

CCQ

a creative conversation



Nástio Mosquito | David Salle | Koo Jeong A | S Mark Gubb
Joël Andrianomearisoa | Futurefarmers | Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva



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Before and After, Richard Higlett, 2016
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Roger Hiorns

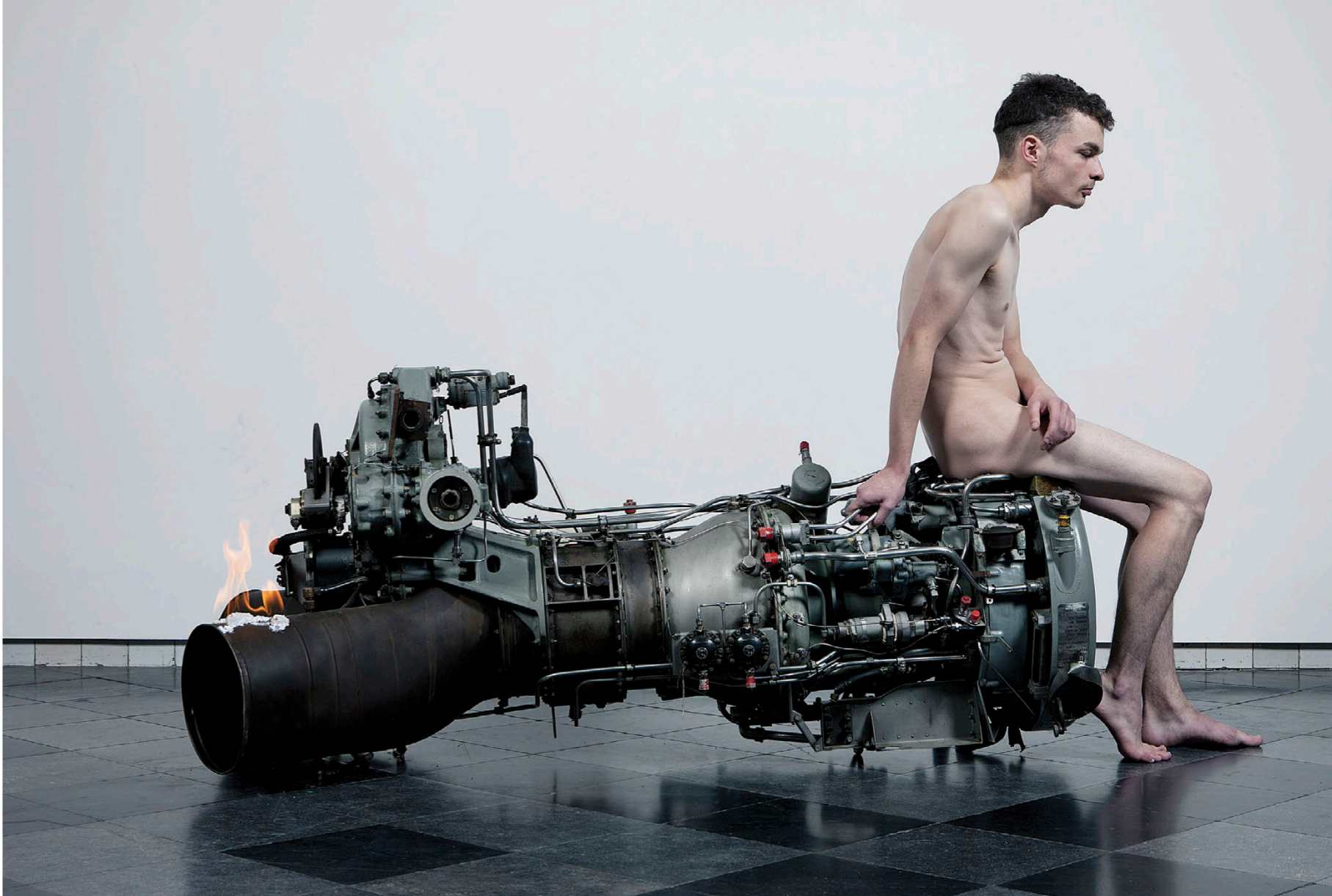
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Roger Hiorns Untitled (2011) Military aircraft engine, fire, youth
Courtesy of the artist and Corvi-Mora, London
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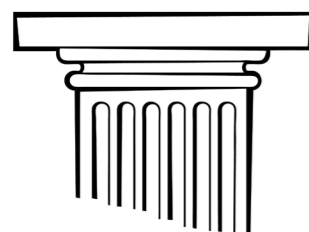
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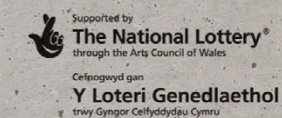
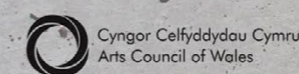
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PAPER #34:

**RUBY
TINGLE**

**THE
LAND
IS**

**7 JANUARY -
18 FEBRUARY
2017**

**PRIVATE VIEW:
THURSDAY
12 JANUARY
6-9PM**

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SUPPOSITORIES

② QUINTUPLET ACTION

- ② SOOTHES
- ② Eases
- ② PAIN RELIEF
- ② LOCATES
- ② AWAKES GOD

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V

Y Lleuad a Gwên The Moon and a Smile 25.02.17 – 23.04.17

Greta Alfaro / Anna Fox
Astrid Kruse Jensen / Neeta Madahar
& Melanie Rose / Sharon Morris
Sophy Rickett / Helen Sear / Patricia Ziad



—The Editors—

Emma Geliot

The world continues to turn, churn and burn, while artists and the art world try to keep up, to adjust to so many seismic changes. For Futurefarmers, the artists' collective shortlisted for Artes Mundi 7, there is real urgency in their mission to collect and safeguard grain seed for future generations. In the same spirit of safeguarding something for posterity, artist S Mark Gubb and writer Jon Gower set off for the Arctic snows, to bury cultural artefacts for future generations (well, maybe they did and maybe they didn't) whose existence can't be guaranteed. Inevitably, global events seep into the sometimes-rarefied air of the art fairs and the biennials. As contexts change, the more fleet of foot artists and curators are able to make a response, to recalibrate, however slightly, their perspectives and observations. In Zurich and Berlin, Jess Matthews re-appraises these art offerings through a post-Brexit lens, and Clelia Coussonnet visits Contemporary Istanbul, in the aftermath of the failed Turkish coup.

If everything feels like it's falling apart, we have found some artists who can scour the wreckage, act as cultural scavengers, repurposing fragments, detritus, ritual, or even animal offal, to create new significance or meaning, while others re-examine the role of objects in a material millennium. Sometimes, it's the tiny shifts in our consciousness, rather than the political upheavals, the military explosions or the natural catastrophes, that make all the difference to our worldview. Artists are well placed to effect these tiny shifts, to penetrate the self-preserving armour, which shields us from daily horror, to find a way in. And it's often the less overtly political work that has some kind of resonance; that shapes and moulds our common humanity.

Wherever you are, what happens in another part of the globe will, inevitably have some impact on your life; even if it's simply to heighten your feelings of impotence, as images of bomb-smashed Aleppo hit your screens. But there is still hope in the inter-cultural connections that we set up, stuff to be learned from other cultures and contexts. For our eleventh issue, CCQ brings you artists from the United States, Macedonia, Madagascar, Singapore, Korea and, closer to home, Manchester, Cardiff and Pwll.

All of us at CCQ wish you a peaceful and creative 2017.

Ric Bower

If there is one painter, whose work has become synonymous with the West finally divesting itself of the shackles of modernity, it would have to be David Salle. He threw open the back door to the creative process, letting in all the messy complexity of human experience, when the smart money was all clean, crisp and neo-conceptual. And he did this using nothing more than the time-honoured tools of paint, brushes and canvas. This is a path the 18th century French master Chardin had walked too, 200 or so years before him, a comparison I am sure Salle would appreciate. It is so often a let-down meeting one's heroes, Salle however did not disappoint, as you will see a little further on in this issue. When Salle first moved to New York, in the '70s, he was, as he puts it, "...burrowing along, often in the dark", towards his objective, more or less unconcerned about what was happening above ground. He was following his gut, which, at the very least, gives the rest of us gut-followers a little hope.

My gut told me a while ago that Nástio Mosquito is more than just the 'next big thing', which he could quite reasonably claim to be, after recently showing at MOMA New York and being commissioned to make work by Prada. His desire to find 'a new way', at any cost, when commercial galleries and institutions are begging him daily to just give them a little of what has made him special, is what makes him more than a flash in the pan.

EMDASH foundation and Another Africa offered CCQ the opportunity to make a new work with Mosquito for this issue, the A.L. Moore Hard Talk supplement, *Dialectics of Protection*, which you will find enclosed. A.L. Moore, the Commander-in-Chief of up-and-coming African nation, Botrovia, is Mosquito's latest alter ego. Moore visited a small art school in Belgium, with his Security Minister, Faggot Koroviev, for the interview, the cover shoot and so that Koroviev could deliver a series of bizarre pronouncements and edicts, all of which manifest in the supplement. To take things a little further though, we have attached packets of Mosquito's suppositories to our cover, part of a work he made for Artes Mundi 7, entitled *Transitory Suppository*. And so, by a rather tortuous route, we return to the gut, through the business end of the digestive system.

We've just launched a juicy new, collaborative website with Culture Colony. Find us online at culturecolony.com

—Contributors—

Clelia Coussonnet

Clelia is an independent curator, art editor and writer. Her areas of research include silenced voices, plants, politics, mapping and place. Recently, she curated *Botany under Influence* at apexart, New York. She regularly contributes to magazines *Afrikadaa*, *Another Africa*, *Diptyk*, *IAM* and *Ibraaz*. Clelia reports from the artscene in Istanbul on p76. sisume.com

Clive Cazeaux

Clive is Professor of Aesthetics at Cardiff School of Art and Design, Wales. His book on the philosophy of artistic research, *Art, Research, Philosophy*, will be published by Routledge, in April 2017. Clive speaks to artist Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva about her show *Making Beauty* on p46 artphilosophyjunction.wordpress.com

Frances Woodley

Frances is a researcher and was the curator of *Models and Materialities: Confabulation and the Contemporary Still Life*. This is the third in a series of curatorial projects undertaken by Frances as part of her doctoral research at the School of Art, Aberystwyth University. On p70 she speaks to artist Jamie Stevenson about her research into still life.

Jamie Stevenson

Jamie is a recent graduate in Illustration from Cardiff School of Art & Design, and has a keen interest in conversation and collaboration in the world of art. In May 2016 he co-curated an illustration exhibition at Paper Arts, Bristol, and he is currently a co-host on Radio Cardiff's weekly *Pitch/Illustration/Radio* show. jamiestevenson.co.uk

Jess Matthews

Jess research-based practice exists between curating / producing, outreach and teaching. She has worked in various arts organisations across Wales, including: Outcasting: Fourth Wall (O:4W) Artists' Moving Image Festival; LightsGoingOn; Wales in Venice 2013; Oriol Davies Gallery; and Wales Artist Resource Programme at g39. On p82, Jess reports from Manifesta and Berlin Biennale

Jon Gower

Jon Gower has over 20 books to his name, including *Y Storiwr*, which won the Wales Book of the Year and *The Story of Wales*, which accompanied the landmark TV series. He is currently writing a book about the Abertillery-based artist John Selway and a Welsh language noir novel. John meets S Mark Gubb, p32.

Sharon Morris
The Moon is Shining on My Mother, 2016

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Painter David Salle talks to Ric Bower about the efficacy of process and the role of the all-pervasive curator.

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We ask artist Koo Jeong A to instigate a follow-up to her collaborative exhibtion *Riptide*.

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Man of Ice

Artist S Mark Gubb partnered up with author and journalist Jon Gower for an epic adventure into the arctic snows.

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Artist Ruby Tingle speaks to Rhiannon Lowe about work that mines the sensory, natural and mythological worlds to find new meanings.

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Beauty Disclosed

Macedonian artist Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva uses animal body parts in her work, spinning beauty out of offal. She talks to philosopher Clive Cazeaux.

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Madagascan artist Joël Andrianomearisoa talks to Ric Bower about colonial legacies, the colour black and a cultural relationship with death.

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Artes Mundi 7 shortlisted artists' collective Futurefarmers drop anchor in Cardiff to talk to Ric Bower about the urgency of saving seed.

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Singaporean artist WeiXin Chong talks to Ric Bower about detritus, cross-disciplinary processes and the digital realm.

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Curation as Conversation – A Correspondence

Artist and curator Frances Woodley talks to Jamie Stevenson about contemporary still life painting and an evolving curatorial process.

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Resilience in Uncertainty

Clelia Coussonnet goes to post-coup Turkey for Contemporary Istanbul and to assess the impact of the recent turbulence.

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aria fritta

Two European biennials – Manifesta and the Berlin Biennale – get a post-Brexit critique from Jess Matthews.

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in solution

Photographer David Barnes gained access to the mysteries of The Loyal Order of Moose.

Medicine

David Salle's exhibition, *Tapestry Paintings*, features some of the very best of his late '80s and early '90s works. **Ric Bower** talked with the iconic postmodern painter, in Skarstedt Gallery's new London space, about the efficacy of process and the role of the all-pervasive curator.

When standing in front of a David Salle canvas, the first mistake would be to ask, 'What does it mean?' His paintings are immediate, born as they are, from the painter's ecumenical sensory experience. They do not allude to, nor do they reveal, any higher concept; in fact, Platonic forms are rendered delightfully irrelevant by his playful narratives. A Salle canvas is medicine for a culture that has been made ill by an over-inflated sense of its own importance, and medicine does not have the capacity to *mean* anything; medicine merely *does* what it is meant to do.

This leads us on to the second mistake and that is to presume that the process of painting is unimportant to Salle, that it is just a convenient means to a particular end. The idea of separating off the subject from object, the journey from the destination or the medium from the method – which is what we must inevitably do when we seek meaning as a separate and distinct possibility – is nonsensical in the context of Salle's painting. We understand now that the complex and fragmented compositions that Salle painted in New York, in the 1980s and '90s were, in fact, stakes through the heart of a *Nosferatu* modernity.

This is why I was so keen to meet and talk to him when he came to London, for the opening of his joint show with fellow New Yorker, Cindy Sherman, at Skarstedt London. I began by asking him how painting, as a vehicle for communicating information, had been affected by the Internet.

David Salle: There is this idea that painting is always about to be transformed by a new technology, but is that really true? I'm not sure painting is the same thing as information; painting communicates *forms*. If you're talking about the internet – just on the level of visual experience – images that we see on screens don't *open up*. They're seductive at first, but it's a short circuit; eventually there is a hollowed-out feeling, a levelling out. Also, the Internet is not *conscious*; images are seen in rapid succession, without a lot of consequence. The whole process is short on decision-making. Looking at a painting is a very different kind of thing: first of all, there is the sense of someone having *decided* on something; among other qualities, it's a set of unalterable decisions that the painter made on that particular day. Painting enacts the idea: *I will do this (and not that)*.

Ric Bower: Instead of making images of objects, as a painter, you would appear to be making objects about images. Is this a viable assertion?

DS: When I was young, I noticed something: that even the great, heroic American painters, like Clyfford Still, the ones I so admired, were also makers of images. Even a non-representational painting is an image: an image of abstraction, an image of itself.

RB: You are showing work in Skarstedt's new London space that you made nearly →





30 years ago, at a very particular time in New York. Has your relationship changed with the work in the intervening years?

DS: I don't think so. Painting, if it's any good, has autonomy and establishes its own terms of engagement. I look at it today in the same way as before, to see if it works. Does it hold my attention?

RB: What makes a painting *not* work then?

DS: A painting can fall apart in a variety of ways. For every error of judgment, or misstep in life, there is probably an equivalent in painting. Most paintings that fail do so because of wishful thinking; they ask of the viewer more than they have the right to.

RB: OK, so can I ask you about the quasi-priestly curatorial orders? Are they a force for good in the art world?

DS: There are so many people now who go by that title [curator], it's hard to generalise. I know some who are very serious. The art world is a whole little ecology, and every organism plays a role. Put another way, art culture is like a club that a lot of people want to join and, as with any club, there are rules of decorum and dress, schedules of events, activities and awards. Someone has to be the social director for the club, devising entertainments, and the like. Curators will, of course, reflect the larger cultural themes and concerns of the moment. It's partly demographic. It's also a job, a career – they have their own careers to consider. Curating – or exhibition-making – can be a very high level, complex thing and tremendously important. An exhibition can resonate for decades.

RB: When we first head off to art college, aged 17 or 18, many of us naively imagine that we are opting out of these hierarchical systems, that we are choosing an alternative way. It comes as something of a shock to find that the art world functions in the same way as any other avenue of human endeavour.

DS: This should come as no surprise. People are people. There will be duplicity,

incompetence or, more often, just plain laziness. In other words: life. There will also be acts of selflessness and penetrating originality, though they are less frequent. Curating as a function has been appropriated by every cultural arena to the point where it has started to lose its meaning; where once there was a librarian, we now have a bookshelf curator. And why not? It's nice work if you can get it.

RB: So does this come back to the all-pervasive Internet again?

DS: I don't think so. The Internet just makes visible a contemporary reality. There are a lot of college educated people in the world and not enough for everyone to do, so art becomes a very attractive place to hang out. Many people want to be a curator of some sort. As the field expands, it has taken on some different meanings, or inflections – almost an expression of a political will. It might not have much to do with art. Or rather, the sheer numbers of people are exerting a pressure that is changing how people think about art. Maybe that's good? I don't really know.

RB: We had a reality show in the UK, recently, which gave members of the public the opportunity to curate a museum show.

DS: It's kind of a great idea – and the fact that it was considered entertainment tells you something about its role in the public mind.

RB: You have collaborated extensively with Karole Armitage. How does the process of collaboration fit into your thinking about creative practice when your core discipline, painting, is, in essence, a solitary process?

DS: Collaboration between the disciplines is one of the curatorial world's most vaunted conceits, and is largely a myth. In reality, it rarely happens on a meaningful level: when two or more people want the same thing from a work of art; when they are astonished by the same things and each have something complimentary to contribute to the main idea. The other reason is time; not many people really want to give it the time required to

make something work. I'm kind of a freak, in that I have spent so much time working for the stage – I just found it very exciting. I've worked almost exclusively with Karole because, in the first place, she's a genius and I just wanted to hang around with her, and partly because she was open to a particular type of stage picture that I had in my head – but it was one I was only able to have as a result of being moved by her work in the first place. Specifically, I wanted to make painting space; use duration, with things changing in a rhythmic sequence over time, images moving on stage, etc. Choreography itself is synchronous with, or in counterpoint to, the music, and I wanted the art part to be synchronous and in counterpoint with both. It was a big challenge – to make something that didn't fade over that prolonged, theatrical time.

RB: To change tack a little now; I had an epiphany as a painter, when I realised that Velázquez painted with a four-foot stick attached to the end of his brush. When I stood in front of *Las Meninas* close up it looked like fruit salad; standing further away it cohered into a readable image. His intentions as a painter were therefore determined by his process. How do you experience, as a painter, the relationship between intention and process?

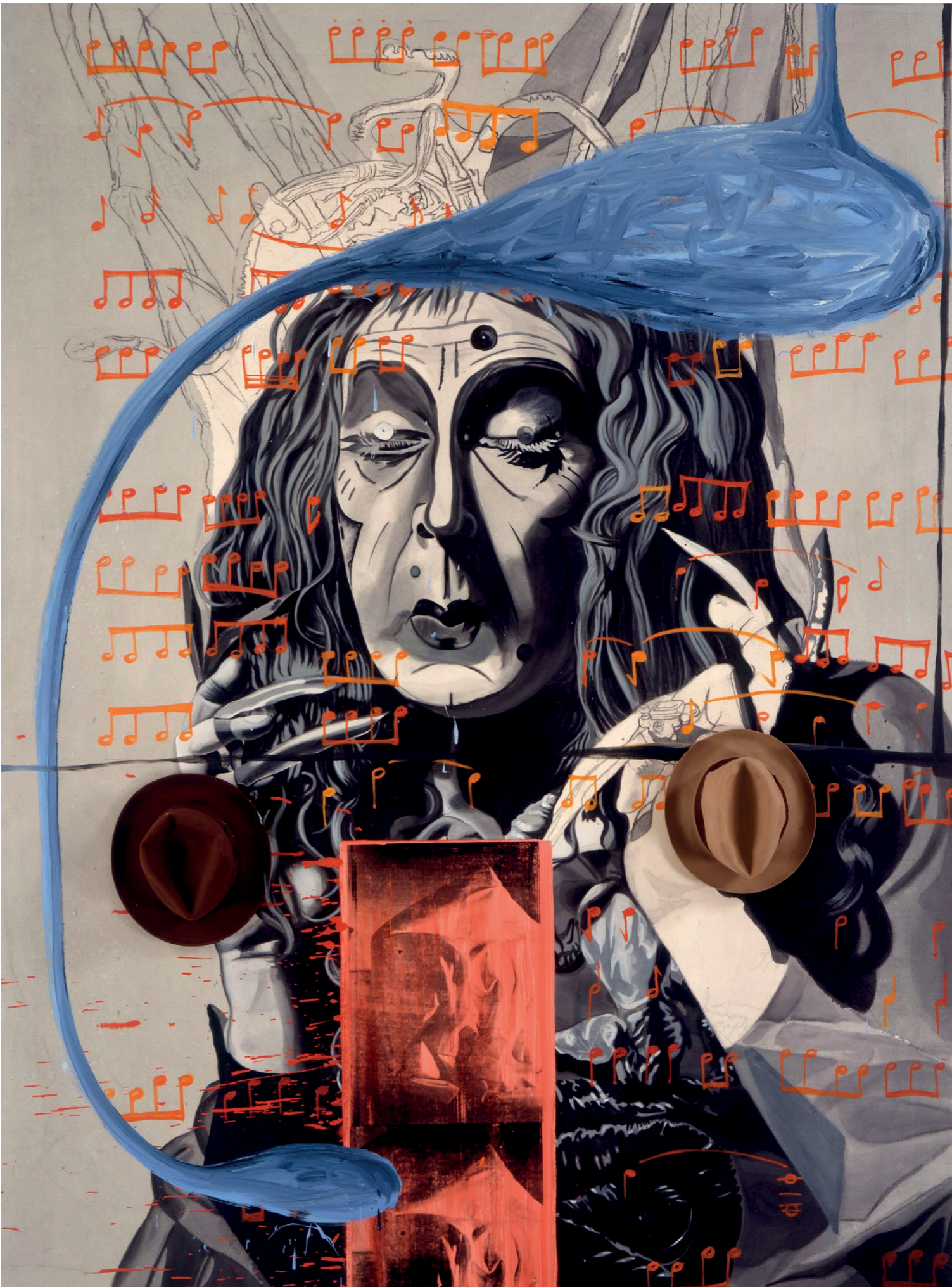
DS: Good question. Of course the two are inextricable. The privileging of intention is one of the biggest fallacies of the last 30 to 40 years; it's a blind alley. Usually, I don't much care what an artist thinks their intention is. Intention only matters when it's in productive synch with what it is you can do, with your talent. I know that no one talks about talent any more. But what do we have to replace it with?

RB: Enthusiasm?

DS: Yes, enthusiasm is today's model. And we need enthusiasm; it's just not the same thing.

RB: Whilst we are in the vicinity, can we drop in on that other dirty word: skill?

