Fragments of a Missing Intersex Archive
Texte zur Kunst, March 2023
Ginevra Shay

TEXTE ZUR KUNST

NEW DEVELOPMENT

FRAGMENTS OF A MISSING INTERSEX ARCHIVE

GINEVRA SHAY

While acronyms for queer and trans communities have come to include the "I" for intersex, as in LGBTQIA, one is hard-pressed to find that "I" presented in the art sphere. Ginevra Shay pulls together poetry, cinema, myths, and music to form the beginning of an intersex archive. Outlined in chapters, this essay is written through the theme of the void and explores its gape and its potential. Here, the intersex experience weaves through stone tablet, primordial ooze, dreams, flowers, and hymnals. Invoking contemporary and ancient works, "Fragments of a Missing Intersex Archive" becomes a poetic guide for anyone interested in traversing paths seldom taken, so one may pursue underconsidered options for the present and for the future.

ANGELIC VOID

AN ANGEL OPENS UP THE RUSTED GATES THAT MAKE WHOLE AN EMBANKMENT. THE ANGEL FLUTTERS WITH THE FORCE OF CORPOREAL FIGURES WHOSE POWER INSPIRES A SLIPPAGE OF FEAR TO PANIC IN THE VIBRATING SOULS OF DOCTORS, LAWYERS, PRIESTS AND BIOLOGISTS WHO CUT AWAY WINGS. A HYPER-SWIFT CLOSING AND RE-CLOSING OF PERCEPTIVE ABILITIES AND MAN-MADE WOUNDS IMPERCEPTIBLE TO THE HUMAN EYE IN ITS MICRO-REPETITIONS.

WHAT BETTER WAY TO RE-ARTICULATE SPACE AND TIME THAN THROUGH A BODY LITERALLY BEYOND THE SCOPE OF, YET STILL WITHIN, THE WORLD OF MAN (AND WOMAN). THE PHALLIC/VOID DIVISION COLLAPSES, NOT AT THE LEVEL OF METAPHOR BUT IN FLESH. ANGELS CAN ONLY BE REPRESENTED IN GESTURES BECAUSE THEY ELUDE PLACE.
– From Juliana Huxtable, *Intersex* (2019)[1]

In the angelic void there are no opposites. The void can hold all forms. Emptiness is absolved and angels' earthly shapes transform.

Angels know divisions are patterned knots to simply untie.

They defy ordering truths to unravel new openings. Fences fall to meadows. Flowers no longer need to turn toward the sun. All things can be drawn together. In the softness of chaos.

Angels can enter where there is no room. They see the vast image.

As in not valid on birth certificates or state documents (they flutter past errors and limitations). As in filling the space that is perceived non-space between male and female. As in declaration. Not legally binding. The angelic void of intersex is heavenly discharge.

PRISMATIC DREAMS

What is mine? Dreams?

While dreaming, a figure comes to the protagonist that's part angel part ram part satellite
Hack …
Into land rights and ownership
Into business law, proprietorship
Into the history of the bank
And question the business of slavery
Of free labor, its relation to today's world
Into ambition into greed
Into suffering and sufferance
The treatment of one faith towards another …

Fragments of a Missing Intersex Archive
Texte zur Kunst, March 2023
Ginevra Shay

Juliana Huxtable, "BAT 2," 2019

Time held a mirror and reflected a world of parallels
Of fear and longing
With no sense of belonging
But that dissonance became a song in me
What should have destroyed me
What attempted to gender or boy me
Set me free

– From *Neptune Frost*, written by Saul Williams, directed by Saul Williams and Anisia Uzeyman (2021)[3]

In dreams, the wanderer finds paths through the dark, seeing before dawn; the reward is discovering what remains invisible to the rest of the world. In the techno-futurist dreamscape *Neptune Frost*, allegory reveals the deep entanglements of the governed body and the desire for autonomy. The protagonists of the film, Neptune and Matalusa, wonder what belongs to the visionary hacker, the wandering laborer, the intersex star-child: A prismatic dream?

Neptune Frost is ultimately a story about the power of dreams and the importance of trusting

in oneself to turn against abusive power structures. A prismatic dream represents the multidimensionality of hopes and desires.

A prism is bound by planes, but the light it refracts, like dreams, is not limited by the same physical restraints. The way the film moves nonlinearly through terrains and narratives articulates a central theme: that bodies are multifaceted and are closer to a nebulous interstellar form than we might realize. Much of Neptune's journey is learning that constructed societal norms, such as the gender binary, are in fact abusive, and that life is much more complex and transcendent.

Relatedly, Neptune and Matalusa know that time continues a reflection of parallels, binary patterns of violence and discrimination that are intertwined with ecology, data, race, and gender. When a mirror is simply a bilateral relation, it becomes a barrier, it loses its prismatic relation to the world.

Neptune and Matalusa wander with an internal sunstone, a prismatic way of seeing, which allows them to find their way through the heavy clouds. They look with stereoscopic sight where false binaries collapse into nothing but potential. They alone possess their voyage. Society holds no sway.

IN THE SPRING OF ASCENSION

When I was writing, I was performing secrets …

– Ana Roxanne on the writing of ~~~ (2019) and *Because of a Flower* (2020)[3]

Ascension is liquid. On an unknown course it spins freely in bloom. Ascension creeps across arid expanses flowering future structures. It's coiled energy stored up in horizons that are felt before they are seen. Lost in whorls, held by world, a passage made without distance.

Ana Roxanne's album *Because of a Flower* is a suite of hymnals where voice builds the structure of sanctuary. Ethereal harmonies condense into a tactile space. Soundscapes swell and retreat, blending with field recordings to build a meandering interior and an expansive garden for the listener to wander.

