## TOM HUNTER

Carmela Tafaro

Tom Hunter's photographs capture the people and places of his local community in Hackney, East London. Born in Dorset in 1965, he studied at the Royal College of Printing and was the first photographer to have a solo show at London's National Gallery. His practice is as political as it is meticulously composed; it toys with the tradition of old masters such as Vermeer and the Pre-Raphaelites (*Persons Unknown*, 1998, and *Life & Death in Hackney* respectively) and captures with acute sensitivity the zeitgeist of the 1990s and life in London at that time. His subjects are family and friends, people he lives with, and his East End neighbourhood.

Empathy is at the heart of Hunter's photography: there is a remarkable humanity in the way these people and their places are portrayed; a deep sense of dignity rendered through many little details and photographic techniques. For example, *Woman Reading Possession Order*, 1998, arguably Hunter's best-known work, borrows the composition and the sumptuous colours from Vermeer's *A Girl Reading At An Open Window*. Like Vermeer, Hunter portrays everyday scenes that give his subjects – ordinary people – a quiet nobility. The 17th Century Golden Age of Dutch painting has had a deep impact on Hunter's practice, especially in the way they dealt with the people: not kings, queens and generals, but milkmaids and other subjects busy in daily activities, captured with

tenderness and compassion. Adopting this classic pictorial style for squatters and travellers, Hunter elevates their status and gives them a visible place within society.

At the same time reviving and reinventing the Modernist concern of the relationship between the individual and society, Hunter's works are both championing politics and beauty, whilst remaining politically aware in a non-documentary way.

These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

**CT:** *Let's start with your practice: how do you capture the people and places in your pictures?*

**TH:** I think it is a negotiation, a conversation with the people. I start off with the basics: I do ten pictures and with each taking of a photograph, little things change. So I normally do a Polaroid to begin with, then I take that and it's a sort of basic pose of where I wanted it to be within the room, the situation or the landscape. This gives me a rough idea on how they fit into that.

The first thing is to set them up in the situation. I then make a couple of photographs and try to see whether there is harmony between them and their surroundings - only then I start taking the pictures. You do notice that people take a while to relax, so the first pictures are always still and

>  
**Tom Hunter**  
*Woman Reading Possession Order*  
1998  
Cibachrome print mounted on board  
150 x 120 cm



static and tense, and then you talk to them, suggesting maybe to drop the hand slightly, to turn the face slightly, and then you do another picture and then hopefully they relax more, they start fitting in the surroundings more and finally they drop their preconceived ideas of how they should look. Everyone thinks that they will look good in photographs in a particular way, as when they take selfies, so you have to try to break that down. Also, it's the tiny little things that make all the difference: just a movement of the head,

a slight drop of the chin, tiny movement of the eye, slight movement with the hair, the change of direction of a finger, a drop of the shoulders: it's tiny little movements that can make it look relaxed and natural or tense and awkward. So it's just trying to find the right balance

This is why I see it as a conversation. So rather than taking lots of pictures and hoping something turns out, it's more of a pace of slowly shifting, moving and relaxing into a situation

where at some point – suddenly – it all comes together. They sit right and that feels ok, but that can take a while. And that's probably why I don't use models really: models have this preconceived ideas of what they think they should look like and it's much easier for me to use people who aren't being photographed so much.

**CT:** *How do you find the right balance between staging/posing versus capturing reality?*

**TH:** The balance is what I find most interesting: the friction between "is it staged or is it documentary"? I love documentary photography and I love staged photography, but I find the latter too unbelievable, as it becomes a bit too fantastical. The notion that a photograph can be real is so important, as when you look at the girl in *The Way Home*, and you start asking yourself "was she really in the water"? It is an industrial estate, there are trains going past, there are weeds: it is real. It is like going to the theatre: Brecht taught us that when you are in the theatre, you are suspended in disbelief. When the actors are talking to you, you are completely caught up in that moment. But at the same time you let yourself go a bit and notice that there are lights on the

stage. So I love that element that you look at the picture and you go: "Wow there is a girl in the canal and it's real!" – but actually she is not in the canal, it is not real, she is not there: it's just a picture.

I work with a small format camera and I love to play with the suspense of what is real and what is fiction. Photography is great with that, as it makes everyone believe that it is real, when in fact it is not. When you bring a camera and take it out, everything changes around you and it is not documentary photography anymore.

**CT:** *Amongst your works, which one is your favourite and why?*

**TH:** I guess it changes with time, as everything is so caught up with memories. Photography is such an organic part of my life; it feels so natural, so easy. Perhaps the *Travellers Series* is my favourite: it was such an intense part of my life. I was about 28 or 29 years old back then, I was living in a double-decker bus travelling around Europe and I was going into other people's vehicles to take pictures of them. I remember the people, the drugs, the parties, whatever it is.



^  
**Tom Hunter**  
*The Way Home*  
 2000  
 Silver dye bleach print

This series is a celebration of life, the life I was living at that time and when I look at them, they bring back a lot of memories, some happy, some sad and some distressing as well. They bring back a whole world, a life that now seems really far away.

**CT:** *Which artist, painter or photographer, has influenced you most?*

**TH:** I guess in a way they all did. When I was studying at the Royal College of Printing, at the

**"I work with a small format camera and I love to play with the suspense of what is real and what is fiction. Photography is great with that, as it makes everyone believe that it is real, when in fact it is not"**

end of every day I was in the library looking at all the great photography books - you absorb them all. Paul Strand, Dorothea Lange and all the American photographers were the best in documenting their country during the 1920s up until the 1980s. That great tradition of American documentary photography was all inspiring. Then you get to Nan Goldin and all things shift. Before her, the photographers stand outside and look in and document what is going on in the world around them. Suddenly - for me - it all shifts with Nan Goldin, as she is on the inside and she is looking at herself, at her friends, the society, the drugs, the gay culture, the transvestites: that's a big turning point in photography. Also people like Sally Mann had a huge influence on me. And then it all goes back to art history. I became very interested in old master painters and the way they depicted their times – Vermeer, Caravaggio, Raphael – lots of people.

**CT:** *Looking at galleries who have represented you in the past, I see a lot of blue-chip profiles – White Cube, Saatchi, etc. – Don't you think there is an evident discrepancy between what you portray in your photographs, that is people rejecting a capitalist lifestyle, and the fancy lifestyle of Mayfair that those galleries represent?*

**TH:** Obviously being involved with commercial galleries is not what I really intended. When I started off, the first piece I made – the model of the street – it was because I did not want to put pretty pictures on the wall, I did not want to be going in a commercial space. So I thought the

model would be the perfect way of expressing the area and the situation: I thought it would be perfect for a museum. I thought it would not be sellable, as I really wanted to avoid the commercialization of art and of my work. Interestingly, commercial galleries came to me and they wanted to sell my work. So it is a big contradiction that I am making works about housing, people becoming homeless, eviction, contemporary modern days struggle within society, and people see that as a commodity and make money with it.

I realized though that if you don't use these institutions, then it means you don't have a voice within society. So I thought – someone described it as a 'Trojan horse' philosophy – that you don't change anything from the outside if you are not involved. But if you get to be inside the system, then you also get to change things. Being represented by galleries like White Cube has allowed my work to be sold and to get out there and in museums, which means that people get to see my works for free and I get to talk about these things and raise a debate, engage them. So I found it really useful. If I hadn't found that, my work would still be in my studio and this would have been a pointless exercise. But it took me a while to work out that contradiction.

*The conversation went on in Hunter's studio in Hackney for about one hour. I could see how everything in the neatly kept space had a designated place. It felt almost as if he is collecting relics about humanity and modern society. The last thing he tells me is a piece of advice that I find apt and applicable to anyone – not just (young) photographers. "Money, fame, all those things aren't important: the most important thing is carrying on with your life and do whatever you like to do. And for me it is creating works of art that connect with people, that talk about society, and talk about its problems or making a critical context – that's important to me. And money has nothing to do with being happy, and you are very deluded if you think that it has. It helps, but it won't make you happy."*

## JEAN-LUC NANCY

THE INVISIBLE VISIBILITY OF THE ORDINARY

Edmée Lepercq

Jean-Luc Nancy's essay *The Vestige of Art* is an answer to the question of whether contemporary art can still be considered art through Hegelian aesthetics. For Nancy, there must be a re-evaluation of Hegel's definition of art as the "sensible manifestation of the Idea" after Nietzsche's death of God and the realization with Derrida that we are no longer going towards a single end, "a final sense", but that we are in a "suspension of sense".<sup>1</sup> The world is "only this world", its meaning anchored in itself and in our experience of it.<sup>2</sup> Art is a sensible manifestation of the Idea in a non-metaphysical, material, sensuous manner. Estrangement and alienation is at the core of Nancy's vestige. In his passage on the Lascaux cave paintings, Nancy emphasizes this quality of art as alienation from ourselves that allows us to become self-aware:

At the advanced tip of the first tracing, the first painter sees coming towards him a monster who holds out to him the unsuspected reverse side of presence, its displacement, its detachment, or its folding into pure manifestation, and the manifestation itself as the coming of the stranger, as the birth into the world of what has no place in the world, like the birth of the origin itself.<sup>3</sup>

The vestigial gesture is a spacing out, the world becoming world another, as it is never what it seeks to represent, always dis-figuring the orig-

inal figure. The trace of the grotto wall and every subsequent mark in art history is the simultaneous emergence and estrangement of the human through monstrous representation of the self. Art's notion of humanity, of which the artwork is the initiatory gesture, is engulfed in its strangeness as it emerges.<sup>4</sup>

Art is an alienation and monstrosity of the self but also of the material. As the artist traces in charcoal onto a stone, the charcoal becomes a drawing while the stone becomes a ground. There are similarities here between the artist and the common house painter. Without colour, walls disappear, but paint on walls sur-determines and re-marks the space as lived. As the charcoal is applied to the stone, both are marked from the natural world and appear to our senses as different.

In her essay on Roni Horn, Briony Fer suggests that art history and natural history are perhaps not so different. She evokes the desert worlds of Donald Judd, Agnes Martin and Vija Celmins, who once said "drawing is a dry world," as if the graphite she used was also a desert to be explored.<sup>5</sup> Fer explores this conception of the artwork as landscape in Horn's drawing series *Bluff Life*. She argues the pool of orange watercolour does not invoke a watery landscape but rather the larger idea that "drawing does not represent a place, or even translate it, but drawing itself becomes a place that is as



^  
**Roni Horn**  
*Untitled ("Consider Incompleteness as a Verb")*  
Solid cast glass  
2010-2012  
56 x 76 x 90cm



captivating as a lava field or an intricate pattern of pools that make up Iceland's wilderness."<sup>6</sup> The depicted landscape is transformed through the artist's sense of the place to become a new landscape made of graphite and paper rather than water, rocks, trees or lava.

^  
**Vija Celmins**  
*Ocean*  
 1975  
*Lithograph on Paper*  
 31 x 47 cm

Horn's sculpture *Untitled* ("Consider incompleteness as a verb") both reflects and alters its immediate landscape.<sup>7</sup> The work is composed of two glass cubes of slightly different shades of blue; their sides are a rough, milky opaqueness, the top is a smooth, shiny translucence. As the outside light changes with the weather, so do the cubes as they hermetically absorb the natural light, transforming it into graspable yet surreal colours, from cerulean to amethyst, which are present but rare in the natural world.<sup>8</sup> Although, from afar, the cube's solidity and stillness seem to contain and stabilize the light, the surface of the cube shifts when the viewer approaches, as though the light changed within the cube itself, in a corporeal response to the new presence. The cubes bring attention to mundane elements of our immediate landscape that are constantly shifting while simultaneously making these familiar elements unfamiliar, through hallucinatory colours and anthropomorphic reactions. As Fer writes, Horn's practice can be described as creating in the viewer the sensation of a tenuous grip on our world, as it magnifies, monumentalizes and mystifies the common.<sup>9</sup>

The transparency of the cubes paradoxically leads them to visibly fill with elements that are invisible outside the artwork. Robert Smithson, in a

**Roni Horn**  
*Bluff Life*  
 1982  
*Watercolour on graphite*  
 v



disagreement with Judd's belief that his use of Plexiglass made his sculptures "less mysterious, less ambiguous", writes: "what is outside [the boxes] vanishes to meet the inside, while what is inside vanishes to meet the outside. The concept of "anti-matter" overruns, and fills everything, making these very definite works verge on the notion of disappearance."<sup>10</sup> The emptiness of the cube's centre becomes the locus of a melting of both outside and inside, leading to a transfiguration of the natural, mundane exterior, and the man-made, artistic interior, creating an uncanny materiality. As Amy Powell writes of Hesse's *Repetition Nineteen III* (fig. 8), the cubes and tubes hold their light and shadow, and the viewer experiences a phenomenological vibration as the object continuously shifts between fullness and emptiness, visibility and invisibility.

Nancy's ambiguous claim that "art is sensible visibility of this intelligible, that is, invisible, visibility" can be interpreted through the work of Celmins, Horn, Hesse and Judd as making sensuously visible the elements of our world that are intelligible but normally invisible, either physically or mundanely, such as light, shadow, weather, emptiness, charcoal and paper. There is an element of metamorphosis or alchemical transformation as an element or material becomes other through the process of art. Through this transformation, viewers become closer to these previously invisible elements as the artwork creates a force that enables them to reach out to us. This reaching out of the artwork can be related to Nancy's definition of the

sacred as something or someone to which we do not have access, but that comes and calls to us: a tomb, a desirable body, a birdsong.

1. Jean-Luc Nancy. "Techniques du Present". *Le Portique*. 15 march 2005. Web accessed March 24, 2016. <http://leportique.revues.org/309>
2. Ibid.
3. Jean Luc Nancy, *The Muses* (Stanford : Stanford University Press, 1996), 76
4. Barker writes of Francis Bacon's figures as embodying Nancy's notion of art as monstration. In Bacon, the figure is also an anti-figure. Its monstrous scream emanates from a non-body, out of the grounding medium, somewhere between presence and absence. Bacon's figuration visualizes the dynamic slippage of sense as animal, human, and spirit. Barker, "De-Monstration and the Sense of Art", in Jean-Luc Nancy and Plural Thinking, ed. Peter Gratton and Marie-Eve Morin (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 184.
5. Briony Fer, *Roni Horn aka Roni Horn* (New York: Steidl, Tate Modern and the Whitney Museum of American Art, 2009), 27.
6. Ibid.
7. Mimi Thompson, "Roni Horn", *Bomb Magazine* 28 (1998), 22.
8. Horn also explores this idea of changing elements in *Still Water* (The River Thames), fifteen large photo-lithographs focused on a small surface area of the river Thames. Their colour and texture varies dramatically as the surface of the Thames changed with tidal movement and light. Small footnotes included in the image link to quotations on the significance of the river and the moods and narratives it evokes.
9. Fer cites Lévi-Strauss to emphasize how our senses can only grasp certain elements of the world rather than the whole: "I can pick out certain scenes and separate them from the rest; is it this tree, this flower? They may well be elsewhere. Is it also a delusion that the whole should fill me with rapture, while each part of it, taken separately, escapes me?" Claude Lévi-Strauss quoted by Fer, *Roni Horn aka Roni Horn*, 28.
10. Rosalind Krauss quoted by Amy Powell, *Depositions : Scenes from the Late Medieval Church to the Modern Museum* (New York: Zone Books, 2012), 249.

**Donald Judd**  
*Untitled*  
 1965  
*Red fluorescent Plexiglass and stainless steel*  
 51 x 122 x 86 cm  
 v



# ELECTRONIC SUPERHIGHWAY

WHITECHAPEL GALLERY

Jackie Dreier

Curated by Omar Kholeif, "Electronic Superhighway (2016 – 1966)" maps a reverse chronological survey that traces the way artists have interacted with technology over the past fifty years. The exhibition is characterized by a wide variety of mediums and includes works developed by computer technology, works that use the internet as a platform, and works that use computer aesthetics as a subject. The title of the show is borrowed from the Korean video artist, Nam June Paik, who, in 1974, used the term "superhighway" to describe the potential of global interconnectedness that he saw emerging with the advent of networked technology. As a curatorial device, the unusual chronology is intriguing, as the viewer is led from the familiar, albeit chaotic landscape of the present towards its ultimate site of inception. While the young generation of visitors do not have a pre-internet brain to miss or remember, this exhibition provides the tools to imagine what it was like to first envision the possibilities of the Internet and the journey our society has taken with it over the past several decades.

Upon entering the exhibition, we are greeted by Olaf Breuning's *Text Butt*, 2015 and Katja Novitskova's *Innate Disposition*, 2012, which, based on the structure of the show, are positioned as the current exemplars of the relationship between art and technology. *Text Butt* presents a large scale,

digitally manipulated photograph of a female bottom with SMS (Short Message Service) text bubbles streaming out of it, providing a playful commentary on our modern modes and style of communication. Placed directly beside it, Novitskova's *Innate Disposition* is a freestanding, enlarged digital photograph of a cute, large-eyed rodent resting in the palm of a human hand. The work reflects the banality of meme culture while giving the digital realm an uncanny physical presence in the real world. The large scale, attention grabbing subject matter of these two works echo the assaulting nature of the Internet and serve as an enticing introduction to the exhibition.

The contemporary works in the first gallery further explore, through a variety of approaches, the pervasiveness of the Internet, its anonymity, and its potential for deception. Petra Cortright's works, for instance, which have the appearance of gestural paintings executed on silk and aluminum, were in fact computer generated and digitally printed. Conversely, Joshua Nathanson's *A Fiction About the Near Future*, 2015, looks as though it was created through computer or smart phone features of paint and airbrush, but, surprisingly, was executed in the more traditional medium of oil and acrylic on canvas. Other artists such as Trevor Paglen and Jacob Appelbaum and Douglas Coupland approach the Internet's pervasive power in terms of its effects on anonymity and privacy. Paglen and

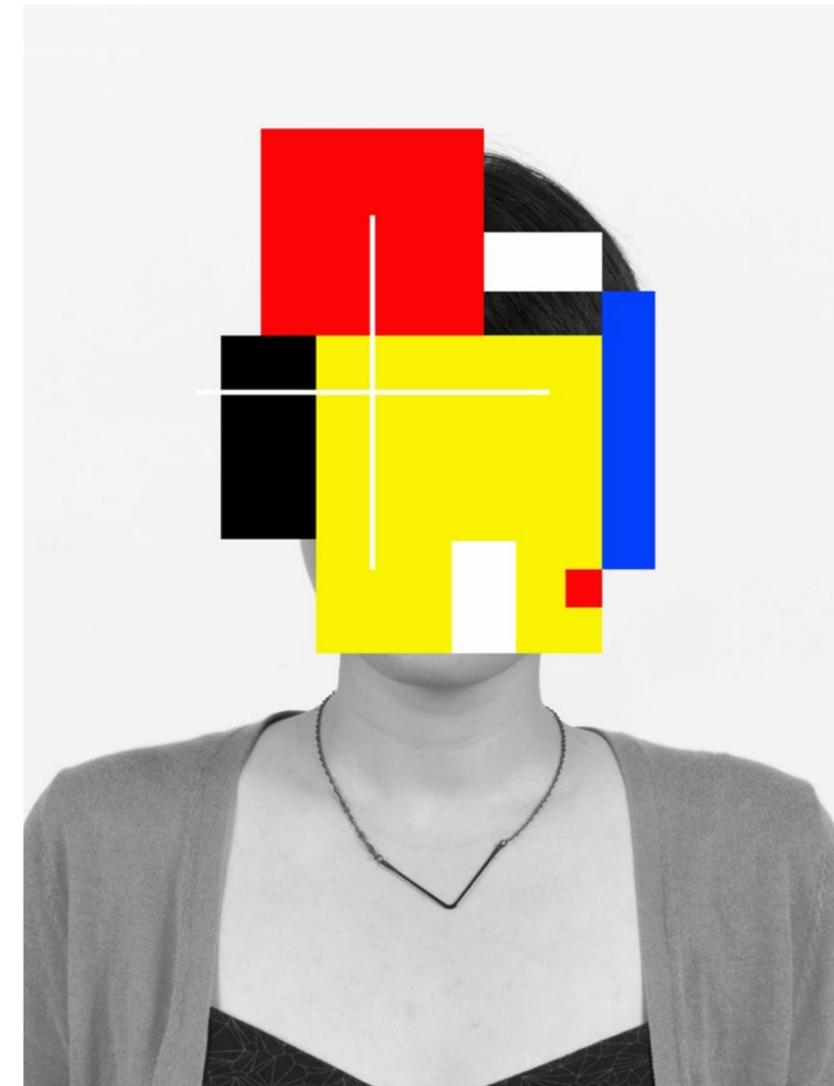
>  
**Douglas Coupland**  
*Deep Face*  
2015

Acrylic on black & white photograph, mounted on diabond

Appelbaum's *Autonomy Cube*, 2014, which holds multiple internet connected computers within its minimal structure, is set up as a hot spot that routes internet activity through an anonymous and protective network. By connecting, visitors are able to participate in the politics of resistance to corporate ownership of Internet information and government surveillance.