DS: Skill is the articulation of a talent. In the movie business, a director might be especially good with crowd scenes, or →



1st spread:
Pavane, David Salle, 1990, acrylic and oil on canvas with two inserted panels, ©David Salle/Licensed by VAGA, New York. Courtesy of the artist and Skarstedt

2nd spread:
Pontiac, David Salle, 2016 oil, acrylic, charcoal, archival digital print and pigment transfer on linen © David Salle / Licensed by VAGA, New York. Courtesy of the artists and Skarstedt

3rd spread:
Ashton, David Salle, 1992, acrylic and oil on canvas, ©David Salle/Licensed by VAGA, New York. Courtesy of the artist and Skarstedt

current spread:
Tennyson, David Salle, 1983, acrylic and oil on canvas, Art © David Salle/Licensed by VAGA, New York. Courtesy of the artist and Skarstedt

final spread, left:
Flying, Growing, David Salle, 2015, oil, acrylic, crayon, silkscreen, and archival digital print on linen, ©David Salle/Licensed by VAGA, New York. Courtesy of the artist and Skarstedt

final spread, right:
Sextant in Dogtown, David Salle, 1989, oil and acrylic on canvas, ©David Salle/Licensed by VAGA, New York. Courtesy of the artist and Skarstedt



drawing room scenes, or whatever – they have a talent, a skill. The talent is in sympathy with a type of effect; it's a predilection, which sometimes becomes a genre. You don't hire Ernst Lubitsch to direct *Spartacus*, for example. That would be a mistake.

RB: Yes, a costly one.

DS: Or maybe it would be sublime? The point is, in other fields, it's normal to talk about talent simply as 'what someone is good at'. It's not that complicated. Alex Katz, to add a more current example to your Velázquez, can pull a line with a very long brush and have it land just where it needs to eight times out of ten. That fact becomes part of his work. It doesn't matter what you call it, but if you can execute that move, it will inevitably be integrated into what used to be called a style. If a singer can reach that note, she will want to find a repertoire that allows her to show it off – it becomes part of her expressive self.

What's interesting is that, through over-intellectualisation or habit or bad advice, you can sometimes see artists who are working in styles that require them to make the equivalent of the perfect line, but they

are actually not very good at it. They are not playing to their strengths – they have been miscast. Is this related to the habit of talking about someone's 'practice'? I'm not sure why we need that word.

RB: Let's take a look at the word 'practice' and also at the word 'art'. I am getting the sense that the currency of the word art has become devalued from overuse. As a term, art refers to everything from what is being sold in a Cork St gallery, to painting as a therapeutic activity for the retired, or even to posh pornography. It means so many things that, to all intents and purposes, it means nothing. Using the word practice, it seems, is an attempt to reclaim a degree of specificity to what it is that a career fine artist, in the old sense, does when she gets up in the morning.

DS: Well, ok. I don't care what we call it. If it helps people – fine with me. To fall back on Wittgenstein's dictum: "In most cases, the meaning of a word is its use". Not entirely, but to some extent, the meaning of art is contextual – just take note of where something looks at home.

RB: You have written about Jeff Koons, "If abstract painting expresses



the idea 'you are what you do' and pop art expresses 'you are what you like', then Koons' art says, 'you are what other people like.'" So what kind of artist does the world need now?

DS: Oh God, how would I know? But surely the answer is: many kinds. There is no one size fits all anymore, no one defining idea that makes everything else obsolete. I just don't think that will happen again, thankfully.

RB: Your preference is for artists who, as you put it in your book, "burrow along, often in the dark, towards their objective, more or less unconcerned about what's happening above ground". We look back now at 1975 New York and see you as contributing to a working

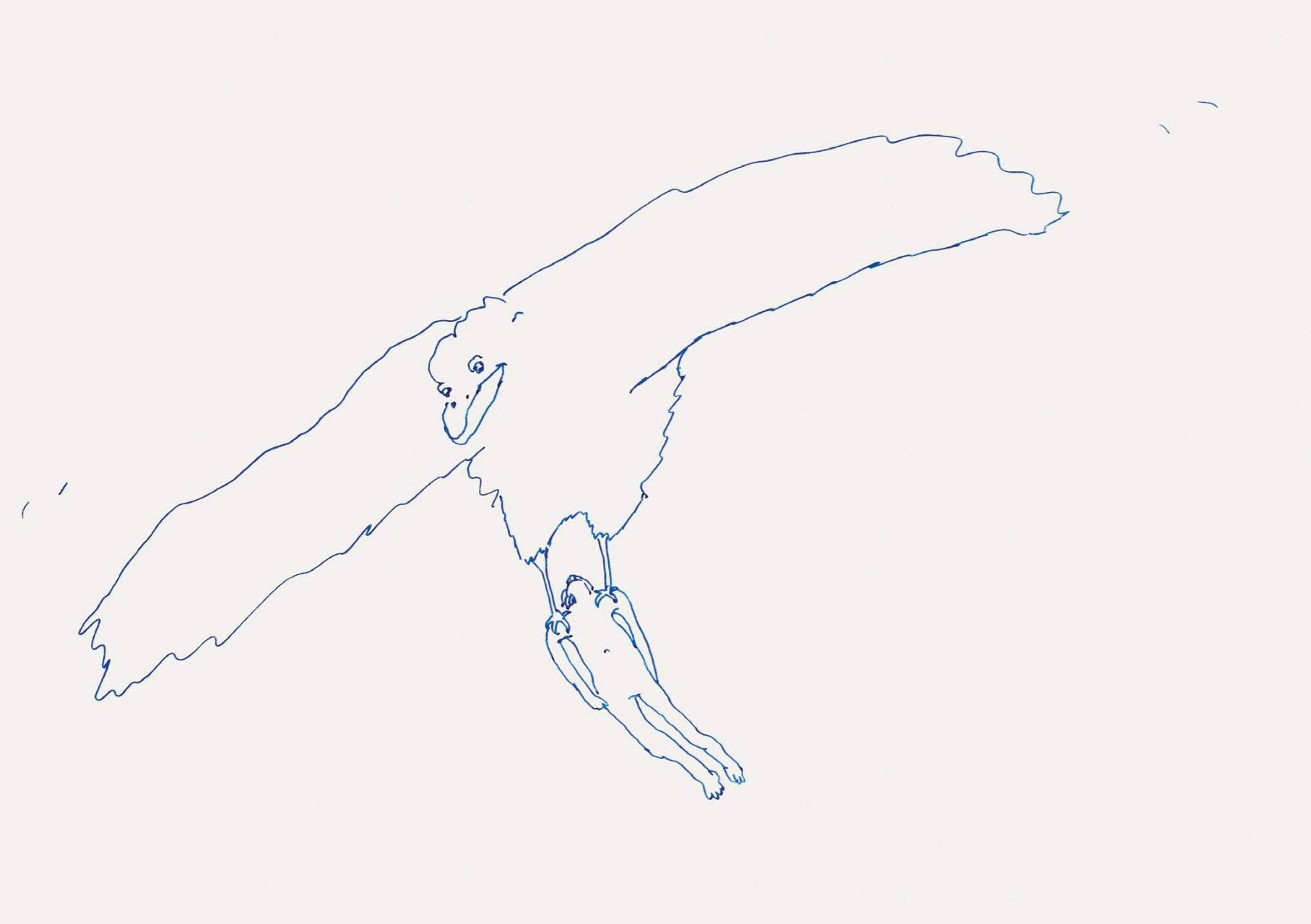
definition of that particular era. Did you have any sense of the 'greater significance' that you were contributing to; the solidification of the postmodern condition at the time, as you were burrowing along as a young artist?

DS: Vaguely, and intermittently. Maybe I should have tried to hold on to it more. Being hip to a significance larger than oneself: it's part of being young, that search for identity. Partly it's imposed from outside. I remember feeling some shared, communal *something* – at certain points along the way; that *something* might have given me courage, which was good for morale I guess, but that *something* only goes so far when you are alone in the studio on a Monday morning—**CCQ**

Cindy Sherman & David Salle: History Portraits & Tapestry Paintings was at Skarstedt, London, 1 October – 26 November 2016

skarstedt.com
davidsallestudio.net

David Salle's book How to See: Looking, Talking, and Thinking about Art, was published by W. W. Norton & Company in November 2016



But, I have more to say.

Earlier this year, the Korean Cultural Centre in London hosted the exquisite show *Riptide*, an exhibition inspired by Koo Jeong A's selection as 2016 Artist of the Year – a major annual award programme established to introduce Korea's vibrant contemporary art scene to UK audiences. For CCQ, Koo asked the artists to respond in their own way to the subjects of collaboration, the ego and the practice of drawing in the 21st century

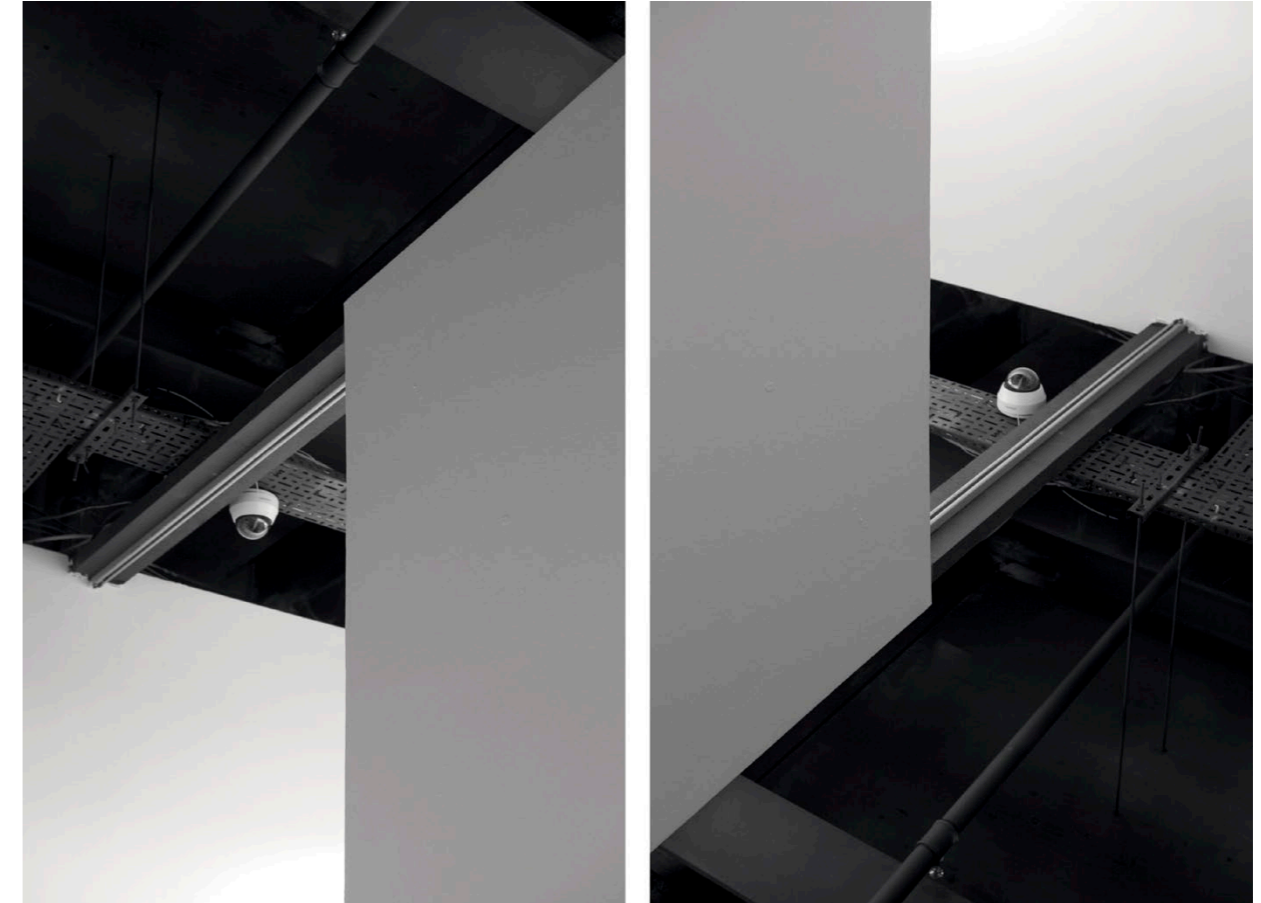
Koo Jeong A

In our minds, a line can transform freely and naturally to tell a story, form a number, or even compose a piece of music; drawing reflects the world around us – in my case, it reveals my multicultural, nomadic life. My consistent reversion to drawing has led me to wonder exactly what it means to draw in the

21st century. The process of collaboration – be it with artists, makers or designers – is integral to my practice. My work *Civilising Process* has inspired many of my projects, each unpicking new meanings and narratives inherent within the drawing. Using this single line image as an inception point for *Riptide*,

I wanted to ask how others might respond to the drawing, and ask, 'to what extent does creative vision and ego dissolve within the process of collaboration?'

koojeonga.com



Hanqing Ma & Mona Yoo

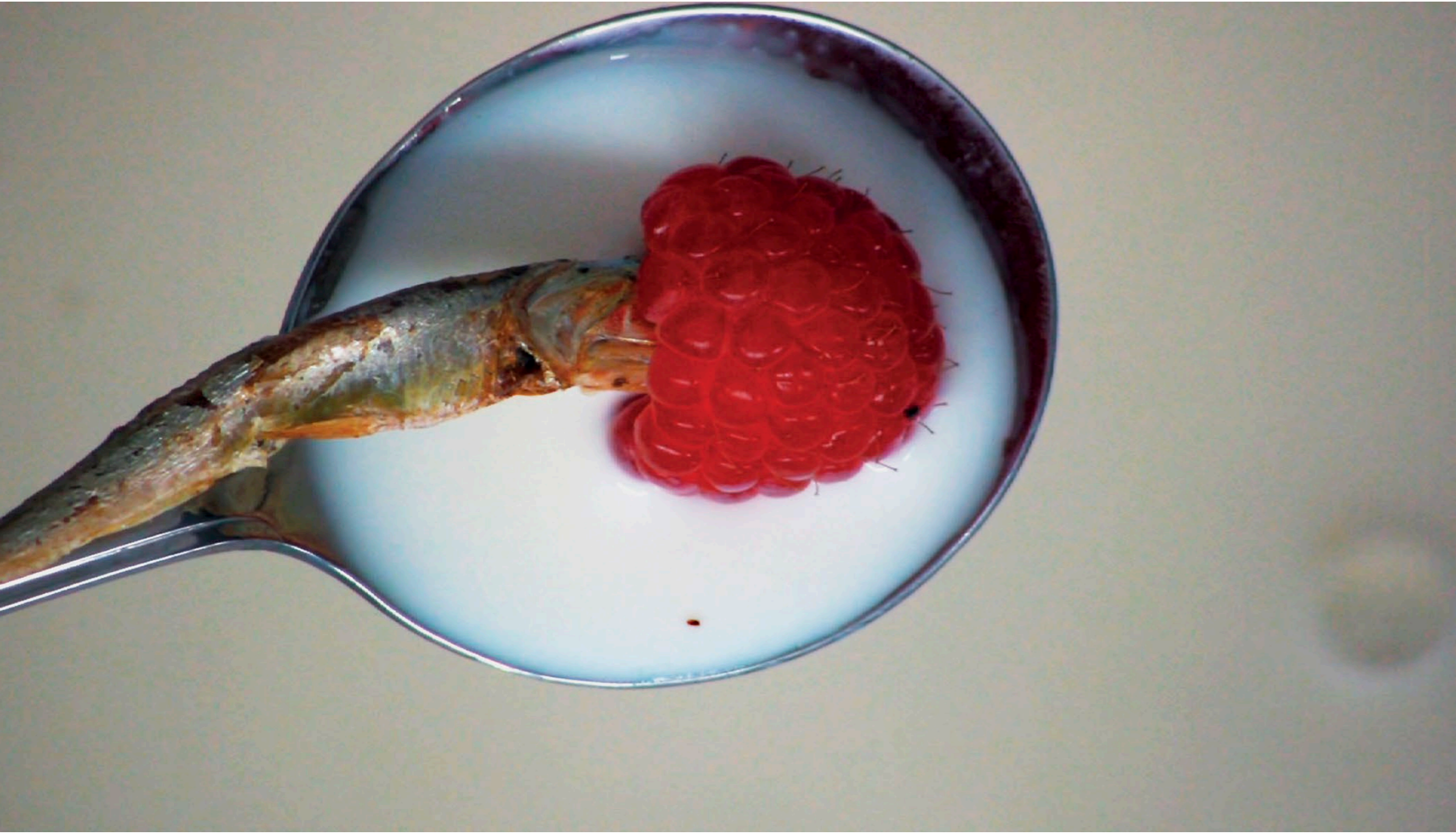
The extension of this project is the process of making spatial work. The image is no-longer used for documentation, nor is the object created as touchable form. They are both reversed into the architectural frame as the ceiling becomes the floor. It is expanding on and on.

Koo's drawing is an ongoing project, bringing the past to the present. Our work *Glimpse* is an ongoing piece; it was not complete when it was installed, nor as the show ended. It is a fragment that will be taken to the next space to become a part of a subsequent project.

unfrozenriver.com

opposite:
Civilising Process, Koo Jeong A,
2005, pen drawing on A4 paper.
Courtesy of the artist

this page:
Glimpse, Hanqing Ma & Mona Yoo,
2016, size variable.
Courtesy of the artists



Yva Jung

Dear K.

The day I received your questions, I accidentally found a collection of letters I wrote to myself. One particular letter seems to have something to say about your first question.

[...]
It has been a trial and error week. The first two days were quite productive but the second half of the week I was a bit lost. The first day I stayed in the studio for 4 hours; then I had an idea: *I want to draw*. Draw what? To find an answer, I looked through some photos on my laptop. Some pictures, taken in Seoul with my mobile phone, caught my attention. They seemed imperfect. They seemed they are not giving the full story and it seemed to me that I have and I can say more with drawing. So, this is going to be the title of my drawing: “I have more to say”.
[...]

In fact, the drawing isn’t called “I have more to say” but, “But, I have more to say.” The letter goes on explaining why there’s an abrupt “but” and how it’s not grammatically wrong because Virginia Woolf starts her essay, *A Room of One’s Own* with “But”. I have more to say but I shall end my letter here.

Yours,
Y.

yvajung.com

this page:
Cache of Monday (anchovy version), Yva Jung, 2016
Photographs (video stills).
Courtesy of the artist

opposite:
The Traces of Small Finds - Mithra's Left Hand (detail), Kyung Roh Bannwart, 2016,
thermoplastic 3D print,
handwritten label, dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist

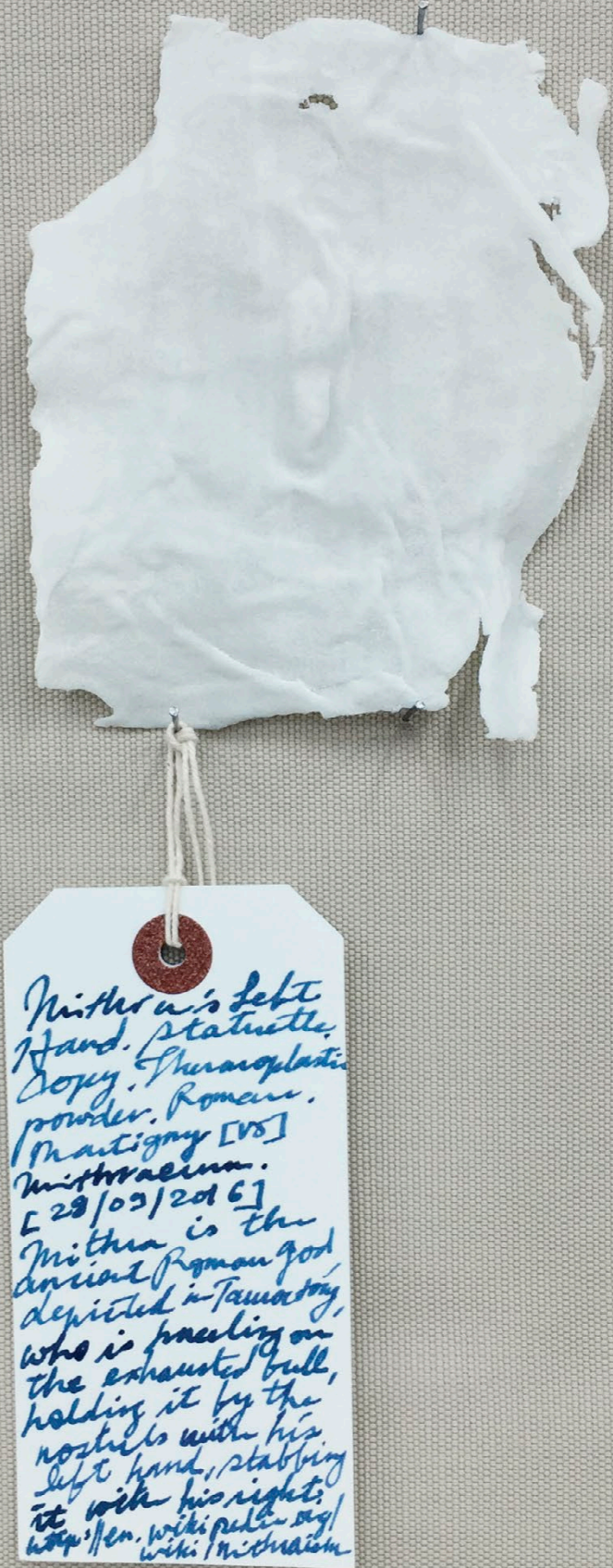
Kyung Roh Bannwart

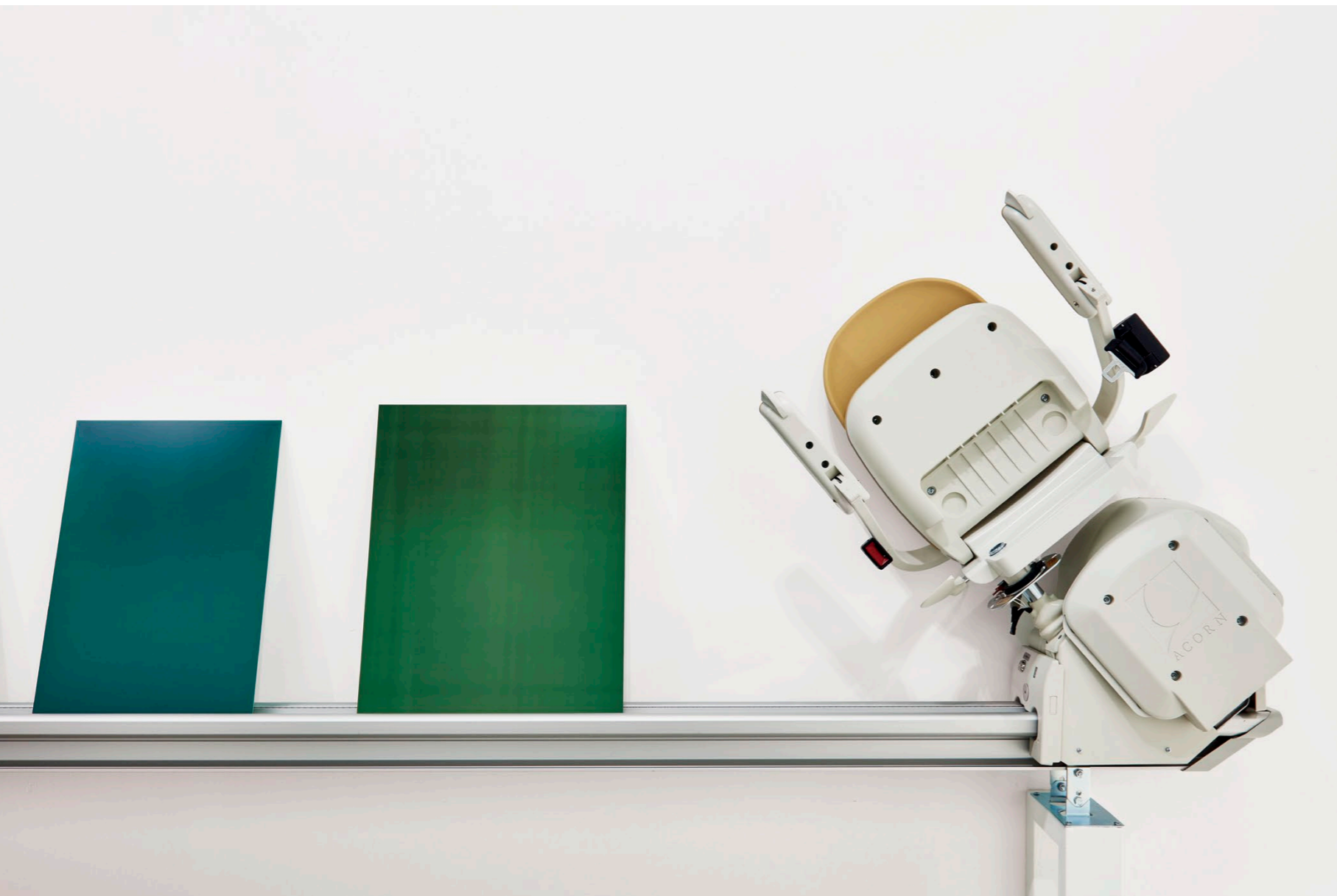
In Two Times / Deux Temps

There was a bird,
There was a man,
The bird was flying,
The man was being carried,
The bird was looking down from above,
The man was looking up from below,
(Fall)
To no end,
To the end,

There is a bird,
There is a man,
The bird is flying,
The man is being carried,
The bird is looking down from above,
The man is looking up from below,
(Fall)
To no end,
To the end.

kyungrohbannwart.com





Life is a Staircase, Matthias Sohr, 2016, solder resist mask on copper, epoxy resin and glass fibre, stairlift. Photo: Luke Andrew Walker. Courtesy the artist and KCCUK

Information about the sculpture by Matthias Sohr

Matthias Sohr is a sculptor.