Because of a Flower pays homage to Herculine Barbin (known by many names, including Camille and Alexina), a French intersex figure who lived in the early 1800s. Barbin's self-titled memoir outlines a peaceful youth lived almost entirely in convents and boarding schools for girls, where she was guided by her faith and supported by patronage to become an educator. At a teachers' convent, Barbin, then known as Camille, fell in love and had a secret relationship with another teacher, Sara. With hopes of marrying her lesbian lover, she confessed her dual-sexed nature to the bishop in her town's church confessional. Though supported by the bishop, her confession ultimately led to discrimination, exile, and a brief and ill-fated attempt to live life as a man. In her memoir, she pushes past blows she received and yearns for something beyond the material world: "your spirits cannot plunge into that limpid Ocean of the infinite, where, lost for a day upon your arid shores, my soul drinks deep."[4]

How does one articulate the vastness of self that is suppressed through the codification of one's being for the sake of identity?

Ana Roxanne's music creates a deep well of boundless space. In her song "Camille," sampled dialogue from René Féret's film *The Mystery of Alexina* billows down cavernous halls and is chased by Roxanne's devotional lyrics and lo-fi bossa nova beats. The album creates an offering, perhaps to absolve the pain of its protagonist Camille, but also to celebrate the clandestine Shakespeareanesque star-crossed love she shared with her partner, Sara, in the convent.

Doesn't devotion sometimes exceed all imagined limitations? Sanctuary is an anywhere to nowhere in particular when a flower is its center.

Anyone who's been made to feel invisible is set free through the ecstatic joy of solitude that is palpable throughout *Because of a Flower*. Near and far, voice at times holds the listener in as close as a whisper, only to retreat and beckon the listener in once again like vespers swirling around a church nave. Its final offering, "Take the Thorn, Leave the Rose," starts with a foreboding fingerpicking whose twang articulates a reminder and warning of the importance of bodily autonomy.

The body doesn't conform to unjust social constructs and neither does the spirit.

Like water, *Because of a Flower* is full of slow movement. One could interpret the end of the album as a reclamation of intersex femininity from centuries of erasure and mutilation. Here, Hermaphroditus willingly becomes Venus in her own private spring and ascends through an acceptance of the unknown.

HEWN OF LIGHT

> ineffable, hidden, brilliant scion,
> forever in whirring motion,
> you scattered the dark mist,
> the mist that lay before your eyes.
> Flapping your wings, you whirled about
> throughout this world,
> you brought pure light.
>
> – From the Orphic Hymn to Protogonos, 6.5–8[5]

In various ancient Orphic theogonies, there is a consistent shared narrative that at genesis, a timeless time, or void, brought into existence a cosmic egg. Protogonos (or Phanes, also equated with Eros), a dual-sexed primeval deity, was the first to emerge from the egg, and he battled with chaos to generate all life.[6] As the bearer of light, Protogonos illuminated the possibility within the abyss and gave birth to the universe.

This Orphic hymn introduces an ancient light as a coruscating and prolonged temporal unfolding. Here, the illumination and evanescence of celestial bodies holds a physicality with which to build humanity and eventually identity, ethics, and the metropolis.

Connections can be drawn between the Orphic creation myth of Protogonos and the Pergamon Statue of Hermaphroditus (2nd century BCE). The Hermaphroditus statue was originally installed alongside the other gods and deities on

the Pergamon Altar in modern-day Bergama, Turkey, which endeavored to produce a larger-than-life ideal of a great civilization and an articulation of political power. Unlike other ancient Greek altars of the Hellenistic and Classical eras, the Pergamon Altar appears to be about a cosmological event and ethics, rather than a valorization war. The Great Altar articulates a paradigm shift in the meaning and symbolism of sculpture from this era.[7] The myth of dual-sexed deities such as Protogonos and Hermaphroditus aligns with many ancient and modern religions, where human perfection is imagined as an unbroken unity of two sexes, sometimes articulated in one body and sometimes as romantic union, as an articulation of the divine. In this symbolism, the acts of love and civility transcend the sexes to re-create the birth of the cosmos.

Hermaphroditus was part of this artistic program put forth by Eumenes II, ruler of Pergamon, in which a standing androgynous god was worshiped for his moral excellence and ability to unite the sexes as the creator of marriage.

The story of Hermaphroditus in the Salmacis Inscription at Halicarnassus appears to draw a connection to the statue of Hermaphroditus from Pergamon in date, legend, and location. The statue and inscription both portray the son of Hermes and Aphrodite. The dual-sexed god contributed to the foundation myths of the cities of Pergamon and Halicarnassus through morality and the belief that the highest human form occurred when the masculine and feminine were balanced in one. A passage from the Salmacis Inscription, which is from the perspective of Aphrodite, translates to:

> Halicarnassus settles the lovely hill beside the stream of Salmacis, called dear to the immortals in song, and she occupies the lovely home of the nymph, who once took our boy in her sweet embrace and raised him, Hermaphroditus, to be outstanding [...][8]

Scholarly research of the past decade has begun to put forth new interpretations of Hermaphroditus. The vast majority of research on Hermaphroditus statues and intersex people from antiquity is based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which has been challenged in recent years with the discovery of the Salmacis Inscription. Ovid seems to have reworked the original myth of an androgynous god to tell the story of a resistant male youth who became corrupted with the body of an aggressive female nymph. The merging of male and female in this way into an androgynous mixture of the two seems to have been his own creation, as it is not attested elsewhere.[9]

A fine line between mastery and mishandling becomes articulated as civilizations tip-toe around omnicide. When a society promotes an ideal, and that ideal changes, it often creates a swing toward an opposite belief system and a purge of the last.