The second section of the exhibition, curated in collaboration with Rhizome, the initiative foun-

ded by artist Mark Tribe in 1966, deals with the emergence of Net art in the 1990s through an exploration of art works in which the internet platform is both the art medium and the subject of the work. Perhaps best illustrated in Taryn Simon's *Image Atlas*, 2014 and Ann Hirsch's *Twelve*, 2013, each of which demonstrates the ability of computer-based art to critique itself. Simon's *Image Atlas*, 2014, indexes the same top image search results across different global search engines, drawing attention to cultural differences



and potential political motivations that could impact our access to information through what we typically consider to be neutral platforms.

The show concludes with two very early and historic instances of artistic engagement with technology: the 1966 founding of the group Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) in New York and the organization of the exhibition "Cybernetic Serendipity: The Computer and the Arts" at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, in 1968. E.A.T.'s legendary performance series "9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering," which took place in New York in October 1966, is represented through Alfons Schilling's footage of the event along with two wired tennis rackets that Bell Labs engineers Bill Kaminski and Jim McGee designed for Robert Rauschenberg's contribution, *Open Score*. By forging alliances between artists and engineers, E.A.T. aimed to encourage a revolutionary and enduring integration of art and technology. Two years later,

"Cybernetic Serendipity" explored the potential of the computer to be used as an artistic tool that would blur the line between artist and engineer. The early computerized art included in the exhibition represents this changing notion of art in an environment shaped by technology.

While the impact of technology on every-day life is not a new idea, an exploration of how artists have responded to it is a far more complex issue, and one that "Electronic Superhighway (2016-1966)" offers powerful insight into. The exhibition introduces us to a wide range of themes including surveillance, the potential for deception, and the implications of virtual communication and information overload, while also leaving us with a new curiosity to further investigate a few of the issues that were only lightly touched upon, such as Lynn Hershman Leeson's exploration of cyber-feminism. While the exhibition's wide range may feel overwhelming or overcrowded at times, overall the layout works well to reflect the saturation of images and information as a result of the Internet today.



Installation view of *Electronic Superhighway* at Whitechapel Gallery

C#16  
GROUP  
SHOW

## CONCEPTUAL ART IN BRITAIN 1964–1979

TATE BRITAIN  
Ekaterina Ryzhkova

The exhibition, which takes place in Tate Britain between 12 April and 29 August 2016, is an effort by the curator Andrew Wilson to evaluate the development of conceptual art practices of British artists between 1964 and 1979. The show provides an opportunity to assess the evolution of conceptual art in Britain, as its nature and themes have been changing over the years. The key focus of the conceptual artists was on placing an idea or concept of artworks above the works' material form. On the one hand, this approach was a realization of Marcel Duchamp's claim that the work of art should go beyond a purely "retinal art," to become a work that was in "the service of the mind". On the other, it was an effort by the new generation of artists to resist the dominance of Clement Greenberg's theory of modernism.

Spanning six rooms of the museum, the show begins with a space dedicated to specifying the timeline and the turning points in the development of conceptual art in Britain over fifteen years from the mid-60s through the late 70s, bringing together seventy works by twenty-one influential artists. The display includes vitrines with documents and publications of the key artists, including Sol LeWitt and Richard Long among others. Since the show progresses in chronological order, it was arguably important for the curator to begin the exhibition with a clear identification of each year over the fifteen-year period, highligh-

ting the events that shaped the directions in which the artists took their practices.

The next room titled "New Frameworks," includes the works of the first phase of the conceptual art development. This period was underscored by a preoccupation of the artists with the themes, such as self-critique of art through art and attempts to break away from the rigidity of modernist approach to medium-specific qualities of each art medium. The attention-grabbing interactive project *Soul City (Pyramid of Oranges)*, 1967, by Roelof Louw occupies the center of the space. The Pyramid of Oranges is placed in a relatively small room, where it stands out from the other works, such as Keith Arnatt's *Invisible Hole Revealed by the Shadow of the Artist*, 1968, due to its bright color and performative nature. The piece in a sense symbolized the emerging change of the nature of art in the mid-1960s, raising an array of questions from what an object of art is and what medium it belongs to, to the issues of permanence and timelessness of art.

The growing importance of the use of text in conceptual art is highlighted by the curator's decision to dedicate the following room to the works of an English conceptual art group, Art & Language. The collaboration was founded in 1968 by artists Michael Baldwin, David Bainbridge, Terry Atkinson and Harold Hurrell, whose efforts centered around the inclusion of text into the artworks,



in an attempt to make the viewer reevaluate the ways of perceiving and analyzing the scope of meanings of a particular object. Displayed on the right wall next to the room entrance is the work *Abstract Art No 8*, 1967, a prominent example of the group's strategy, in which the text from an abstract from a philosophical magazine was taken out of context and put on silkscreen, like a painting. As a result of this manipulation, the use of language as a tool becomes a subject of the work and its displacement from the original text creates a room for various interpretations.

By the mid-70s conceptual art gained widespread recognition and institutional acceptance in Britain, largely helped by a number of landmark exhibitions, including "Seven Exhibitions", 1972 at the Tate Gallery. Two rooms, constituting a large section of "Conceptual Art in Britain: 1964-1979", were specifically dedicated to this period, arguably making it the backbone of the show. This section includes works by a number of artists, such as Bruce McLean, Victor Burgin and John Hilliard among others. The use of photography as a key art medium distinguishes this part

of the show from the first three rooms. The artists' intention behind their choice of turning to the camera rather than painting or sculpture was to critique the process and strategies behind the making of the photograph itself. Instead of working on the perfection of the composition of the image, as would have been required according to the standards of modernism, the artists captured mundane subjects and used the body of the artist to critique the artist's ego. Bruce McLean's *Pose Work for Plinths 3*, 1971, is an example of this strategy. The work consists of twelve images of the artist in the studio making various poses on three plinths of different sizes. The work demonstrates the artist's intention to question the role of the composition and subject in modernist photography. Additionally, the artwork aimed to critique the idea of the independency of each art media, showing how this notion became obsolete in conceptual art.

The works on display in the final part of the show titled "Action Practice" indicated a further evolution of the conceptual art, which was becoming more involved with raising socio-

<

**Roelof Louw**  
*Soul City (Pyramid of Oranges)*  
 1967  
 Oranges, wood, plastic  
 152 x 167 x 167 cm

political issues and activist agenda. Victor Burgin's *Possession*, 1976, for instance, depicts an image of a young couple, which by composition resembles a fashion advertising camping. The message of the work, however, is not about selling a product, but instead it is about prompting questions relating to the idea of private relations becoming commodified, and as a result turning into property relations.

Overall, the show demonstrates a concise summary of a vibrant and diverse period in the development of the British art scene. The curatorial approach to the display allowed one to identify the main themes and artists of the period. This strategy helped in manifesting the importance of the role of the conceptual art in Britain, in securing the departure of art practice away from the dominance of the Clement Greenberg's theory of modernism, with its medium-specific qualities and reliance on visual aesthetics.

**Keith Arnatt**  
*Invisible Hole Revealed by the Shadow of the Artist*  
 1968  
 Photograph, gelatin silver print on paper  
 61 x 75 cm

v



# 100 FOR 100: BEN URI PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE

CHRISTIE'S SOUTH KENSINGTON

Lucy Middleton

Picture a family group. A man with arm protectively around his wife who in turn, clutches a precious bundle of baby. A small child peeks out from behind his mother's skirts, wide-eyed and terrified. An escape, under cover of moonlight from a village in Poland. This is not a photograph of a contemporary event however but a depiction in gouache executed by the Jewish-Polish artist Josef Herman when he had arrived in Glasgow in 1940/41. In the middle of the picture a black, devil-like cat looms menacingly above the family silently watching them. The cat holds a dead mouse in its jaws, dripping dark red blood and staining the snow below in a gesture of presentiment.

The picture (in the Ben Uri Collection) can be seen as part of the "100 for 100: Ben Uri Past, Present & Future" on show at Christie's South Kensington. Arresting in both subject matter and beauty, Herman's picture belies a horrific truth. He escaped the Nazis across Europe ahead of his wife and small children to secure a new life for them in Britain. He lost contact before learning of the demise of his entire family in the horror of the Warsaw ghetto.

This exhibition features one hundred works spanning a century of art from the extensive archives of the tiny Ben Uri gallery, now located in Boundary Road, NW8. The collection, largely hidden

from view packs a massive punch. It contains 1300 works from over 350 artists and over 34 countries are represented. This exhibition provides a rare opportunity to view spectacular works by artists such as Frank Auerbach, David Bomberg, Jacob Epstein, Mark Gertler, Leon Kossoff, Marc Chagall and Chaïm Soutine. It has also seen the unveiling of a "Masterpiece from the Guggenheim Family Collection" in honour of the centenary, a large 1905 canvas by Alfred Aaron Wolmark (1877-1961) entitled *The Last Days of Rabbi ben Ezra*.

The exhibition is densely hung with 100 works hung in just three rooms and curated into three sections; "Integration and Identity" including conflict and modernism, "Forced Journeys" which also details post-war journeys and "Contemporary émigré art and Identity".

The gallery was founded one hundred years ago by émigré Jews in 1915 as an organisation for artists unable to access to mainstream British society. It provided a vital support to artists in the first stage of their existence in their new life. The Ben Uri is now a century of émigré stories of immigrant artists about the culture, language and family left behind. Ben Uri's continuing "transformation" and future will be led by David Glasser, as Executive Chair. The new Ben Uri will be an international centre of scholarship focused on the themes of identity and migration sharing its space with other émigré

>  
**David Bomberg**  
*Ghetto Theatre*  
1920  
Oil on canvas  
74 x 62 cm

communities in a joint exhibition programme. The Ben Uri has always been radical in its thinking and approach. The permanent collection includes some distinguished 19th-century oil paintings in the best Victorian and Edwardian modes by the likes of Solomon Hart (the first Jewish RA) and Solomon J. Solomon (the second Jewish RA). It also has works by the Jewish Pre-Raphaelite Simeon Solomon, the acquisition of whose paintings demonstrated the foresight of the museum and the refusal to exclude a minority group (Soloman was imprisoned for being a homosexual and died in penury and disgrace). The Ben Uri is also proud of the fact that twenty seven percent of their works are by female artists, a larger ratio than both the Tate Gallery and the National Gallery. Artists such as Lily Delissa Joseph (sister of Solomon J. Solomon) who missed her own private view due to her imprisonment for suffragette activity. Also one of the first women to own a car and to learn to fly.

The most stand-out pieces in the exhibition however are mostly from the early 20th century. On a single wall there are works by the "Whitechapel Boys" Jacob Epstein, David Bomberg and Mark Gertler. In the middle of the wall hangs a tiny blistered picture, a heart-breaking self-portrait in *Steel Helmet*, 1916, by Isaac Rosenberg.

The picture has been executed in pencil with just a few highlights in yellow crayon on what appears to be brown packing paper - perhaps it wrapped a gift from home. The portrait (unlike the artist) found its way home. Rosenberg was killed on active service and now blistered and crumbling after 100 years, watches us from under the rim of his Tommy's helmet.

Nearby hangs Rosenberg's *Portrait of Sonia*, 1916, painted on his last leave home of ten days. A poignant picture of the subject of unrequited love, Sonia Joslen (née Cohen), was pregnant and living with Rosenberg's friend, the modernist poet John Rodker.

Bomberg's *Ghetto Theatre*, 1920, was one of Ben Uri's first acquisitions in 1920. It depicts a theatre in the East End famous for its theatrical repertoire performed in Yiddish. Reminiscent of *The Steerage* (1907) by Alfred Stieglitz, the long sweeping curve of the balcony rail, dominates the work and silently comments on the social and religious divides of a contemporary society. *Racehorses*, 1913, also by Bomberg is a rhythmical work from his more Cubist and Futurist-influenced period, when he was in quest for 'the construction of pure form', in his own words.



A pivotal work by Eva Frankfurter points towards the future aspirations of the gallery. Her delicate and muted oil painting *West Indian Waitresses*, 1955, is an early depiction of

the multicultural face of Britain. The colourful lives and clothes of the Windrush generation are set in sharp contrast with their reality in drab postwar London.



^  
**Isaac Rosenberg**  
*Steel Helmet*  
1916

*Black chalk, white and yellow gouache on brown wrapping paper*  
24 x19 cm



## DIGGING A HOLE IN CHINA

OCT CONTEMPORARY ART TERMINAL, SHENZHEN

*Lynn Fan*

There are indeed holes dug in the midst of the exhibit "Digging a Hole in China", recently at Exhibition Hall A, OCT Contemporary Art Terminal Shenzhen. This is one of the most comprehensive recent art exhibits on the subject of land in the Chinese contemporary art scene.

Land art is a movement that originated in the United States in the late 1960s, with influences from minimalism and conceptual art. It involves documentations in the form of photographs, and installations using natural materials from the landscape. It was first introduced in China in the mid-1980s. Different to the traditional land art that land was seen as a provocative gesture pointing to a conceptual nowhere, this exhibition is flavoured with many examples of Chinese notions of ownership, management, land use, and the transfer of restrictions on these rights after the country opened its doors to the West in 1980.

Participating are twelve artists with a total of eighteen art works, which were produced at different moments from 1994 onward. Some of them expose the ways in which, behind China's rapid development of the past three decades, there were uses of the land that involved unearthing what was beneath the surface. In fact, the direct translation of the exhibition's Chinese title is the "Landscape of Events", which subtly delineates the hidden trajectory of land's conceptual evolution.

The exhibition does not appear to be arranged in any particular order; yet, in fact, the curator has carefully planned the show based on correlations that can be found between the various artworks. The diagram on the brochure maps out how these works are related through keywords, such as land ownership, referenced religions, road regulations, and other features of the sites. The latency of these resemblances within the works gives viewers a sense of freedom, but also creates a dynamism within the limited space of gallery, which may fit well the theme of capitalist development.

It was probably the curator Venus Lau's intention to choose artists who have some connection to Guangdong, the governing municipality of Shenzhen, in order to connect the show with the local audience, including Cantonese viewers from Hong Kong and Macau. Because of the role it played in the transformation of China's economy in the 1980s and 1990s, Shenzhen may be the most appropriate place in the country to hold this exhibition. In 1980, it was made the first Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in China due to its proximity to Hong Kong. Since then, this fishing village has grown from a population of 30,000 into a city of almost 11 million people. By 2015, its property prices had soared by almost 50%, conferring on it the title of hosting the fastest growth in residential properties worldwide. In fact, the city has long been the role model of China's experiments in rural urbanisation, which is now widely followed.

In China, where land cannot be privatised, land ownership actually means holding a lease with the government for no more than seventy years. Zhang Liaoyuan's artwork *1M2*, 2006, confronts the relationship between public space and private property. After spending a long time negotiating with the local government and property developers, the artist finally obtained approval to dig in one square meter of land in the busiest intersection of Hangzhou, placing the earth excavated from this site in a temporary exhibition. The related photographs and documentations were presented in the exhibition. He was able to "privatise" that one square meter, which is the basic measure of private property in China, for only 24 hours before he had to "return" it in the intersection.

Another artwork that deals with the excavation of public land is Liu Wei and Colin Chinnery's *Propitiation*, 2007, which has been recreated in the exhibition hall, a newly constructed space and an act of excavation. In Liu Wei's fabricated space, the floor is made of black asphalt, while the four walls are covered with square tiles that form abstract patterns. The audience can walk into the space and perceive the ritualistic feel of a sacred space at the back of the exhibition. For the excavation, the artists cut a dozen human size holes in geometrical shapes out of the cement floors of the exhibition hall, revealing concrete, bricks and

soil. The work's title, *Propitiation* stems from a Taoist ritual known as a "propitiation ceremony", in which individuals express their appreciations to the God of Land. These two works explore the history of struggle between peasants and landlords and the relationship of social class to radical transformations of the land.

In his work on show, Liu Chuang's video *Untitled (Dancing Partner)*, 2010, is more than just entertaining. The video shows two identical white cars cruising at the slowest legal speed in perfect synchrony on the busiest highway of Beijing, thus creating traffic congestion behind them. I could imagine the noise of all the honking horns, serving as orchestra for the performance. It reflects and reveals the rules and regulations that ethically ground road users.

One artwork that considers China's rapid development is the single-channel video *RMB City: A Second-Life City Planning*, 2007-2011, by Cao Fei, a Guangzhou-born woman artist. Through an online platform, the artist and her team have collected fragments of Chinese society and artistic

**Liu Wei, Colin Chinnery**  
*Propitiation*  
2007-16  
Mixed Media  
v



practices and used them to create an island city in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Most of the objects in *RMB City* are playful fantasies that parody their prototypes in real life. It is almost like a fun park with all the bright colours, and a roller coaster travelling through iconic works of architecture like the Forbidden City, the Shanghai Pearl Tower, and the Beijing CCTV building, as well as an industrial oil field and a giant panda balloon floating in the air. These are not only materialised manifestations of the artist's observations of urban landscapes, but they also constitute a virtual platform through which viewers can experience virtually contemporary Chinese art and society. Two other videos of Cao Fei's, *Rumba II: Nomad*, 2015, and *East Wind*, 2011-2015, are also exhibited.

In her essay on the exhibit, curator Venus Lau examines the connections between land and society through contemporary art: an exploratory and evolving process. Each of the pieces speaks to the on-going transformation in China. She also discusses the impact of the natural environment, which both shapes and resists human interaction. The exhibition

certainly provides quite a diverse body of work, all of which engage with the subject of land in China today. Each of the works sheds light on the subject from a unique standpoint, with numerous points of convergence among them.

**Cao Fei (SL Avatar: China Tracy)**  
*A Second Life City Planning*  
2007-2011  
Video 5'57"  
v



# AFTERWORK

PARA SITE  
Runan Zhang

Another faint cry for those 320,000 pairs of invisible hands that cook, clean, serve and bring up the children of Hong Kong households at the "Afterwork" exhibition at Para Site in Hong Kong. As Hong Kong's leading contemporary art centre, and one of the oldest independent art institutions in Asia, Para Site celebrates its 20th anniversary with a bold ambition to address issues of class, race, labour, and migration in Hong Kong and its surrounding regions through its "Afterwork" exhibition. This is part of Para Site's year-long Migrant Domestic Workers Project that started last July with a vision to engage the Foreign Domestic Workers (FWDs) community

through organising public programmes and commissioning artist research.

With such an ambitious theme at hand, "Afterwork" consists of artworks from thirty artists whose work covers a range of media, from painting to photography to multimedia and object-based installations. Works are carefully arranged throughout the exhibition space consisting of the main area at the

*Xyza Cruz Bacani*  
*Keep reaching for your dreams*  
Photograph



^  
*Abdoulaye Konaté*  
*Intolerance*  
1998  
Mixed Media

entrance with smaller rooms extending to the left and right. Although each work is spaciouly set apart, one cannot help but ascertain a certain uncomfortable closeness of the ceilings and walls. It is perhaps because you are bombarded by such a vast range of artworks that one does not know where to start, or maybe it is due to the lack of windows that makes being on the 22nd floor irrelevant.