That means: He makes sculptures.

Sculptures are figures.

For example made from plastic.

Or from metal.

At the Korean Cultural Centre

Matthias Sohr also shows other things.

For example:

- A stairlift
- Or a walking frame
- Or colourful boards on the wall

Matthias Sohr has thought about many topics for the sculpture.

For example, the sculpture is about:

- family and family ties
- the agency of people

Matthias Sohr makes art.

He doesn't just show things.

He wants to show things differently than they normally are.

That's important to him.

Matthias Sohr

Hi Koo,

[...]

My request for material sponsoring to the company Mobiness has been passed on to the sales manager Angela Rekari. For the duration of our exhibition at the Korean Cultural Centre in London, I would like to get on loan a walking frame from the company Mobiness. Ms Rekari is concerned that my use of a walking frame might be perceived as stigmatizing. So that she can get a better picture of my work, I am sending her a concept in Easy Read, which is a simplified English. I have prepared this inclusive text with the help of the AWO Büro Leichte Sprache Berlin. It will be used at the KCC in the exhibition for better understanding of my piece.

[...]

Best wishes, Matthias

matthiassohr.net

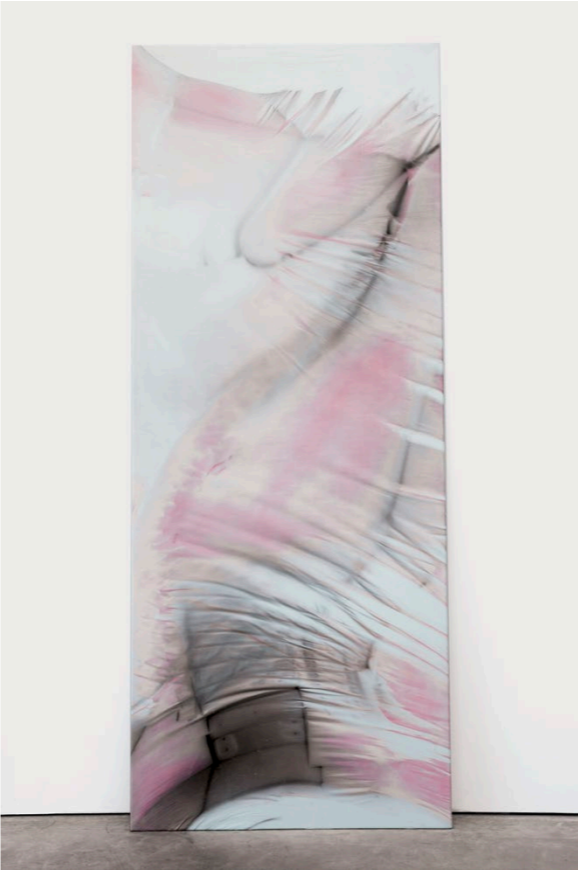


From October to November 2016
I grew grass on persian rugs in
London, Martin Roth, 2016, various
grass seeds on persian rugs
Photo: Luke Andrew Walker
Courtesy KCCUK and the artist

Martin Roth

For me, drawing never had anything to do with a paper or a pen. For one of my works I had earthworms draw each night; I saw their burrows/tunnels as line drawings. I purchased hundreds of worms at a fishing supply store and filled large plexiglass boxes with organic soil. Over a period of time these drawings would appear on the edge of the glass; it was really quite performative. But I liked that you hardly ever saw a worm. I would look at the installation each morning and see a different drawing. No worm would ever use the same tunnel twice.

martinroth.at



Robochronochoreo (1, 3 and 4), Melissa
Dubbin & Aaron S. Davidson, 2016, Robot
protective cover from painting robot, wood
panel. 305 x 122 cm each. Courtesy of the
artists and Untilthen, Paris

Melissa Dubbin & Aaron S. Davidson

‘Collaboration’ as a term seems limited in describing the set of relations we try to construct. The word has become popular in corporate culture and seems less applicable to how we define our artistic practice. We work together because of who and what we become in each others presence, and what these interactions produce on a material and philosophical level. The work is the materialisation of these relationships.

dubbin-davidson.com

Riptide, Koo Jeong A was at the
Korean Cultural Centre UK,
7 October - 19 November 2016

london.korean-culture.org

Man of Ice

Author and journalist, Jon Gower, relates how he and the apocalyptically minded artist, S. Mark Gubb, embarked on an adventure to bury items of cultural significance in the Siberian permafrost.

The phone call was entirely unexpected. The plummy voice on the other end announced he was calling from Kew Gardens, and that they'd found me in their database of botanists. I used to be a botanist, that's true, but I was a little bit wary of such an august institution contacting a man whose botanical knowledge had faded like a leaf. I was no expert. Not any more.

Dr Flowers (I kid you not!) went on to explain that they were just putting together a consignment of plant seeds and other genetic material to deposit under the permafrost in Siberia, and they had a little bit of spare capacity. They'd discussed it internally and had decided they wanted to record the life of a creative person. They understood I knew something about the arts, so would I be interested in finding the right person and then helping them fill a box? It wouldn't be unlike the time capsules they place in the foundations of a new school, he suggested. I was already in and I told him so.

An artist... Which artist? I phoned a friend, Gareth, who owns a gallery in Camden Town; without drawing a breath he suggested that I should contact S Mark Gubb. I knew the name. He lived in Cardiff, Wales, said my mate, and he assured that we would get along like a Welsh second home on fire. I thanked him for the predictable joke and for the lead.

I met Gubb, a week later, and Gareth had been right, we did get on like a flaming dormer bungalow in Abersoch.

It took us less than five minutes to agree on the first object to include in the box: namely a book. It was one we both loved and had been totally appalled by: *The Dirt*, the thoroughly shocking biography of Motley Crüe. It's not your usual sex, booze and groupies account. No

siree! It's got far too much degradation and human wreckage for that. It turns out he quite obsessively reads rock and heavy metal musicians' biographies and autobiographies and told me he thinks this has a lot to do with him failing to become the rock star he wanted to be. "They almost all follow the same narrative arc", he told me, "troubled childhood, solace in music, form a band, mega-stardom, groupies, drug and alcohol abuse, near death, discover God. Of all the ones I've read, *The Dirt* remains the most debauched and fundamentally rock n' roll. It's full of self-loathing, appalling degradation of women, drug abuse, money and death."

That is his first gift to the Reader of the Future. Another book title followed swiftly. Mark plumped for George Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier*. A hundred years old, it shows that some things haven't changed, such as the cloying poverty afflicting many in our society. I thought we'd inscribe our copy to Theresa May, before planting it in the frozen ground, in lieu of her frozen, withered heart.

We decided we needed to include some elements of standard biography: "S. Mark Gubb was raised near Margate on the Kent coast", that sort of thing, and he told me he'd written a performance piece about his first 21 years in the town, which he delivered on a bus tour. He told the passengers how Reculver, near Herne Bay, was used to test the bouncing bomb featured in *The Dam Busters* and was the setting for some scenes in the TV series *Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em*, not to mention one entire series called *Cockles* about a man's attempts to resuscitate a dying seaside resort. Herne Bay used to have one of the longest piers in the UK... that is, until a ship ran into it and knocked it into the sea. Oh, and Marcel Duchamp stayed in Herne Bay for a —→

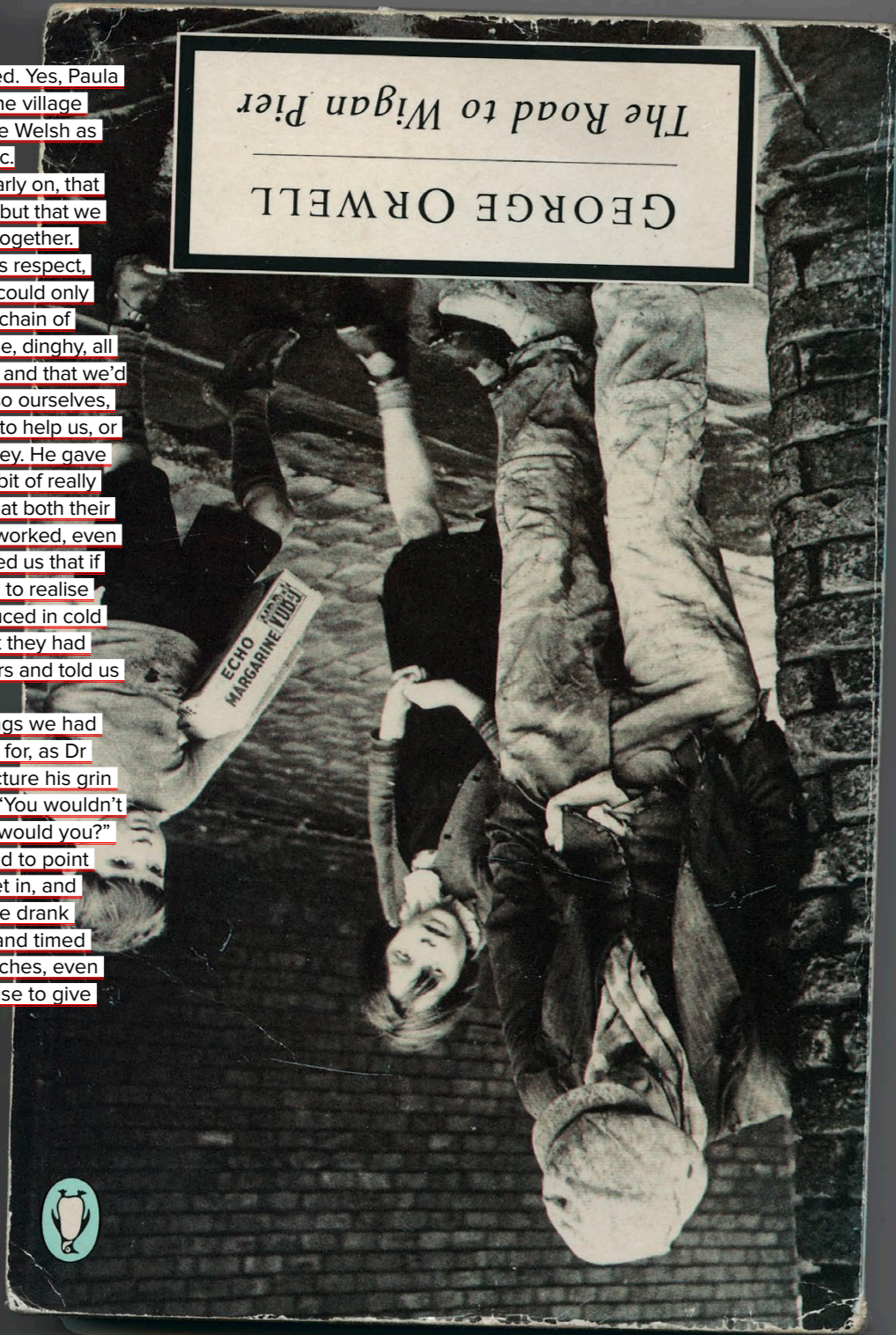


opposite:
*Revelations: The Poison of Free Thought
Part II* (installation view), S Mark
Gubb, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and
g39. Photo: Jamie Woodley

little while, and Paula Yates visited. Yes, Paula Yates! It made my childhood in the village of Pwll, (which translates from the Welsh as “hole”), seem decidedly un-exotic.

Mark and I decided, pretty early on, that we didn’t just want to fill the box, but that we also wanted to physically bury it together. Dr Flowers was very helpful in this respect, although he did warn us that we could only get so far by public transport – a chain of bus, train, plane, smaller sea-plane, dinghy, all terrain-four wheel drive vehicle – and that we’d have to walk the final 100 km or so ourselves, and that they couldn’t undertake to help us, or insure us for any part of the journey. He gave us precise co-ordinates and one bit of really reassuring information: namely that both their project leaders had phones that worked, even in those remote climes, but warned us that if we took our own mobiles we had to realise that battery time was hugely reduced in cold weather. He sent us the info pack they had sent to all the expedition members and told us to get in shape.

One of the most difficult things we had to learn to do was pee in a hurry for, as Dr Flowers had said (and I could picture his grin down the other end of the line), “You wouldn’t want to lose your dangles now, would you?” In sub-zero temperatures you had to point and shoot before the frostbite set in, and this could happen in seconds. We drank oodles of water, day in day out, and timed ourselves urinating with stopwatches, even wearing over-trousers in the house to give



the act some proper authenticity. I felt like a gunslinger handling my own penis: I was that quick on the draw. Gubb told me he’d managed to unzip both ways in less than five seconds. This new skill gave us each more than a soupçon of confidence.

We started walking together. Five miles a day to begin with, nudging that up by a mile a day as we only had three weeks to prepare. I lost weight and Mark said he’d never felt better. On one of our routes, around Llandaff and Fairwater, [in Cardiff] I asked him how he’d represent Donald Trump in the box and he answered pretty much straight away. Someone had seen his new work in Cardiff’s g39 gallery and said it was Donald Trump. So we included a picture of the work and a copy of the tape in which Trumpy reveals what fame and money can do for a pathetic man’s sex life. It’s like burying a reptile.

By the end of two weeks, we were walking up to thirty miles a day. We took the old funeral path between the village of Llanpumsaint and Abercrave and were surprised not to be out of breath when we got to the top of the glacial ridge that separates the two. We’d begun to swap tales – family stuff in the main. His great-grandmother, seventh child of the seventh child, was gifted in the astral travel department and could materialise pretty much anywhere at will. I told him about my grandmother, who was a real piece of work, right out of one of the tales of the Brothers Grimm. We decided to place snaps of both in the box as we had plenty —>

This booklet tells you how to make
your home and your family as safe as
possible under nuclear attack



PROTECT
AND
SURVIVE

of room for such things. This had much to do with Mark's decision to include some very small items, such as a guitar plectrum...

"Following on from my obsession with music, I love guitar plectrums. I've played the guitar since I was 14 and had a brief moment of being the youngest person to have ever played London's legendary Marquee Club (the Charing Cross Road incarnation), just shy of my 16th birthday. Apart from being an incredibly simple tool for the creation of something so profoundly moving (music – I've never found an equal in any other art form), I love the alchemy of that moment when a guitarist throws their plectrum out into the crowd. How a cheap piece of plastic suddenly takes on real emotional and, potentially, economic value as it lands in the hand of a fan."

He showed me two other items to be included in the box, which are on a shelf in his studio: genuine pieces of HMS Victory and the Berlin Wall (at least, he was sold them as such). The piece of HMS Victory came from a school holiday to the Isle of Wight, when he was about 10 years old. "We spent the day in Portsmouth", he told me, "before we got the ferry over and visited the ship. I think it had recently undergone some refurbishment, and some marketing genius had clearly had the idea to keep all of the splinters from the works, package them in a neat little plastic box and sell them in the gift shop. So I bought it. Then, of course, the same thing happened with the Berlin Wall. It's impossible to go into a gift shop in Berlin without seeing 'genuine' pieces of the wall for sale in all sorts of

previous spread, left:
Road to Wigan Pier, received from a stranger in exchange for a copy of *Man Without a Country*; by Kurt Vonnegut, at *Praxis Makes Perfect* performance, featuring Gruff Rhys and Boom Bip of Neon Neon. Cover scan: courtesy of S Mark Gubb

previous spread, right:
First edition (paperback) of Motley Crue's *The Dirt*. One of the artist's extensive collection of rock autobiographies;. Cover scan: courtesy of S Mark Gubb

opposite:
Original copy of *Protect and Survive*, purchased by the artist from eBay. Cover scan: courtesy of S Mark Gubb

shapes and sizes. One of the most important political and architectural structures of the 20th century, a wall that tore a country, families and lives apart, chipped up and repackaged as fridge magnets. I've bought at least three pieces of it in my lifetime."

It's remarkable how little space Mark's mini-museum takes up. He told me that he had grown up paralysed with fear at the idea of imminent nuclear destruction; the Public Service ads about stocking up on enough food for 14 days still give him a frisson of fear even now. He wonders how many of the people he went to school with in Ramsgate knew that when America bombed Libya they launched the attack from Manston Airport, a mere four miles away from his school. Mark thinks the *Protect and Survive* booklet is a perfect document of its time. On some level, for him, it also functions like those pieces of HMS Victory and the Berlin Wall – he is literally holding a piece of history in his hands. Then, in 2004, every single household in the UK received the *Preparing for Emergencies* leaflet about what to do in the event of a terrorist attack.

On the night before we left, we had a series of espresso martinis in one of my favourite drinking clinics, by way of saying goodbye to creature comforts. Within twenty-four hours of leaving Cardiff, we were being dropped off at a wind-blasted patch of sheer bloody remoteness by a smiling Inuit, who was off to play pool against some oil engineers, who were in a testing area a hundred clicks away. Our happy chauffeur left us feeling as stranded as two people can get. We stared at desolate swathes of Arctic moor-grass in front of us, checked the compass and set off at a trudge. Where the air touched our exposed skin it prickled and then deadened. Gubb was no longer smiling and neither was I. It was too cold to smile and walking was a real effort. No, breathing was an effort. Even through the scarves we'd wrapped around our mouths, it felt as if we were inhaling shards of glass crystal.

It's funny how well you can get to know a fellow human being when you're both in extreme conditions. Trudging over the permafrost,

I doubted if either the booklet or the leaflet would serve us well, other than to start a fire. We might roast a lemming if we could catch one. But there is something about Mark's stubborn determination that inspires me – to lift one leg and then another with, well, an explorer's gait.

Soon we started to slow down, our muscles seeming to wither. Luckily we'd packed the *Protect and Survive* booklet (1976) and a *Preparing for Emergencies* leaflet (2004). We'd be ok with these, Mark had suggested. His optimism in itself was a source of concern to me.

I can't remember much about the rest of the trek, other than waking up in a hospital in Greenland. Mark had apparently saved my life when I'd collapsed, just a mile from our rendezvous point with the Kew scientists. Did he bury the box? I don't think so. He'd not had the chance, what with accompanying me in the helicopter and all.

Today I shall be making an ice sculpture. It will be of an artist I know. One of the bravest artists – no, strike that – one of the bravest human beings I have ever known. I may place it on a plinth, out there on the windy promontory, where in May you can watch the narwhals pass underwater in their tens of thousands. Yes, I'll place it near the rock that is sulphur yellow with all the lichen. Mark will like standing there and tourist boats, in their season, will slow to photograph him: The Man of Ice.—CCQ

smarkgubb.com



above:
Various plectrums owned by the artist – two of Scott Ian's (Anthrax) collected at The Cardiff Coal Exchange and the Newport Centre; one of Gary Holt's (Exodus/Slayer) from the Newport Centre; one of Tommy Victor's (Prong) from The Rescue Rooms; one of John Roche's (Gama Bomb) from The Globe; one of Joey Z's (Life of Agony) designed by the artist; and one containing a Napalm Death quote, also designed by the artist. Scans: courtesy of S Mark Gubb

RubyRubyRuby

As she prepared for her new exhibition *The Land Is* at PAPER, opening in January, artist Ruby Tingle spoke to **Rhiannon Lowe** about all things natural, mythological, visual and aural.

The Exploring PAPER Residency is a six-week programme where the gallery space at PAPER in Manchester is temporarily transformed into a studio. Musician, performer, drawer and maker Ruby Tingle has recently completed a stint there as artist in residence, which involves welcoming in the public each Saturday when the gallery is open. Even for an artist who is used to an audience and being at the very focus of her own work, it is hard to permit close intervention into half-formed work and ideas. The spaces between private and public are ever awkward fields to operate within artistically.

Rhiannon Lowe: Am I correct in feeling that you're a little tired of questions about the interweave of your work and life, especially how you look or present yourself?

Ruby Tingle: Maybe I am a little, if only because it is so natural for me, sometimes I take it for granted; it's just aesthetic expression. I pick out a dress in the same way I see part of an image in a book that I think 'ooh, I'll cut that out' and 'put it on'. I can't do things by half measures, but I think that's a good thing. When I perform I tend to construct a more specific outfit, and maybe it will be more extravagant. I think a lot of artists do look like their work or express something of it whether intentionally or not. I tend just to stand out a bit if I'm in Tesco in a gold ball gown with plastic frogs in my hair...

RL: There is though a point between living and performing – is that just control?

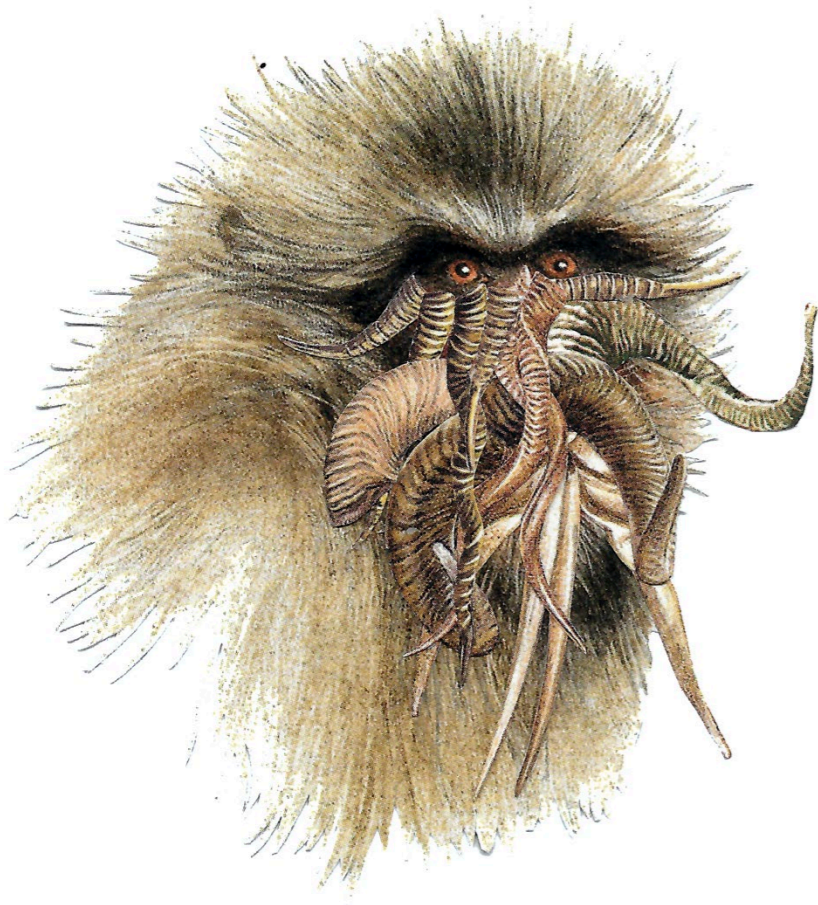
RT: Yes, I think it is about control. I find it natural to have boundaries. I always know where I am within my own lines of performing or not. I think each artist who works similarly will have their own boundaries that they stop noticing as their practice develops. The cut off is just always somewhere at the back of the mind.