The altering of stories and statues has long been common practice. The Sleeping Venus/Hermaphrodite (1st/2nd century CE), at the World Museum in Liverpool, was originally Hermaphroditus but was altered in the 1800s to have its phallus, as well as its nursing children, removed. This is only known because there is a drawing of the original statue in the collection of the British Museum.[10] With clear evidence of manipulation

Fragments of a Missing Intersex Archive
Texte zur Kunst, March 2023
Ginevra Shay

Saul Williams and Anisia Uzeyman, scene from "Neptune Frost," 2021

to this prominent statue, how many other Venuses may have begun as Hermaphroditus?

Hermaphroditus evades the corporeal and the concrete to find unity in duality. Perhaps there is the potential for illumination to create a conjoinment in which the primordial and the futuristic traverse the same fever dream of contrivance. In it, the ethereal and solid find a way to unfold together in the present.

THE MISSING "I"

> In the first place, let me treat of the nature of mankind and what has happened to it; for the original human nature was not like the present, but different. The sexes were not two as they are now, but originally three in number; there was man, woman, and the union of the two, having a name corresponding to this double nature, which had once a real existence, but is now lost [...]
>
> – From Aristophanes's speech in Plato's *Symposium*[11]

What happened to this third sex, the androgyne, of ancient Greek thought? Was the androgyne's wholeness a threat to the gods, and Zeus required their strength be diminished by being cut in two? Are gods alone allowed to be androgynous but humans not?

The act of getting lost can happen under innumerable circumstances – intentional wandering, secret acts of preservation, or simply chance. On the more common (and nefarious) side, original courses of objects and histories vanish through theft, censorship, war, and change in religious power. It is hard to encapsulate all that's been lost through intentional alteration, suppression, and destruction.

The paucity of the missing is perhaps what keeps one searching for fragments, and the intangibility is what makes some strive to articulate it. How does one start to define something that has an unknown form? Where does one begin?

Searching *Printed Matter*'s catalogue, one item and one table came up from the search term

Fragments of a Missing Intersex Archive
Texte zur Kunst, March 2023
Ginevra Shay

Oliver Laric, "Sleeping Figure," 2022

"intersex" in a catalogue of 45,000 titles.

Wendy's Subway
Zero intersex mentions from 3,000 noncirculating titles and numerous events and programs.

Artforum
Twelve intersex mentions (first mention, 2008) in a more than 100,000-page archive over six decades.

TEXTE ZUR KUNST
Zero intersex mentions in about 1,800 articles available online.

e-flux
Seventeen intersex mentions in over 26,000 documents.

Intersex individuals continue to be left out of major institutions, archives, and programs.[12]

Misrepresented and put on display in medical findings. It begs the question: Where is the I in LGBTQIA? To recognize and normalize the intersex individual and their many known and yet-to-be-identified intersex variations in the mainstream would be to take a step toward undoing the shoddy scaffolding of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. An effort toward bodily and mental autonomy. A step toward the acceptance of difference and diversity of all kinds. It would pave the way for more research and scholarship on the intersex figures who have influenced history, culture, and politics and give more living intersex people the confidence to be seen.

The Intersex flag was added to the combined Pride flag in 2021.

Germany adopted its first law "for the protection of children with variants of sex development," albeit with numerous loopholes, in 2021.

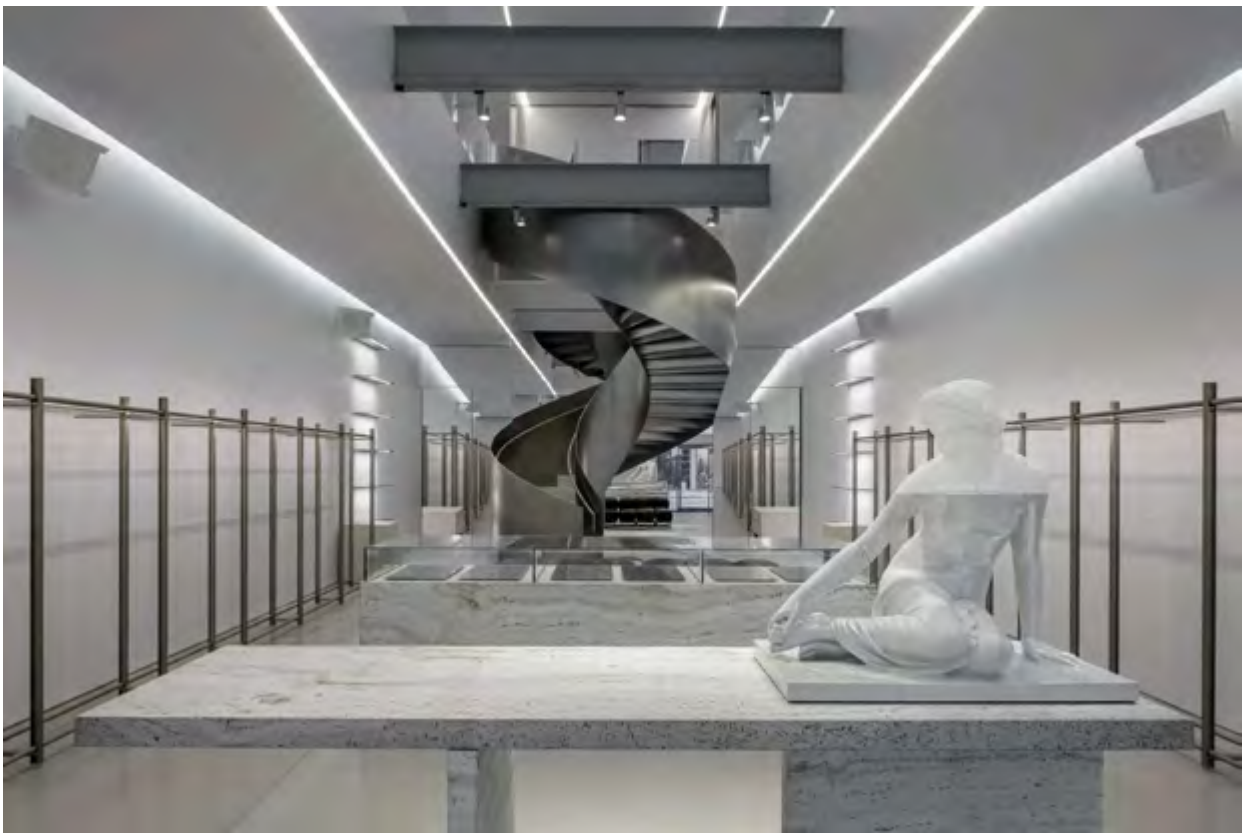
Nonconsensual, medically unnecessary intersex surgeries are still legal in the United States.