The most colourful and striking piece of art when entering the exhibition space is an installation made entirely of clothes, pinned to a frame consuming an entire wall space. *Intolerance* is a work by the Malian artist Abdoulaye Konaté, who uses clothes to address the refugee crisis of 1998, when over 100,000 Vietnamese sought refugee rights in Hong Kong. This topic is particularly relevant this year in light of a similar refugee crisis in Europe, and Konaté vibrantly expresses the intolerance of people amidst times of social tension.

Another striking artwork in the main entrance is a group of 16 black and white photographs by former FDW turned freelance photographer, Xyza Cruz Bacani. A second-generation Filipina domestic worker who moved to Hong Kong in 2006 at the age of 19, where she took care of six children at her place of work. She is one of only two artists out of the whole exhibition who represents the domestic workers' demography; the other is Indonesian migrant worker I GAK Murniasih.

Here Xyza's monochromes show snapshots of the working life and leisure time of FDWs residing in the Big Apple of China. She interprets the bustling metropolitan city only through varying shades of grey, revealing the hardship and isolation that is their living space. This feeling of familial loneliness is a stark contrast to the sense of belonging experienced through the city's chaotic mesh of lights and livery. This imagery is made poignant by the arrangement and black framing of each photograph, bringing to life the possible grid-like claustrophobic concrete cells that is a daily reality. Xyza's work is appropriate for the theme at large and addresses the ever controversial and enduring issue of FWDs that makes up an important but hidden strata of Hong Kong society. However, for as much as they are needed, they are legally invisible. They are always considered as outsiders and victims of cheap labour. Laws that apply to other foreigners, such as the right to citizenship after seven years of living in Hong Kong, and minimum wage law of HKD 32.5 (around GBP 2.8) per hour, do not apply to domestic worker visa holders. As one works their way through the gallery one questions the social issues that each work attempts to raise, as reminded by Inti Guerro, one of four curators of "Afterwork", in an interview for the Myartguides.com that this exhibition tackles not only migrant

worker issues but also subjects relating to race, distinction and stereotyping.

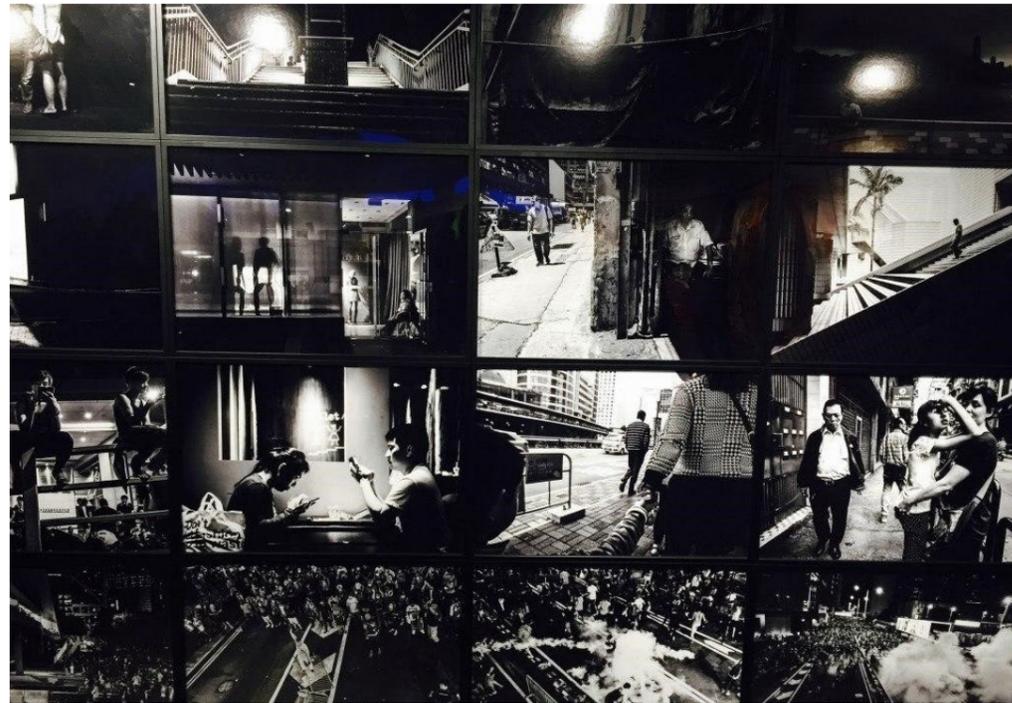
Works such as Jean-François Boclé's installation of a collection of products gathered from all over the world with their varying degree of racist connotations arranged from the whitest to the blackest; Hong Kong artist Joyce Lung Yuet Ching's concern for the relationship between people and human identity, explores her connexion with her domestic worker by making cleaning bottles out of porcelain; while Filipina artist Maria Taniguchi targets the densely populated urban environment of Manila with her 'brick' paintings, whereby she covers a large black canvas with faint white lines to create an illusion of a solid wall of bricks; and Ryan Villamael also explores the unpredictable growth of urban development with his delicate paper sculptures cut out from a book.

There is certainly an entertaining amount of art to feast your eyes upon. However, one cannot help but question the degree of earnestness with which the exhibition has set out to tackle social issues, as some of the artworks chosen feel as though they are being stretched in order to address a serious issue. Furthermore, their grouping within the exhibition space seems rather unclear. Even though it seems like the curators attempted to arrange each

area by theme, for example a space that addresses racism, there seems to be some difficulty in separating them into clear, definable sections.

What's more, one issue that has been completely left out is migrant workers from Mainland China. There is no doubt a good proportion of Chinese people from the Mainland who are also subject to similar discrimination and working conditions, yet they are not represented at all whatsoever. Whether it was a conscious or unconscious decision by the curators, it nevertheless raises the curious question of the curators' definition of migrant workers. Perhaps Mainlanders are not considered as foreigners since they belong to the same country that is the People's Republic of China, or they are not on the same level of foreignness as those coming from the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand?

The fact that the subjects of the artworks, such as FDWs, could never make it to the exhibition provides plenty of food for thought as one strolls through the exhibition. Despite some occasionally underwhelming and misaligned choices in the artworks selected to represent such broad social issues of communities living in Hong Kong and further afield, "Afterwork" helps to bring them to light in a most colourful and enigmatic way.



^  
*Xyza Cruz Bacani*  
Collection of Photographs of Hong Kong

C#16  
GROUP  
SHOW

## TRIPLES: HARRY DODGE, EVAN HOLLOWAY, PETER SHELTON

THE APPROACH  
*Luca Santilli*

Today, with the pressure of living in a world in which so much of our sociality is conducted on-line and so much of our time is spent there, a show like "Triples," that redirects our digital data contaminated attention to materiality, is a kind of unique and refreshing experience.

Perhaps the most important key to interpret this show is the idea that sculpture is first and foremost dependent on its material read, on the way it describes how physical things are put together and how they inhabit the surrounding space.

The concentrated exhibit contents itself with one room in the Approach gallery and deals with the do-it-yourself culture, mysticism, and idiosyncratic engagement with contemporary culture—what Evan Holloway, who also 'proposes' the show, describes as an "analog- counterrevolution".

In the essay *The Origin of the Work of Art* Heidegger promotes the notion that for the Greeks, *téchne* ('art' or 'craft') was not the active work of a willing, intentional subject, but rather an 'allowing' of the upsurge of creation that the Greeks knew as *physis*, 'nature'. Aristotle in fact describes *téchne* not as the allowing of natural creation but as the imparting of form on matter by a craftsman's physical transmission of motion to tools, a transmission informed by the *techne*-knowledge of means and ends. In *Triples* the significance of individual human labour is evident. As in Ed

Kienholz's most ambitious installations, all the works, in fact, highlight the artist's prowess as a craftsman.

The first absurd and mysterious piece catching the eye as one enters the exhibition room is *Ocho*, a totemic colourful column sculpture of celluclay cast stacked heads whose noses are replaced with light bulbs. As the lights flash in a mathematically generated sequence, or all at once, different relationships are created between the heads, like a rollercoaster ride into a hierarchical power distribution space. The chromatic sequence or progression also provides another visual system possessed by a spirit of carnivalesque familiarity. The work with its strong, raw handmade and proudly analogue quality, folds imagery from counterculture history into serious sculptural exploration that reflects the spirit of self-sufficiency and self-discovery through material experimentation. With a sculpture like this that is at once personal and universal, Holloway exemplifies a distinct West Coast art historical tradition channelling an intensity of vision also seen in the work of artists like Bruce Nauman or Mike Kelley.

Harry Dodge's lo-fi handmade *Emergency Weapons* are another straight example of typical West Coast art practice. Carefully displayed along two of the bright white gallery's walls through a system of small candid shelves or



^  
Installation View of Triples, The Approach

hangers, the stocky and intriguing sculptures inspired by the feelings of political insecurity and terror paranoia in the U.S. seem to shout loud the words: "I have to protect myself." Dodge set up the parameters to make a weapon only with things that were on hand and the resulting objects are as

ingenious as they are terrifying: a sock studded with rusted nails, assorted tool handles topped with resin and embedded with screws of frightening proportions, and an axe handle ameliorated with a ranch dressing bottle and what appears to be a paring knife. Dodge's use of materials is sinister and hilarious. All the grotesque prosthetic sculptures, beautifully exhibited like some of the archaeological relics we can find in the Pitt Rivers Museum of Oxford, also play with concept of hybridity, amalgamation, and work on ideas about the substance between things; where 'relation' is, and analogously, sociality too. Furthermore, Dodge's sculptures show more interest in the possibilities made by their mix-up than in binaries of the virtual and material.

Almost in the middle of the space, hanging from the ceiling, Peter Shelton's weighty cast iron *Longbag* stands like a resigned abstract form ready to be smashed and cut by the weapons at hand. Alternately anatomical and industrial this large-scale bubble sculpture, precariously balancing, creates a spatial tension in the gallery that evokes all its possible associations from bodily fluids to gravity and time. The material in *Longbag* is not just a surface but part to what the work is. It's like the skin that contains us and indeed very much a part of what gives us definition. Shelton's work melds seemingly contradictory forces such as weightlessness and weight. It is tough and tender, sober and funny, elevated and base.



^  
Installation View of Triples, The Approach

The large scale bodily physicality of *Longbag* brilliantly interacts with Dodge's modest size prosthetic objects and Holloway's piled up heads delivering an image of finished anatomical architecture. Peter Shelton's sculpture makes it also deviously clear that physical space is, inevitably, also psychical space. We all occupy space and move according to internalized assumptions about scale, balance, proportion, rightness, how things ought to look and where they belong. In defying those implicit expectations, *Longbag* forces them to the surface of consciousness.

Similar to Shelton's work, Holloway's sculptures *Metaphor* and *Kinship*, deconstruct the conceptual stunt whereby a work's formal structure is determined by a pre-existing set of rules. Simultaneously figurative and abstract, they call attention to the arbitrary or illogical character of system that orders our perception of the world. In *Metaphor* the seeming randomness of how the tiny elongated faces, whose steel rods vibrate and jiggle in the air, are arranged in space, produces an image of increasing chaos.

This cloud of faces, each slumbering or meditating with closed eyes and pouring from a metal joint (described by the artist as an elbow), feels like a lo-fi surrealist dream of community. *Kinship*, featuring pig's trotters arranged on a set of steel spokes, directly confront the viewer with its aesthetic cruelty and stands alone like a portable wonder wheel of self-bestiality. These sculptures, with their geometric and engineering conceptual system, have an acute ability to reveal an unseen, hidden structure of reality.

In "Triples," these corporeal and architectural works that are both abstract and referential are the results of Evan Holloway, Harry Dodge, and Peter Shelton's investigation in the simple and fundamental transactions between people and objects. Their materiality and subject matter elicit a physical, emotional, and psychic engagement making the viewer's visual experience tactile and tangible. The general functionality of these works as objects importantly show that today, we still respond to a world of real physical objects, rather than to pure information, data and statistics.



^  
Installation View of Triples, The Approach

## EMOTIONAL SUPPLY CHAINS

ZABLUDOWICZ COLLECTION

Yudaikha Singh

The exploration of self and identity is not an uncommon topic; within the structures of the art world, however, its significance in a social context is as important as one's first cup of coffee in the morning. The Zabludowicz collection brings together the work of 17 artists under the exhibition "Emotional Supply Chains" showing a rich body of work broadly addressing the instability of self, between technology and the individual; emotion and machine. "Our identities and personalities are multiple and shifting rather than solid or stable," curator Paul Luckraft says, discussing the main ideas behind the show. Although the fluidity of identity is not a new phenomenon, Luckraft is interested in how both culturally and technologically the digital age "has accelerated and heightened this sensation," and how our sense of self is built upon a supply chain of objects, images and ideas.

Introducing the themes of 'authenticity and artificiality' in the main hall is Simon Denny's central installation *The Personal Effects of Kim Dotcom*. In this lurid installation, Denny creates a portrait of Kim Dotcom, the eccentric billionaire behind the file sharing and streaming services Megaupload and Megavideo, based on some of the seized possessions from his 2012 indictment. The refashioned objects range from ironic licence plates with the words 'GOD,' 'GUILTY,' and 'CEO' to a life size Predator collectible still in its packaging. With these items, the artist takes

a close look at an identity made by the Internet, and draws attention to the complexities of digital ownership.

In the second chapter of the exhibition titled 'The Networked Self,' artists explore the boundaries of self-presentation further within the context of our online selves. While the internet has reconstituted the boundaries of self-portraiture, which often, as Luckraft says 'runs the risk of getting written off as narcissism of the 'selfie generation,' works such as Ed Fornieles' interactive installation *Dorm Daze* explores the makings of public and private identities through a Facebook 'sitcom,' which viewers can watch from behind the desk of an imaginary fraternity student. To create the sitcom, Fornieles enlisted 32 volunteers to act out an online role-play based on the open Facebook profiles of Berkeley students. Fornieles explains, "They were inhabited by people who grew and expanded their characters, mixing archetypes, their own personal inclinations and current events to generate something distinct yet completely knowable." Watching the synthetic spectacle unfold in the isolated setting of a dorm desk, the reality of the networked self presented here is as absorbing as it is troubling. "I think we are experiencing a continued fracturing of self that has been going on for hundreds of years," says Fornieles. "We are dividing up into smaller and smaller pieces, which is both fantastic and terrifying at the same time."

The artists in this exhibition engage in layers of storytelling, focusing often on portraiture and self-portraiture. There are moments in the exhibition where certain artists are highly present in the works as participants and characters. This is evident in the 'origins and renewal' chapter of the exhibition, especially looking at David Blandy's 2010 installation film *Child of the Atom*. Blandy's film delves into family myth and collective guilt; this is developed by travelling with his son through the reconstructed city of Hiroshima, which is played on a television sitting within a stylised Japanese living room. Narrated by his daughter, it tells the story of their trip alongside a story about Blandy's grandfather, who was an American prisoner of war during World War II and was apparently released because of the bombing of Hiroshima. "How many died so I can live?" asks Blandy through the voice of his daughter, as they walk through the reconstruc-

ted streets, searching out their origins and questioning the momentous inhumanity and complexities of history that makes us who we are. Interspersed within these scenes, Blandy has created his own apocalyptic anime to tell a parallel fiction and reference the country's own cultural trauma. It is a very personal story but it also, as Blandy articulates, became "a way of thinking about the individual's relationship to history and global politics, the historic violence being intercut with the peaceful tourism of the two children of the atom."

This exhibition explores the multifaceted ability of elements both from the cyber world and the real; providing a layer of substance allowing ourselves to consciously reference our "narcissistic supply", our admiration, interpersonal support or sustenance drawn by an individual from his or her environment and essential to their self-esteem, in the environments we find ourselves ensconced in.

**Ed Fornieles**

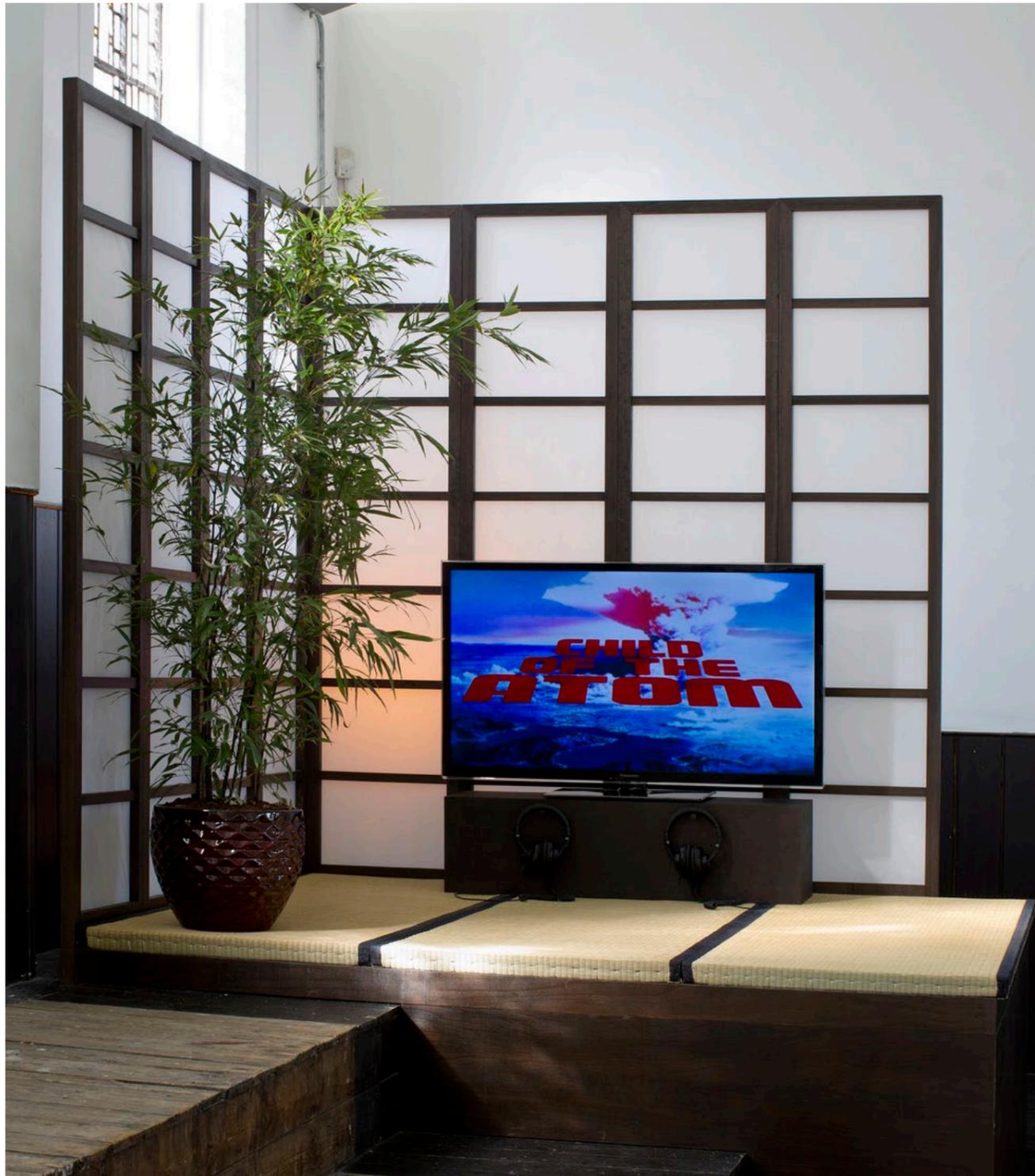
Installation view of *Dorm Daze*

2011

Mixed media

▼





^  
**David Blandy**  
 Installation view of *Child of the Atom*  
 2010  
 Mixed media

C#16  
 FOCUS  
 PIECE

## ROBERT SMITHSON

HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT  
*Kaitlyn Kane*

In 1971, Robert Smithson penned an essay that was to be his definitive statement on photography. Like much of his writing, *Art Through the Camera's Eye* is a compelling and detailed essay that poses as many questions as it answers. 'There is something abominable about cameras,' he writes, 'because they possess the power to invent many worlds. As an artist who has been lost in this wilderness of mechanical reproduction for many years, I do not know which world to start with.'<sup>1</sup> Evoking Walter Benjamin's seminal essay of 1936,<sup>2</sup> Smithson seems to simultaneously propose two points of view: one in which the photograph can be used as a tool of creativity and one in which the photograph is an artefact that creates confusion, paralysing the artist in a forest of multiplicity and uncertainty. He would give voice to these slightly antithetical points throughout his career. In April 1969, he confessed to P.A. Norwell that photography's limiting conditions 'fascinated him.'<sup>3</sup> The next autumn, he would solemnly state that 'photographs steal away the spirit of the work.'<sup>4</sup> While these statements are not exactly incompatible, taken together they present a somewhat dialectical point of view.