I work as a life model, so I am constantly flitting between being a static subject and a person even at work, which I find completely normal after

doing it for years. My job transfers heavily onto and mirrors the performative part of my practice. I know when I'm sat for a class I become lines and shapes for students to draw – I'm not vulnerable or personal when I'm frozen in a pose. These delicate differences are all comparable to how I know when I'm performing and not.

RL: You've been artist in residence at PAPER recently. How did you find the bounds between artist/audience, private/personal, performance/other?

RT: Working in residence was quite a departure for me as I wasn't used to allowing people to see work half-finished or in progress. But as the residency provided an intensive experimental period, I let go and pushed through a lot of personal work barriers, so it was a very freeing



time and very valuable in developing my work. I found it useful speaking to visitors – the open studios weren't performances as such, but, as usual, people would comment on me and my work being connected visually in some way.

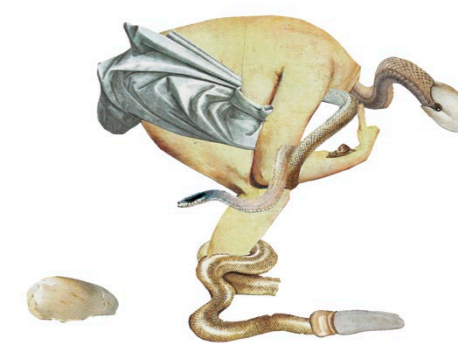
During the residency I was looking specifically at sound and animal language, and the binding of my audio and visual work, and how to respond to sound visually. A lot of visitors spoke to me about synaesthesia and various sensory responses, which was interesting. My work and studio space being so full of reference to animals and nature sparked more scientific conversation than artistic, which I prefer, as it means the work provides a platform for a variety of subjects and reflections which aren't just on an aesthetic level. —>

opposite page, far left:
Horns, Ruby Tingle, 2016,
collage on paper

left:
Lepidoptera, Ruby Tingle, 2016,
collage on paper

this page, above:
Crocodiles dinin' in the sweet swamp fog,
Ruby Tingle, 2016, collage paint and
charcoal on paper

below:
In Glamour, Layin' Eggs, Ruby Tingle,
2015, collage on paper





this page, above:
To The Land where we belong, Ruby Tingle,
2016, collage, paint and charcoal on paper

right:
Tortoiseshell fungus, Ruby Tingle,
2016, collage installation

opposite page, from top:
Adder, Ruby Tingle,
2016, paper and bracken collage

In Glamour, Vultures, Ruby Tingle,
2015, collage on paper

A Pond Lord, Ruby Tingle,
2016, collage on paper

Hymn, Ruby Tingle,
2016, collage on paper



the Lake District. I wanted to capture a unique perspective of these places, and portray how deeply connected they are with my sense of self – as they are to many others, in their own personal ways. I've just recently, since the residency, been recording the album, pulling

together all the writing and reflections, the results of various experiments, and developing and refining successful works.

The album has become a series of what are, pretty much, love songs. It's as close as I'll get to a Disney soundtrack too – I'm literally singing along with animals. But there are other messages within the music, about conservation, loss and communication. During this three year period of growth, clarity and being immersed in the natural world, my Nan's health deteriorated and she passed away. My Nan had been very much a symbol of what these areas of land are to me, and that is the flip side to the Disneyesque paeans.

Music is a large part of my practice, and I use the method of collage a great deal when sampling and editing sound pieces that are then usually incorporated into songs I write and record, or simply form instrumental soundtrack pieces to accompany or support performances. The songs I write are completely intertwined with the visual work I produce; images, words and sounds usually supporting or reflecting one another.

RL: David [Hancock] at PAPER told me you'd produced a lot of new visual collaged pieces as well during the residency.

RT: I've created quite a large body of work in response to *The Land Is* project, which really started to take shape during the residency. I felt I turned a corner during that intensive period where the paper pieces that make up the collages were brought to life in some way. I started printing larger scale

and double-sided pieces, so I could sculpt the paper and lift areas away from the page, when working on a flat piece. I was spending a lot of time producing automatic drawings and mark-making in response to sound in the studio. I was trying to find interesting ways of visually portraying the sounds and music I was recording and working with. I would sculpt materials into shapes which resembled the responsive drawings, and then spray paint over them, creating some kind of musical mark or trace.

Developing the paper work sculpturally allows the collage pieces to be present within, or make up entire, installation pieces. The installations and performances provide me with a platform to mirror the delicate and small collage works on a larger scale, combining found objects, fabrics, plastics and paper manipulated in other ways, such as shredding or forming props. The body of work I will show at PAPER ranges from small and intricate paper collages which are like pinned insect specimens, to paper woven into a three —→





dimensional living portrait, where there is music and also me, as a living presence, almost collaged in. Also, fungus made from paper tortoiseshells will grow in the gallery space. There will be herons wrapped in gold, dead frogs stuffed with tissue paper, collage portraits of so called 'pond lords', of my partner, of terrapins and toads... All the imagery stems from the words and sounds of the album, a kind of newly mythologised take on a response to the natural world.

RL: There seems to be a delightful shift between the natural rootedness of your research and work and a playful semi-artificial wonder that it develops into.

RT: I want to live through my work vicariously because it offers me the opportunity to exist



this page above:
Menagerie in Blue, a performance for life drawing, **Ruby Tingle**, 2015, performance and installation. Photo: David Hancock

left:
Lilypads, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016, collage installation

opposite page, left to right:
Newts in Gold, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016, collage on paper

Heave ho get out of the water, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016, plastic, paint and shred paper installation

Sloughing Blue, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016, paper collage



within situations not possible in reality; my work is generally an embellished reflection of my life and personal or everyday experiences. Being able to situate myself in my work plays quite a large and important part of my practice, being so personally connected with the works I am producing I feel a part of the work as much as it is a part of me, but I also feel the need to capture myself in portraits and self-mythologise to a certain extent. By being present within the work, I make myself the centre of my own myth; only, in actuality, the myth is just response to my reality.

RL: Do the audience and you play out roles?

RT: Some of my performances are interactive and based around audience responses to the work, which in some way complete it. My piece *Menagerie in Blue* for example was set up as a life drawing class so the audience had to re-draw their own interpretation of a living self-portrait I had installed in a space. Having multiple portraits created by others reinforced a specific element of myself that I wished to document, or have documented. Through performance and the way I present myself, I am kind of documenting myself in the same way I feel I am when presenting other visual works – this sort of unnatural or alternate natural history.



RL: Is documentation essential for the performance?

RT: In some ways. In the performances for drawing – the capturing of the portrait via audience participation – it is essential, having others documenting a part of myself. Photographing and videoing the performances is important to me too; it acts as a kind of evidence that an event took place – although I think the main draw with performance and live art is that it is occurring fleetingly, in that moment, and that whoever is there experiences it and records it mentally in some way, takes it away with them. The memory of a live work is a more intangible form of capturing a visual or sonic experience.

RL: Do you work with others in performance, and are they brought into works as partners, or merely figures for you to use for your own presentation?

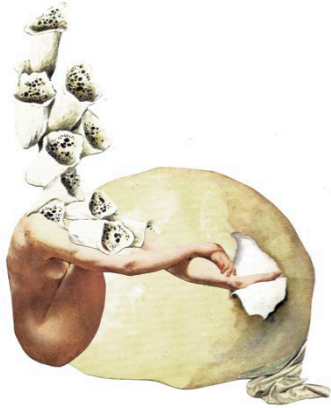
RT: I have worked with other artists. In 2014, I developed a performance with Marina Kelly, an American performance artist who works with contemporary dance. She was interested in similar boundaries, so it was very much a mutual work rather than one or another introducing players or actors. This could be something I do in the future though, if I feel the need for some kind of narrative, or need figures for a particular scene.

RL: You're a solo musician – are you in a band too? —>

RT: I work with electro artist Dirty Freud in a project called Dead Harold, we've both been pretty busy recently but we will start work again in 2017. The way we have worked together has been really valuable to my musical development – he sends me half made pieces and I add to them, or vice versa. It's helped me to learn recording techniques and also influenced how these pieces I'm recording are actually formed. Being able to strip parts of songs away, to be left with abstract pieces that can stand alone, has made my musical processes more particular and less precious.

RL: How is the sampling for the new album delivered when you perform?

RT: Previously I've always performed just me and a piano, doing pared down versions of the songs, which works nicely because I can present the music differently. But recently, I have wanted to step out from behind the instrument and perform the songs much more how they are recorded. I'm going to start combining scene-setting performances and installations with live performances of the songs, using backing tracks and my voice and presence as the key live element. It will be refreshing for me to perform music in a different way; and also it's important the audience hears the sounds I'm actually developing now rather than how I made music 10 years ago, when I was just writing simple piano and vocal pieces. I want to develop a way of performing live that is unique and also a more accurate presentation of the recorded pieces.



this page, top:
Zebra, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016,
collage on paper

above:
Automatic drawing experiment (1), **Ruby Tingle**, 2016, pastel
and paint on paper

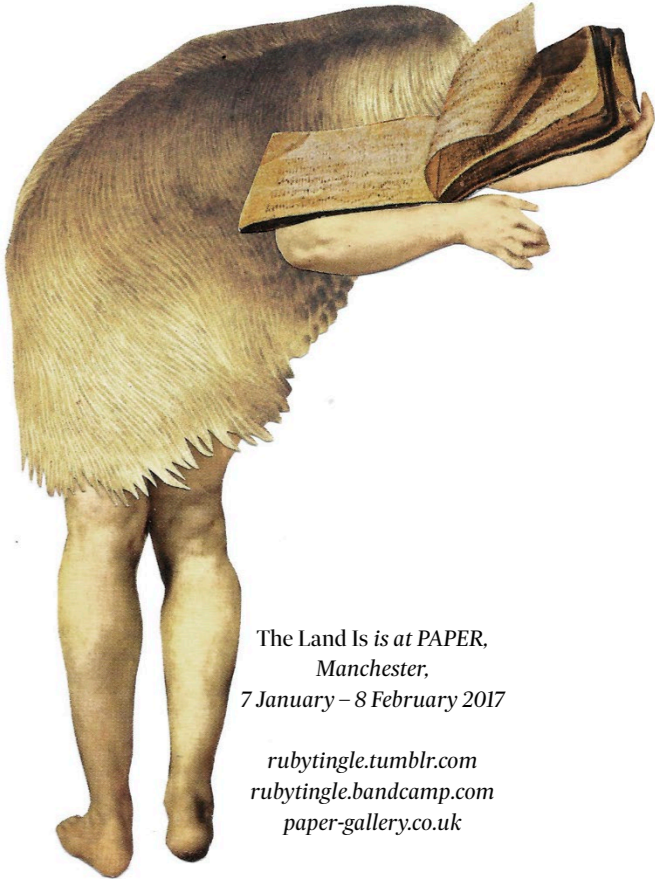
left:
In Glamour, Fungal Nude, **Ruby Tingle**, 2015, collage on paper

right:
Slow Worm in Silk, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016, collage, moss and
paint on paper

opposite page, top:
Mane, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016,
collage on paper

opposite page, on left:
*Automatic drawing
experiment (2)*, **Ruby Tingle**,
2016, charcoal and
paint on paper

opposite page, on far right:
Sire, **Ruby Tingle**, 2016,
collage on paper



RL: What music do you listen to?

RT: I listen to all kinds of music and sound, although I have staples who are obvious influences like Kate Bush, Björk, Tom Waits. Recently I've listened to a lot of exotica records, classical, and artists like Moondog, Harry Parch, John Frusciante, Diamanda Galas, pop, the radio, film soundtracks: all sorts – anything that makes my ears prick up! And I've spend a lot of time recently listening to animal sounds, noises from the natural world or biophony: the most original form of music.

RL: Do you use other people's words in your songs?

RT: I don't use other people's lyrics in my songs, but I think I do make reference to them by lifting words or re-working phrases; I like to alter nursery rhymes, well known sayings, re-appropriate them within my own poetry or lyrics. Even though the process is very much collage, as with my visual collage pieces, I don't intend for the works to really look like typical collages – I want them to look more like paintings, like the pieces have always belonged together—**CCQ**

The Land Is is at PAPER,
Manchester,
7 January – 8 February 2017

rubytingle.tumblr.com
rubytingle.bandcamp.com
paper-gallery.co.uk

Beauty Disclosed

The Macedonian artist, Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, uses animal body parts in her work, affording them the space and context to disclose their own particular and unexpected beauty. She spoke to philosopher **Clive Cazeaux** during her show, *Making Beauty*, at the Djanogly Gallery Nottingham,

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva's interest in revealing what is hidden, is strongly manifest in *Making Beauty* at the Djanogly. Within the installation *Haruspex*, which forms part of the show, the object that commands attention, is a sphere-like construction, suspended two metres or so above the ground, composed of inside-out, sewn-together omasa. An omasum is the third of four compartments in a cow's stomach. It is a mucous-lined membrane that is folded into leaves, like a book ('omasum' also means 'bible'), to create a surface of four to five square metres within the stomach. It can absorb water and nutrients while also preventing the transmission of large particles through the digestive system. The title *Haruspex* refers to a priest in ancient Rome who practised divination, especially from the entrails of animals killed in sacrifice. The work was first commissioned for the Vatican Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. Turned inside out, sewn together and suspended in a network of sheep's intestines, which fan out above and below it, it looks simultaneously like a brain and a sphere of lips. Arching above us, it feels as if we are within the domain of an alien creature, with a religious truth or commandment, or many truths, about to issue from its multitudinous lips.

This exploration of Hadzi-Vasileva's recent work is made from a philosophical perspective, and draws in particular upon ideas from the philosophy of perception. Perception is widely understood to be a form of reception: the world as we know it, is the world that we receive through the five senses, via the impressions that reality makes upon our sensory faculties. This is one of many theories of knowledge. It began with Aristotle, and was revived by John Locke, in the 17th century, to become one of the foundations of modern British empiricist philosophy and the philosophy of science. Another theory is that perception is a form of disclosure, of un-concealment, of providing the conditions that allow something to become manifest, tangible and detectable in the first place. In order for something to appear, the conditions that will allow its appearance to form – light for illumination, a surface that can reflect light, and a light-sensitive perceiver – have to be in place. This was first proposed by the 20th century German philosopher Martin Heidegger, and has begun to challenge the dominance of empiricism within the philosophy of science.

I was keen that my conversation with Hadzi-Vasileva should touch upon this idea of 'disclosure', both because of her own declared interest in the practice of revealing what is hidden, and also because many of the works in *Making Beauty* are the result of collaborations with scientists, and much of scientific knowledge can be understood as a form of disclosure. Common to both is the idea that disclosure, as a process of revealing something new or unexpected, brings to light something not normally associated with the object of study that changes our perception of it. Something that at first sight might seem to be one thing with one identity, once it is turned around, studied from the left, from the right, from above, from below, examined through one lens, then through another, begins to display many different facets and appearances. This means any object or domain can be mined for qualities that are wholly other than what the object is known to be. The initial object in *Haruspex* and its surprising innards, when combined, become a metaphor: one thing is presented as something else. With this in mind it seemed fair that I should begin by asking Hadzi-Vasileva whether the transition from an 'initial object' to 'finding surprise within it' is something she actively seeks in a project?

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva: As I develop an artwork, the material I've selected and its nature suggest different approaches. Sometimes these are surprising, but it's not something I particularly look for. It's an outcome of using these unusual materials.

Clive Cazeaux: It sounds as if the selection of material at the start of a project and, in particular, the selection of material that is unusual, is important for you. What is it about the 'unusual' that appeals? Is it 'unusual' in the sense of 'unexpected in an art context', or in the sense that these are materials whose hidden depths, or aesthetic possibilities, have yet to be explored?

EHV: It's very much about the hidden. Early in my career, I was probably more focused upon choosing unusual materials, but now, it's very much the context that drives these decisions. Perhaps I have normalised this approach, but I don't think I am consciously choosing materials for —→





the fact they are unusual, rather I am focused on their appropriateness.

CC: Your work frequently involves collaboration with experts in other subjects. Is it one of the benefits of collaboration that specialists can reveal surprising qualities in objects?

EHV: Yes, specialists from other fields offer really interesting insights into materials, and my conversations with them, my observations of how they work, their techniques and working methodologies, reveal and suggest different and new ways of working with those materials. Sometimes this influences the work itself, so the forms, the shapes, the dynamics of the whole work are informed.

CC: Being exposed to so many new methods and possibilities must be stimulating on the one hand, but challenging on the other, for it suggests that new avenues of possibility are opening left, right and centre. I imagine that this could be quite daunting. How do you know which ones to pursue, or is it a case of they choose or grab you?

EHV: A vision or, perhaps better put, a first idea is developed quite early, but this is also quite speculative, so being introduced to new methods and possibilities, shifts and develops the vision, so there is a process of change, updating, shifts in emphasis – the R&D period is quite fluid.

CC: What intrigues me in your work is what you do with the forms that you develop, because the action of turning them into a work is never simply presenting them in a white cube environment. In your installations, you are taking the materials and details that you have developed, and then – literally and metaphorically – taking them somewhere else by having them engage with a new location; for example, the suspension of many sheets of caul fat from the ceiling to create a tunnel, or nave-like space, through which visitors walk. I say ‘nave-like’ because the piece, *Fragility*, was originally commissioned in 2015 for Fabrica Gallery, a deconsecrated church, in Brighton. Part of the joy of the work is the interplay between the light (from the ceiling-mounted spotlights) and the sheets of fat. The sheets are semi-transparent. Folded and crinkled, sometimes they let light through; sometimes the light is diffused across the sheets, making them glow. This means the ribbons of caul fat shift from being light on dark to dark against light. All

of this is happening as I walk slowly through the tunnel. Thus, caul fat, lighting and a gallery interior have interacted to create an environment and a series of observations which neither could be said to own or predict independently.

How do you approach the relationship between the objects you are working with and the space in which they are due to be installed; for example, sheets of caul fat in a former church, cow stomachs in the Vatican Pavilion?

EHV: Those spaces or places were a given part of each commission, so I knew I wanted to fill the spaces in particular ways, knowing how the material would react or behave in each of those spaces. Having used the caul fat and cow stomachs in a number of works, I understand their materiality and the way I can influence – through bleaching, shaping and/or stretching – how they will work when installed. So I’m working to a vision and an ambition, particularly in those two installations. I’ve been helped enormously by the architect, Pero Bojkov, who’s worked with me on a number of projects, to understand and locate the works I have in mind in architectural spaces. For each of those installations, my ambition was to create spaces within spaces: for the Vatican, drawing upon Van Eyck’s *Adoration of the Lamb*; and for Fabrica, as informed by the Georgian church itself and the way light behaves in that building.

CC: It sounds as if, once the commission is confirmed, you know very early on how to combine material and place. You say you are ‘working to a vision’. What is the nature of the vision? Is it a sense that material and place are going to fit, or that their combination will, in fact, produce the opposite effect – that is, an incongruity or clash – which could still be called poetic? Are there any surprises or unexpected effects, beyond the vision, along the way?

EHV: Commissions are developed very differently: sometimes there is a fixed process of making a proposal, then sticking to the plan; sometimes it’s more adaptable. This is informed by time, resources and, of course, budget; but, predominantly, the methodology the commissioners choose to use or propose. I think I’ve made successful work when I’ve stayed close to an original proposal, but also, where time has allowed, the original proposal has changed dramatically. There are always surprises and unexpected challenges, and I learn a great deal more about a new material as I work with it. —→



first spread:
Haruspex (detail). Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, 2015, animal viscera. Courtesy of the artist and Djanogly Gallery. Photo: Nick Dunmur

previous spread:
Fragility (detail). Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, 2015, animal viscera. Courtesy of the artist and Djanogly Gallery. Photo: Nick Dunmur

above:
Fragility (installation view). Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, 2015, animal viscera. Courtesy of the artist and Djanogly Gallery. Photo: Nick Dunmur

following spread:
Fragility (installation view). Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva, 2015, animal viscera. Courtesy of the artist and Djanogly Gallery. Photo: Nick Dunmur



CC: The most recent work in *Making Beauty* is a series of sculptures from 2016. They are the result of Wellcome Trust-funded collaborations with scientists working in university departments specialising in digestive disease: University College Hospital (London), University of East Anglia and the University of Nottingham. The majority of the 2016 works are objects rather than installations, inspired by scientific visualisation: the use of imaging technologies and graphic displays to render visible what is normally invisible to perception, or correlations that occur over time. *Prototypes for Making a Machine*, for example, is a series of 3D-printed, white, nylon spheres, 8cm in diameter, that are versions of enlarged 3D-models of digestion-aiding molecules, designed by Dr Richard Day and his colleagues at the University College London.

The relationship that the sculptures have to their source domain feels different from the installations. This is not a criticism. Rather, it is an observation suggesting that disclosure and transformation operate in different ways in your work. The sculptures remain close to the environments or subjects from which they were drawn; for example, the enlargement of a molecule in Prototypes, and the rendering of a graph in copper in Manometry. Technically, enlargement and rendering in copper are transformations, but the concepts of molecule and graph are still prominent. In contrast, the installations involve a process of transformation, where material from a source domain, e.g. omasa, sheep intestines and caul fat, has been adapted to occupy a space so that material and space interact in a way which neither element in isolation could predict or intimate. The omasums, sheep intestine and caul fat still retain their identities as such, but they are now addressing a space, and have been arranged in ways where we are asked to consider them as something else. Is there a difference for you between sculpture and installation?

EHV: I think the difference is one of perception. So, for the installation, the process of viewing requires negotiating the space – you are part of the work; while for the sculptures, they are revealed in one view, a single act of consumption and the viewer is external. For me, it's not about a difference in transformation for sculpture or installation, but of scale, location and the relationship to viewer. For the installation, the materiality of the work is still critical.

CC: Do you think sculpture and installation can be distinguished in this way? A sculpture, or a painting for that matter, can make just as many demands on a body as an installation, compelling us to move this way, then that, to draw near, then to back away. In this sense, a viewer can be part of a sculpture or a painting. Also, it seems that, for both your installations and your sculptures, materiality is critical, whether it's suspended caul fat, or the nylon, lace-like structure of a molecule model. Might it be that the sculpture–installation distinction is not that strict or significant for you after all? Or is there something about an installation's relationship with its location that is key?

EHV: As I said, I think it's one of perception. For me, I'm concerned with the hidden, so the role of installation acts as a journey, perhaps a longer physical journey than that when looking at a sculpture, accomplished with a few steps, or a tilt of the head. Materiality is always a concern for any sculptural form. I'm interested in place and context, so I hope my installations convey that. Relocating installations is hard, so I'm particularly pleased that the installation in Nottingham worked so well, despite not being intended for that space.

CC: 'Beauty' is in the title of your exhibition, but it is also prominent as a theme, given the various beautiful or striking natural forms that appear in your work. The original, eighteenth-century meaning of 'fine art' is art that imitates or represents the beautiful in nature, but this is nature as it is perceived by the human eye, unaided, i.e. without instrumentation. I think something else is happening in contemporary scientific visualisation. The appearances achieved, technologically or graphically through visualisation, are not simply the properties of the objects under examination – for example, a molecule or bowel motility – but are partly generated by the conditions that allow the objects to be manifest in this way – for example, a molecule with a lace-like structure or bowel motility as a series of lines with occasional ripples. What is disclosed in this way is often beautiful, or visually striking, as demonstrated by exhibitions and competitions in the field of scientific imaging.