Notes

1 Excerpt from Juliana Huxtable, *Intersex* (New York: Façadomy, 2019). Edition of 5.
2 Dialogue from *Neptune Frost* (Rwanda, United States: Kino Lorber, 2021).
3 Ana Roxanne and Cat Zhang, "The Radiant Slowness of Ana Roxanne," Pitchfork, April 14, 2021, https://pitchfork.com/features/rising/the-radiant-slowness-of-ana-roxanne/.
4 Herculine Barbin, *Herculine Barbin: Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth-Century French Hermaphrodite*, trans. Richard McDougall, with an introduction by Michel Foucault (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 155–56.
5 *The Orphic Hymns*, trans. Apostolos N. Athanassakis and Benjamin M. Wolkow (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).
6 Alberto Bernabé, "The Gods in Later Orphism," in *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Andrew Erskine, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) 422–41.
7 Victor Ljunggren Szepessy, "The Marriage Maker: The Pergamon Hermaphrodite as the God Hermaphroditos, Divine Ideal and Erotic Object" (master's thesis, University of Oslo, 2014), https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/40013.
8 Allen J. Romano, "The Invention Of Marriage: Hermaphroditus and Salmacis at Halicarnassus and in Ovid," *Classical Quarterly*, New Series 59, no. 2 (December 2009): 543–61.
9 Jaclyn Rene Friend, "In Corpus Corpore Toto: Merging Bodies in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*" (master's thesis, University of Georgia, 2014).
10 For details on the statue's alteration, see "Sleeping Venus/Hermaphrodite," National Museums Liverpool (website), accessed February 1, 2023, www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/artifact/sleeping-venushermaphrodite.
11 Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1956).
12 "Intersex Fact Sheet," Free & Equal, United Nations for LGBT Equality, May 2005, https://www.unfe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/UNFE-Intersex.pdf.

The Slow Burn of Hot Clothes–Dion Lee Opens His First US Store
Vogue, December, 2023
José Criales-Unzueta

VOGUE



The Dion Lee store in Miami will open to the public this coming weekend. These images were shot before any merchandise was added to show the space and its design. Kris Tamburello

RUNWAY

The Slow Burn of Hot Clothes—Dion Lee Opens His First US Store

BY JOSÉ CRIALES-UNZUETA
December 12, 2023

It's impossible to go out in New York without running into Dion Lee. His clothes, that is. Be it his hefty cargos, his razor-sharp tailoring, or his omnipresent second-skin jersey fabrications, the Australian designer has woven himself into the fabric of the downtown New York uniform. It should come as no shock that the US is Lee's biggest market; what's surprising is that the designer, who currently operates six retail stores in Australia, has not yet expanded his physical footprint in this country. That will change soon enough. This coming weekend, Lee is opening his first international store in Miami's Design District after celebrating with a party during Art Basel.

"I first went to the Design District years ago when friends said that it was a place to be," says Lee. "Miami has a unique perspective, especially when it comes to fashion, but we could see that we had a customer there from wholesalers and from our digital channels and the product being shipped there." That the Miami lifestyle is not entirely dissimilar to that of Sydney and Melbourne was an added bonus: "It was easy to see that there's potential to translate the type of customer we've built in Australia," adds Lee. "There's a focus on athleticism and the body, they love showing it off."

The Slow Burn of Hot Clothes–Dion Lee Opens His First US Store
Vogue, December, 2023
José Criales-Unzueta