For an artist who had so much to say about photography, this side of Smithson's practice is often strangely overlooked. In *Land and Environmental Art*, Jeffrey Kastner claims that environmental art is 'fundamentally sculptural,' cit-

ing Smithson as an example.<sup>5</sup> Rosalind Krauss would both open and close her opus *Passages in Modern Sculpture* with *Spiral Jetty*, arguing that it is 'physically meant to be entered. One can only see the work by moving along it.'<sup>6</sup> What both Kastner and Krauss fail to acknowledge is the reality of how most viewers encounter Smithson—through photography. Their omission is hardly surprising, as reproduced images are susceptible to unconscious consumption, but it is insidious. In reality, Smithson's art and its complex meaning is tightly bound to the very medium that so confounded him. It is the secondary, rather than primary, experience that is crucial. When this element is addressed, the true complexity and depth of Smithson's art is made evident.

The spectre looming over any discussion of Smithson is of course, the *Spiral Jetty*, one of the more recognisable works of art created in the 20th century. The fact that it has become so well-known is due in large part to Gianfranco Gorgoni's widely disseminated colour and black-and-white images of the site which Smithson commissioned. Located on Rozel Point on the Great Salt Lake, Utah, the *Spiral Jetty* is incredibly remote. Smithson describes reaching the site as a time consuming, otherworldly journey: 'The valley spread into an uncanny immensity unlike the other landscapes we had seen. The roads on the map became a net of dashes, while in the far distance, the Salt Lake existed as



an interrupted silver band.<sup>17</sup> With the barriers of distance and time, the *Spiral Jetty* became something odd: a famous site that was, in the words of Lynne Cooke, 'known primarily through secondary means.'<sup>18</sup> While Lawrence Alloway would claim in the October 1976 *Artforum* that it was a site-specific work where 'the form of the sculpture cannot be separated from the terrain it occupies,' this is not the standard viewing condition.<sup>9</sup> In fact, the most arresting and most re-published photographs are the ones which least recall the experience of being at Rozel Point, showing the construction from above with nearly all the surrounding terrain cropped out.

These photos were clearly important to Smithson and nine of them would eventually illustrate his essay of *Spiral Jetty*, firmly establishing them as iconic. More than merely a secondary piece of documentation, these photographs play a central role in the production of meaning. In the case of *Spiral Jetty*, the photographs act as a type of Non-site, calling back to his earlier practice of creating small, sculptural museum installations

that referenced remote locations. While Smithson never overtly makes this connection, telling-ly the *Spiral Jetty* essay contains his most detailed description of his Site/Non-site dialectic, though it is relegated to the footnotes. There, he sets up a series of relations: 'scattered information' and 'contained information,' 'reflection' and 'mirror,' 'edge' and 'centre,' 'some place (physical)' and 'no place (abstract).'<sup>10</sup> As Smithson explains, while the Site can be considered to be infinite, undetermined, and remote, the Non-site represents the original location or experience bounded, limited, and brought before the viewer. In many ways, as Lawrence Alloway deftly summarised in 1971, 'The nonsite ... acts as the signifier of the absent site.'<sup>11</sup> In short, the relationship is an indexical one, with the object presented to us signaling the existence of some larger, absent idea. With his Site/Non-site dialectic, Smithson's thinking echoed the ideas of a central post-war thinker: Foucault's 'Heterotopias'. Heterotopias – related to Utopias and Dystopias were places that had layered meaning and where other, real sites were simultaneously represented and

contested. As Foucault summarises, in contemporary culture, we live in a set of relations.<sup>12</sup> Smithson's Non-sites dramatise these relations and, making use of the frameworks of both the gallery space and the medium, compel the viewer to acknowledge the conditionality of perception.

This is, on a fundamental level, an inherently anti-Modernist project. While Smithson may have considered the possibility that people would trek to Utah to see the site itself, that viewing experience would be incomplete without exposure to his documentation.<sup>13</sup> Instead, he seeks to make the viewer aware of relationships. With Smithson, art is no longer an autonomous, singular object that represents ideas and concepts through the distilling and purifying of medium. Rather, he complicates the process, creating one singular work that is informed and completed by a multitude of forms. With *Spiral Jetty*, as Smithson himself notes, there is 'no sense wondering about classifications and categories, there were none.'<sup>14</sup> The notion of a singular point of view has been entirely disrupted, and we are instead directed to focus on how we come to know things and how different modes of representation can tell different stories.

There could be danger in considering Smithson's photographs in relative isolation from the rest of his practice. As always with Smithson, the central aspect is the network of information, including his essays and films. However, as his photography is in many ways the most visible of aspect of his practice while also being the one most in danger of being passively consumed rather than thoughtfully considered, it is vital that special attention be paid. Indeed, although it is useless to speculate how Smithson's work would have developed had he lived, the nature of his photographs were what eventually made his work such fertile ground for the Postmodern writers and critics of the 1980s. Throughout the entirety of his mature career, they dis-

play the Postmodern interests of indexicality, the signifier/signified relationship, and multiple viewpoints. His photo works are at once deeply fractured and shifting while also deeply rooted in the cultural zeitgeist. Now, even over three decades after his death and after the height of Postmodernism has passed, he continues to be an undeniably relevant figure in contemporary art and one whose work and theories remain fruitful ground for discussion and development.

1. Tsai, Robert Smithson *Unearthed: Drawings, Collages, Writings*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. p 88.
2. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."
3. Lippard. *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972 ...* Berkeley: U of California, 1997. p 89.
4. Lippard. p 184.
5. Kastner, ed. *Land and Environmental Art*. London: Phaidon, 1998. p 12.
6. Krauss. *Passages in Modern Sculpture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1981. p 281.
7. Smithson. "The Spiral Jetty (1972)." Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings. ed Jack Flam. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. p 145.
8. Importantly, these secondary means also included Smithson's later essay and the film he made during and after the construction of the site. The film in particular was to be the centrepiece of his exhibition at the Dwan Gallery in New York, 31 October 1970. However, Smithson was notably very particular about how it was shown, requiring a dark space and that it start at specific times rather than be played in a loop. Perhaps because of these complications, the photographs remain the enduring statement. Cooke. "A Position of Elsewhere." Robert Smithson: *Spiral Jetty*. True Fictions, False Realities. Berkeley: U of California, 2005. p 53.
9. Kastner, ed. p 281. Quote first published in an essay titled 'Site Inspection.'
10. Smithson. "The Spiral Jetty (1972)." Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings. ed Jack Flam. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. pp 152-153.
11. Osborne. "Transcategoriality: Postconceptual Art." *Anywhere or Not At All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*. London: Verso, 2013. p 113.
12. Foucault. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." *Trans. Jay Miskowiec. Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité*. no. 5 (October 1984). p 47.
13. Here, Smithson's words regarding an earlier project, The Yucatan Mirror Displacements, seem to ring true: 'If you visit the sites (a doubtful possibility) you find nothing but memory-traces... It is the dimension of absence that remains to be found.' (Uroskie. "La Jetée En Spirale: Robert Smithson's Stratigraphic Cinema." *Grey Room*, No. 19 (Spring, 2005). pp. 55.)
14. Smithson. p 146.

<

**Robert Smithson**  
*Spiral Jetty*  
 1970  
 Great Salt Lake, Utah  
 Mud, salt crystals, rocks, water  
 1500 feet long and 15 feet wide

>

**Robert Smithson**  
*Spiral Jetty*  
 1970  
 Great Salt Lake, Utah  
 Mud, salt crystals, rocks, water  
 1500 feet long and 15 feet wide



C#16  
SOLO  
SHOW

## MONA HATOUM

TATE MODERN  
Maura Derossis

The ambience of Mona Hatoum's first retrospective at a major UK institution feels surprisingly serene and comforting on the opening weekend of Tate Modern's Switch House extension. Despite the threat of violence and menace inherent to many of Hatoum's works, it is a welcome refuge from the excited hordes of visitors entranced by the buzz of the new and posing for selfies in front of an Ai Weiwei Tree.

The non-chronological layout, unusual for a survey show, has permitted curators Clarrie Wallis and Christine van Assche to create interesting new dialogues between the works. I saw the vacant plinth *Socle du Monde*, 1992-93 which opens the show in a new light beyond a tribute to Piero Manzoni via the intrusion of the pulsating rhythm of Hatoum's heartbeat from the video *Corps étranger*, 1994 in the next room. The fur-like surface created with iron filings covering the plinth appears even more bodily due to the juxtaposition.

In borrowing from such diverse art historical sources as minimalist grids, the body art of 1970s feminism, surrealist objects, and the Duchampian readymade, Hatoum could be accused of using appropriation to disguise a lack of direction. Yet despite this plethora of influences there is a strong thread of thematic unity run-

ning through her practice that ensures cohesion. Wallace and van Assche highlight the recurrent concern with threats to and violation of the physical body by creating a conversation between *Corps étranger* and the enlarged pseudo-readymades *Daybed*, 2008 and *Grater Divide*, 2002 which resemble human-size retro graters. In particular the placing of *Daybed* in the middle of the room where one could reasonably expect a bench leads the viewer to shudder at the idea of torn human flesh. Likewise, on entering the small pod within which *Corps étranger* is projected onto the floor the viewer is confronted with the physical invasion of the artist's own body both internally and externally. The explanation that the work was created using hi-tech surveillance equipment adds to the feeling of voyeurism experienced. Interestingly, visitors were respectfully contorting their own bodies inside the pod to avoid standing on the image projected onto the floor and further violate a body which has already suffered an undignified invasion.

*Corps étranger* has a push/pull dynamic that simultaneously repulses and compels one to keep watching. The discomfort that this viewing experience creates is heightened by the grating buzz of the installation *Homebound*, 2000 further ahead where a domestic interior scene takes on an aura of menace via the wiring of all its elements to an electric current. The kitchen utensils on the table



seem possessed of a pent-up aggression that recalls Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, 1975 in challenging the gendering of the domestic. Although the curators avoid over focusing on Hatoum's biography this work also deals with a sense of yearning for an unattainable home. Mona Hatoum's identity as a double exile is well documented; her Palestinian parents were forced to relocate in Beirut, and she herself was placed in a similar predicament in London in 1975 where she was obliged to remain following the breakout of civil war in Lebanon.

Hatoum's strong political engagement goes beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict but on the occasions when she deals directly with her family's displacement, the political undertones to the personal story are evoked with a dexterous subtlety lacking in some of her more monumental works such as *Hot Spot*, 2013 and *Undercurrent*, 2008 where content seems overly generalised in favour of formal presence. For me one of the most powerful works in the show is Hatoum's

early video *Measures of Distance*, 1988. Its warmth and pathos still have the capacity to affect despite the noise emanating from *Homebound* in the room beyond drowning out the dialogue. Hatoum's mother is pictured in the shower in the family home in Beirut behind a "curtain" of Arabic writing of her own letters to her daughter in England which provides an indexical link to home and family. It links Hatoum's personal situation with more general concerns regarding identity and displacement with a non voyeuristic intimacy.

*Present Tense*, 1996, consisting of a grid-like pattern of cubes of olive oil soap from Nablus studded with tiny beads delineating the islands of land designated to be handed over to the PLO under the 1993 Oslo Peace Accord, similarly uses an indexical reference to place that links to Hatoum's personal family history. Although drawing from Carl Andre and minimalist sculpture for its display (a prescient reference as it later transpires that the story of controversy surrounding the 1970s acquisition of Andre's "bricks" by Tate is being

<  
**Mona Hatoum**  
*Grater Divide*  
 2002  
 Mild steel  
 204 x 3.5 cm (variable width)

simultaneously recounted by eager guides in the new wing of the gallery), Hatoum's material appears fragile and vulnerable. Unlike the robustness of Andre's sculptures there is a sense that this work could be all too easily washed away and the beads scattered, as vulnerable as the Israeli-Palestinian rapprochement.

I was reminded of *Present Tense* and the subtleties of Hatoum's political engagement with place when later visiting the Switch House display where a Kader Attia's *Untitled (Ghardaïa)*, (2009) similarly uses material symbolically in modelling the ancient Algerian city and UNESCO heritage site in couscous. Attia is making a serious comment about postcolonial identity and the Disney-fication of the African Other but Hatoum's subtlety in using the soap compared to the sandcastle-like installation of Attia's work for me symbolises the lightness of her touch and the success of the exhibition.

**Mona Hatoum**  
*Present Tense*  
 1996  
 Soap and glass beads  
 5 x 232 x 289 cm  
 v





^  
**Mona Hatoum**  
*Hot Spot*  
2006  
Stainless steel and neon tube  
234 x 223 cm

## GEORGE SHAW

NATIONAL GALLERY  
Catherine Harbuz

In order to view George Shaw's new exhibition "My Back to Nature" at the National Gallery, one must walk through the Central Hall, which is filled with large, intricate works by famous Italian Old Masters depicting adoring angels and saints. It is a tough act to follow.

Shaw himself is acutely aware of this, and his two-year residency that culminated in more than 50 paintings and drawings show his desire to acknowledge, reference and reinvent the subjects of the past. "My Back to Nature" uses the Christian collection of the National Gallery together with the mythical woodland nymph paintings of Titian and Poussin to tell a modern tale of the forest, its other-worldliness touched by the illicit, unobserved and forbidden activities that take place within its depths. The Sunley room seems to be the perfect site for these works; the lights have been dimmed and the walls painted a dusky grey, allowing an immersion into a perpetual twilight of the woodland.

George Shaw, born in Coventry in 1966, studied his MA at the Royal College of Art in 1998 and was later nominated for the Turner Prize in 2011. While previously Shaw has concentrated on the hard, bleak man-made landscape of his childhood estate, in this exhibition he turns towards nature (or turns his back to it, as the case may

be). His focus has always been on illuminating human presence through its absence. However, in "My Back to Nature", it's in the items left behind after these depraved, risky encounters: from discarded bottles and mattresses to porn magazines and cigarettes. Shaw interrupts our tranquil, sublime view of the pastoral idyll; walking through the woods, we are more likely to come across a crumpled chip packet than an untouched, pristine landscape.

The works, painted with Shaw's signature Humbrol enamel paints, include obvious references throughout to major works in the Gallery's collection. In *The Living and the Dead*, a blue tarp haphazardly draped over a tree branch evokes the veil concealing Diana in Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* as well as the robes of revellers in Poussin's *The Triumph of Pan*. A small work, *The School of Love* also bears the same title as Correggio's painting of Venus and Cupid. It is difficult to picture the goddess lounging on this grimy, discarded mattress, but it has an ethereal quality all the same. Other paintings play humorously on this influence; a painting titled *The Old Master* depicts hastily drawn phallic graffiti on a tree trunk.

In the short film accompanying the exhibition Shaw himself says: "The whole National Gallery is a haunted graveyard really." His works are no different. These paintings are haunted by the ghosts of



^  
**George Shaw**  
*The Living and the Dead*  
 2015-16  
 Humbrol enamel on canvas

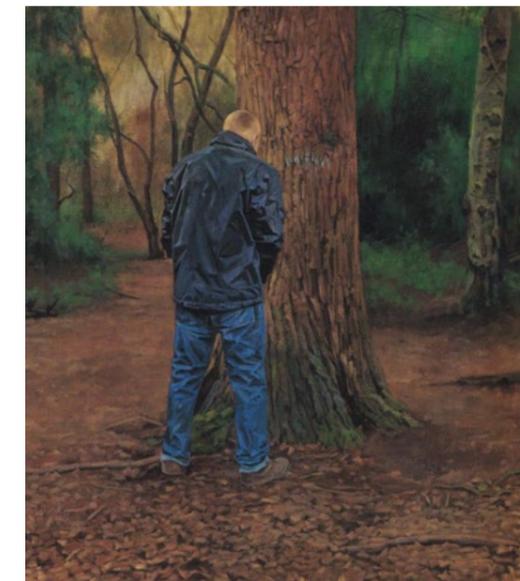
**George Shaw**  
*Old Master*  
 2015-16  
 Humbrol enamel on canvas  
 v



the past, recording previous transgressive activities and events. Shaw used the sites around his previous midland estate as an inspiration, and it is this marginal, liminal landscape that is the main fascination, a merging of the wilderness and the urban, where mundane objects take on extraordinary connotations. Where red splashes on trees become intimations of violence or rituals, and tarps caught in trees appear like strange ghosts reaching toward you.

Shaw's work feels quite traditional, but its contemporary quality is subtle, in the artificial sheen of the Humbrol enamel paints and the otherworldly flatness created through his practice of painting from photographs. His work is very distinct; a melancholy depiction of landscapes disturbed by their human inhabitants. "My Back to Nature" feels like a continuation of Shaw's fascination with his childhood memories. While his practice began with paintings of his estate, it continues here by focusing on the surrounding landscape, a place similarly infused with memories of childhood and adolescence, rebellion and discovery. Shaw, describes the influence of his upbringing:

"My last 18 years of painting the landscape where I was brought up, and painting it from a very nostalgic, sentimental point of view, there's something about all that that I define as self-portraiture rather than landscape, it's an attempt to represent my growing, in the same way that Rembrandt painted self-portraits as he aged."



<  
**George Shaw**  
*Call of Nature*  
 2015-16  
 Humbrol enamel on canvas

Shaw has certainly developed, and while there are many similarities with his previous work in these new paintings, there are also hints of a new direction. The use of canvas as a support is a novel choice for the painter, who typically works on board. The final work of the show also offers a surprise: *Call of Nature* features a figure – looking suspiciously like the artist himself – with his back turned, urinating on a tree. The inclusion of a human presence marks a new avenue for the painter, and this two yearlong residency has clearly provided fresh material for the further development of his practice. With "My Back To Nature", Shaw has continued to solidify his wish of being considered a major contributor to the contemporary English painting culture.

## IN THE AGE OF GIORGIONE

ROYAL ACADEMY  
Caitlyn Playle

The historian, Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) in his *Lives of the Artists*, 1567, claimed that Giorgione far surpassed the Bellinis (Jacopo, Gentile, and Giovanni) in talent and excellence. Despite Giorgione's acclaim among artists during his lifetime, the painter is shrouded in mystery. "In the Age of Giorgione" at the Royal Academy of Arts, London (12 March-5 June, 2016) presented the mystery of Giorgione through known works of the artist as well as works by other artists, including Titian, that were once attributed to Giorgione.

Giorgio da Castelfranco ('Zorzo' in the local Venetian dialect) was born in 1478 in Castelfranco, Italy. He was first called Giorgione in 1528 in an inventory of the collection of Marino Grimani. During his lifetime, Giorgione acquired an artistic reputation as rival in excellence to the founding artists of the modern style working in Tuscany. According to Vasari, the master painter always selected the 'most beautiful and varied subjects he could find to put in his works' and 'had been born to infuse life into his figures to reproduce the freshness of living flesh more than any other artist who had ever painted.' Giorgione's reputation as a one of the great painters of the Venetian Renaissance was cemented by his early death at the age of thirty-two in 1510 due to the plague.