However, this is beauty that arises not because it looks like nature as we know it or want it to be, but because it is surprising that nature can take these forms. This is one form of beauty; beauty as metaphor: one thing presented in a surprising way. I think one of the values of your method of looking to see what is available within a subject or

an environment, is that it leads to specialists – butchers, bowel scientists – who reveal nature in surprising ways. To what extent are the objects you choose to work with guided by a concept of beauty?

EHV: I'm interested in aesthetics that are not bound by our usual view of beauty, but I'm looking to reveal and find beauty in unusual places, or unusual or unexpected materials. I've balanced this, in some works, by juxtaposing with materials we do associate with beauty, such as gold leaf, crafted and turned wood. I appropriate designs, for example those from the Whistler rooms at Mottisfont, the priory and country estate in Hampshire, that I gilded onto five fallen trees for *Resuscitare*, a site-specific installation which I created in the grounds of the priory in 2013.

CC: Balance is a significant metaphor. Are you saying you don't want these works to go too far as regards displaying unusual beauty, and that you introduce signs of conventional beauty to keep them at bay? Might it be the case that, by placing opposites side by side, relationships other than balance are being created, for instance, tension, incongruity?

EHV: I am not trying to minimise the impact of any unusual beauty I find; if anything I want to emphasise it, and yes, of course, other relationships are being suggested – tensions between forms as much as material, sculptural concerns, light, shadow, the spaces between, and certainly what's underneath and the way things touch—**CCQ**

Making Beauty: Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva was at Djanogly Gallery, Nottingham Lakeside Arts 20 August – 30 October 2016.

lakesidearts.org.uk

Elpida Hadzi-Vasileva has a solo show at Danielle Arnaud Gallery from 14 January – 12 February 2017. In spring 2017, her work will be included in A Scientific Encounter at Musée d'Anatomie de Montpellier.

daniellearnaud.com

That Beautiful Kiss That Doesn't Happen

Madagascan artist, Joël Andrianomearisoa, met **Ric Bower** at the opening of his solo exhibition, *Last Year at Antananarivo*, to talk about colonial legacies, the colour black, and the relationship of his culture with death.

Joël Andrianomearisoa: This is the first time that I have made work using my own memories of Madagascar. I built the show around found imagery and film. I am an artist, though, so my approach was both complicated and imperfect. I like the idea that everything we do exists in a continuous loop – our lives, our breath, our history – then, sometimes, certain incidents intervene to disrupt that cycle, making room for something else to appear, before the whole process is repeated over again.

Ric Bower: You have a reputation for using a lot of black in your work...

JA: The black that I have used in much of my earlier work, is about darkness. When you close your eyes, in the dark, different things have the capacity to be revealed –

smells, textures, even little chinks of light can become apparent in the darkness.

RB: There's a certain reverence, a religious sensibility, which you seem to be giving to the rows of black wrapped objects in *Last Year at Antananarivo*.

JA: We dedicate about 75% of our lives to the dead in Madagascar. Even when we are drinking, there is a tradition to pour a little alcohol in the corner of the room for the memory of people that have died.

When people die, we wrap them in layers of silk. If you are rich or well known, you might have, say, 50 layers; if you are not, you might just have two. My grandmother died about a year ago. She had about 20 layers, the first one referring to her as a child and the subsequent ones being about —→





1st spread:
What really happened last year? Walk through this door with me. Show me your eyes, again. Try to remember, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Tyburn Gallery

current spread, left to right:
Joana Francesa / Jeanne la Française, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Tyburn Gallery

Mireille Rakotomalala, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Tyburn Gallery

Mathangi Arulpragasam, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Tyburn Gallery

following spread, left page, first column, from top:
Duration: continuous loop, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Image courtesy the artist, FTM Archives, Antananarivo, Madagascar and Tyburn Gallery

Where have you been? **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Courtesy Joël Andrianomearisoa FTM Archives, Antananarivo, Madagascar and Tyburn Gallery

Your eyes tell me stories of Paris, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Images courtesy the artist, FTM Archives, Antananarivo, Madagascar and Tyburn Gallery

Last Year in Antananarivo, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Courtesy the artist, FTM Archives, Antananarivo, Madagascar and Tyburn Gallery

following spread, left page, second column
Do you remember? **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Images courtesy the artist, FTM Archives, Antananarivo, Madagascar and Tyburn Gallery

Remember Iarivo? **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Images courtesy the artist, FTM Archives, Antananarivo, Madagascar and Tyburn Gallery

following spread, right page
Untitled, **Joël Andrianomearisoa**, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Tyburn Gallery



her family. The last one was a red piece, like a dress; her last dress. After you die, every 10 or 20 years your body is exhumed and rewrapped.

Anyway. In the same way, the wrapping of objects in my work is to do with the memory of them. The technique for fabricating them is first to wrap them and then to remove the objects from their casing, leaving behind just the black wrapping, the shell, a hollow memory.

RB: You’ve placed the wrapped objects in an unexpected way in the gallery space; you almost trip over them as you walk in.

JA: Yes, when people expect a specific thing or approach, I don’t want to give it to them. When I’m about to kiss someone, it’s just at that moment that I might find I don’t want to kiss them.

RB: Delicate disruption and looking at things in alternative ways appear to play a large part in your practice. Similarly, you also seem to eschew the political or historical in any overt way, but both are very much present in your work.

JA: What people know most about the past of Madagascar is the colonisation of the country by the French; if you go there now, people are speaking French and there is a general sense of ‘French-ness’. My own experience of colonialism is based almost entirely on images and on the memories of my grandparents and my parents. Sometimes, they spoke of that time with a certain fondness; my grandmother would say, “Oh, when the French were here, the city was so clean; everything was more beautiful somehow...” Many of the forms we experience in Madagascar originate from the time of our

colonisation; but of course this implication is constructed. There is no perfect connection to the Madagascar of that time.

RB: You seem to have an awareness of the ephemerality of each period the country passes through.

JA: It’s all ephemeral. When the French left Madagascar in the early 1960s, just as they were leaving Vietnam and Algeria, there was a brief time when we were both French and independent at the same time. When my grandmother was looking back through the effects of my grandfather after he died, she discovered he still had a French passport.

Geographically, Madagascar is part of Africa, but our culture is also totally Asiatic; it’s a complex country. We are three times the size of France, but we are an island. If you come from an island and stay there, you have

to dream about something else; you have to imagine the connection.

RB: So, are you facilitating a process of imagined connection?

JA: Maybe... or just trying to disturb something.

RB: Can you offer an indication as to how you go about disrupting the direct reading of a subject, interrupting the conclusions that are so easy to slip into when dealing with subjects like Madagascar?

JA: I came across an archive from the Colonial period during my research for the show. I spent time with it, turning pages, just blowing off the dust and looking, and I came across this particular image of a group of people. Written on the back was ‘The Malagasy Ball, 19th

Century’ and I decided that this was the perfect image to use as the basis for my enquiry. I wondered how I could talk about the glamour that the title suggested, when in fact the image, as we read it now, is very unglamorous. I decided that the image wouldn’t have to be part of the hung show, but I wanted to use it as a vehicle. I worked with it over a period of time, chopping it and trimming it to different sizes.

While I was working on this, I was reminded of the film *L’Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961) by Alain Resnais; it is a languorous and elegant film. There is nothing concrete connecting the actors with the story; they pass one another by – like that beautiful kiss that doesn’t happen. There is no touch, there is no sensuality; everything is suspended.

RB: What role do images play in your practice?

JA: We don’t take time anymore to focus just on one thing, on one image. What I’m trying to do is to establish a link with something very small, something that you might have forgotten, something that might even be forbidden. For example, it’s ok to cry when you watch a film, but it’s not generally acceptable to cry in an exhibition. In an exhibition, it’s more about references and effect. I want people to be able to cry in my exhibitions.

RB: What processes of translation occurred between the source image that you found in the archive and your fully-fledged exhibition – the cloth pieces, that you refer to as paintings, and the black wrapped objects?

JA: The clothing in the archive image and the people depicted present a quite particular identity. I started tearing up fabric and attaching the strips to canvas. And, then, —→



I came across a woman selling second-hand saris and felt that was the right material to use, both because Madagascar and India have a very strong connection, and because it made sense aesthetically. I also took the objects from the photograph as a starting point for my wrapped objects. I added in other items – everyday ones, like a bottle from the cafe next door – to the collection. I wanted to disturb the perfection of the memory and of what the photograph shows.

RB: Many of the sari paintings have a strong horizon line. Why is that?

JA: I began my career training to be an architect in Paris. I learnt the importance of the horizon then. My main references were the Bauhaus and Malevich. When you're designing a building, the starting point is always a line from which you create two surfaces, two elements; outside and inside. That duality can be pushed much further of course: life and death, hell and paradise, light and darkness. The horizon line represents a fragile moment, the indiscernible point at which something can change. Also, you automatically have to think about proportion – what's below it, what's above. It's an interesting problem when hanging a work on a wall: do you hang in relation to the eye or the body?

RB: How has your training in architecture – a profession that usually sets out with the intention of creating something permanent – influenced your desire to work with the liminal and the ephemeral?

JA: As an architect you can build, but you can also destroy. When I had my interview to get into l'Ecole Speciale d'Architecture in Paris, I said that I was there to discover, not to understand. For the first two years, I studied hard, learning about volume, social implication and history, so that I could establish some context within which to work, some grounding. For the second part of the course, I decided to try and discover the point at which ephemerality ends and permanence begins.

My final presentation was a piece of textile, a black square. As with so much of my work, the significance lay, to a greater extent, in the intention rather than in the forms that I had actually constructed—**CCQ**

Joël Andrianomearisoa's solo exhibition, Last Year at Antananarivo was at Tyburn Gallery, London from 4 October – 22 December 2016

tyburngallery.com



Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan

As Artes Mundi 7 – the international exhibition and art prize – opened in Cardiff, shortlisted artists’ collective, Futurefarmers, spoke to **Ric Bower** about a sea voyage they are undertaking, to repatriate ancient grains to the Middle East, on an old sailing boat called Christiania. The form of the conversation loosely references nautical radio protocol, a metaphor Futurefarmers have adopted to represent the processes of exchange that have influenced the migration of seed varieties over the millennia.

The Journey

The wooden sailing boat Christiania departed on *Seed Journey*, a Flatbread Society project, from the port of Oslo, in September 2016, and concludes its voyage in Istanbul in June 2017. Ancient grains and stories are being collected en route by the crew, from farmers, bakers and seed savers. Each sample of grain collected is inventoried and sealed into an hourglass along the way. The return of the ancient seeds to the Middle East, from where many of them originate, is like reverse engineering, taking apart, fold by fold, their long and complicated history.

The Seeds

The endangered seeds, being taken on *Seed Journey*, have been rescued from various locations in the Northern Hemisphere – from the very formal (seeds saved in the Vavilov Institute Seed Bank, during the Siege of Leningrad) to the informal (experimental archaeologists discovering Finnish Rye between two wooden boards in an abandoned Rihii in Hamar, Norway). Many of the grains were once considered weeds, but have since been domesticated by complex, hand-to-hand networks, over tens of thousands of years.

The Vessel

The 47ft sailing boat undertaking the *Seed Journey* is the RS-10 Christiania, a wooden rescue vessel designed by the shipwright Colin Archer, built in Norway in 1895.

Note: Three calls of ‘pan-pan’ (pay attention now) are used in radiotelephone communications to signify that there is an urgency on board, but there is no immediate danger. This is referred to as ‘a state of urgency’.

Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan, Pan-Pan.
CCQ CCQ CCQ. **This is sailing vessel Christiania.** My position is Five One degrees, Eight Six Nine Seven Eight Zero minutes, North. Three degrees Zero Six Three One One Seven minutes, West. I have a crew of seven and a cargo of ancient grains. Do you wish to converse?

Over

Hello Christiania, **this is CCQ:** Yes we would like to converse.

Over

OK CCQ, **this is Christiana.** Go ahead.

Over

OK Christiania, **this is CCQ:** When we think of California in the early 1970s, we think of Neil Young singing, “They were flying Mother Nature’s silver seed to a new home in the sun”. As, you were growing up in California, did this vibrant period of hippy activism and idealism have a particular impact on you?

Over

CCQ, **this is Christiania:** 100% yes. The area is encompassed, on one side by the sierras and on the other by the Pacific Ocean, and it is split down the middle by a geological fault. In the late ’60s and early ’70s, military industrial complexes in California butted directly up against Land Movement communes, which represented the heart of the hippy thinking. At the time it was key, in our view, that, although these communities were in conflict, they were also in conversation. The anti-war and famous draft resister, David Harris, (Joan Baez’s husband) and new-environmentalist Stewart Brand are examples of the kind of people who were engaged in this strange dialogue. It’s both a dynamically and geographically charged area.

The artist David Hannah told me that: “California is where the East ends and the West begins.” He was saying, in effect, that California exists on a cusp. I think this permanently

transitional status has an effect on both our approach to art and our peculiarly interdisciplinary approach to education.

Over

Thank you Christiania, **this is CCQ:** When you are seeking alternative models, what percentage of your effort is spent looking backwards rather than forwards?

Over

CCQ, **this is Christiania:** I think Futurefarmers used to spend a lot more time looking into the future; we began to realise that it is hard to be really present though, if you are looking forward all the time. We did this project called Victory Gardens, in which we proposed reinstating a garden in front of City Hall, San Francisco, as it had been in the 1940s. We started to realise that a lot of ideas, particularly in urban planning, never get fully realised. So, rather than reinventing the wheel, we thought that perhaps we should

be recycling some of these unused proposals, looking backwards rather than forwards.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** How does this kind of radically socially engaged practice translate into the gallery environment? Why do you continue working with museums and these kind of traditional spaces.

Over

CCQ, **this is Christiania:** We used to challenge it way more, and try to force the museums as institutions to let us work outside of the accepted museum space. Our practice is alive and dynamic; it often involves a public programme. The artist, to a certain extent, disappears amidst the many personalities who would, for instance, turn up for a baking workshop. There is no way to capture that kind of experience and share it with a broader audience, if you weren’t actually —→



above:
Photo: Amy Franceschini/Futurefarmers, 2016

following spread, top:
Photo: Monica Lovdahl, 2016

middle:
Photo: Martha Van Dessel, 2016

bottom:
Photo: Monica Lovdahl, 2016

final spread:
Photo: Monica Lovdahl, 2016

there; we think social artists struggle with that. The reason we show in museums is to try to distil and document our work. We translate the work into sculptural elements, which we consider as props. Props in theatre are a simplified representation of something that is, in reality, more dynamic. ‘Prop’ is also the shortened form of the word propagation, as in the propagation of ideas. The museum allows a poetic entry point to our work too; it allows time to be with the work, to connect your own dots, so to speak. A museum also has a robust infrastructure, within which we can distribute our work; it doesn’t have a broader audience, it is quite limited, to be honest. If we are doing things in a public space, the audience is probably demographically more diverse. We have credibility as a group by being associated with the museum, so, when we call the Welsh Grain Farm and invite them to library at the National Museum, it has the effect of validating their work too.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** What techniques do you use to build community over an extended period of time, to develop Futurefarmers as a group of creative individuals, rather than a single creative individual?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: Presence and duration are the two tools that avail us to make rooted projects in a place CCQ. The project we are working on in Oslo is called Durational Public Art, the other artist involved has committed themselves to it for 100 years. We will probably be there for 15 years.

Over

This is CCQ: That is a serious commitment Christiania!

Over

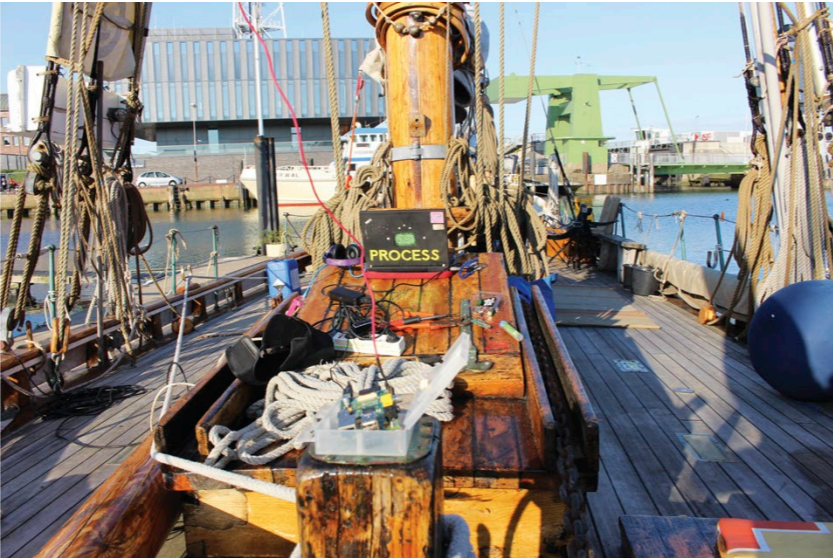
CCQ, this is Christiania: Our strategy to become fully committed to the place begins with living there and attending everything we can that might have a bearing on our project. The first year is spent doing research. Oslo is going through a huge transition of gentrification, a redefinition of their waterfront to put them on a global stage. We did not want to participate in this, so we sought out the resistance, the alternatives. We went to social service projects, hackerspaces, squats and art projects – people living alternatively – and then sought to transfer some of the broader capital to these people. In Oslo, we are engaging directly with the corporate developers. I think, when I was younger, I would not have entertained such an engagement; now I am thinking that we have an opportunity to sit at the table with people who are deciding the future of this place – it’s clay so let’s sculpt it! In Oslo we have succeeded in changing the master plan, at least temporarily, for example a piece of land that was going to be a football field with some benches and street lights, will now instead become an urban farm with a bakehouse.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** You are all spending a lot of time at sea together at the moment, which means you are living in very close proximity to one another, which in turn means submitting yourself to the hierarchy that working on a boat demands to function efficiently and safely; something that is perhaps counterintuitive to an alternative culture. How is this lifestyle choice informing your thinking about your practice?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: We love the hierarchy. We think it makes things really clear; there is only one answer to any given



question and there is no time for debate. The idea of being on a boat is trying to mirror, with our bodies, the slowness of the migration of seeds and the slowness of growing grain – trying to be present in that.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** And you have no choice but to be present, in a boat.

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: Indeed... and we are developing new muscles, both mental and physical, by being here. We all live in port cities, we are used to being surrounded by trade, but to be at sea in a little old wooden boat with these huge ships, waiting with them to go into port, brings a quite different perspective for us.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** Seed Journey as you mentioned, is being undertaken on a 1895 wooden rescue sailboat. What drew you to this kind of boat?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: We saw a photograph of the boat, stuck in ice, with a small windmill on its deck. It was powered by wind but it wasn’t moving; it was designed to handle the rigours of being stuck in ice as it journeyed North. It was lined with reindeer fur to insulate it and the windmill was there to power a small lamp. The crew knew that if they did not have light to do stuff, whilst they were stuck, they would go crazy. They published a daily newspaper by that light and had a beautiful library of books to read. The rescue boat now is enacting a fantasy by taking these grains back to where they were first domesticated.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** So the process of communication,

within the context of your journey, is mirroring in some way the spreading of seeds.

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: It is important that there is an informal side to our processes of communication, and it does not simply occur through official channels and media. The misquotes and errors, that are propagated as a story is passed on, are an important part of the process. From these very pragmatic activities that make up the process of living on a boat – using the radio as a vehicle of communication, for instance – we have borrowed these ideas, that then inform our own communication schedules within the project.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** What do you believe is the implication of the idea of ‘commons’ within contemporary society?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: It is trying to keep air, water and land in the hands of many, rather than the hands of few.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** In a previous work of yours, A Variation on the Powers of Ten, a multifaceted response to Charles and Ray Eames’ film, Powers of Ten (1977), you contemplate scale. How is scale, as a phenomenon, implicated within your current project, Seed Journey?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: The challenge for us is to remain small scale. Ancient grains are becoming more popular now, and grains are being selected out from them that bake better, or grow particularly well in warmer climates. That is exactly what we do not want to be doing of course;

perhaps instead we should be leaving a part of any crop completely unselected, to preserve diversity in the plant. It becomes an issue of managing the financial implications of that decision. In general, I tend to think in terms of time rather than scale, though.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** Can you explain that relationship then – that is, the project’s relationship with time – in the broader sense?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: Time, as we understand it, is a human phenomenon; it is standardised. Seed types are standardised; they are stable, describable and homogeneous. Futurefarmers has very much been about breaking down the standards that dictate the way we do things. Our seeds are uncertified, unstable and hard to categorise; these are the qualities that we seek in our practice. Our trip itself is unstable; it is dependent on the weather and fluctuating currents. I thrive in that uncertainty. I grew up on a farm where a storm might destroy a crop, or a change in politics mean a certain fertiliser could not be used, or a subsidy would not be given; things can change completely overnight. It is our role as a group to create a framework around that uncertainty that’s intentional; as our captain says, ‘the more organised you are the more disorganised you can afford to be’.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** You are keen to involve ceremony and ritual in your processes. Is this a religious thing?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: It can actually be something of a problem. We are, after all,

heading to Palestine in a boat called Christiania; within this context, words like ‘rescue’ and ‘return’ become quite loaded. For us, the significance of these actions comes from the repetition that is inherent in the idea of ritual. The seed ceremony is about trying to enact an exchange with the farmers, to give the seeds themselves agency.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** What recurring thoughts or messages have you come across over the last year or two?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: A farmer in Norway said to us: “we don’t need a museum to conserve varieties of plant. What we need to do is to grow them.” We have adopted this message – it is on the [National Museum Wales] wall in Morse code – and we take it with us on our journey. We ask each farmer if there is a message they want us to pass on as we travel, or to give directly to the next farmer that we meet. Every time we have asked a farmer this question it has been a poignant experience and, on three separate occasions, they have actually been moved to tears.

Over

Christiania, **this is CCQ:** Wow. Why do you think you have had this response?

Over

CCQ, this is Christiania: One farmer said to us, yesterday, that preserving ancient grains was ruining him. It was simply not economical for him to grow these varieties. When we do the ceremony, we are providing a degree of validation to people like him, I think, for all their unacknowledged and unrewarded effort. Some people make money by making beer out of these grains, but rarely →



do they make money directly from the grain by itself. I think it is powerful for them, too, that we are enacting the same ceremony with other farmers, who are upholding similar principles.
Over

Thank you Christiania, **this is CCQ:** Good luck in your mission.
Out

Futurefarmers was founded by Amy Franceschini, in 1995, and is a group of artists, researchers, designers, farmers, scientists, engineers, with a common interest in creating work that challenges current social, political and economic systems.