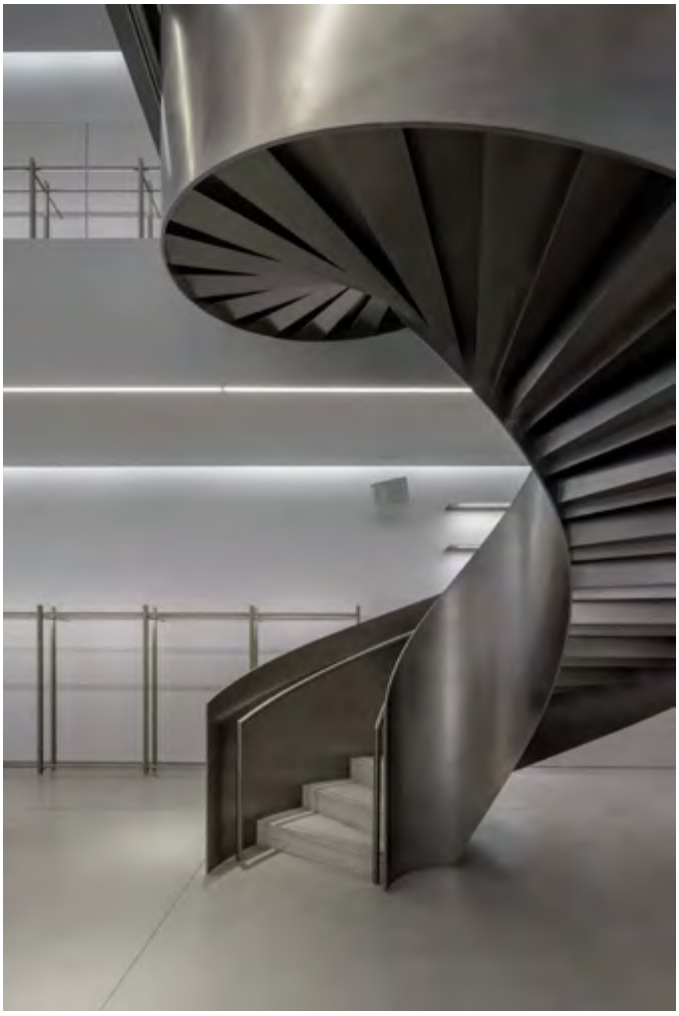
The façade of Dion Lee's new store in the heart of Miami's Design District. Kris Tamburello

The Dion Lee store in Miami was designed by Smart Design Studio (Architect of Record - ANDstudio) and features custom furniture. Kris Tamburello

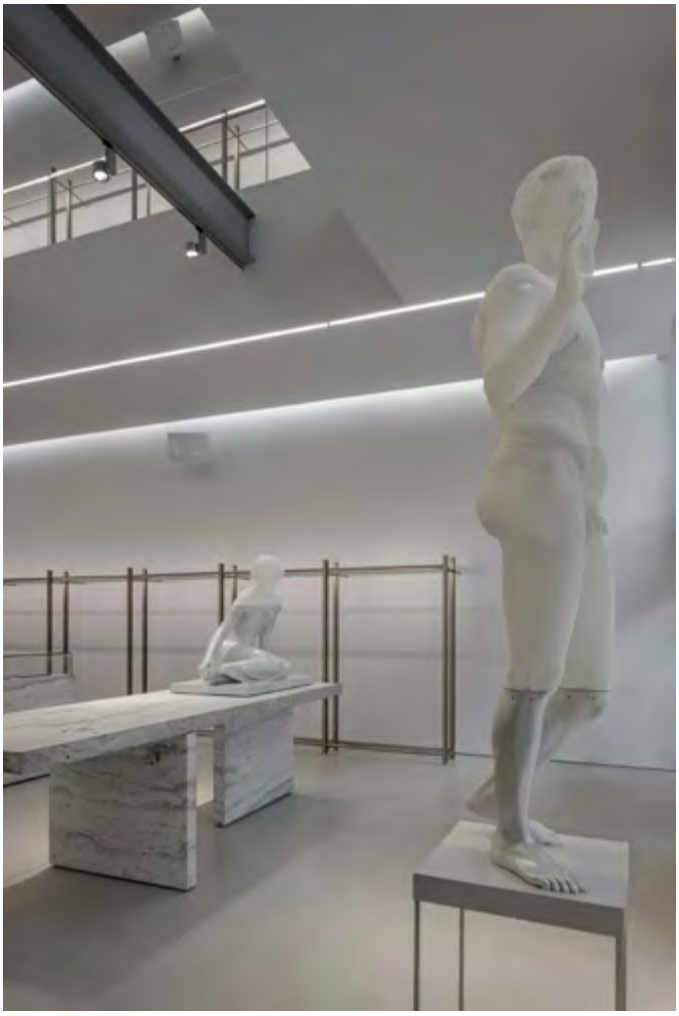
Lee staged his fall 2021 show in February of that year at 11 Mercer Street in New York, announcing that the raw space would become his first store in America when it opened later that summer. It never happened. Blame the "unforeseen challenges" of renovating a heritage building in New York, but, says Lee, "it's *very* much still in the works." When it *does* open next year (Lee is being wisely coy about sharing a date), it will have 4,000 square feet of space, making it bigger than the Miami location, which occupies 3,000. Both stores will feature custom furniture with Dion Lee detailing, lifestyle spaces, and room for artist collaborations. Up first in Miami is the Berlin-based artist Oliver Laric. Lee is also unveiling a brand new flagship store in Melbourne later this month.

"When I first opened my stores, I was showing primarily womenswear collections," says Lee. Much has changed since. "We introduced a men's capsule, launched our unisex line [Lee doesn't formally have a menswear collection, rather labeling it as unisex], and expanded into footwear, handbags, and jewelry." This new wave of spaces is designed to show off the full range of Dion Lee. "With online retailers in the US and a small representation of specialty boutiques and concept stores, you don't get to see the breadth of the product," Lee says. "I'm excited to invite people to experience all aspects of the brand, but also to challenge people's perception of it as well."