The mystery of Giorgione began with his death during the turmoil of the plague years and continued with Marcantonio Michiel's *Notizia d'opere di disegno* (1525-43), which is a catalogue of contemporary art collections in northern Italy including fourteen works by Giorgione. Over the following centuries, the number of paintings attributed to Giorgione rose to two hundred and fifty in the seventeenth century and continued increasing into the beginning of the nineteenth century. Today, that number has returned to the sixteenth century estimate of forty works. Of the original fourteen paintings identified in the *Notizia*, five can be identified among the forty works that make up Giorgione's oeuvre. The numerous attributions to Giorgione's name occurred because works by Giorgione were highly sought after by wealthy collectors after his death. Because works by Giorgione were so heavily guarded by the collectors who owned them, other artists would produce works in a Giorgionesque style to be sold to those who did not own a Giorgione.

The Royal Academy of Arts exhibition illustrated the fascination with Giorgione throughout time by exhibiting works that were either once attributed to Giorgione or clearly influenced by him. Of the forty-seven works included in the exhibition, eight were known works of Giorgione and an additional five works were accepted attributed works, leaving

>  
**Giorgione**  
*Virgin Enthroned between St. Francis and St. Liberale*  
c. 1503-04  
Oil on panel  
200.5 x 144.5 cm

the majority of the works to other artists. Titian exemplifies the confusion between Giorgione's work and other artists. Titian and Giorgione both studied under Bellini. When Giorgione developed his mature style in 1507, Titian left Bellini's workshop to become a pupil of Giorgione and within a few years, he was able to skilfully copy Giorgione's style.

Titian's *Virgin and Child with Saint Anthony of Padua and Saint Roch* (1509-10; cat. 32; fig. 1) acquired a Giorgione attribution in the nineteenth century and was viewed by Giovanni Morelli as having all the traits typical of Giorgione's brush and having the same style as Giorgione's own work: the *Virgin Enthroned between Saint Francis and Saint Liberale* (c. 1505; fig. 2). A factor in the misidentification of the artist may have arisen from the works of Titian and Giorgione frequently being confused by their contemporaries and by later critics. Both pieces show the Virgin on a raised platform and flanked by two saints. Titian's work is clearly modelled after the earlier Giorgione with the Virgin positioned on a high platform and framed by an extravagant cloth. Giorgione popularized the positioning of the Virgin on an elevated throne and the use of rich colours such as the velvet crimsons and reds, grass greens, and gilded damascening seen in both works.

Giorgione was unusual amongst Venetian artists of his time; he did not work for any of the religious or social organizations in the city, or the scuole, nor did he pursue the public commissions that had previously been considered the sign of a master artist. The only exterior projects he completed were frescoes on the facades and in drawing rooms of palaces which were of a style imported from his native province of Treviso. Instead, Giorgione focused on creating art for the private viewer. Even his devotional works were small and intended for private worship. His single largescale devotional work was the *Virgin Enthroned between Saint Francis and Saint Liberale*, c. 1505, which was created for the chapel of the family of General Costanzo in the Duomo in Castelfranco. Even the altarpiece operates on the private level with its placement in a family chapel and the way it, along with Giorgione's



other devotional works, invites the viewer into the scene, thus eliminating the sense of remoteness normally found in devotional works.

Perhaps the best example of Giorgione's enigma is his *Il Tramonto (Landscape with Saint Roch, Saint George, and Saint Anthony Abbot)* (c. 1502-05; cat. 19; fig. 3). This landscape was actually believed to be a Giorgionesque work when it was discovered in 1933 in the Villa Garzoni which belonged to the Michiel family. The painting was heavily damaged at the time and underwent extensive restoration work. In fact, Saint George is a later addition by one of the twentieth century restorers. The title *Il Tramonto* was a fabrication by art historian Roberto Longhi to draw parallels with another enigmatic painting of Giorgione's, *La Tempesta*, 1506-8. This illustrates how much of our view of an artist is created by later collectors and critics.

"In the Age of Giorgione" is divided into four sections (portraits, landscapes, devotional works, and allegorical works) displayed in five small rooms. The small size of the rooms and types



^  
**Giorgione**  
*Il Tramonto*  
 1506-1510  
 Oil on canvas  
 73 x 91.5cm

of paintings help emphasise the private nature of the paintings. All of the works were chosen to highlight aspects of Giorgione's style that were then adopted by the next generation of the Renaissance. These aspects were the introduction of hands in portraits to create the sitter's personality, landscapes as a new category of painting, the intimacy of private devotion, and allegory as a new style of portraiture. The exhibition perfectly serves the curators' intentions in providing the viewer with just enough information and examples to encourage contemplation on who Giorgione was and how he influenced Titian and others of the new generation of Renaissance painters.

C#16  
 SOLO  
 SHOW

## ALEX KATZ

SERPENTINE GALLERY  
 Michelle Mahadi

Over 60 years since his first exhibition in 1954, Katz has produced a celebrated body of work, which includes mainly paintings, sculptures, and prints. The exhibition at The Serpentine Gallery features nineteen new and recent works displayed across six gallery rooms (three of which were painted from the mid to late 1990s, but mostly within the past four years). Katz is most notably known for his flat and brightly coloured close-up portrait paintings, although this particular exhibition shifts the focus towards his landscapes. The title of the exhibition, "Quick Light" is appropriate and reflects Katz body of work in the show. His landscape paintings depict different times of the day, various qualities of light and the changing of the seasons. The Serpentine Gallery feels like the ideal location for the "Quick Light" exhibition to take place. Surrounded by Hyde Park, the environment resonates with his landscapes and enhances the viewer's experience of nature.

Visitors are invited into the opening gallery with a portrait of an elderly woman with long grey hair and watchful eyes set against a warm orange monochrome background. Just like most of Katz's portraits, the outlined facial structure and frontal light diminishes detail and augments flatness. Her name is *Ada*, 2015 (Figure.1), Katz's 89-year-old wife and muse. *Ada's* facial composition is cropped on her forehead and painted close-up.

She is painted so simply yet appears glamorous and self-composed in the large-scale canvas. Two of his paintings in this show are comprised of multiple figures that seem to be in continuous motion, which inevitably forces the eye to move about the canvas. *Vivien*, 2015 (Figure. 2) based on Katz's daughter, was painted in six variations, dressed in blasé slacks, shades and a straw hat, and set in similar and nonchalant poses.

Another work shows a young gymnast named *Emma*, 2015 (Figure. 3). She wears a black swimsuit and strikes different poses painted on the similar, but more painterly orange monochromatic background. Both large canvases measure the same size; they have the same characteristics, approach, colour and style. All six figurative and portrait paintings essentially share very similar qualities and give a similar impression regarding a bright colour palette and composition and invoking vibrations of energy. On the other hand, Katz's landscapes are filled with contrasts of dark and bright colours but share the element of light within the paintings.

Katz's new landscapes are mostly scenes of cityscapes and landscapes of Manhattan and Maine, which is where the artist spends most of his time during the summers. *Reflection 7*, 2008 (Figure. 4) is a painting of a cerulean blue and black watery pattern that resembles inkblot images, stretching



nine by eighteen feet. This painting is situated between figuration and abstraction. The first impression of this painting is an abstract one. The title unveils what the painting represents. Katz painted light reflecting off of dark water. He also paints light on the roof of a red house in the countryside, titled *Red House 3*, 2013 (Figure. 5). *City Landscape*, 1995 (Figure. 6) depicts a grid of black tree trunks delineated by thick brush strokes. Whether the picture is a subject of the evening sky, the building across the way, or an outdoor scene, flashes of light and speed are manifested in Katz's vast landscape canvases. He is able to capture flashing lights through his brushstrokes just as the Impressionists did.

^  
**Alex Katz**  
*Red House 3*  
 2013  
 Oil on linen  
 203.2 x 213.4 cm

A truly beautiful show composed of simple yet eye-catching large canvases, the Serpentine has successfully put together Katz's select works from the past two decades. Katz's landscapes depict his intention to capture the present day through paint. His landscapes correspond to the show's title, which become poetic works. Katz spent quite a bit of time around poets early on in his career, which perhaps justifies the connection between art and poetry within his paintings. Despite the unpredictable weather in London, Katz's portraits, figures and landscape paintings housed in the intimate Serpentine Gallery induce a ceaseless sense of luminosity.

C#16  
 GROUP  
 SHOW

## ETEL ADNAN

SERPENTINE GALLERY  
*Luke Strong Doyle*

"The Weight of the World," a title taken from Etel Adnan's latest body of work, is her first survey show at a UK public institution. Known predominantly for her writing, it is only in the last decade that the multi-faceted Lebanese American has begun to be recognised for her art as well. Born in Beirut in 1925 to a Christian Greek mother and a Muslim Syrian father (an officer in the Ottoman army), Adnan's work recalls sceneries or moments from her past that in a sense feel shared. Her ability to communicate should be of no surprise as Adnan is a polyglot, frequently giving lectures in Arabic, English and French.

Having lived in Lebanon, France, and the United States, to name a few countries, Adnan has clearly had an extraordinary life, and her work reflects this. Despite creating paintings, drawings, poetry, and tapestries for over 50 years, the curator of the exhibition, Rebecca Lewin, has kept Adnan's colourful display of work succinct. The exhibition mainly contains groupings of abstract compositions and references to nature: oil on canvases that track along the furthest wall offer areas of contemplation. Between these various series and groupings, Adnan's sketches and watercolours blot this vista of canvases.

Flowing between abstract forms, unique terrains, and texts written in both Arabic and English,

Adnan's artwork spans the same time during which she would have also been producing her award-winning novels.

Yet the exhibition has very few examples of her writing, a decision that allows her work to be unburdened by current political issues. Ambivalent suggestions of the outside are made through *le-porellos*, accordion-like notebooks that allow for a visual narrative to literally be unfolded and unraveled. *East River Pollution "From Laura's Window"*, *New York, April 79*, 1979, located in one of the two central rooms, depicts an environment not too dissimilar from a wasteland. At the time of this creation, Lebanon was experience a civil war and Adnan had to flee to the United States. Despite New York being a place of safety and refuge, the city as an environment, is depicted as a messy and desolate expanse. Conversely, it is through organic forms that Adnan expresses vitality by using a vibrant palette.

The tightly woven tapestries also contain this vitality and vibrancy. These works are reminiscent of the carpets from Adnan's childhood home in Beirut. Taken from sketches made in the 60s and 70s, the tapestries possess an automatist feeling to them. Traditional hand woven technique has been used to transform sketchbook memories.



Transformation is a theme that is explored within "The Weight of the World," with each series of works appearing to be a reinterpretation of a basic form. In a talk that Adnan gave in conjunction to this exhibition, she stated that her work was to depict gradual transition instead of change. Seeming to be a subtle difference, Adnan believes that change can be abrasive and jolting, an understandable belief as the artist has experienced displacement and exile throughout her life.

Instead of Adnan reflecting on these moments of change in her life, it seems that her work focuses on things that are permanent. When asked by a journalist who her closest friend was, Adnan replied Mount Tamalpais, a mountain located near to where she lived in California. It was during this period that she became aware of the Native Americans and the religious philosophies that they held. It was through her contact with the Native American's that Adnan was able to see parts of nature for its meditative qualities. Many of her oil on canvas works focus on this mountain and were made over a long period of time, showing how focusing on part of nature can be a point of brilliance and beauty. In a life that has gone through constant change, the mountain acts as a point of safety that can always be returned to.

One of the central dimly lit rooms screens *Motion*, 1980-89 / 2012, a 8mm film of things in transition, such as sunlight gradually moving across a building or clouds parting and fusing in the sky. Carpets, not too dissimilar to the size of the tapestries, are laid on the ground. The room invites people to sit cross-legged and reflect whilst watching the film. This appears to give a small insight into the creative process of Adnan and how she is able to almost obsess over something, observing its development.

By placing the more overt references to the outside world in the central two rooms, visitors are able to switch between the real world, be it through *Motion* and the leporellos to the creation of a different reality through Adnan's abstract works. The exhibition allows for an understanding of Adnan that does not focus on her political views. The geopolitics of the last half-century are not represented here.

There is no need. The world's realities are lifted within this gallery space, providing visitors with an opportunity to explore an interpretation of nature through Adnan's fond memories and thoughtfulness. Her art has become more imaginative and braver over the last 50 years, something that this survey show highlights. With the weight of the world's problems on Adnan's mind, optimism still shines through.

<  
**Etel Adnan**  
*East River Pollution from Laura's Window*  
 1990  
 Watercolour, ink  
 18.3 x 12.3 cm

>  
**Etel Adnan**  
*Untitled (Mt. Tamalpais 1)*  
 1983-86  
 Oil on canvas  
 35 x 45.5 cm



>  
**Etel Adnan**  
*Acrobaties Printanieres*  
 1967-70/2015  
 Wool tapestry  
 160 x 200 cm



## CARL ANDRE

SCULPTURE AS PLACE, 1958-2010, HAMBURGER BAHNHOF  
Constance Carakehian

"From form in sculpture to structure in sculpture to what I wound up with as place in sculpture," is how Carl Andre has described his artistic development since the 1970s. Since then, three decades have passed, yet reading this statement three times, one still finds it hard to understand and it deserves to be explained not by language but by experience. Fortunately, the Hamburger Bahnhof has made this possible. Encompassing more than 300 works, "Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place, 1958 – 2010" is the largest solo show to date of this major American artist. The Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart presents Andre's minimalist oeuvre by exhibiting works from over five decades, tracing historical shifts and evolutions in his artistic production.

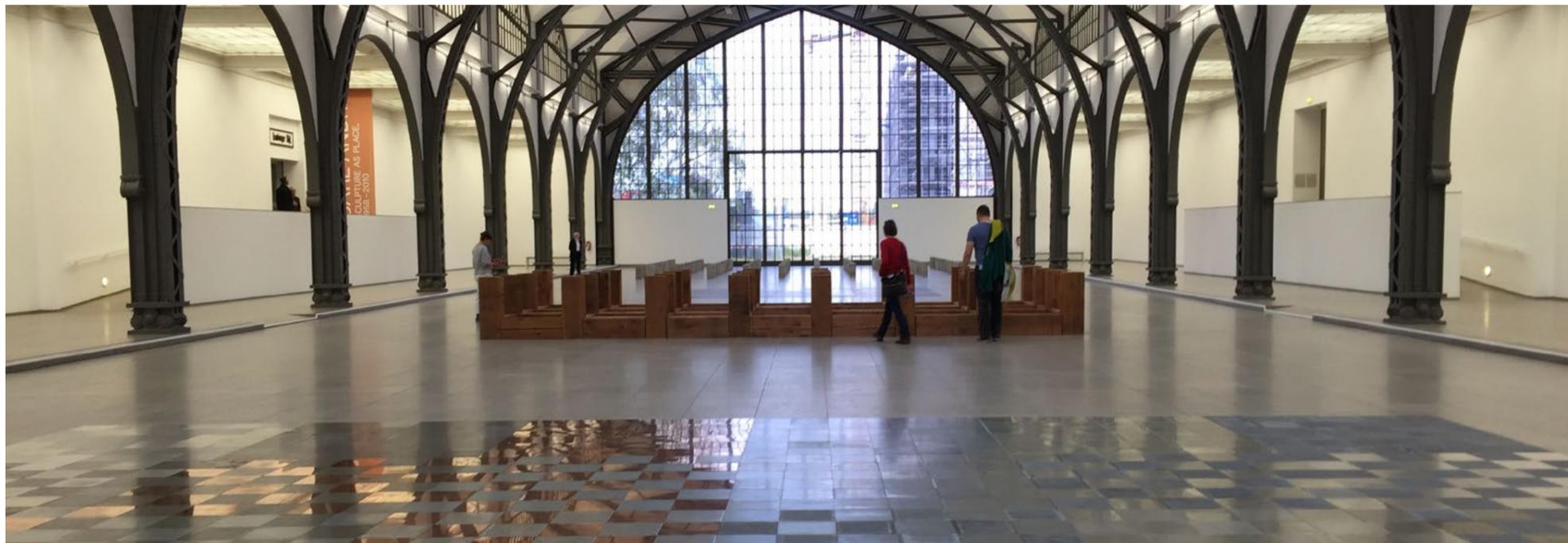
Upon entering the historical train station, a question arises, 'how did all these works arrive here?' as you notice five large-scale works exhibited in the Historical Hall, consisting of 1,515 parts. The first sculpture *6-Metal Fugue (for Mendeleev)* 1995, consists of six different metals into 36 squares, consisting of 36 panels, arranged in order of decreasing purity. Materiality and gravity define the shape, nothing else. You look right and left, the museum guards nod and one stands in the middle of the sculpture, in the middle of the place that Carl Andre has created. The individual plates unite each other as well as the floor and the viewer. Although it is solid metal, it feels like rare sheets of gold – precious and somehow fragile. Any hierarchical relationship between the artwork and the viewer

is repealed. "My idea of a sculpture is a road. A road does not open up after a certain point. Roads appear and disappear." The architectural context of the Bahnhof enters into a dialogue with Andre's materials echoing with allusions to the artist's time spent working in the early 60s for the railroads as a freight brakeman, calling this period his "sculptural finishing school." The surrounding space is thereby integrated into the work itself; the sculpture becomes place, radically redefining the role of the spectator in the process of reception. As you lose yourself through the Rieckhallen – a row of converted storage and freight warehouses – Andre's artistic production unfolds. You will come across his early works such as *Lever* 1966 – a work that represents his artistic breakthrough – a sculpture consisting of 137 firebricks arranged in a straight line jutting out of the gallery space. Andre explained this horizontal sculpture in simultaneous terms of path, cut and fallen column. Most famous for his series of flat geometric floor sculptures made from metal plates which he created from 1967 to 2010, his last one is exhibited, a large scale work in the middle of the room called *9 x 27 Napoli Rectangle*, 2010.

In addition to Andre's sculptures, over 150 poems, a selection of photographs and a group of rarely exhibited assemblages known as *Dada Forgeries* allow the audience to trace the aesthetic evolutions in his artistic production. Passport occupied a place of exception in his production. The work is a scrapbook memorializing disparate materials from Andre's everyday life containing

reproductions of historical works of art such as Constantin Brancusi who influenced him greatly, as well as portraits of friends and figures he admired. Andre didn't let himself be too impressed by Duchamp's milestone of art history, particularly the Readymade; therefore, following a similar style, he fabricated the *Dada Forgeries* as playful aberrations of his own identity as an artist. These creations are read as sly visual puns such as *Cask of Meats*, 1959, which consists of a book of literary criticism with a three-inch hole drilled through its center; just one among several jests executed with and against books. To close the show, like the *Element Series*, 1960, which is presented in the first gallery of the Rieckhallen, in the last gallery *Uncarved Blocks*, 1975, is a progressive ensemble, evolving from two-to-five unit sets. Sets of identical size are differentiated by their orientation – north, south, east and west. Each set points towards one or more imaginary "ways" or paths. The combinations are determined, and limited, by the repeated shape of a single timber block resting on each of its sides. By emphasizing the principle of the 'unaltered', this work's title ultimately summarizes the core of Andre's sculptural practice that is also the essence of this exhibition.

Carl Andre is one of the leading figures in Minimal Art, redefining our traditional concept of sculpture. He was the first artist to create works that were primarily site-specific, declaring: "I am not a studio artist, I am a location artist." The expressive pathos of Abstract Expressionism translated included Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt and Carl Andre, against a category of objects whose art content was minimal. Andre uses both natural and industrial materials that oscillate between Readymade and Object Trouvé, materials from everyday life are at the heart of his sculptural practice. The works of Carl Andre are honest, straightforward and surprisingly, the nudity of the material deceives all advocate for the assumption that art is due craftsmanship. In an exhibition space of approximately 7500m<sup>2</sup> Andre's art can be impressively retraced in all its facets.