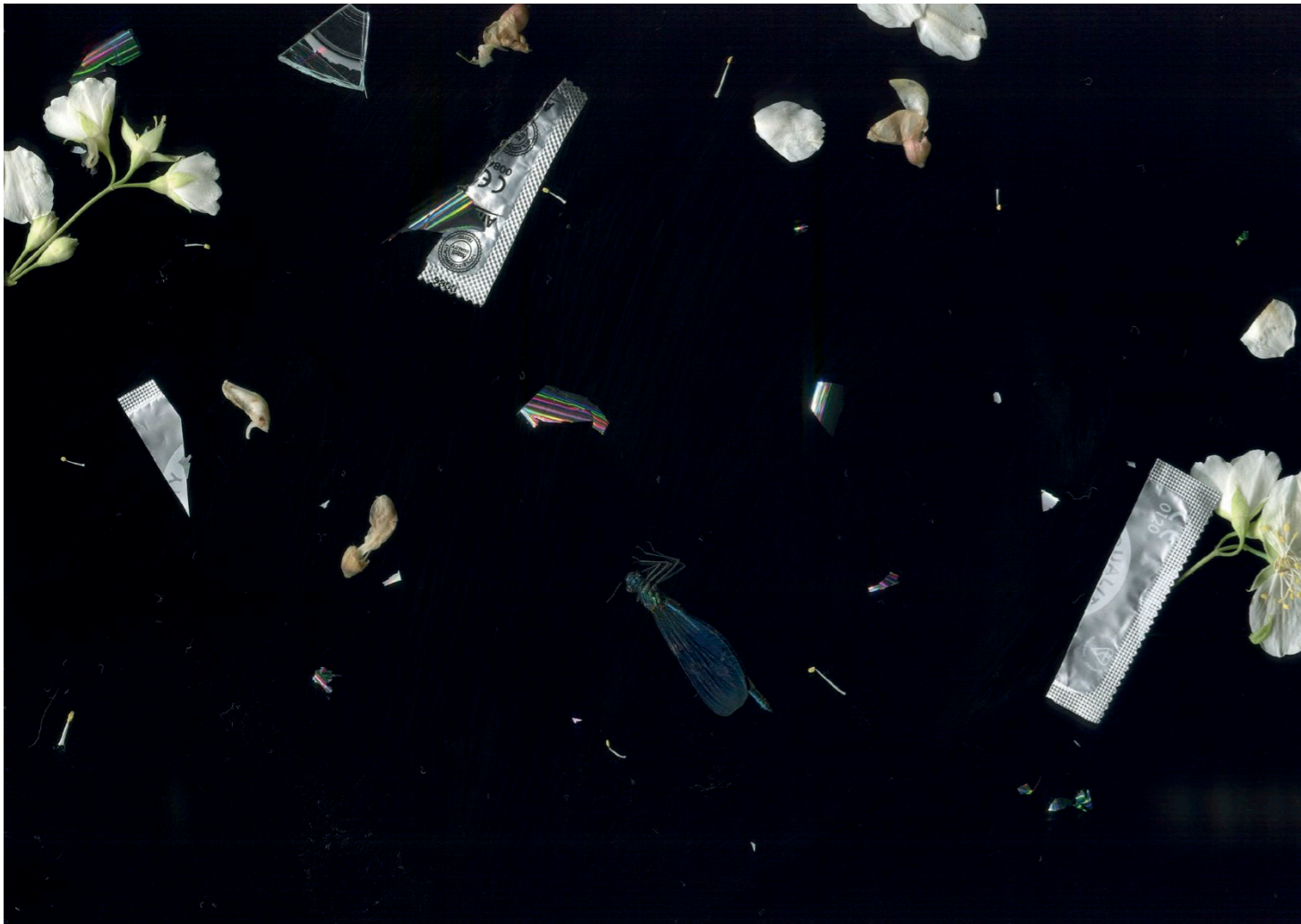
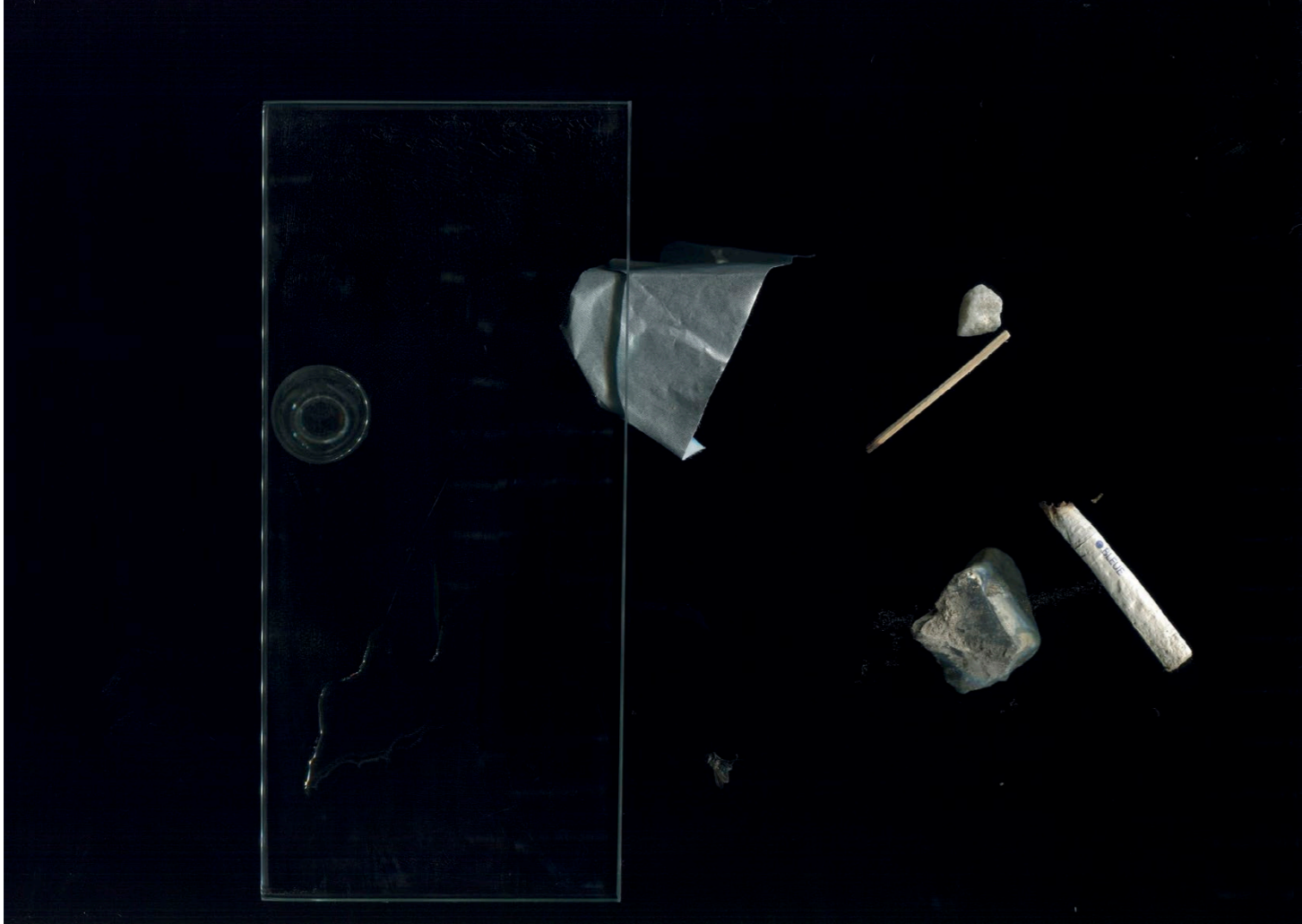
futurefarmers.com

Flatbread Society is a permanent public art project created in a common area in the waterfront development of Bjørvika, in Oslo, Norway. In 2012 Futurefarmers formed Flatbread Society as a proposition for working with local actors to establish an aligned vision for the use of this contested area of land. The group's dynamic activation of the site through public programs, a bakehouse and a cultivated grain field has attracted the imagination of farmers, bakers, oven builders, artists, activists, soil scientists and city officials.

flatbreadsociety.net

Artes Mundi 7 runs at Amgueddfa Cymru/National Museum Wales and Chapter until 26 February 2017

artesmundi.org
museum.wales
chapter.org



Fragments

Singaporean artist WeiXin Chong makes physical and digital works in response to the detritus she collects. She spoke to **Ric Bower** during her solo presentation at Start Art Fair 2016 about cross-disciplinary processes and the digital realm.

WeiXin Chong: I made the *Toute La Nuit* series of scanned images while on a residency in Paris. I was there as part of The Urban Explorations Project [a project by the Media Lab at Lasalle College of the Arts, Singapore] with a group of other creatives, including a photographer, a bio-enthusiast and media artists. It was a strangely isolated and focused work environment... the idea was to collect data in urban spaces. I began the project conscious that I was doing something quite different from science; I was trying to create ‘aesthetic data’. I collected, organised and labelled detritus from various locations in Paris, then picked out fragments at night to look at them separately, before choosing and composing them for the scanner.

Ric Bower: How did you choose what to place on the scanner from the detritus you collected?

WXC: I’m very aware that I am in a strange position of power over these assorted fragments. When I look at them, they take on personalities... out of a large pool of various detritus, I start to see the relationships and connections between the individual objects.

RB: What influences the selection process: is it an externally imposed narrative or is it intuition?

WXC: It’s entirely intuition. Especially for this series, as none of the detritus belonged to me – they all had their own history. I tried to see what feeling I could absorb from each object.

RB: Insects seem to hold a particular significance...

WXC: Insects were part of my daily life during the residency. Growing up, I loved insects; I kept them and observed them throughout my childhood. Later, by learning about their scientific names, I became aware of the history behind the observation, recording and classification of specimens in colonised regions. To me, it’s an extremely

valuable history, yet also riddled with a dark complexity. This duality underlies the organic elements which reference natural history within my work.

RB: The inclusion of insects in your work seems to allude to ephemerality in the same way that depictions of insects were *memento mori* in the work of 17th century still life painters, like Georg Flegel. But how are the effects of time integral to the development of the work itself, though?

WXC: There is a lot of waiting during the process: waiting for night, waiting for the dark, waiting for people not to disturb me! Before I could see the images and respond to them, I had to wait for each high resolution scan to complete – it was a strange and suspended state.

RB: During the residency you worked alongside creatives with a science-driven focus. How does data collected by scientists relate to your collection and use of ‘aesthetic data’?

WXC: There are some parallels and also some counterpoints. Despite looking for our own samples, we would complete some field research as a team which influenced our conversations, of course. However, the priorities we had would be quite different when we were at the same location. The scientist was trying to interpret the city through the collection of snails to create concrete data sets. The project aimed to bring together a group of different makers with different creative perspectives. I’m still in contact with some of the other participants... it was, and is, great to have that ‘cross-view conversation’.

RB: Have you had other ‘cross-view conversations’ that have influenced your work?

WXC: Yes, I had a residency in Carrara with

a group of creatives and had the privilege of being at Laboratori Artistici Nicoli, an historic marble workshop (working with Gabrielle Dini, on a project called *Excavata*) where I made an archive of discarded marble chips. I had great conversations with people I met in Carrara, discussing attitudes to their own work with marble and marble workers, and views on the history of quarrying... how there is a macho, monumental relationship with the marble object: sculpted, the bigger the better, compared to a traditional Chinese or Japanese philosophy, geared towards finding landscapes within the patterns in stone. Meanwhile, I had been creating scans from the marble fragments and making these into large-scale silk pieces. In a cheeky way, this subverts the monumentality of the material and plays with the different cultural perspectives towards it.

RB: By reconstituting the marble texture with the small fragments, you were undermining both cultural discourses surrounding the material, I guess?

WXC: Yes and, significantly, my marble works are also made from detritus.

RB: You also collect digital debris, I gather...

WXC: The digital realm is an exciting alternative reality to me. Our experience of it begins with activities within our own familiar reality, but it then extrapolates those activities out and beyond what we are humanly capable of or familiar with. The idea of a digital file being both simultaneously concrete and also completely abstract is fascinating to me. It might be the case that it is completely impossible to erase a digital file from existence... This strange kind of existence the digital realm operates in alludes to ideas of reincarnation and mortality. I’m interested in how the digital, while becoming integrated in our senses, is a ghostly extension of something beyond our

own physicality. I am also jarringly aware that when I'm looking at the icons on a computer screen desktop I'm reading in code rather than just using my natural visual sensibilities. The icons contain so much visual information, but I've learnt to process them instantly; my brain is learning to parallel the computer's processes by overriding my own physical senses.

RB: Are you personally optimistic about the digital realm?

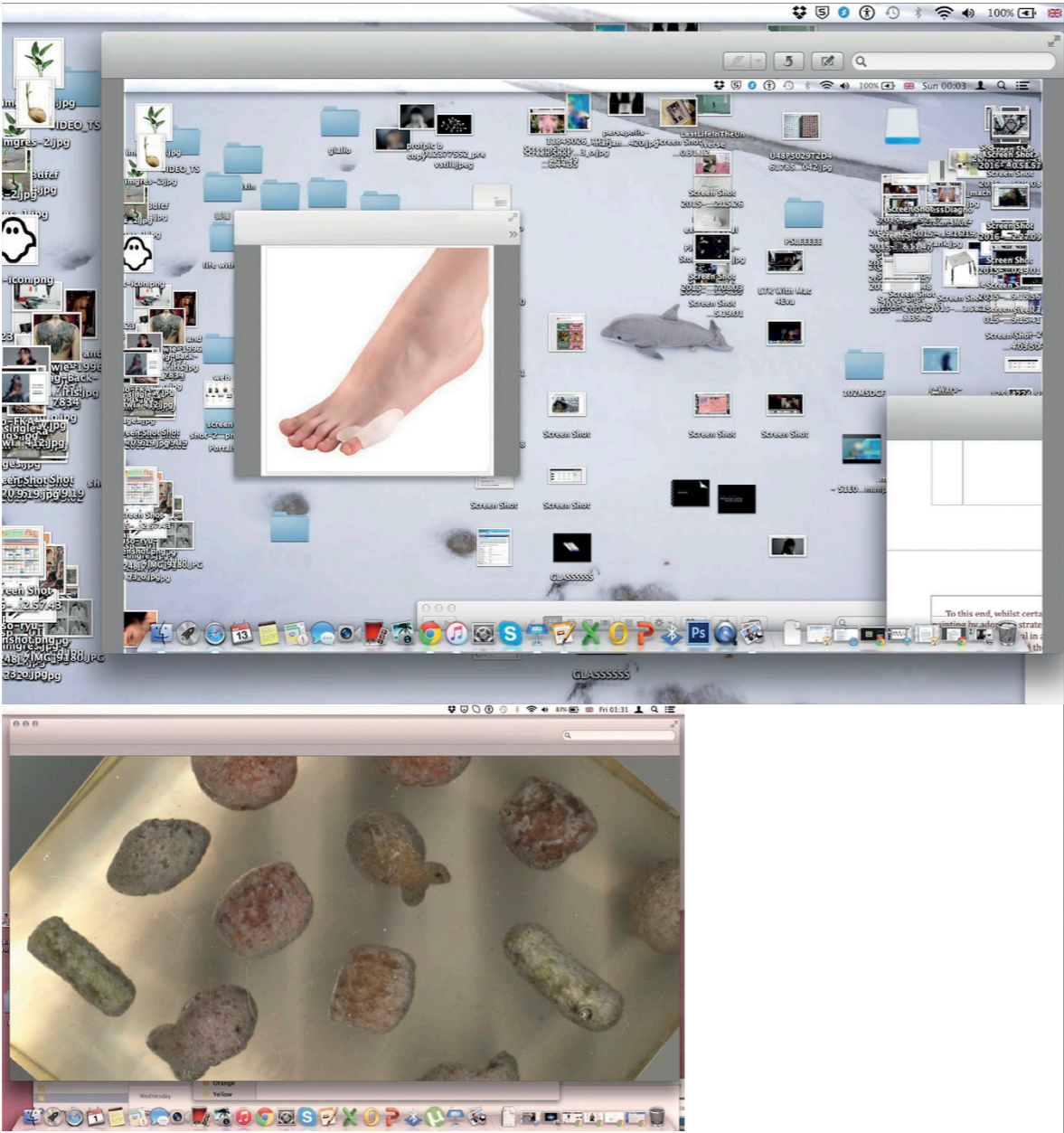
WXC: I'm conflicted about it, because with every utopia there inevitably comes a dystopia. What interests me in particular is the constant flipping between those two perspectives. I see how the digital strategies might offer a possible redemption for our lost connection with materiality. Conversely I can also see how much it replaces and displaces a lot of other things like our general awareness, our memory capacity and our language.

RB: It seems to me your engagement with the digital is quite subtle, because it's addressing our mental adaptations to the digital realm rather than the perhaps more obvious physical changes in our behaviour. How do you set out to explore these subtleties as a practitioner?

WXC: Since I began the series of *Dictation* performances – where collaborators are invited to transcribe as I am reading from a selection of fixed texts – alongside my visual and material work, I have connected with my audience differently. I'm wary of the speed that we become accustomed to looking at things. Through the dictation experience, I can enter a slightly different space where the focus is purely on communication and language. This is so important to me, as the digital space is a reflection of psychological space; equally unknown and vast. As a result, I approach my work not primarily as digital, but as an extension of interior space—**CCQ**

Start Art Fair 2016 was at the Saatchi Gallery, London, 15 – 18 September

startartfair.com
tropicalghosts.net
a-i-gallery.com



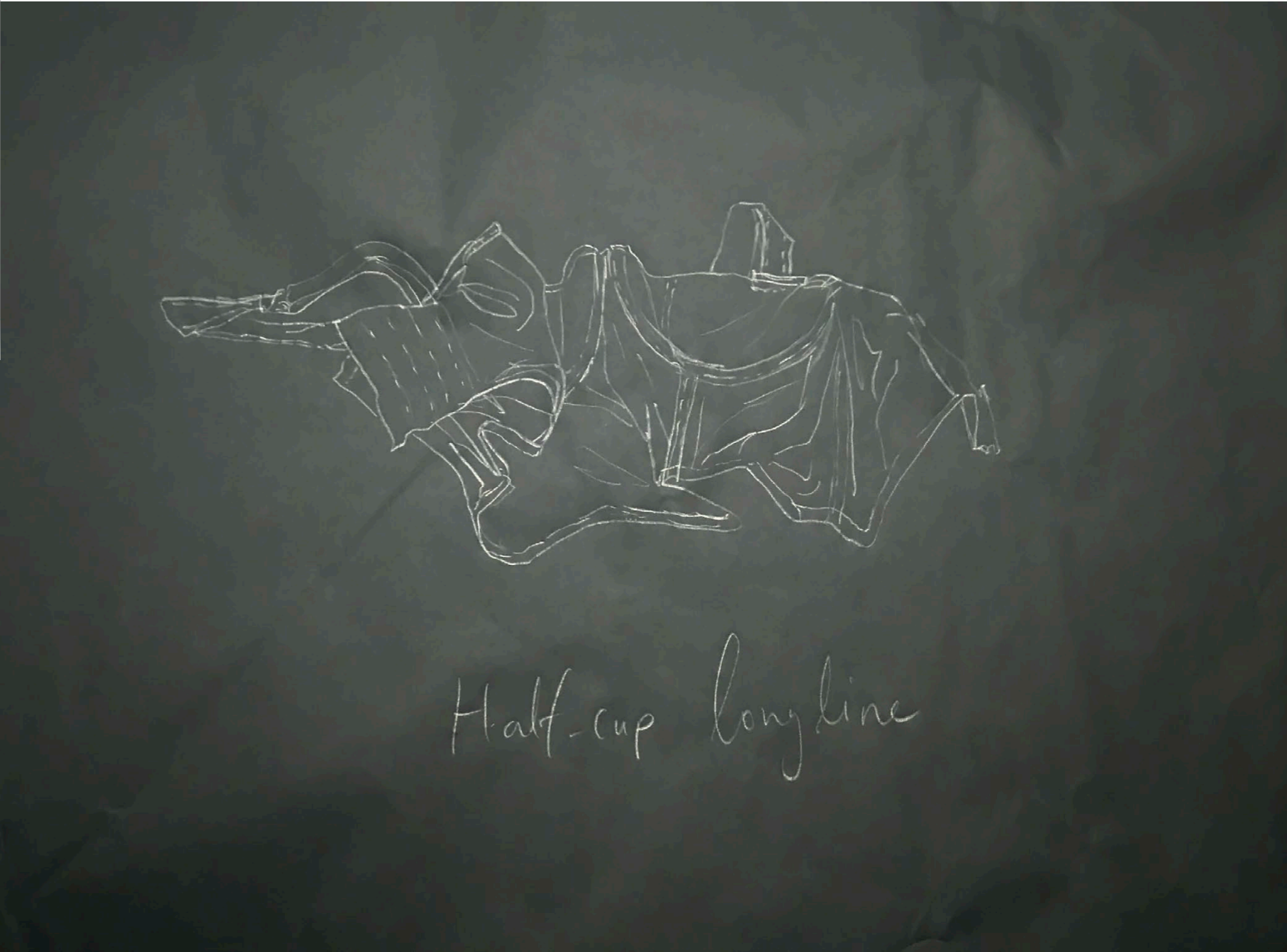
previous spread, top:
Bois de Boulogne (Toute La Nuit series),
WeiXin Chong, 2015. Dye-sublimation on
aluminium, 43.6 x 60cm. Courtesy of the
artist and A.I. Gallery

bottom:
Ionesco (Toute La Nuit series), **WeiXin Chong**,
2015. Dye-sublimation on aluminium, 43.6 x
60cm. Courtesy of the artist and A.I. Gallery

this page, top:
Percentage/Proportions, **WeiXin Chong**, 2016,
Giclee on high-definition paper, 20 x 29cm.
Courtesy of the artist and A.I. Gallery

this page, above:
Smoothness of the succulent, **WeiXin Chong**,
2016. Giclee on high-definition paper, 20 x
29cm. Courtesy of the artist and A.I. Gallery

opposite page:
Under the Dress (6), **WeiXin Chong**, 2016,
Graphite on Tissue paper, 31.5 x 44cm.
Courtesy of the artist and A.I. Gallery



Curation as Conversation – A Correspondence

Artist and curator, **Frances Woodley**, developed her latest exhibition for *Models and Materialities: Confabulation and the Contemporary Still Life*, in an extraordinarily collaborative way, corresponding with the artists whose work she was curating, and engaging in discussion throughout the development of the exhibition. In an abridged version of her interaction with artist **Jamie Stevenson**, Woodley's curatorial approach and reflections on the place of still life in contemporary art are teased out.



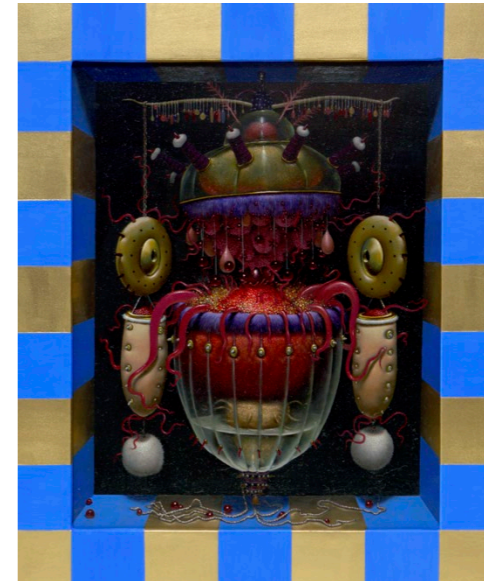
Jamie Stevenson: As an outsider, who has only had a very brief time to observe you as a curator and writer, it strikes me that your fascination with contemporary still life is an almost archaeological one.

Frances Woodley: Your archaeological metaphor is interesting. It's close in some ways, but not in others. In my recent curatorial projects, I have been uncovering rather than excavating, and discovering potential in the past rather than reconstructing it. I should say here that I am a researcher and not a professional curator so, when I go in search of contemporary painting of still life, it is to look for something in circulation, something alive, not entirely graspable and on the move. I am drawn to how things and ideas escape their past yet remain rooted in it, particularly in the painting of still life.

JS: Such an endeavour requires care and respect, but also a relentless enthusiasm and a drive to learn. You are constantly trying to place yourself, if not in the mind of the artist, then at least somewhere in their atmosphere; distanced so that you remain yourself, but just close enough that some of the humanity that imbues each of you may crackle across the gap, like static.

FW: I decided, early on, that the only way I would be able to come to any sort of meaningful understanding of the contemporary interpretation of this traditional genre was to engage with artists and writers directly by means of conversation, correspondence, writing and curation. Importantly, there was never any attempt on my part to get to the 'essence' of artists' practice. Instead, what has been learnt on both sides has occurred in the interchange between us.