The Slow Burn of Hot Clothes–Dion Lee Opens His First US Store
Vogue, December, 2023
José Criales-Unzueta



Dion Lee in Miami. Kris Tamburello



Dion Lee in Miami. Kris Tamburello

He's been showing stateside for a decade, but it's in the last couple of years that he's become a designer to watch. "I think it's me maturing, my taste maturing, and the product paralleling that," says Lee. You can see it in his tailoring and in his more evening-leaning product, but there's a new finesse to his fabrications across the board. Lee has an undeniably sizable business, which may surprise his New York Fashion Week peers. The thing about being young and making clothes that are seen as sexy and "on trend," is that you're boxed into the idea of being "emerging."

"I do feel that I've been in a holding pattern waiting for these projects to materialize in order for people's perception of the brand to evolve and for that misconception to be corrected," he says. He knows that people don't always have the strongest understanding of the brand, but he doesn't see it as a problem. "Having shown in New York for close to 10 years, I'm aware that many brands come and go," he says. "Brands can become the next big thing in two seconds, and I've taken a very slow-burn approach to building myself within the industry, having sat outside of the CFDA platform and not coming up through the industry here." His outsider status may actually be his biggest asset. "What I've learned from my now quite lengthy time in the industry is that it's about sticking to what you do and taking measured steps, even if they're slow."

Oliver Laric “Betweenness” Stedelijk Museum / Amsterdam
Flash Art, December 7, 2021
Lijuan Klassen

Flash Art

337 WINTER 2021-22, REVIEWS

7 December 2021, 9:00 am CET

Oliver Laric “Betweenness” *Stedelijk Museum / Amsterdam*

by Lijuan Klassen

1 2 3 4

Oliver Laric, *Betweenness*, 2018. HD video, color, sound. 4’ 48”. Photography by Gert-Jan van Rooij. Courtesy of Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. Gift of Modern Forms, London.

On the occasion of a donation by the private collection and curatorial platform Modern Forms, London, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, is presenting Oliver Laric’s video work *Betweenness* (2018), the artist’s first solo show in the Netherlands.

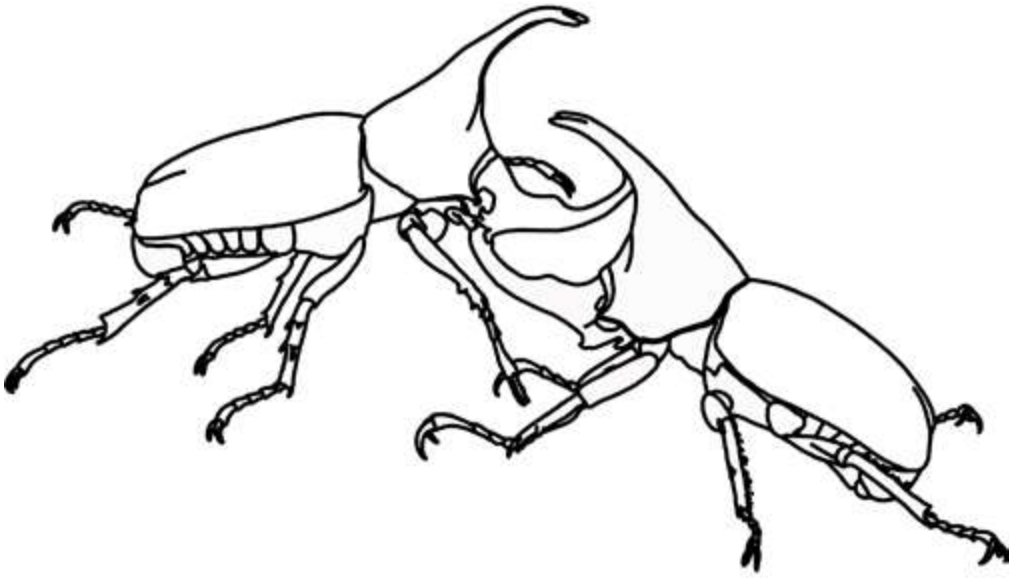
Upon entering the dark, carpeted space, the viewer’s attention is immediately captured by the bright screen and the eerie soundtrack that pervades the room. Over the course of roughly four minutes, the video unfolds as an array of continuously moving black lines on a white ground. The contours of a monkey’s face transform into a hog’s head, fungi, insects, human figures, and so on. The rhythmically morphing shapes raise questions about the stability of form, whether organic or aesthetic. While a habitually geometric perception may tempt one to think of form as static — a fixed property that defines the boundaries of objects and organisms — Laric suggests otherwise. *Betweenness* depicts form as something constantly in flux, as an event in the process of becoming.

This suggestion can be read in the context of the artist’s ongoing investigation into the historical appropriation and manipulation of images, from Roman copies of Hellenistic marble sculptures to recycled animation scenes in Disney movies. By juxtaposing and modifying these adaptations in a series of video essays called *Versions* (2010), he questions notions of authorship, piracy, and originality, ultimately celebrating the copy as a significant form of artistic interpretation. Formally speaking, *Betweenness* more closely follows *Untitled* (2014–15), a video showing excerpted clips of metamorphosing animation characters against a white background. Although *Betweenness* also uses a mix of 3-D scans from life and found-footage renderings, its reductive animation style frees it from pop-cultural and art-historical references, letting an impulsive search for meaning make way for sensual immersion. A sense of drifting is supported by the melancholic, never-resolving score, composed by Finnish musician and producer Ville Haimala, who is part of the Berlin-based duo Amnesia Scanner.