<  
Carl Andre  
Installation view Hamburger Bahnhof  
2016

# OLAFUR ELIASSON

PALACE OF VERSAILLES  
Claire Durborow

Since 2008 the Palace of Versailles has organized a yearly exhibition dedicated to a French or foreign artist. Danish artist Olafur Eliasson is the featured artist this summer. He has stated that his dream Versailles "is a place that empowers everyone." His exhibition encourages visitors to take ownership of their experience instead of consuming it as it is fed to them.

As I progressed through the interior, I was searching for Eliasson's work; there was no exhibition map provided with ticket sales or one that I could find at the information desk and the pieces were not labeled within the rooms. The first piece that I noticed inside was *Your Sense of Unity*, 2016 located at the end of the Galerie des Glaces. Utilizing only two mirrors – positioned facing one another at an acute angle – and a black half circle placed between them, the reflections created and lighting used made it appear that there was one ring shown in black and one illuminated in white on a backing of several adjoined mirrors, a mosaic of mirrors, if you will. The reflections of the viewers throughout the hall were altered, as was the reflection of hall. *Your Sense of Unity* stands in stark contrast to the mirrors throughout the hall that offer only plain, expected reflections. *Deep Mirror (Yellow)* and *Deep Mirror (Black)*, 2016 placed in the Salon de l'Œil de Bœuf, each consisted of a round black void and a round yellow lit void, respectively, surrounded by mirrors.

These pieces were positioned across from each other in this salon. This space acted as a thoroughfare on a busy Saturday, which made it difficult to observe this work and grapple with its level of simplicity. The third work I approached while moving through the palace was *Solar Compression*, 2016 was hung in the Salle des Gardes du Roi. This piece consisted of two round mirrors pressed against one another, back to back, with a source of light shining between them. It hung in the center of the room, separated from viewers by a thin roped off perimeter, and rotated slowly. This room was void of much on the walls, forcing viewers to regard the piece, and further emphasizing the viewers moving through the room and the surrounding walls. The slow rotation of the piece, caused by its weight at the end of the wire it was hung from, left people with the urge to walk around the piece, following their reflection, an urge some indulged. Only three of the five pieces located in the palace were seen, as they were easy to identify with the amount of visitors that day, without a map of the locations. This was all well though: the real magic is in the gardens.

The garden pieces allowed one to discover the gardens in a new way, regard the landscape and stumble upon something unexpected. The first that my companion and I happily stumbled upon was *Glacial Rock Flour Garden*, 2016 situated in the Bosquet de la Colonnade. Here we found the first map stating the locations of the pieces, which were

>  
**Olafur Eliasson**  
*Deep Mirror (Yellow) and Deep Mirror (Black)*  
2016  
Mirrors, monofrequency light, aluminium steel,  
wood, black and white paint, control unit  
445 x 180 x 90 cm  
234 x 223 cm



only placed at the location of each work. For this piece, Eliasson placed glacial residue from Greenland into the center of the colonnade, in an inset circle located several short steps down toward the center of the colonnade which is usually filled with gravel and displays a statue in the center. It created an illusion of a dry cracked landscape in a green-blue color, and at the same time resembled the motion of water frozen in a photograph. The addition prevented us from walking closer to the statue to examine it, leaving a distance between what would traditionally be the only artwork in the space and us.

The second piece, *Fog Assembly*, 2016 was assembled in the Bosquet de l'Étoile and was the highlight of the otherwise cloudy, rainy day at Versailles. This section of the gardens is a bit of a maze to navigate, entering first through one of the four corners and then moving around an inner circle to locate one of four more openings leading into the center field of grass. Once inside, the only thing visible is a fog and a metal structure consisting of thin metal poles placed in a circular fashion connected

by an additional ring of metal around the top, where the fog came from. This fog moved with the motion of the air and wind in the space. My friend and I walked into the center of the structure to experience the work from inside the fog. We were then surrounded on all sides by green manicured hedgerows and a lush, wet carpet of grass. The fog enveloped and swirled around us, obscuring the hedges and entryways as it went. This piece added an element of mystery and myth to the gardens, the fog at the end of a short maze, in a space void of anything else.

Finally, the largest and easiest piece to spot was *Waterfall*, 2016 constructed at the beginning of the Grand Canal on the center axis of the garden. I had seen it as we first entered the garden but because it was not turned on, was unsure of what I was looking at. The structure consists of metal pipes and scaffolding allowing the water from the canal to be gathered in the structure at the top and released in a long cascading waterfall, which lasts for several hours.

The noise created by the falls blends with the fountain situated directly in front of it. This is the work that most epitomizes Eliasson's aim with this show and the visuals of Versailles. It stands out and blends in simultaneously. Each work occupies

its own space; whether it sticks out like a sore thumb or remains hidden in plain sight, it assists in experiencing and viewing Versailles in a new way, giving a new life to a centuries-old estate.



^  
**Olafur Eliasson**  
*Waterfall*  
 2016  
 Crane, water, stainless steel, pump system,  
 hose, ballast

C#16  
 FOCUS  
 PIECE

## KENNETH ANGER

ALL FORMS OF LOVE, SUFFERING AND MADNESS  
*Constanza Santilli*

In our society, which sacrifices its freedom to the fury of an all-devouring Moloch, there are few artists that have succeeded in rising above its bronzed head with a force so disruptive to reflect, with their presence, the lights and shadows of an entire generation. It happens with the life and work of visionary Kenneth Anger, pioneer of American experimental cinema and consecrated icon of underground culture. Film maverick, actor, painter, writer, and disciple of the satanic pope Aleister Crowley, his influence extends cross-generationally not only to independent and mainstream cinema but also to contemporary art.

Occult, psychedelic, highly symbolic, and visually dazzling, Anger's work is a stimulating and intoxicating trip to the murky underworld. He has turned his life into a work of controversial and seductive art. It involves, in its delirium, half the music scene of the 1960s and 1970s (Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Marianne Faithfull), his personal history, intertwined with that of the Manson family, the Church of Satan, the perverse Hollywood scene, the most decadent European avant-garde (Anais Nin, Jean Cocteau, Aleister Crowley), and the America of Neopagan rediscovery. His life, and by extension work, takes on the mysterious and fascinating undertones of a legend.

Kenneth Anger's cinema hovers between mass culture and avant-garde, inhabiting the terra incognita that stretches between art and counterculture. Its celluloid surface has the shiny sensuousness and decadent opulence of the Hollywood Golden Era, an industry built on desire, joined with a dark, Oniric violence of personal lyricism whose visual intensity seems inevitably attracted to the shadows of culture. Collecting the dying reminiscence of the European avant-garde within Hollywood's body—the extravagant sets, the young, muscular forms, the narrative climaxes – the aesthetic quality of Anger's work dwells in the tension between the controlled order of his self-conscious, deeply aware filmic language, organised accordingly to Hollywood's visual conventions, and the unpredictable beauty generated by its explosion into hallucinatory, orgiastic forms that, dislocating linear narrative and logic into chaotic and irrational fantasies, ultimately offer a subversive and ambivalent commentary on American mass-produced, mass-consumed culture.

Remaining faithful to the short format, Anger transformed the inevitable conditions of his artistic beginnings, the brevity and poverty of means, into a personal declaration of style and freedom that adds to his idiosyncratic and mythopoetic vision. Gushing from the artist's polyhedric imagination –and mixing personal and egotistic fantasies, social



<  
**Kenneth Anger**  
*Still from Scorpio Rising*  
 1964

and historical icons and transpersonal, spiritual symbols – this universe replaces the coherence of narrative logic with a visionary, hallucinatory dimension made of latent, mysterio-sophic forces and hyperbolic visual metaphors. The absence of narrative and dialogue – substituted by a kaleidoscope of pop and classic songs – the hedonistic attention to the quality of the cinematic image, carefully curated down to the smallest details of every single frame (each one rendered as self-contained work of art) and the creative, non-linear use of editing and montage, all contribute to the filmmaker's original and intoxicating approach to film-making. With its superimposed and cross-cut images, Anger's language taps into a meta-physical dimension where time and space limitation doesn't exist, giving rise to a hypnotic, intense imagination populated by beautiful and dangerous demons, scarlet women, goddesses, and tragi-comic, carnivalesque characters – a realm where the cult of the senses and perception, and its subversion, shines in a marvelous disorder of luminous pulsations.

Born in California at the dusk of silent cinema, Anger promptly developed a deep fascination for Hollywood's industry that would cross all his career until present days and would see him immersing in film from an early age when he

allegedly starred as the Channeling Prince in Max Reinhardt's film adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (most historians agree that this claim is part of Anger's own self mythology). Functioning both as matrix and antithetic source of inspiration for Anger's alternative cinema – that places itself deliberately in conflict with it – Hollywood is found at the origin not only of films such as *Puce Moment* and *Scorpio Rising* but also of that satiric bible of Tinseltown scandals that is his *Hollywood Babylon*.

Anger's visionary genius revealed itself also at an early age when, after a series of homemade short films made out of leftovers from family movies, the artist debuted, age sixteen, with his first widely recognised film *Fireworks* that, after capturing Jean Cocteau's attention, was selected to participate to his Festival du Film Maud it in 1949. Being one of the earliest examples of openly gay cinema, *Fireworks* is an exquisite homoerotic fantasy of gang rape perpetrated by hot teenage sailors on the film's protagonist, played by Anger himself, and eventually culminating in violence. The film represents a trip in the unconscious and destructive underbelly of homosexual desire, an erotically vibrant and sexually ambiguous tale (at the same time comic, introspective and shocking) of American stereotypical masculinity. The work

introduces some of the main tropes within the entire corpus of the artist's oeuvre and defines his signature dream logic merging surrealism with homoerotic and esoterism and translating movements of consciousness into archetypal, mythical forms that function as vehicles for the iconoclastic critique of societal and political conventions.

Following Jean Cocteau's invite to go to France, Anger spent a decade there involved in many abortive projects some of which in collaboration with the artists of the Cinémathèque Française. Indeed, Anger's career is punctuated with films abandoned due to mysterious occurrences (such as theft, fire or vandalism) that do nothing but feed the artist's self generated hagiography. In reality, Anger's struggle to secure funding for his ambitious projects and his almost maniacal perfectionism, led him to incessantly rework his already finished works. He gave birth, during thirty years of career, to almost forty short films of which only six have received final distribution under the name of *Magick Lantern Cycle*. At the core of the cycles is Anger's iconic *Scorpio Rising*. Here, the artist's cinematic rituality and taste for a magic-astrological symbolism inspired by Crowley theology – and typical of many other works such as *Lucifer Rising* – reach their expressive climax.

In *Scorpio Rising*, the montaged juxtaposition of popular icons (Brando, Dean, Elvis), religious imagery and fascist symbols (swastikas, crucifixes, Hitler, Jesus) seems to represent a critique and demystification of the phallogocentric economy and patriarchal cult of techno scientific rationality dominating contemporary society. Merging documentary footage of Hells Angels motorcycle gangs with scenes of a found, low budget B-movie on the life of Christ, *Scorpio Rising* is one of the first films to make use of a compilation of rock and roll songs to provide commentary to its visual imagery.

Adopting *détournement*, a subversive technique used in avant-garde experimentations and implying a transgression and dislocation of meanings through appropriation of pre-existing, recognisable images, Anger displaces these icons from their original context and, through their superimposition on the film surface and the use of an ambiguous soundtrack, re-assesses them and opens them up to alternative readings.

Under Anger's alchemical and subversive spell, these appropriated motifs – already reified by modernity – are digested into new, perverted forms, re-shaped into artificial signifiers of a totalizing and totalitarian idolatry pervading collective imagination. Creating unique and totalizing synesthetic experiences, as much visual and physical as mental and spiritual, Anger's films act as magical, mesmeric incantations—initiatory rituals emanating from wild and primordial forces able to generate dark spiritual odysseys and to induce altered states of consciousness and perception in the viewer's mind.

Anger's silent cinematic language, maintained through the use of the soundtrack as often ironic counterpoint to the images aimed at threatening the coherence and logic of the narration, produces an hallucinatory, schizophrenic behavior of postmodern taste and open up a space in the viewer's mind for personal, unmediated imaginative processes and new meanings.

In Anger's work, beyond the sophisticated appearance of commodity and mass culture fetishism and the fascination with the idols of Hollywood's decadent mythology, beyond the representation of a new primordial rituality inherent to modern life and culture, there is something else that can be sensed. Something inevitably elusive creeps, sudden and unexpected, between frames, a destabilizing element that threatens the consistency of what is on the screen and deceives the eye to the point of forcing the viewer to look again and look closer because he ultimately feels cheated and in a sense profoundly violated.



In this way Anger's cinema of Magick, in its deliberate attempt to shock us out of our visual and perceptual complacency, rips the veil of our illusions and insinuations into the unattended blind spot of our collective consciousness, gives way to the fall of all our security, to a metaphysical

abyss where we are left hanging on the verge of the doubt, lords of ourselves, alone to fill the gaps with new, meaningful truths that are ours and only ours.

^  
**Kenneth Anger**  
*Still from Fireworks*  
 1947

C#16  
 GROUP  
 SHOW

## DANIEL LEE

TAIPEI FINE ARTS MUSEUM  
*Karen Lin*

Do you believe in Darwin's Theory of Evolution? Could you believe that humans evolved from fish? Is it possible that humans would 'de-evolve' back to fish due to changing environments and evolutionary pressures from global warming and the rising sea levels? Daniel Lee, also known as Lee Xiaojing, current retrospective exhibition in the Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei attempts to trace the journey of Lee's 51 years as a visual artist backwards, displaying his 16 most remarkable groups of work from 1965 to 2016.

There are three major themes in this exhibition, starting with Lee's latest work, *N.E.X.T.*, 2016, in which he audaciously makes the biological hypothesis of human future destiny. The exhibition moves on to his bizarre and thought-provoking imaginary creation on human-animal, such as *Harvest*, *Origin*, and *Self-Portrait/Manimals* and concludes with an archive of Lee's creative process and examples of his earliest studio portraits, such as *Images of China* and *Color of the 3rd Kind*. The reversed chronological order helps the viewer see the transformations of Lee's work as well as how his current work relates back to earlier ones. The inverted timeline also echoes the title of the show "Looking Glass" which symbolises looking into the mirror to reflect the past.

The first piece the viewer sees is *Merman*, which is placed at the entrance so its body points in the direction of the path that the viewer takes and is a subtle invitation to enter into Lee's imaginary future. Following the merman's direction, the viewer will enter an aquarium-like space, called *Return to the Sea*, where Lee utilises the projector to play a video of merman 'swimming' on the wide wall. At the same time, another projector plays a video of ocean waves on the floor, creating an under-sea atmosphere and allowing the audience to feel like they are in the scene.

Lee divides the next room into two sides. On the left is a 3D printer printing Lee's merman, with a shoal of merman on the floor and background. The use of 3D-printing as a medium in this room is a satisfyingly appropriate as the artist is presenting his vision of the future human being using a futuristic technology. On the right side, a big merman skeleton is placed on an ash-like platform, with the screen background projecting a powder-like element flying out from the skeleton. This room ingeniously displayed the death and birth of the merman.

*N.E.X.T.* is one of the highlight groups of this exhibition. It reflects Lee's earlier work *Origin* in 1991, which was based on Darwin's evolution, showing the 'evolution of human' from nothing to fish,

amphibians, apes, and finally human being. This piece also demonstrates Lee's concern about how pollution and climate change might impact the humans and his assumption that we will all go back to the sea in the future if environmental pollution and global warming are not improved.

The next group is his extraordinary creation on human-animal. Each image contains a narrative reflecting social issues or social lives that Lee is concerned. For example, in his *Harvest* series, Lee raises the issue of organ transplant technologies between animals and human beings. He imagines that one day animals might have emotions and desires and become human-like. Images of human faces on animal bodies performing human or animal activities are displayed on a blue-wall hallway. The colour blue calms the viewers, soothes their intellect, and sharpens their thoughts.

Alongside with the blue-wall is a red-wall, upon which are *Self-Portrait/Manimals* which stimulate the viewer's emotions. It is a group of 12 portraits, each depicting a person mixed with the characteristics of his/her corresponding Chinese zodiac animals. The corresponding year and the name of the animal are shown on the tag. This work was exhibited in 1993 at the O.K. Harris Gallery in Soho, New York, where the wide exposure spurred Lee's growth into a world-famous digital artist.



The next highlight *108 Windows* was inspired by the reverberation of the New Year bells of Hanshan Temple, which echo brings blessing to all living beings, in Suzhou, China. It is a video shows the portraits of 108 hybrid creatures on small circular plates, symbolising the characters of the six realms of reincarnation in Buddhism and Chinese folk beliefs. When the viewers walk in to the room they will initially see a big circular plate showing one of the portraits and some sitting areas on the floor. This setup offers the viewers a space to meditate with the sound of echoing bells and allows them to rest and think of their past and future.

*Jungle/Nightlife* also provides the viewer a resting space but it is in the style of American night club, with small bulbs, a chair, and tables at the centre. It is very dim inside, although the artworks are highlighted with illumination. Well-dressed hybrid creatures in the images depict urban and jungle nightlife and enriches the space with exoticism. Many of these creatures are shown in a frontal view, looking directly at the viewer, and recreates the feeling of visiting a night club where people inside would typically look at the new people coming in.

Finally, the last group in the exhibition is Lee's studio portraits of the celebrities from the East and West, as well as other individuals. The viewer can see evidence of Lee as a successful photographer. The unusual part of this section is that the artist's photo studio is presented at the end, with two big



< **Daniel Lee**  
*108 Windows*  
1996  
Video Installation

^ *Installation view at Taipei Fine Arts Museum*

dressing room mirrors on its back. This unusual setup invites the audience to explore Lee's work space. Moreover, on the wall is a timetable of the important events in Lee's life and an archive placed in glass showcases are next to the mirrors.

Just as importantly, the exhibit creates an unforgettable viewing experience for the audience because the curator and artist allocated the space

well. They attempt to bring the viewer to experience different atmospheres when they look at different groups of art, distinguishing the space by lighting, wall colours, or sound. Labels of the work are written in simple Chinese and English. Short introduction paragraph are provided on the wall of each section.

## YAYOI KUSAMA

VICTORIA MIRO  
Giulia Franceschini

Known for her hallucinatory paintings, polka dotted pumpkins, and immersive installations, Yayoi Kusama (b. 1929) weaves together her personal obsessions with themes of infinity and sublime for her latest exhibition. Spreading across Victoria Mirò's two galleries in London, Kusama's show is a survey of the artist's multidisciplinary practice, featuring new paintings from her *My Eternal Soul* series and *Infinity Nets*, iconic pumpkin sculptures, and hypnotic mirror rooms.

Kusama's ability to create surreal installations with psychedelic aesthetics has regularly been discussed with her mental health. From her early childhood she began to experience strong hallucinations which still persist to this day and has led her to admit herself to a mental hospital in Tokyo. Coming from her childhood is also her obsession for pumpkins, which surrounded her family home. "Pumpkins," she has said, "have been a great comfort to me since my childhood; they speak to me of the joy of living. They are humble and amusing at the same time, and I have and always will celebrate them in my art." Honouring her beloved pumpkins, three bronze sculptures, varying in size and engraved with black dots, shine around the gallery.

The visual influence of the fields of kabocha squashes surrounding her family home can also be found in *All the Eternal Love I Have for the*

*Pumpkins*, 2016, a mirror room filled with glowing yellow and black pumpkins that immerse the viewer in a seemingly boundless and fantastical environment. Designed to heighten emotional and physical reflection, these mirror rooms enclose the visitors in rhythmic patterns of illusion. In *Chandelier of Grief*, 2016, a chandelier, choreographed to flicker in varying pulses, illuminates a hexagonal mirror room where the visitors stand surrounded by the infinite flashing reflections of themselves.