The three curatorial projects which I have initiated over the last few years, have been a search for a community of practice that barely knows itself as such. Artists, invited to participate, were prepared to take the risk of being questioned, challenged and changed by what we undertook together. I realised,



early on, that a combination of empathy, respect, patience, generous critique, genuine interest, openness and humour, would be the most effective manner with which to proceed if we were all to get something out of the project and beyond. This research was, after all, intended to inform my own practice too. Conversation as method and metaphor has therefore been the fulcrum for the projects, bringing artists' work together in ways that a straightforward group show or directory could not have done. G.L. Brierley, a participating artist, wrote to me shortly after this recent exhibition, "You helped open up new thoughts and areas and I am grateful. Lovely, too, to be part of a dialogue with the other artists, having the work contextualised within so many layers gives it life in the world".

JS: Yes, you're right, perhaps my archaeology metaphor doesn't properly acknowledge the vitality so intrinsic to these paintings and your correspondences with the artists. It does raise in me some interesting thoughts about this exhibition's relationship with time and history, however.

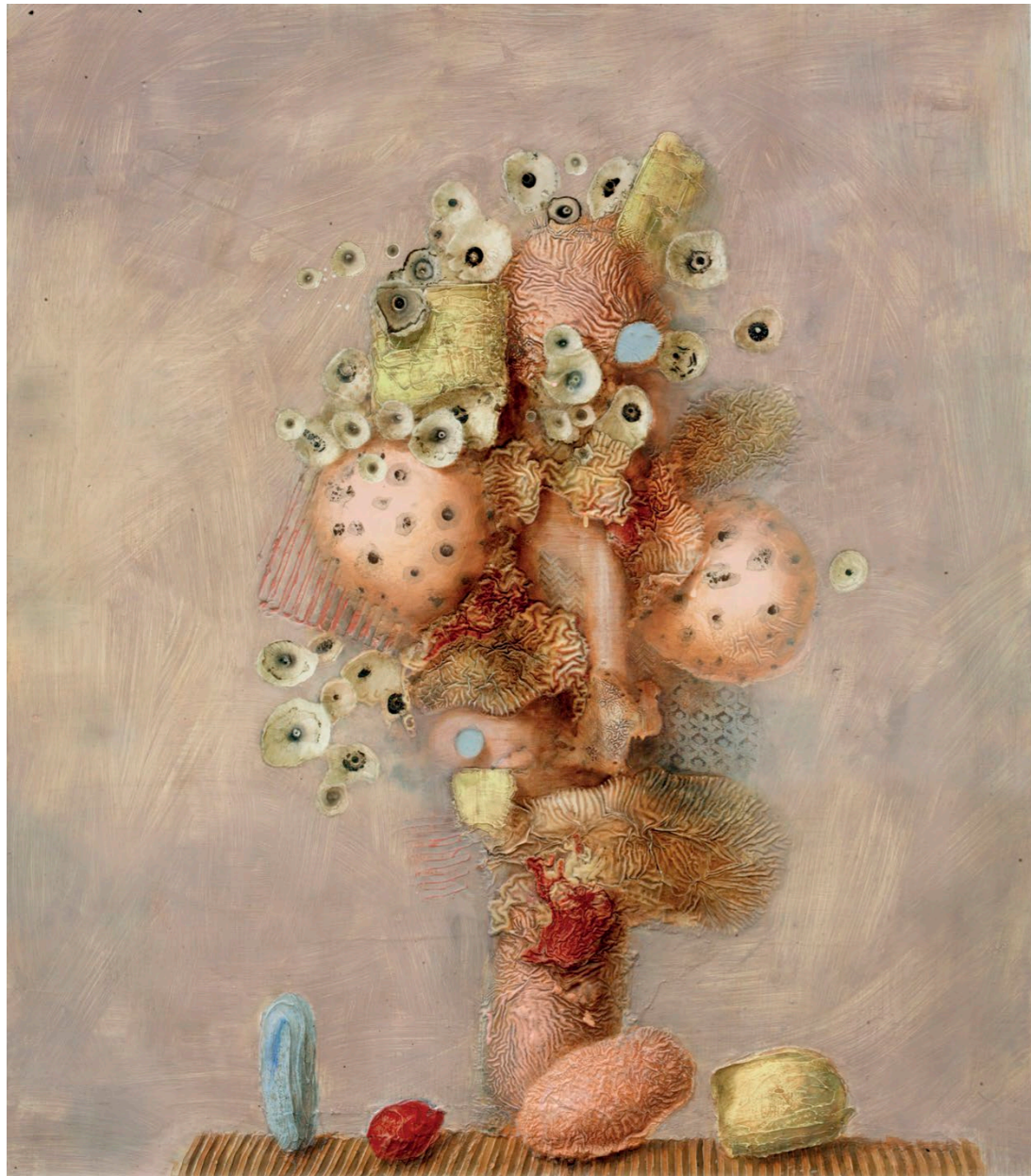
A lost civilisation is generally lost in time far more so than it is in space, but one strange aspect of a curated exhibition

is that, when considered as a single phenomenon in its entirety (curator included), it appears atemporal.

FW: The time in which art is made is crucial for its execution (materials, technologies, gestures and so forth), availability (not everything is open to sight, sensation and understanding at the same time), and its reception (viewing contexts). Fundamental to my research has been current painting's conversation with past art. This is not a yearning for the past (nostalgia), but how past art, existing as it does in the present in museums, collections, books and websites and so on, addresses, and is addressed by, painters today.

JS: For my part, you see, I have experienced *Models and Materialities* in several stages. The first, the exhibition, is anchored to time in two ways: for one, I can place the visit to the gallery within my own singular timeline; secondly, I had the power to choose the length of time and order in which I viewed the artworks. The visit was a tangible, recallable event with another timeline of events held within it. After reading the catalogue and beginning our correspondence, however, that clear chronology becomes muddled. Suddenly I am grappling not only with the vast context of the still life tradition, and how it informs these contemporary painters and their practices, but also with your timeline as researcher and curator, and finally the timelines and memories of the artists themselves.

FW: But isn't this how we all live and experience time – all muddled up? In contemporary Western culture, we operate in interconnected modes of sequential, historical, virtual and future time. We situate ourselves in relation to memory, its confabulation and effacement. No-one's experience of time is quite the same, yet we choose to make a 'human connection', as you say, through its shared technologies, such as digital clocks, timers, etc., and regulated cultural structures and practices, such as art history and museums. —→



previous pread, left:
Monkey, Peter Jones, 2016,
oil on canvas, 25.5 x 30.5 cm

right:
El Dorado, John Greenwood, 2016,
oil on linen, 35 x 30 cm + frame

this spread, left top:
Pert, G.L. Brierley, 2015,
oil on wood, 90 x 103 cm

bottom:
Live at the Witch Trials, Jonny Green, 2015,
oil on canvas on board, 90 x 72 cm

opposite:
Teeter #2, Clare Chapman, 2015,
oil on canvas, 30 x 40 cm

following spread, left
Pill Packs Adjacent Light, Alex Hanna, 2016,
oil on board, 20 x 25 x 3 cm

right:
Head Bag I, Chris Nurse, 2016,
oil on canvas, 120 x 97 cm





In the early modern period, when still life painting was established, people experienced seasonal, mythological, classical and biblical time together and were happy to mix it up. Examples include floral still lifes, where seasonal flowers were presented synchronically and, like us, they were not averse to anachronic appropriation either.

JS: It may be my position as a newcomer, not only to this method of correspondence but also to this area of research process, that causes me, perhaps mistakenly, to search for temporal order that may aid my understanding. I think my only instinctive (and perhaps subconscious) option, when faced with a chronological maze such as this one, is to dispense with the notion of time altogether, choosing instead to examine the people, the artworks and the ideas. How, I ask, might someone entirely outside the curation process attempt to consider it metaphysically as a whole, rather than as an assortment of tangible end products, connected by intangible ideas?

FW: Yes, ‘the people, the artworks and the ideas’ are the thing, but they are also products of the past, of memory and history. Ultimately an exhibition stands or falls on its artworks. I, as mere curator of *Models and Materialities*, can take no credit for the extraordinary diversity of painterly language to be seen across paintings by Dodds, Smith, Green and Hanna, for instance, or the worlds created in Greenwood’s paintings or the wordlessness of Jones’ or Nurse’s. Curation and critique are, at best, only additional interpretive tools with which to open paintings up to conversation. It is this that brings them together as a whole.

JS: You’ve spoken, in the catalogue and in this correspondence, of several different instances of ‘conversation’ that exist throughout the project: contemporary still life painters’ conversations with past tradition; your conversations with the artists; our conversation with each other. The link between them is the very essence of a conversation – a deep reflexivity that uses the mutual connection with a subject, circumstance or concept to enable a transformation, both in the conversers’ perceptions of that subject and in their perceptions of themselves and each other.

FW: You discriminate between different types of conversation and you’re right to do so. Are you suggesting there may be a problem with how far the elasticity of this

term can be usefully stretched? My thoughts on conversation are drawn and adapted from Gadamer’s writings, particularly in *Truth and Method* (first published in 1960). Of conversation, Gadamer writes: “No one knows in advance what will ‘come out’ of conversation... the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it – i.e. that it allows something to ‘emerge’ which henceforth exists.”

JS: There seems to be another, less explicit form of conversation at play here, and that is the one between the paintings themselves. The nature of an exhibition is such that the artworks on display can no longer be considered as singular cultural events; instead they are forced to open themselves to the contexts of all the other artworks. Given that paintings exist as much in the viewer’s perception of them as they do in materiality, then a change in that perception could be considered a conversation between the artworks, with the viewer acting as a mediator.

FW: Paintings are unable to ‘speak’ without the mediation of a viewer but, arguably, they can be made more open to conversation between themselves when assisted by a curator. Seen this way the curator functions as enabler, mediator and interpreter. Such ‘interference’ comes with its own surprises: for example, though I had planned in advance for this intertextual conversation, I was taken unawares when the pinks and carmines of Clare Chapman’s paintings of amorphous things ‘spoke’ across the gallery to Christopher Nurse’s paintings of crimson ‘military jackets’ (painted paper models), on top of which perched flushed portraits of WWI generals (painted on upturned paper bags). Prior to this, I had understood Nurse’s paintings as absurdist anamorphic arrangements, but now, brought on by my own curation, I understood something else about what Sassoon had ironically termed ‘cheery old card[s]’ when caught in the glare of Chapman’s erotic blushes. Conversation, and curation, should always exceed our expectations of the art on view, and surprise us—**CCQ**

Models and Materialities: Confabulation and the Contemporary Still Life, was at BayArt gallery, Cardiff 1 – 29 October, 2016

Participating artists and writers included: Jonny Green, Peter Jones, Laura Smith, G.L. Brierley, Clare Chapman, John Greenwood, Tim Hon Hung Lee, Christopher Nurse, Tim Dodds, Alex Hanna, Dr Jonathan Clarkson, Philip Nicol, Isabel Seligman, Catherine Roche, Frances Woodley

bayart.org.uk



Resilience in Uncertainty

Despite recent turbulence, the eleventh Contemporary Istanbul was held in November 2016. **Clelia Coussonnet** visited Turkey's largest, most cosmopolitan city to gauge the impact on one of the newer international art fairs of the failed coup attempt on the government

In 2016, the Turkish regime stiffened, instilling a form of censorship, which resulted in the growth of uncertainty in all spheres of public life. The repercussions on the cultural scene can be sensed, and several events cancelled their 2016 editions – Art International, Moving Image and the 5th Çanakkale Biennial – while some exhibitions, and Contemporary Istanbul itself, have been marked by altercations with both conservatives and radicals. As a consequence, the market is more volatile and lacklustre, with only 70 galleries participating in the fair, compared to an average of 100 in previous years.

However, Contemporary Istanbul's (CI) founder, Ali Güreli, never thought of postponing the event, even adding a design section to it. Rather than become isolated, he decided to go for solidarity and capitalise on the future, relying on the fair's strong network of local collectors. If the city definitely looks towards Europe – especially London or Berlin – more than towards the Middle East, for instance, the influx of international collectors has been less important in Istanbul in the past months.

In the fair (a packed, high-class event, sometimes flirting with luxury), the majority of pieces avoided any politically overt topics, with a marked preference for ornamental works. The most interesting participations came from emerging galleries. This was evidenced in the bestowing of the Best Booth Award to the pared-down presentation of the freshly inaugurated The Pill gallery, based in the Balat district away from the art circuits of Beyoğlu and Karaköy's.

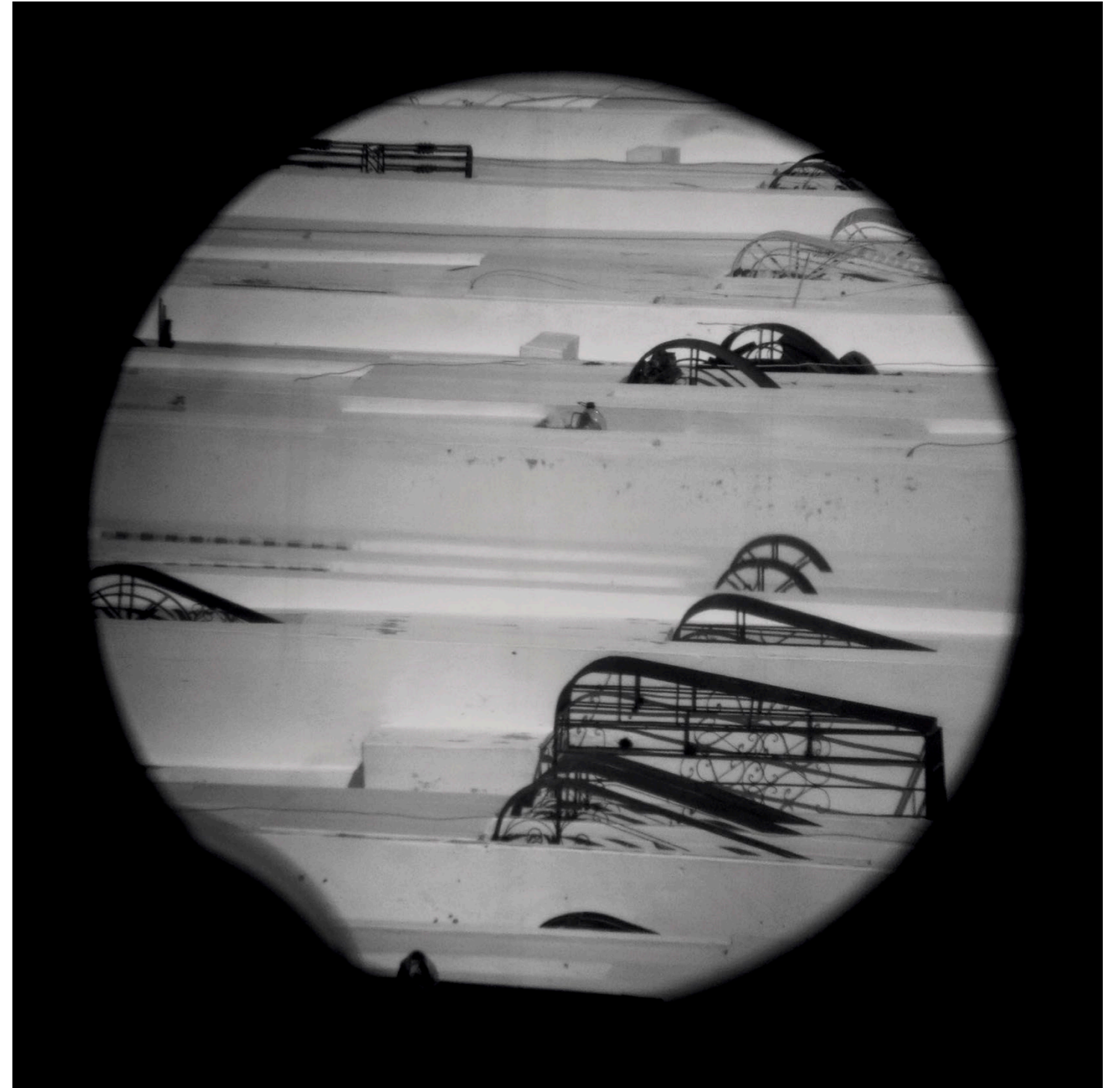
Few pieces were anchored in the city's history and fabric, with the exception of the beautiful architectural installation *Lions* (2016), by Zimbabwean artist Adrian Hermanides, at Xavier Laboulbenne's booth. Focusing on appropriation strategies, the artist collected cobblestones, found concrete and marble from Taksim Square, and gathered them in a modular steel structure, shown alongside a silver gelatin print. Presented for the first time,

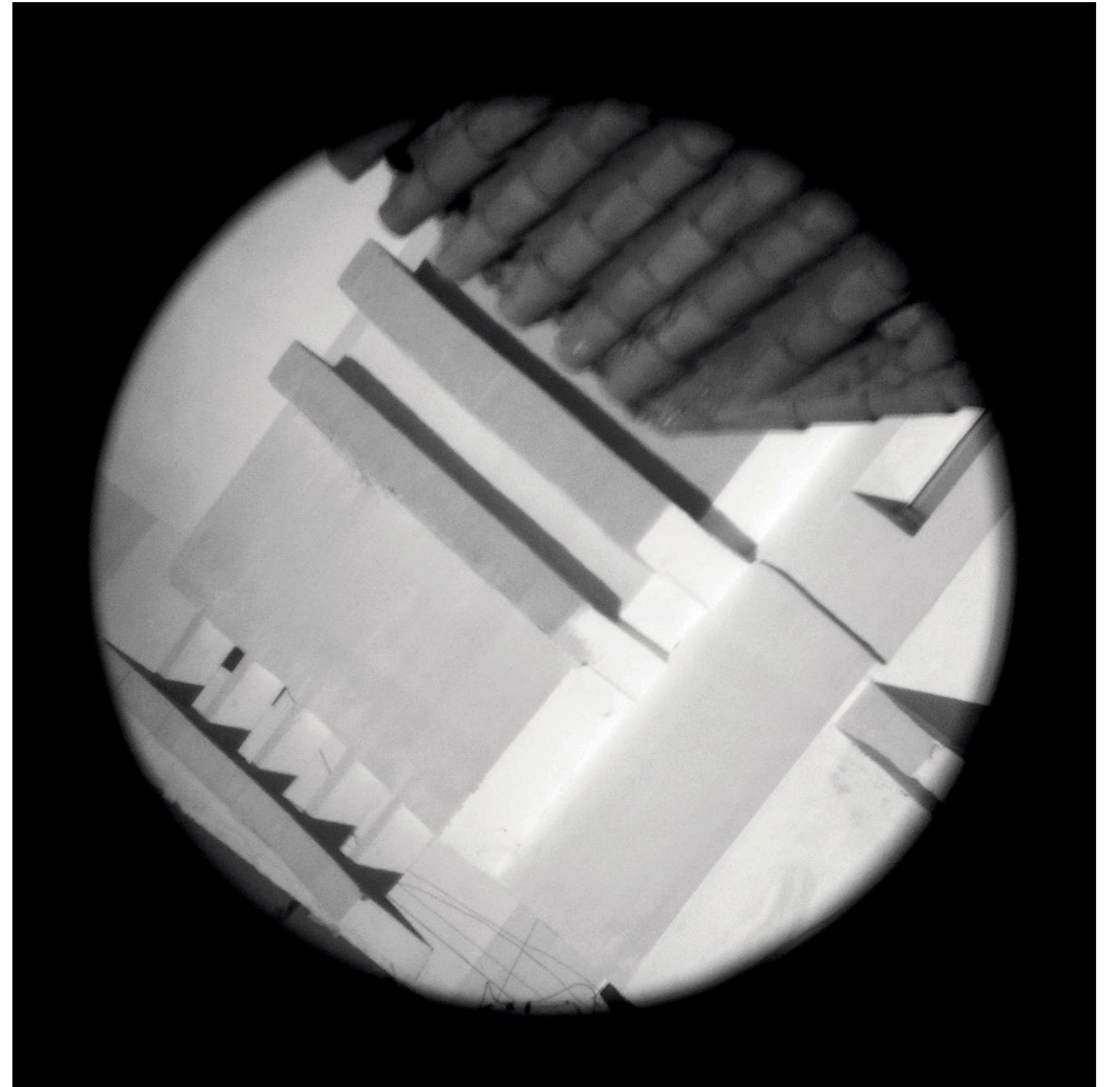
in the city that has inspired it, *Lions* reflects on urban development and transformation, conservation and memory, whilst evoking the 2013 protests in Gezi Park. In the end, the most stimulating artworks were the most modest and minimalist ones and, as such, might have been overlooked; like the tiny photographs of Özge Enginöz and her poetic cosmogony; and the mixed media pieces of Gökçen Dilek Acay, in which she tackles power relations, gender and the interactions between men and animals.

At Zilberman Gallery, Egyptian artist Heba Y. Amin presented *The Earth is an Imperfect Ellipsoid* (2016). The black and white photographs were made using a theodolite, and were taken when she travelled in North Africa following ancient Islamic trade routes which are now taken by migrants to reach the Mediterranean. In her cross-research, she explored the links between colonisation, landscape occupation, borders and surveillance. Wandering in these constructed, and sometimes contested, territories, she confronts us with the impact of technologies and geography on our own bodies.

To regain confidence and occupy the both public and symbolic space, 14 galleries, including Art Sümer and Rampa, have demonstrated solidarity by creating, in early September, the first Istanbul Gallery Weekend (IGW), hoping to turn it into a recurrent event in the local cultural agenda. In addition, to build momentum, it has been decided that, in September 2017, Art International, CI and Moving Image will be held concurrently with the Istanbul Biennial.

Even if the art scene experienced a boom between 2002-2005 and 2011-2012, it seems it is in development and requires more tools to mature. There is still a lack of publishing; artists need to have monographs edited and disseminated to represent their practice better. They would also benefit from participating in more residency exchanges, and maybe from looking towards the —→





1st, 2nd and current spread:
from the series: *The Earth is an Imperfect
Elipsoid*, Heba Amin, 2016, mixed media:
photography, text, projection



Middle East and establishing regional support for their work in more stable markets. Most importantly, however, the cultural sector in Turkey needs both government and public support. There are no cultural policies, and the funding of all the initiatives that exist throughout Istanbul and the rest of the country, comes from passionate individuals, collectors, private patrons and foundations – such as the IKSİ, İstanbul Kültür Sanat Vakfı (Istanbul Foundation for Art and Culture).

A little section of the CI fair was dedicated to other art initiatives, particularly to museums and artist-run spaces, like Space Debris, SPOT and TOZ. In parallel with the commercial art scene, there is an interesting alternative scene that might be more in tune with local audiences, putting the emphasis on education and collaboration. However, the situation is uncertain for these too, as they rely on private funding. Anyone who wants to delve into these spaces should visit The Empire Project, Mixer, Depo – an old tobacco factory – and Arter, a more conventional space with wonderful retrospectives of Turkish artists. It is currently showing a timely exhibition of Nil Yalter's *Off the Record*, which 'explores individuals' strategies for survival in the face of society's control'. Until now, it seems museums and alternative arenas have been spared more than artists, media actors and cultural practitioners. There might be significant changes in the forthcoming year, however, with rumours of the retirement of Vasıf Kortun from his position as Director of Research and Programs at SALT – an institution the seminal curator has been running since 2011.