Whereas in *Untitled* the figures are cast against a white ground, in *Betweenness* the white in between the lines still appears as textured, voluminous, or translucent, depending on the viewer’s imagination. Thus, the video functions as a kind of practical appropriation of what is theorized in *Versions*: “Five people interpret an action, and each interpretation is different because, in the telling and the retelling, the people reveal not the action but themselves.” Zooming in on beetles and ants moving at a strangely slowed down pace, commonly human perceptions of scale and time are put out of joint. Foregrounding insects and organisms implies that repetition is not only a cultural phenomenon but a fundamental characteristic of natural history. In a sense, the video itself can be read as an allegory of evolution — evolution understood not as a linear progression or competition at the level of species, but rather as an ongoing, open process of change and contingency, a multispecies meshwork of organic and inorganic material.

Akin to the simplicity of its presentation, *Betweenness* is beautiful and to the point. At the same time, the lack of external reference causes it to become somewhat self-referential and blurry in what it actually proposes. While moods and feelings are rarely as clear cut and defined as a critical argument, they are just as real. More importantly, they are constitutive to argumentation and crucial, especially, when trying to grasp more-than-human relations. The presentation of this work feels timely in terms of a certain ecological awakening in the art world. Still, as Laric’s first solo show in the Netherlands, it was a missed opportunity to exhibit more of the multimedia artist’s works that could have provided some context.

Oliver Laric “Betweenness” Stedelijk Museum / Amsterdam
Flash Art, December 7, 2021
Lijuan Klassen



1 2 3 4

Oliver Laric, *Betweenness*, 2018. Still from HD video, color, sound. 4’ 48”. Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin.

1 2 3 4

Oliver Laric, *Betweenness*, 2018. Still from HD video, color, sound. 4’ 48”. Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin.

Inside de Cover: Things and stuffing: Oliver Laric's "Untitled" (2020)
CURA, November, 2020
Carson Chan

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Inside de Cover: Things and stuffing: Oliver Laric's "Untitled" (2020)
CURA, November, 2020
Carson Chan

INSIDE THE COVER

TEXT BY
CARSON CHAN

Inside de Cover: Things and stuffing: Oliver Laric's "Untitled" (2020)
CURA, November, 2020
Carson Chan

THINGS AND STUFFING: OLIVER LARIC'S *UNTITLED* (2020)

Rendered in a dimpled, luminous grey, the animated figures in Oliver Laric's video, *Untitled* (2020), appear as if captured by a scanning electron microscope, or made of hammered tin. Sharp, rhythmic cuts bring us from one tableau to the next. A praying mantis turns its head; a crab moves across the screen; flies, worms, and eukaryote-like critters swarm; a sea urchin, lobster, and horseshoe crab are held up as if by a vendor at a seafood market; an assortment of fungi fruit from various surfaces. Everything moves with a vibrant jerkiness as in stop-motion animations or time-lapse videos. There's a sense that we're seeing something come into being. A lumpy mass grows a head and limbs to become a man in repose. A snout protrudes from a shapeless lump to become a frog. A figure evolves from an embryonic mass. Topologically, the sea creatures, insects, humans, and fungi are all bags or vessels—wireframe nets molded into life forms.

The notion that the world is populated by vessels is found in much of Laric's work. *The Hunter and His Dog* (2014) is a series of low-relief sculptures made by pouring polyurethane into molds made from 3D scans of John Gibson's neo-classical sculpture of the same name (1838). The resin is mixed with powdered jade, aluminum, bronze, and various pigments, then poured into the mold as if making marble cake. Privileging content over form is emphasized by the fact that the sculpture exists in multiples. Each pour in the mold produces the same form with a different marbling pattern. In Laric's hands, Gibson's *The Hunter and His Dog* is merely a vessel and its content—its substance, its meaning—comes from what fills out the form. *Sleeping Boy* (2016), a 3D printed sculpture fashioned after another Gibson scan, proposes the opposite. Where the marble mid-19th century original, carved under the tutelage of Canova in Rome, displays Gibson's ability to how supple, youthful flesh from stone, under Laric's hand, the boy's soft slack body and the slumped wool of his sheepskin seat are rendered into a series of thin plastic shells fastened together to form a figural whole. In this case, the surface is the content.

In fact, many—if not most—of Laric's things can be construed as vessels. The opening lines of Tristan Garcia's philosophical work, *Form and Object: A Treatise on Things* (2014), comes to mind. "Our time," he writes, "is perhaps the time of an epidemic of things." In a world where things increase in number at an exponential rate, Garcia proposes that one way to attend to everything is to remove the hierarchies we've previously used to put the world into categories. Rather than cramming more books onto a full shelf, he lays them side-by-side on the ground. For Garcia, objects and things (a sculpture, a sea urchin, the Internet, the coronavirus etc.) exist before we ascribe meaning to them (a piece of rock exists even before we recognize its existence). Things come into being when their various attributes combine. Imagine everything as a container filled with cards with qualities and attributes written on them. A crab is nothing more than a vessel filled with cards labeled "marine animal," "exoskeleton," "invertebrate," "possesses pincers," and so on. The crab is defined by what is in the "crab vessel" and what is not. "Being comes inside a thing and being goes outside it," Garcia writes. "A thing is nothing other than the *difference* between being inside [*l'être entré*] and being outside [*l'être sorti*]."

Returning to the pulsating, evolving forms in Laric's video, it bears mentioning that the question of formation is depicted through agents of decay and disintegration. We see fungi multiply on tree trunks, worms unspooling with life, bugs crawling over a dead mantis and crawling all over a frog, a cancerous growth metastasizing on a crab, a swarm of flies gathered on a man's back, what appears to be bacteria or mold spores rapidly proliferating, and a widening hole on an outstretched human hand—perhaps a terrifying time-lapse of a flesh-eating wound. Many of the animals in the video are scavengers and decomposers. Crabs, lobsters, worms, flies, ants, fungi, and bacteria all feed on dead things. In doing so, they break down organic material and make vital nutrients available for the ecosystem's primary producers, namely plants and algae. Just as death is necessary for life, decomposition is essential for the emergence of form.