Similarly, completely covered with small round marks in a monotonously repeated motif, Kusama's *Infinity Nets* (2016) also produce a hypnotic sensation of endless repetition. Kusama started these series of paintings shortly after her arrival in New York in 1958 where they had been linked to the painterly concerns of Abstract Expressionism and the simplified aesthetics of Minimalism. Described by herself as composition-less pictures, the *Infinity Nets* patterns connote infinity, self-obliteration, and illusion just as her mirror works.

Along with preoccupations with mortality and death, the theme of infinity also governs her *My Eternal Soul* series of paintings. Recalling cell structures, through biomorphic forms and kaleidoscopic juxtaposition of colours, works as *I WILL STILL GO ON LIVING*, 2015, *SHEDDING TEARS TO THE SEASON*, 2015 embed the spontaneity of Kusama's hand tracing her brush across

the canvases. As in *SENDING PEOPLE TO THE OTHER WORLD*, 2015, Kusama's compositions come together through reiterations of lines and dots along with pictures of eyes and surrealist imagery, revealing the overabundance of ideas going through Kusama's mind as she paints.

The gallery's Waterside Garden also offers her permanent installation, *Narcissus Garden*, 1966 – a 'kinetic carpet' of mirrored spheres floating in the canal and *Where the Lights in My Heart Go*, 2016. This work is another immersive room that almost

becomes invisible through its reflective surface. As the title suggests, light plays a major role in this installation; a space Kusama has referred to as a 'subtle planetarium', it is a room in constant movement, through an ever-changing constellation of lights produced by the sun rays infiltrating in the small holes punctured on its walls.

Provocative and crazy, her works unfold themselves and reveal Kusama's personality with time - the more you are willing to immerse yourself in her world, the clearer it becomes.



^  
**Yayoi Kusama,**  
*All The Eternal Love I Have For The Pumpkins*  
2016  
wood, mirror, plastic, acrylic, LED  
292.4 x 415 x 415 cm



<  
**Yayoi Kusama**  
*Chandelier of Grief*  
2016  
Steel, aluminium, one-way  
mirror, acrylic, chandelier, motor,  
plastic, LED  
353.8 x 556.3 x 481.8 cm

# FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES

HAUSER & WIRTH  
Shanyu Zhang

In front of me is a blue mirror, chill and fathomless, reflecting the window of the gallery, the street, and myself. This is the first work, *Untitled (Fear)*, 1991, in the exhibition "Felix Gonzalez-Torres" of the Cuban-born, New York-based artist at Hauser & Wirth London, separated from other works by a dividing wall.

Why fear? The curators and artists Julie Ault and Roni Horn draw our attention to a particular year in the artist's life – 1991, the year his life-long lover Ross Laycock died from AIDS. The epidemic, from which Gonzalez-Torres also died five years later, inevitably becomes hauntingly matter-of-factly connected to his practices. However, in contrast to the first major exhibition of the artist in the UK at Serpentine Galleries in 2000, which emphasised the disease and the political concern in his oeuvre, Ault and Horn, as friends of the artist, here develop an intimate narrative. The blue mirrors, draining the warmth of everything reflected, are the fear of disease, death, and loss of one's lover. Simultaneously, what is reflected in this deep blue are our own images, and the fear inside ourselves. 'I is another.' The declaration by Arthur Rimbaud a century ago finds its echo here. Abounding with pairing and doubling, the practice of Gonzalez-Torres sees the fluidity between self and other, subject and object. Two juxtaposing light bulbs from the work *Untitled (March 5th)*

#2, fill the large space with warm white light. On the opposite wall, are two mirrors about the height of a person standing next to each other, titled *Untitled Orpheus (Twice)*. 'Twice' might refer to the twinning mirrors, the mirror and the reflection, or to the loss of Eurydice, Orpheus's lover, who was reclaimed twice by the underworld. The light bulbs from the other side of the room seem to become part of the myth, as if the light of the real world is ahead of Orpheus and his lover. If Eurydice is already the mirror, then the gaze of Orpheus into the mirror causes not only the loss of his lover, but the loss of self. In this case, Eurydice becomes his lost other, which is reminiscent of the self-effacing symptoms of melancholia in Freudian theory – in reaction to the loss of a loved person, the libido withdraws into the ego and identifies itself with the lost object. Ault and Horn make the space as the extension of the artist's studio, putting the viewer in the position of confronting his feelings and experience – the death of his other, the distant self, and the melancholia of loss. Ambivalence seems to be a basic structure in his work. While interpretations are left open as the works are all untitled, the parentheses create a context for the viewer; the doubled mirrors are at the same time de-materialized because of their transparency, in which both the self and the other disappear; the attempt of Orpheus to save his lover ends up in the void... His works become a tabula rasa, in which we are free to construct, or deconstruct our own feelings and imagination.

>  
**Felix Gonzalez-Torres**  
*Untitled (Fear)*  
1991  
*Blue Mirror*  
76.2 x 63.5 cm

Along the walls between the two installations are twenty-six jigsaw puzzles in plastic bags with images mounted on each of them. Connections between most images are ambiguous. Some appear like an intimate display of the artist's private life, showing love letters, landscape photos, family albums, and portraits of Ross. Either fragmental or blurry, these autographical images were forever fixed in the year 1991 like an aide-memoire of the artist, foreshadowing the loss and erosion of memory. Meanwhile, on some jigsaw puzzles, a pair of beach loungers, or two raccoons on the tree, appear as the repertoire of Gonzalez-Torres, echoing the pairing light bulbs and mirrors. In the large, dim, and theatrical space – almost like a bare stage – their intimate scale, muted tone, and the dust collected on the plastic bags evoke my nostalgia. A sense of time seizes me—something has forever gone, either from the artist, or from my own side.

However, it is hard to ignore there are also images showing the hands of a judge, the house of a controversial George HW Bush appointee, political news, and soldiers back from the Gulf War.

Converging politics with his own memories, Gonzalez-Torres claims his concerns about social activism. "I'm a person who lives in this society and I'm the product of this society and this culture." Behind the intimate narrative of love and death, AIDS, which took away the life of his lover and his own, becomes the underlying structure of this exhibition. It haunts us, as not only Gonzalez-Torres, but Keith Haring, Robert Mapplethorpe, Davis Wojnarowicz, and many more lesser known names, are all victims of the enormous impact that AIDS made to the New York artworld in 1980s. Like his contemporaries Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger, and Sherry Levine,



Gonzalez-Torres addresses social issues including consumerism, AIDS, homophobia, and sexism.

For Gonzalez-Torres, the year 1991 is surrounded by fear, loss, and melancholia on one hand, but on the other, the year witnessed the strongest political declaration by the artist on AIDS activism. Using minimalist strategies, he manipulates colour,

forms, as well as ready-mades. Self, other, love, body, loss... Abstract concepts are objectified into simple but fragile materials which can be easily dispersed and disappear: the jigsaw puzzles, piles of paper, candies, mirrors... Fragility and volatility become the narrative of his social activism, and all the heaviness that AIDS exerts in life, is approached through a lightness of touch.

**Felix Gonzalez-Torres**  
*Untitled (Orpheus, Twice)*  
1991  
190.5 x 139.7 cm overall

∨



C#16  
SOLO  
SHOW

## MICHAEL DEAN

SOUTH LONDON GALLERY  
Celeste Baracchi

---

*"Nature is a temple in which living pillars sometimes give voice to confuse words; Man passes there through forests of symbols which look at him with understanding eyes."*

*–Charles Baudelaire, "Correspondances", Les Fleurs du mal*

"Sic Glyphs," Michael Dean's solo exhibition at the South London Gallery, opens with a barricade. A trio of sculptures blocks the main entrance to the gallery, forcing us to access from the back door. As in other sculptures by Dean, the human body is made to scale, giving to the sculptural characters an uncanny anthropomorphic resemblance. A wooden panel, a concrete block, and a metal shutter stare at us with threatening eyes, anticipating an entire troop of sentinels that inhabit the main space. A sinister tube-shaped amalgam of black concrete and pennies invigilates the antechamber of the main room, almost assaulting us with its metal bar. Small pieces of white concrete adorn the beams of the space whereas others lie abandoned on the floor, as trophies of some sort.

Those "glyphs" have to be read as the physical manifestation of Dean's written work. They are quasi-corpora, abstract forms fuelled with expression<sup>1</sup>. However, the activation of the sculptures by the viewer is fundamental in Dean's practice. A direct encounter is essential to enter the artist's community of perception. It is like being on the stage of a theatre in which the actors and the environment around them demand

our permission to begin the play. Dean has prepared this stage carefully. For this occasion, he has unveiled the large skylights and covered the floor with white linoleum. On a sunny day, the encounter with Dean's work is arresting. Corrugated shutters, distorted and patched concrete columns and cordons, metal doodles covered of sand and dry seaweeds represent Dean's mnemonic traces. Hands are the means through which the act of writing takes place. And Dean's sculptures keep the traces of his touch in the rough surfaces of their limbs. Casts of fists and fingers taken from the hands of the artist and his son lie everywhere on the white floor. As though they were archaeological remains, our encounter with them acquires the tint of nostalgia.

In his practice, the writing comes first, like a fuse that initiates a process of making<sup>2</sup>. The title of the exhibition is a reference to this continuous slippage of signs, in which "sic" –sic errat scriptum- indicates that the quoted matter has been transcribed exactly as found. Can we be sure about it? The shapeshifting quality of his "glyphs" represents the work of a fascinating mind, which acts on a level between what thoughts are and what their physical materialisation might be.

Pages from the artist's latest book, *fffff (unfinished notes)*, make their appearance in the show to remind us of their relation to Dean's sculptural forms. Some of them have been rolled into a ball and then hidden under the lifted edge of the gallery's linoleum; others just sit on the floor, like remains of a recent metamorphosis. Mass culture's symbol of cannabis leaves, pennies, Bob Marley's faces, clouds and Playboy bunnies trace doodles on the crumpled paper, as delirious as steps of a liberating dance. Their desire for freedom is compulsive. Like ivy plants, they leave the boundaries of the paper to keep their run on the metal shutters. Others are scattered on the floor in the form of small plastic bags.

In Dean's shows words matter. They can create playful loops on the paper or barriers impossible to overtake. "Shore" is one of those words. Hundreds of personalised stickers containing variations of the noun – shoring, shorey, sho, shore – are attached in a chaotic fashion throughout the space: on the walls, on the doors, on the door-frames. In a corner of the gallery, more stickers trace a circle around a pile of concrete pieces that

are similar to the trophies in the antechamber. The feeling of being left out, a déjà vu of our first encounter, is reinforced by the "accessed denied" symbol. Yet we are in. Just another border between us and those abandoned limbs seeking a compassion of some sort.

As a noun, "Shore" refers to that piece of land along a body of water, a universal symbol of journeys and discoveries. However, this sense of freedom is at stake now more than ever. In a recent article on *Artforum*, Michelle Kuo points out that every form of identity is "as much about asserting one as it is about escaping it"<sup>3</sup>. It is this duality that fuels Dean's art. Roaming in the space of the South London Gallery, it is impossible not to read Dean's borders as a reference to the current refugee crisis. Much as "Qualities of Violence" – the other show for which Dean has been nominated for the Turner Prize – "Sic Glyphs" speaks through a dichotomy of language. Indeed, identity politics are at the core of the mass migration and iconoclasm exploding around the world today<sup>4</sup>. The question is whether or not art should be political.



^  
**Michael Dean**  
*Sic Glyphs*  
 2015  
*Installation View*  
 South London Gallery

>  
**Michael Dean**  
*Sic Glyphs*  
 2015  
*Installation View*  
 South London Gallery



According to Jacques Rancière, an artistic intervention can be political when it finds new paths to express the ways we perceive and express the sensible<sup>5</sup>. Dean's show is all of that. It does not look for indignation. Instead, it explores the political resources of art from a more discrete perspective. "Sic Glyphs" does not say its words aloud. Rather, it does pronounce tender whispers to our ears, begging us to decipher its melody.

1. Neo-Concretist Manifesto, Rio de Janeiro, March 1959, signed by Amílcar de Castro, Ferreira Gullar, Franz Weissman, Lygia Clark, Lygia Paper, Reynaldo Jardim, Theon Spanus. Reproduced in Lygia Clark and Yves-Alain Bois, "Nostalgia of the Body", *October*, vol. 69, (Summer 1994): 94.
2. Pavel S. Pys', "Giving flesh to words", in Michael Dean: Selected Writings, (London: Mousse Publishing and The Henry Moore Foundation, 2012), 10. *Grey Room*, No. 19 (Spring, 2005), pp. 55.)
3. Michelle Kuo, "Art and Identity", *Artforum* (Summer 2016), 246.
4. Ibid.
5. Jacques Rancière interviewed by Fulvia Carnevale and John Kelsey, "Art of the Possible. A conversation with Jacques Rancière", *Artforum* 45, no. 7 (March 2007): 257.

# JEAN DUBUFFET

TIMOTHY TAYLOR GALLERY  
Frédéric Maillard

This spring, Timothy Taylor Gallery in London chose to exhibit works by artist Jean Dubuffet. Dubuffet, born in 1901, was a French post-war artist and is known for founding the Art Brut (raw art). He was interested in the art of the mentally ill and children as he saw them as free from any cultural inhibitions. It was this freedom of the mind that fascinated the artist and that defined his work.

Timothy Taylor's exhibition focuses on Dubuffet's late works, with 17 pieces ranging from 1966 to 1984 (the artist passed away in 1985). The gallery exhibited the main cycles of his late body of work such as *L'Hourloupe*, *Théâtres de Mémoires* (theatres of memories), *Psycho-Sites*, *Non-Lieux* (non-sites), and *Mires*. Displayed in Taylor Gallery's Mayfair exhibition space, all the works are shown in the same room, making for a rather small exhibition. The first works encountered by the visitor are pieces from his *L'Hourloupe* cycle, considered the most important part of the artist's body of work. Here the artist has developed his own idioms to represent day to day objects such as a Piano or a Coffee cup. With these works, executed with a ballpoint pen with shapes interlocking like a jigsaw, he develops a parallel world of representation removed from any conformist visions. In this exhibition, *L'Hourloupe* is taken as a starting point to define the artist's late

works. As this cycle redefined the representation of a man's environment, the later series presented here are a questioning of everyman's place in his physical and mental environment. The artist defined his later works as "landscapes of the brain," where what he thought was more important than what he saw. In this exhibition, we can see how Dubuffet gradually released the subject matter from his works, leaning towards totally non-figurative works. With his *Théâtres de Mémoire*, objects and figures are randomly juxtaposed in a "cacophonous space" and here figures only help to give voice to the space around it. In the cycle that follows, the *Psycho-Sites*, the environment around the figures are emphasised so that the mental state of the figure becomes more important than the figure itself. We can see in both the *Théâtres de Mémoire* and the *Psycho-sites* how the figures become increasingly separated and isolated from his environment to the point that they are secondary subject matter. This refusal of figuration culminated in the last two group of his works: *Non-Lieux* and *Mires*, where all references to physical reality have disappeared. These are his most liberated works as they consist purely in a black background with multitudes of intertwining lines of colours.

This exhibition presents how in the last decade of his life, Dubuffet progressively and consistently pursued a negation of representation. Dubuffet's

>  
**Jean Dubuffet**  
Installation view at Timothy  
Taylor Gallery

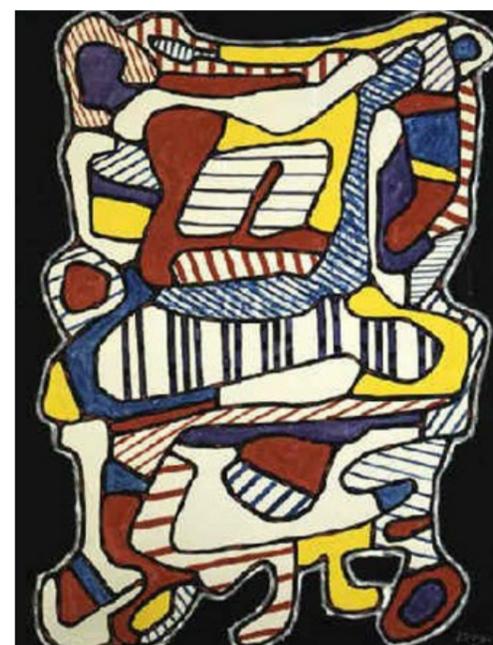


interest in the art of the insane laid in the mental process that was behind those works. By exhibiting works such as the *Mires*, the show illustrates how Dubuffet completed his life's work by depicting landscape that were purely mental rather than physical, proving that his primary concern was a meditation on the mind as central to observation.

This exhibition highlights how the last years of Dubuffet's life were productive, with groups of work succeeding one another. In the show, each cycle of this period is equally represented, none emphasised over another. Three sculptures are also exhibited, reflecting the artist's great interest in the medium.

Despite giving a good sense of the artist's late works, this show doesn't add anything to our prior understanding of this artist's oeuvre. Jean Dubuffet's works have been highly exhibited these past years by gallery and museums around the world. This year the Foundation Beyeler in Basel held an important retrospective of the artist's work, and Dubuffet's late paintings have even been the main subject of another London-based gallery booth at the last edition of Frieze.

Works by Jean Dubuffet have seen their prices rise consequently these past years on the art market. Timothy Taylor, being a commercial gallery, certainly exhibited the artist for the high demand for his works on the market rather than for a will of bringing to life a new reading of Jean Dubuffet's practice. Nonetheless, the quality of the works exhibited is very high, which makes it a very enjoyable exhibition.



<  
**Jean Dubuffet**  
*Piano*  
1966  
Vinyl paint  
130.5 x 97.2 cm

C#16  
SOLO  
SHOW

# TOMÁS SARACENO

ESTER SCHIPPER GALLERY, BERLIN

*Kaitlyn Kane*



There is a fragility, a lightness inherent in Tomás Saraceno's new work, recently presented by the Esther Schipper Gallery, Berlin. Two and three-dimensional work comprised primarily of spider silk, these qualities are of course innate in their very form. Still, it is also the prevalent tone throughout the gallery, where the two works in the bright, white first room are so restrained, so diaphanous as to be nearly indiscernible.

Tomás Saraceno, an Argentinian artist based in Berlin, has made a reputation for himself in the art world in recent years by making large, utopian installations as part of his ongoing *Cloud Cities* series which imagine fantastical models for new ways of living. He is known for seeking to re-frame our relationship to the world, our awareness of environments. While these considerations may be more overt in his large installations, they are no less present in the three delicate spider silk pieces at Esther Schipper, each playing with a different medium: drawing, sculpture, performance.

The first piece in the exhibition, a work on paper, is titled *Asocial Semi-Social Mapping Of Pasiphae 743.61 by a solo Nephila Kenianensis - One Week And A Trio Of Cyrtophora Citricola - Six Weeks*. It seems straightforward at first; spider silk made

visible with black powdered ink and fixed to a large, white sheet of paper. The web converges in two distinct areas, swelling into denser clouds of black before splintering off again, scribbling over the sheet. In the mere act of preservation involved though, there is a magic. Rather than brushing these webs aside, viewing them as unseemly additions to the crooks and crannies of daily life, Saraceno is treasuring them, asking us to examine them anew.

With the sculptural work in the exhibition, *Hybrid Solitary Semi-Social Instrument ESO 146-IG 005: Built By Two Argiope Anasuja-Two Weeks, Three Cyrtophora Citricola-Three Weeks, One Cyrtophora Moluccensis-Two Weeks, And One Tegenaria Domestica-Ten Weeks*, this is even more apparent. Again a web of spider's silk that has been made visible through the use of black ink, the piece hangs from the ceiling in the centre of the gallery, protected by a clear plexiglass box. With *Asocial Semi-Social Mapping*, there is some trepidation—although there is beauty to be found in the piece, it is matched with loss. Although in some way preserved in the gallery space, the flat-tened web is ultimately destroyed and made unusable. With *Hybrid Solitary Semi-Social Instrument*, this isn't the case. As if belonging to a frozen moment, at any moment a spider could reclaim its place.