The failed coup attempt of 15 July should not make us forget, however, that several coups have erupted in modern Turkey (in 1960, 1971 and 1980, for instance) and that cultural practitioners have learned how to navigate such circumstances. If long-term and socially engaged projects are needed more than ever now, the power of resilience and synergy are never to be

underestimated. There are well established Turkish artists, including those in the diaspora, on the international and local scene – Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, Ahmet Ögüt and Deniz Üster, to name but a few – and Istanbul fulfils its potential, being included in partnerships, such as the upcoming Sharjah Biennial. Under the authority of its curator, Lebanese Christine Tohmé, the biennial, entitled *Tamawuj*, will expand to four other cities in addition to Sharjah: Beirut, Dakar, Istanbul (mid-May 2017) and Ramallah. Despite the complexity of the context, the fertility of the country's cultural production has to be protected. The theme of crops, or learning how to sow seeds for the future, chosen by Tohmé for Istanbul, and to be curated by Zeynep Öz, seems to embody just such an endeavour—**CCQ**

*Contemporary Istanbul 2017 will run from 13 – 17
September*

*contemporaryistanbul.com
sharjahart.org*

aria fritta

Not long after the UK opted for a divorce from the EU, **Jess Matthews** visited Manifesta, in Zurich, and the Berlin Biennale. Both biennials threw up more questions than they answered.



This year, Manifesta – the itinerant European biennial– took up residence in the picturesque lakeside city of Zurich, the global centre for banking and finance. Titled *What People Do for Money – Some Joint Ventures*, the curatorial offering was one of collaboration between a guest (the international artists invited) and a host (a Zurich citizen who isn’t professionally active in contemporary art). The intricacies of this guest / host relationship were interesting – a strange meeting point, the defining quality of which is, perhaps, generosity.

The Pavilion of Reflections, a vast, open, wooden structure, docked at the waters’ edge, floated at the heart of the biennial – a romantic vision of a critical space that might come to exist between communal production and leisure. A dentist, a meteorologist, a boat maker, a pathologist, a master watchmaker, firemen, a pastor and a dog stylist were among the 30 hosts to their artist guests. The resulting commissions form the basis of 30 satellite exhibitions across the city to be discovered by visitors in, amongst others: a police station; the office of a dentist; a hotel room, in Zurich’s gentrifying red light district; a cemetery; the tourist information hub in the train station; and a sewage treatment plant.

It felt somehow intrusive to wander idly into the city’s University Hospital looking for art – it is a public space, but one that is quite unfamiliar to a biennial-going audience. Jiří Thýn’s textual interventions, on the vast windows that surround the central courtyard inside, however, brought cohesion within this unique meeting point between art and life. I sat among patients waiting for their number to be called in the consultation raffle, reading vinyl texts about the nature of consciousness. Teresa Margolles’ film *Póker de Damas (Ladies’ Poker)* (2016), which was made in collaboration with Sonja Victoria Vera Bohórquez – a sex worker from Zurich – offered a similarly poignant juxtaposition. Displayed at the Löwenbräukunst (one of two institutional venues), the film documents a poker game in the absence of one key collaborator, Karla, a transgender prostitute, who was murdered a few months before the biennial launched. Friends tell stories of Karla and share insights into the dangerous and precarious nature of their labour. In Room 104, at the Hotel Rothaus, Zurich – originally intended to host the poker game – a large-scale portrait of Karla stands surrounded by red curtains that drape the walls. Margolles’ work resonates far

beyond the artificial premise of a biennial – demanding that our attention be turned towards these harrowing acts of violence and alienation.

Less arresting, was Mike Bouchet’s *The Zurich Load* – a day’s worth of human excrement produced in the city, processed and compressed into blocks for display on the other side of the Löwenbräukunst. Few people would wish to dwell here too long. There was some light-hearted relief along the way; losing fifteen minutes in front of Adrian Piper’s *Lessons in Funk* (1983) – a dance lecture, workshop and deconstruction of funk – was a particular joy. As was seeing Bruno Munari’s photographic essay, *Seeking comfort in an uncomfortable chair* (1944), and watching Fernando Sanchez Castillo’s *Pegasus Dance: Choreography for Police Water Canon Trucks* (2007). All of these formed part of the historic exhibition hang, framed by scaffolding that cut through the main gallery spaces.

Eager to use this opportunity to cultivate relationships and conversations that re-identify how we live, work, think and see our future alongside European friends, I was introduced to a Zurich-based research group, who go by the name of Slow Spicy Curatorial Practices. Wiktorja Furrer (research associate, Institute for Critical Theory, Zürcher Hochschule der Künste) talked about the importance of re-thinking labour in terms of small economics. For them, curating stems from its etymological root ‘to care’. They let ideas grow collectively, across disciplines and distances, as part of the University’s Connecting Spaces: Hong Kong-Zurich programme, often between these two cities. Dissatisfied with capitalist rhythms of labour, Slow Spicy, as part of Manifesta 11’s Parallel programme, asked, “What do people do with little or no money?” A communal dinner on a disused square, between the university, hotels and real-estate investors, provided a platform for this conversation; a place to ‘create leakage’. Slow Spicy describe their rejection of a capitalist model as: “Solidarity, instead of individualisation; closed-circle economy, instead of garbage incineration; sufficiency, instead of blind consumption; questioning of food production processes, and development of new models of reuse.” We spoke about small acts being beautiful, and resistance to institutions, critical in the pursuit of enabling a true space for collaboration.

A ‘plane ride away, the labour of biennial-making was entrusted to New York fashion collective DIS at the 9th Berlin





Biennale. DIS members have backgrounds in product development, fashion marketing and brand culture and ‘Discover’, ‘Distaste’, ‘Dystopia’, ‘Disco’, ‘Discussion’, ‘Disimages’ and ‘Disown’ form the subheadings for their website – clues to the culture of continuous appropriation and translation of content that they thrive on. Content – textual, visual, aural, digital, real and fictional – forms the basis of their takeover. The collective states: “A pop album by artists may or may not replace the press release. Performance art may or may not be the future of advanced interior design and performers may or may not be paid sick-days. The KW Institute for Contemporary Art may or may not trade square metres with the Mall of Berlin. The 9th Berlin Biennale may or may not render the present in drag.”

In the basement of KW, a tormented Tony Blair, Condoleezza Rice and George W. Bush whimper pitiful ‘sorrys’ under the glare of the camera. Josh Kline’s *Crying Games* (2015) uses real-time face substitution, open-source software to overlay the performances of actors with digitised masks. It is far from a seamless transplant; the combined faces slip and pause awkwardly – glitches that point to the true nature of the deception. The biennale has an air of corporate tradeshow about it, every experience is for sale or purchase, should you be so inclined. *Blockchain Visionaries* (2016), by Berlin-based Simon Denny with Linda Kantchev, at the ESMT European School of Management and Technology, points to the future operation of nation in terms of corporate visualisation, modes of branding and decentralised transaction databases. Described as ‘supranational economic schemes’, the hope of these new transaction technologies, such as Bitcoin, is that they will rapidly transform the traditional, geopolitical, nation-based world order – for better or for worse. In the next room, nation building and identity politics is at the heart of GCC’s *Positive Pathways (+)* (2016). The room is a shell, with wires and fixtures exposed, temporary lighting in place. It is difficult to know whether it exists on the brink of extinction or creation. A running track around the figures of a mother and child and a sales pitch about aspiration, happiness and positive living, contributes to an uncanny environment, which teeters somewhere between state propaganda and corporate visioning.

At the Akademie der Künste, environments, or ‘experience suites’, for content consumption were modelled. Simon Fujiwara’s *The Happy Museum* (2016) is just that – an unnerving museum-like destination, produced in collaboration with his brother, an economist working in the field of ‘happiness

economics’ – a growing trend, in which happiness and well-being are valued and monetised. The future, as projected by this collection, will be one of companies, corporations and states galore, monitoring the well-being and satisfaction of users via digital platforms, in a bizarre archiving of consumer contentment.

Christopher Kulendran Thomas’ *New Eelam* (2016) was a study of how citizenship might be reconceived in an age of increasing detachment and dislocation. A slick advertisement traces a journey from a ‘primitive’ community, the Tamil people of Sri Lanka, to an accelerated mutation of capitalism brought on by the world’s biggest bookstore, Amazon – whose revenues have come to eclipse those of entire countries. *New Eelam*, in the guise of a global housing subscription based on collective ownership, is a proposal for a new economic system – beyond scarcity, beyond work and beyond national borders.

I was grateful for a lunch break at Prinzessinnengärten – a community garden for organic food production, biodiversity and climate protection, after such digital bombardment. Personally, I was disappointed that you had to purchase a ticket to access the communal, open, inclusive Pavilion of Reflections, and disappointed that the newly formed artists’ guild house, Cabaret der Künstler – Zunfthaus Voltaire, was only open to a select group of people; in the light of this, can Manifesta be seen to critique its own structure? A structure that is based, to a large extent, on the labour of volunteers, interns, unpaid student directors of artists’ films and the good nature of professional unpaid hosts. The realities of everyday work experience, the underbelly of labour, rituals of the ordinary, hybrid and micro-narratives which unfold between strangers, and the characteristics of people who seek no global spotlight, like that of Manifesta, are ambitious and exciting premises on which to base a biennial. However, the risk is, in the words of curator / producer Silvia Converso of Lesbos Falafel, “It will float its way in, appropriate, homogenise, then up sticks, leaving nothing for us to chew on besides a load of aria fritta” [trans: fried (hot) air] —**CCQ**

Jess Matthews visited Manifesta and the Berlin Biennale as part of a research trip for emerging curators, organised and supported by Wales Arts International

m11.manifesta.org
bb9.berlinbiennale.de

first spread:
The Zurich Load, Löwenbräukunst, Mike Bouchet. Photo © Camilo Brau

second spread, left
When Skies are not named yet (I), Marguerite Humeau., installation at Satellite ETH Zürich. Copyright Manifestall/ Eduard Meltzer

right:
Cabaret der Kuenstler, Tobias Bernstrup, Image courtesy of the artist

this spread, opposite:
Pass Though, Helmhaus, Yin Xunzhi, Photo © Manifestall/Wolfgang Tracger





in solution

David Barnes spent four years in the South Wales Valleys to create the series *in solution*. The images, produced in Barnes' fluid vernacular, get under the skin of a community. His open and generous approach won him unprecedented access to the Tredegar Lodge of the Loyal Order of Moose, whose former National President, **Gerald Tyler**, provides the historical context of this unique organisation.

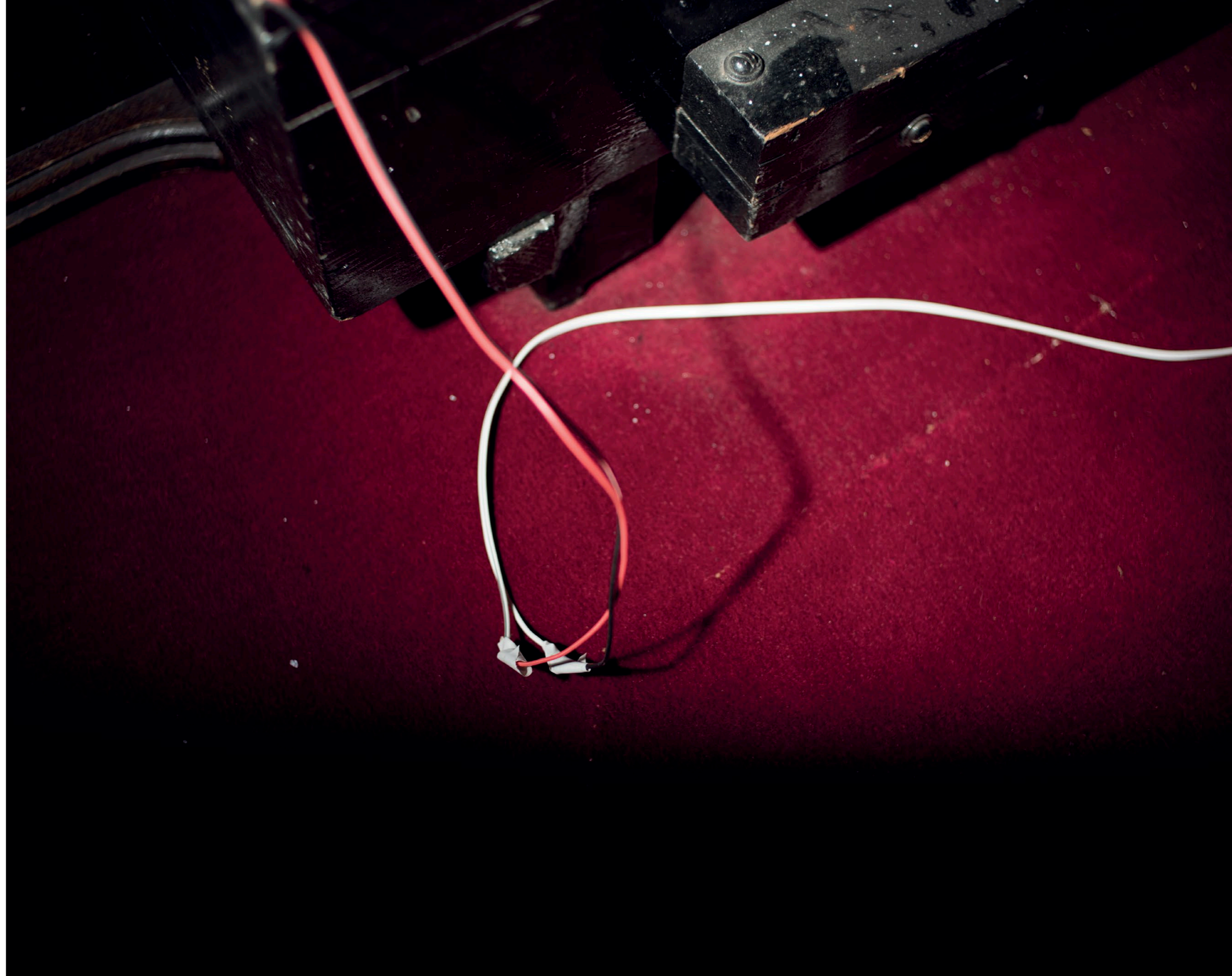
The first meeting of The Loyal Order of Moose in Great Britain was held in the Castle Hotel, Tredegar, in 1926. James J Davies, a Welshman who had emigrated to the USA, became leader of the fledgling order there and came back to the town to establish 'Moose, in Wales. He went all over the country, at the time, and set-up lodges from the Midlands right down to the south west of England, many of which are still open today.

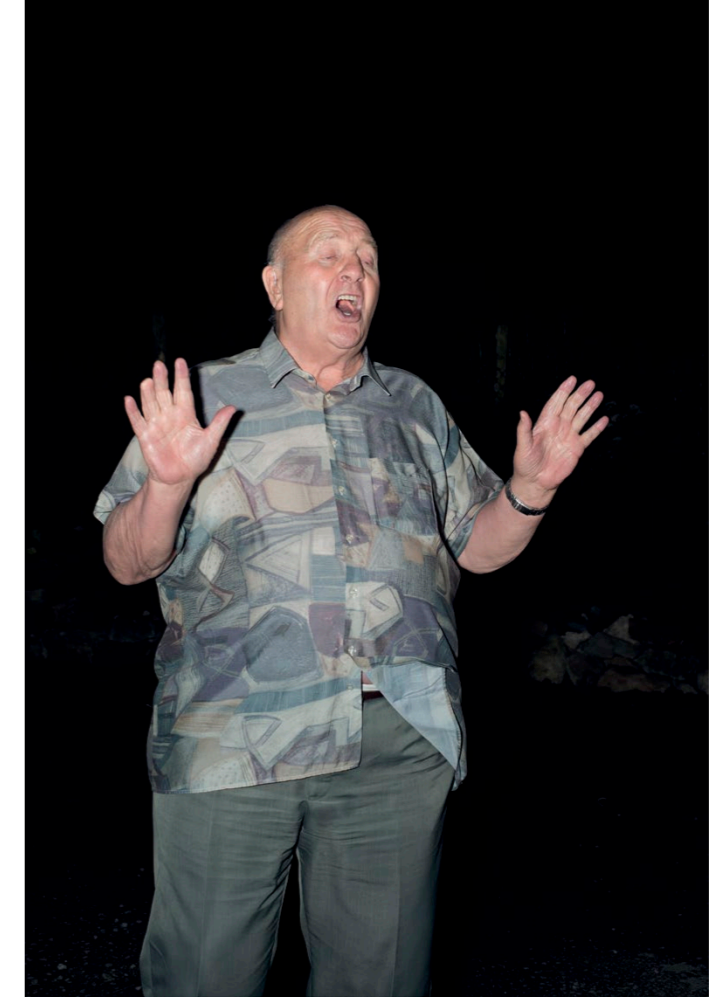
Davies had worked as a 'puddler' in the ironworks of Pennsylvania. 'Puddling' was an important process in the production of iron, which was perfected in South Wales. Like many families, the Davieses left the area before the First World War, when work was scarce.

As a young man he got involved in the union and then, eventually, the US

Senate, serving four different Presidents. Some people say that Davies himself would have been President if he had been born in the United States. Either way, both the Roosevelts, Warren G Harding and Harry S Truman were all members of the 'Moose. At the time, a lot of men were being killed in the iron industry. It was dangerous work and there was no social security, so working-class families were often left destitute. Davies focussed efforts in the organisation on helping orphaned children – eventually building a special residential complex called Mooseheart, in Illinois, a place where the children could be cared for and educated; children still go there from all over the world.

The Tredegar Lodge building was originally converted from a stable-block. It's been greatly extended and improved —→





over the years. We have over 80 members, which is the largest membership in the UK, including a thriving women's order. We're active in raising money for local charities and are very involved in the social life of the community.

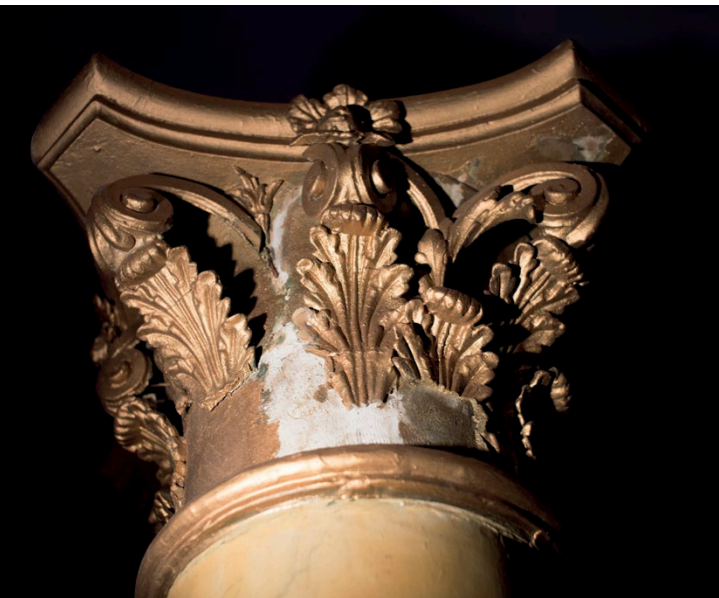
The reason a moose was chosen as a symbol for the movement is because it was considered to be an animal that looks after its herd. It only takes what it needs from the forest and harms no other animals, yet it is

very protective. The 'Moose attracts all kinds of people. We've got no preference as long as they enjoy our way of doing things and are socially minded. We're not a political organisation and we're open to all colours and creeds. 'Moose was set-up over a hundred years ago and James J Davies' ideas need to be understood as reflecting the attitudes of the time. If you read his autobiography you will see that, alongside all the good ideas, there are a few unsavoury ones, such as an interest in

eugenics. I'm not trying to rewrite history – it is what it is. It's a fact that, originally, membership was restricted to white people too. I'm proud that the organisation has left all that behind; we are very inclusive and welcoming to everyone – that's the way this community is. We are passionate about that.

Ritual has been an important part of 'Moose life since the start. We have ceremonies and rituals which we do that reflect the values of the organisation, —>





including a special one to enrol new members. We get dressed up in dress suits and have particular positions, or stations, in the room. We use an old Bible and, in some rituals, an old red lamp, which has a particular significance. The rituals include prayers and readings, some of which reflect the importance of the moose as the symbol of our organisation. In recent years we have cut back on the ritual and become more of a social organisation. Young people often aren't interested, these days, in the ritual side of things.

Many of our members are getting older and some lodges have closed. I think community organisations in general face a challenge attracting members these days. It seems that people need community less than they did; they often stay at home rather than go out and socialise. I hope that will change and that 'Moose will continue to play an active part in the communities that they are based in. I will be a member as long as I live and I am proud that Lodge Number 1, here in Tredegar, continues to thrive—**CCQ**

David Barnes' solo exhibition, in solution, was at Ffotogallery's Turner House Gallery in Penarth 15 October – 03 December 2016

*davidbarnes.info
ffotogallery.org
mooseintl.org*

all images:
from the series
in solution, David Barnes



Pontio, Invertigo Theatre Company a The Conker Group yn cyflwyno

My Body Welsh

Tara Robinson + Steffan Donnelly

Stiwdio

Nos Fawrth 10 a Nos Fercher 11 Ionawr, 8pm

£10/£8 myfyrwyr a gostyngiadau

Studio

Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 January, 8pm

£10/£8 students and concessions

Cabaret Pontio

FARA +PLU

Theatr Bryn Terfel

Nos Wener 27 Ionawr, 8pm

£14/£13 gostyngiadau

Friday 27 January, 8pm

£14/£13 concessions

DREAM yn cyflwyno/presents

Bromance

Barely Methodical Troupe

Theatr Bryn Terfel

Nos Fercher 1 a Nos Iau 2 Chwefror, 7.30pm

£15/£14/£12 myfyrwyr ac o dan 18 oed

Wednesday 1 & Thursday 2 February, 7.30pm

£15/£14/£12 students and under 18s

Nick Williams yn cyflwyno cynhyrchiad gan Bristol Old Vic

Nick Williams presents the Bristol Old Vic production

Pink Mist

Theatr Bryn Terfel

Nos Fawrth 14 Mawrth, 7.30pm

£15/£14/£12 myfyrwyr ac o dan 18 oed

Tuesday 14 March, 7.30pm

£15/£14/£12 students and under 18s

(12+)

Cerddorfa Genedlaethol Gymreig y BBC a Pontio yn cyflwyno

Taith Gerddorol – o'r ddaear i'r gofod!

Stiwdio

Dydd Sadwrn 18 Mawrth 2.30pm

£6/£20 Tocyn Teulu a Ffrindiau (4 person, o leiaf un o dan 18) Addas i oedran 5+

Bydd gweithdy creadigol AM DDIM.

BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Pontio present

A Musical Journey – from planet earth and into space!

Studio

Saturday 18 March 2.30pm

£6/£20 Family and Friends Ticket (4 people, at least one under 18) Suitable for ages 5+

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Theatr Bryn Terfel

Nos Sadwrn 1 Ebrill, 8pm

Saturday 1 April, 8pm

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Tim Davies, *Figures on the Foreshore*, 2015. Detail of site-responsive photographic installation at Nine Elms Lane, London. Overall size 3.6 metres x 110 metres; commissioned by Thames Tideway Tunnel. The work was realised with the assistance of Garry Bartlett and Chris Holtom of CIRIC, UWTSd

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Swansea College of Art
Founded 1853

Tim represented Wales in a solo show at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011 and was shortlisted for the inaugural Artes Mundi prize in 2004. He continues to work from his Swansea studio and has been lecturing with us for several years.

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**“... in times of misinformation
in the form of textual and
audiovisual rhetorical
diarrhea, we must make sure
the good ones are not drunk,
angry and isolated when
writing after 2am. There’s only
one man for the job. Adrian
Searle, please make artists
relevant again. I can pay ...”**

Excerpt from A.L. Moore’s open letter “*Why I Care*”, to
summon Adrian Searle for Culture Minister of Botrovia &
Director of the Botrovian Public Steam Sauna in Nasdriby.

A.L. Moore was invited by Emdash Foundation to share his thoughts in
CCQ. EMDASH is a philanthropic foundation that encourages and enables
significant projects with contemporary artists. Founded by Andrea Dibelius
in 2010, EMDASH believes in innovative ideas as expressed through art and
interdisciplinary collaborations, and seeks to bring these to a wider audience
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emdash.net



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