<  
**Tomás Saraceno**  
*Arachno Concert With Arachne*  
(*Nephila senegalensis*), *Cosmic Dust (Porus Chondrite)* and *the Breathing Ensemble*  
2016

However, it isn't all that simple. The more I looked at Saraceno's work, the more I felt that some element of their construction had been hidden from me. These webs, with their swelling, sculptural forms, could have only been created by an extraordinary creature. They go beyond mere functionality in their complexity. By presenting titles here, I have perhaps already given the game away, but for me, it only clicked when I scrounged myself up a copy of the press release. If it seemed that these constructions were too complex for any ordinary spider, it's because in fact, they are. These are hybrid creations, where different species of spiders of different generations would 'collaborate,' each taking residency of the web in turn and adapting it with their own habits and forms. Impossible combinations in nature, these webs could have only been created through Saraceno's intervention.

It's here that these new works begin to resonate in the context of Saraceno's practice. They are testaments to collaboration, hybridity, community. They are, after all, his utopian cloud city. They are his ideal of the cosmos writ small and made miniature— another fact brought home by his titles, where each web is numbered after a galaxy.

It is only in the last room, with a work titled *Arachno Concert: with Arachne (Nephila senegalensis)*, *Cosmic Dust (Porus Chondrite)* and *the Breathing Ensemble*, this cosmic influence

was formally emphasised. Dark and eerie where the previous work is light, the small room is dominated by a large, live spider, slowly building a web on a metal frame, open to the air. Somehow managing to strike a balance between the subtle and the sensational, to balance emotions between curiosity and anxiety, its slow progression has a transfixing beauty. Creativity, work, and patience are presented to us without mediation.

Perhaps I was just too taken with the spider, properly appreciating the species for the first time, but it's here that the rest of the installation lost me. Once I could tear my eyes away from the spider and appreciate the surrounding apparatus— a beam of light casting a dramatic shadow, a camera pick-up and projecting the resulting dust particles, a speaker amplifying the slight movements of the spider and making audible, through translation, the movements of dust— it all seemed a bit secondary. Back in the Berlin sunlight, I could appreciate it thematically, how relationships— between the biological and technological; the organic and inorganic; our planet and the universe— are dramatised. Still, in the intimate space, it was hard to see past the spider and its remarkable, steady work. The projection and sound elements seemed to be mere distraction from what was truly vital.

Still, *Aerocene* comes together into a powerful exhibition, subtly showing us the possibilities for the future while treasuring what is extraordinary about our present. It is a remarkable entry by both Saraceno and the Esther Schipper Gallery.



## EMPIRES

HUANG YONG PING PRESENTED IN MONUMENTA  
*Gretchen Cline*

Conceived in 2007, the contemporary art exhibition Monumenta has annually tasked artists of international recognition with the monumental responsibility of filling the Grand Palais with a site specific work. Commissioned by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, previous manifestations have shown works by Anselm Kiefer, Richard Serra, and Anish Kapoor. This year's creation, on view from 8 May to 18 June 2016, was provided by Franco-Chinese artist Huang Yong Ping and titled *Empires*. Yong Ping is an interesting choice for several reasons, one of which is his avant-garde history through his founding of the Xiamen Dada – a movement defined by radical performances that contrasted with the decorative and ideological work at that time in China (the mid-1980s). The second fascinating element in Yong Ping's practice is his adoption of an immigrant identity after moving to France in 1989, and the notions of migration that permeate his body of work following this time.

Migration is just one element in the massive installation of *Empires* that deals concurrently

with concepts of religion, political and economic powers, geographical regions, and globalisation in past, present, and future terms. At over 17 meters high, and 250 meters long, the scale of the work matches the scale of the notion Yong Ping is conveying on empires throughout history and the effects these quests for power have on global citizens.

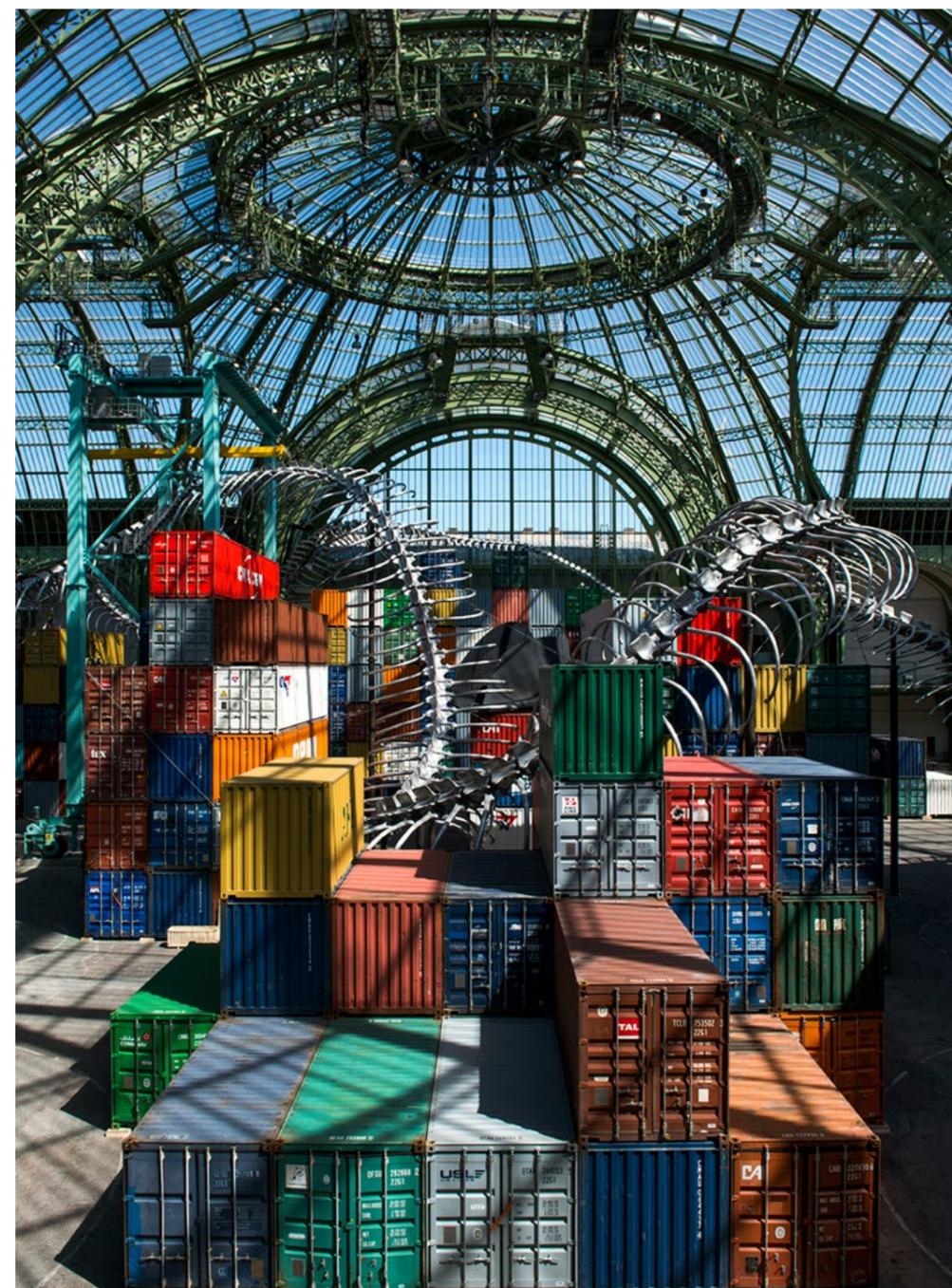
Throughout the Grand Palais, 305 life-size shipping containers are arranged in 'islands' or stacks which gives the immediate feeling that one has found their way to a shipping yard where containers are ready to depart. Circling above and winding throughout the stacks is a metal skeletal serpent, whose open jaw sits directly across from a stack of containers forming an arc, similar to the Arc de Triomphe in a nod to Paris as a host for the work. Atop the arc sits a historical bicorne hat, recognisable immediately as a Napoleonic symbol of battle and war. Altogether, these three elements play to very strong and specific themes in the overarching discussion of globalisation and empires as we have come to understand them.

Shipping containers are a modern creation, having gained popularity in the mid-20th century, primarily during the Vietnam War, as a means of international trade in late capitalism. Yong Ping creates them as realistically as possible, making each container colourfully branded, either with a company name or a country, demonstrating the stake each individual economy tries to have in the global economic landscape – a landscape represented further by the literal topography made from 'mountains' of containers. The ties these containers have to war is emphasised by the hat perched on top. The hat embodies the bloodiness and brutality associated with Napoleon's efforts to create an empire. And yet, those efforts also helped lead to modernity with standardisation and organisation, epitomised by the containers themselves. What's more, the skeletal serpent with its aluminium body mimics the architecture of the Grand Palais, harking back to its origins in the industrial revolution. In this way, there is a further representation of economic history, the start of westernisation, and the rise of capitalism and class structure as they have developed over time. These three elements are so entwined that despite the slight disconnect in imagery from one object to the next, and the somewhat ridiculousness of the hat at such a large scale and sitting as a centrepiece in the entire work, the unified symbolism gives it all credence.

The serpent also speaks to religious and cultural ideology. The importance and frequent emergence of the serpent in Chinese culture was what originally drew Yong Ping to use it in his work. In 2012 he created a permanent installation in the Loire Valley estuary entitled

*Serpent in the Water*. He also called upon the importance of the serpent in biblical representation through his piece *Ark*, created in 2009 to explore the idea of Noah's Ark representing safety and stability in contrast with modern thoughts on migration. The various religious, cultural, and political associations are encouraged by Yong Ping and were something he remained conscious of throughout the development of *Empires*. Without establishing a specific opinion on the notion of an empire, Huang Yong Ping has managed to create a work that discusses the multitude of components involved historically in the development of them. Napoleon, while present in this specific work, is just one small example of an emperor known to history, but he hardly compares to the duration of such empires as Byzantium Empire, the Chinese Empire, or the Roman Empire. The past is represented not physically, as in the case of the bicornes, but figuratively as one imagines all that has come before the time of Napoleon and all that has led up to this moment.

Yong Ping has stated his intention for the work to represent past, present, and future empires. Yet the viewer is arguably only receiving part of that picture with the past and present. If the future of globalisation is to be guessed at from Yong Ping's work, it seems to be a negative view as we are presented the grim reality of capitalism and war. But perhaps we are to take the lessons of the empires that have come before the introduction of capitalism and today's influx of the internet in all aspects of life and somehow develop a global empire that maintains the identity and integrity of its citizens. Only time will tell.



^  
*Huang Yongping*  
*Empire*  
2016  
Grand Palais, Paris

## CHARLOTTE CULLINAN ON CULLINAN RICHARDS

*Celeste Baracchi*

**CB:** Since 1997 you have produced collaborative work with Jeanine Richards, first as Artlab. You then changed your name to Cullinan Richards. Why is it so important for you to work in and as a duo?

**CC:** We made a joke about that originally. We think it's quite funny because I didn't like the work I was making. I think Jeanine would probably agree – she didn't like her own work either. So when we started to work together, we had the same ideas around the work. Working together implies a sort of de-responsibility... It's very relaxing. The decisions are made always jointly. You have the power of two minds, and Jeanine's parents are scientists so she is much more formal with her thinking and she thinks in a different way to me. I really admire the way she thinks. When I first met her, I thought that she is one of the most extraordinary thinkers coming through the art education but with this kind of scientific basis, and that is very intriguing.

**CB:** Does it have to do with a sort of disengagement from an idea of authorship? It is fundamental for you to collaborate with other artists as well.

**CC:** Yes, very much so. The collapsing of authorship is very important for us. For example,

as Artlab we ran an art programme from a room adjacent to a canteen on the ground floor of the Imperial College. We were thinking about making artworks that housed other artists' work. It might be something invisible like serving the drinks, or it might be something more substantial like making the walling systems or supporting structures to support the works of other artists. In many cases they were like cinema structures. Thus, the idea of a kind of disengagement from an idea of authorship is also very important.

**CB:** You have also installed a shop in the front of your studio called 4Cose, selling products from Italy. This shop is the result of your collaboration with Andrea Sassi. I am fascinated by the multifaceted quality of your studio as a place where other things happen.

**CC:** You're right. The studio becomes the shop and the shop becomes the studio. However, the customers who want just to buy Parmesan cheese don't have to be worried about that. It should be just a nice environment for them. We managed to time the opening of a new show just before the referendum. It was a political kind of pro-Europe stance. We were working on this website called *Britain is Not an Island*, and we had the German TV questioning people and looking at the shop. We managed to give the show a political atmosphere. It was a very pivotal moment. It was really

successful for that. It made us feel like everything was working properly. The shop has a kind of politics to it and art has a kind of politics to it.

**CB:** I really like this idea of the studio as a place of exchange and discussion.

**CC:** And that is exactly what happens here. It's about popping up and making things happen. And that makes the shop really fascinating.

**CB:** That's true. And the metal structures you use in the shop are actually the same ones you use in your installations.

**CC:** Absolutely. The shop is fabricated out of the artworks. For example, the shelving system used to be panel painting and the lamp pieces are part of our installations too. And we consider the shutter as a museum piece. Because for us the floor is important, the ceilings are important, the walls are important, the lighting is important. Everything around the work is important. In this way, the work is never isolated. And that brings back the subject of why we like to work with other artists. Because we like to join, we like to connect objects and artworks together.

**CB:** That makes your studio a gallery space and the space of the gallery an extension of your studio.

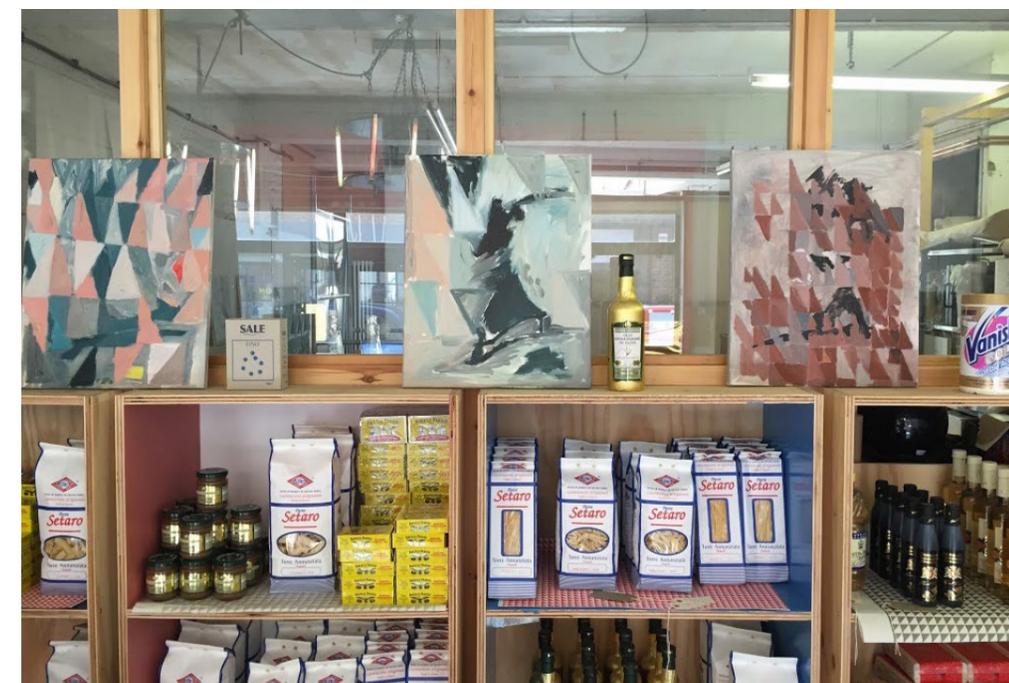
**CC:** Exactly.

**CB:** Your work dislikes boundaries. It aims to be free.

**CC:** Yes, that's a lovely thing to say. These post-referendum days have seen a strengthening around the idea of borders. It is so depressing. We prefer no boundaries and no borders, and the society should be borderless as well.

**CB:** In 2010 Cullinan Richards participated to the programme of interventions sited on the Hayward Gallery's exterior while it was temporarily shut for maintenance work. You made a poster to promote an exhibition that never occurred. I am particularly interested in its title, *The Ultimate Materiality of Women*.

**CC:** The title comes from a film called *Fast-er, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* by Russ Meyer. He has always been super interesting to us because of the very makeshift sets that he has in the



>  
**Cullinan Richards**  
*Image of artist studio and 4Cose*

desert or in the studio. His sets are always rough and ready. The scripts of some of his movies were written by the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas. We were interested in the way Russ Meyer was making these films. At the beginning of one of his first films, he is screaming at the go-go dancers to go with the dancing. We were interested in Meyer's relationship with his actors. When the curator asked us to come up with something, we wanted to go through it in a very feminine way, and we wanted the idea to remain a premonition.

**CB:** *Feminine means being free for you.*

**CC:** It means being free. It means a loose and anti-formal arrangement of objects. There is an entirely female cast in that show, and we make these structures that support other female artists' works. You might call that a feminine position. It is about the reflection of something on something else. We started to make these reflective artworks out of plastic mirrors. They have weak surfaces but are in fact quite strong because they reflect other people's work.

**CB:** *I also link the idea of the feminine to interior spaces. Historically, women have been considered responsible for the interior, while the exterior monumentality of architecture was regarded as a male domain. As artists, you might be interested in art related to interior design.*

**CC:** That is true. However, what we want to do is to take the domestic outside. A lot of people who see our work and don't know us read our work as masculine, which is quite odd.

**CB:** *You foreground parts of the exhibition process that other artists might prefer making invisible. It seems to me that paint or plastic sheeting are references to this aspect in your work.*

**CC:** Absolutely. We never want something to be fixed. We are so interested in the unfixed, and we have had a lot of trouble with that. This is part of a value system that we have thought quite hard about. It looks unfinished, but it is not about that. It's just about unfixing.

**CB:** *And it is this idea of the unfixed that makes possible to constantly revise what you have done before. Your work is a sort of open system. It contains a collection of elements that recur from one piece to the next, forming a system of language that addresses a wide range of themes.*

**CC:** Precisely. One thing ends in another. It's about associations more than anything else. We want to look at art in a non-academic way and our associations come from intuition more than anything else.

**CB:** *You might not like the comparison I have in mind then! I was thinking that your way of making art is not too far from Duchamp's anti-optical aesthetic position. The importance attributed to concatenations of indexes was Duchamp's favourite working method.*

**CC:** It is extremely flattering when anyone mentions Duchamp. However, I think we have more principles coming from someone like Joseph Beuys. For example, you don't need a fine art background to come to our course. Working in this way really broadens the idea of what art can be. Before I talked about the relation Russ Meyer had with his actors – we have a similar relation with our students. If they can produce something that we have never seen before, that is far more exciting than producing things that look like art. I taught in a summer academy, and I came up with a theme for the class titled There is so much more to be seen at Saturn. Saturn is a planet but is also a science laboratory. My class turned out to be absolutely mental. I had students who were interested in astrology and things went absolutely wild.

**CB:** *And being wild is so feminine.*

**CC:** And that's so feminine because it is completely uncontrolled. It was an uncontrolled sort of environment where in the end you can

produce the unexpected. Everything around us right now is so masculine such as the referendum, the government, the corporations. However, we want to highlight the fact that there is also another way of thinking that is opposite to that.

**CB:** *What does abstraction mean for you?*

**CC:** We always say abstraction versus figuration. A lot of our works are titled *Collapse into the Abstract* because the abstract for us also represents a kind of empathy. We are lucky because we know what abstract means. We think about it in terms of non-figuration. There are some artists whose work is over-figurative and figuration causes a lot of damage. Brexit is an example of not being able to see the abstract. It is an example of not being able to see a better future because its position is so figurative. All the stress of the world is so figurative, whereas abstract is for us much more about intuition. On a natural level, if you do not understand the abstract, you have a much harder life.



<  
**Cullinan Richards**  
Paradigm Store, Victoria, London  
2015