Architecture theorist Keller Easterling proposed a similar thesis in her 2014 essay, *Subtraction*. In it, she argues that construction, though dominant, is only one process by which architects can shape the lived environment. Architects are trained to build, yet there are no institutionalized studies on how to unbuild or subtract. "Methods of demolishing, imploding, or otherwise subtracting building material," she writes, "are not among the essential skills imparted to architects-in-training." Subtracting from the world, dismantling the structures we've built up, clears new spaces and shapes our lived environment as powerfully as construction. Like Laric's decomposers, Easterling suggests that new and renewed realities can

Untitled, 2020 (pp. 54-67). Courtesy: the artist

Inside de Cover: Things and stuffing: Oliver Laric's "Untitled" (2020)
CURA, November, 2020
Carson Chan

Sleeping Boy, 2016 Photo: Center Lapkovsk (pp. 70-71)
Courtesy: the artist and Tanya Leighton Berlin

The Hunter and His Dog, 2020 (p. 73)

Inside de Cover: Things and stuffing: Oliver Laric's "Untitled" (2020)
CURA, November, 2020
Carson Chan

only come into being by tearing down old structures. Architects value construction because the results of energy expended is thought to be more visible. "The general consensus within the discipline," she writes, "is that architectural efforts should be visible to photographs." This, of course, is wrong. Even in the recent past, the destruction of walls, towers, and monuments register photographically, ideologically, and politically in their profound absences. An ethics of space emerges from what is not there or no longer there.

The last two scenes in Laric's video depict a squid swimming across the screen past unknown floating globules, and what appears to be a time-lapse clip of a crowd of people milling around each other as if at a party or train station. The pairing of the squid and the human in these final scenes recalls Vilém Flusser philosophical treatise, *Vampyrotouthis Infernalis* (1987/2012), which probed the condition of being human through a biological exploration of the titular squid, the "vampire squid from hell." Measuring about thirty centimeters, it lives in the deepest, most oxygen deprived parts of the ocean. Its eight arms are webbed together, giving it the impression of wearing a cloak, like a vampire. It feeds exclusively on "marine snow," the tiny flakes of decomposed animals, feces, and plankton that drift into the abyss from above. When Flusser's book was first published—four years before he died tragically in a car crash in 1991—no one had ever seen a vampire squid alive. Found caught in deep sea drag nets, floating on the surface, or washed ashore, it was a species that humanity knew only in its death. Our lived environment and that of the vampire squid cannot be further apart. Indeed, just as it finds death as it approaches the ocean surface, humans cannot survive in the cold, pressurized, dark waters of its home; humans and squids are separated by half a billion years of evolutionary divergence, yet we shared an ancestor once, deep in the past. Flusser saw the ocean surface as a magic mirror. We can learn of the human condition by probing its antithesis. Like the promise of renewal represented by Laric's decomposers, or the value making logic of Easterling's subtraction, one of Flusser's most striking discoveries was an ethical one that derived from the cephalopod's form. Like humans, the vampire squid is bilaterally symmetrical. It differentiates between up and down, left and right, and given these formal attributes, Flusser argues that it must also be a dialectical thinker. Like us, it must "deny one side from the position of the other."

The squid is also a vessel, a bag. Its internal organs float freely within its body or mantle—the part humans like to slice into rings and deep fry in breading. The hollow of the squid is often used like sausage casing and stuffed with other ingredients; stuffed squid is enjoyed by coastal communities around the world. What would Flusser say about this? Forget aesthetics, forget philosophy, what if humanity's key form of interaction with the world is simply a metabolic one, adding to our biomass as we subtract from the world? If Laric's video suggests a topological affinity between all organisms—humans, squids etc.—the monster at hand is not a vampire, but rather, a cannibal.

“Sculptures Infinies”, Le moulage retombe sur ses plâtres
Libération, January 13, 2020
Diane Lisarelli

Libération

CRITIQUE

«SCULPTURES INFINIES», LE MOULAGE RETOMBE SUR SES PLÂTRES

Par Diane Lisarelli
— 13 janvier 2020 à 18:06

Confrontant des modèles antiques et leurs variations contemporaines, l'exposition du palais des Beaux-Arts réactualise l'intérêt pour cette pratique à l'heure de la duplication numérique.

The Hunter and His Dog, 2015, de l'artiste autrichien Oliver Laric. Photo Günter Lepkowski

“Sculptures Infinies”, Le moulage retombe sur ses plâtres
Libération, January 13, 2020
Diane Lisarelli

Il fut un temps où l'on réservait aux plâtres les plus belles salles de l'Ecole des beaux-arts. Dans la cour vitrée se toisaient les répliques d'illustres Grecs et de fameux Romains, dignes ambassadeurs de l'«antique», alors au centre de l'enseignement de l'histoire de l'art mais aussi de la pratique de la sculpture et du dessin. Puis ceux-ci ont progressivement perdu leur aura. Considérées comme des avatars du passé, inutiles pour la formation des artistes modernes, ces silhouettes immobiles, à la merci d'un temps qui n'était plus le leur, ont même été vandalisées. Quand, au tout début des années 70 aux Beaux-Arts, la jambe droite de la réplique de l'*Hercule Farnèse* fut brisée et les statues du monumental fronton d'Egine décapitées, une partie de la collection fut transférée aux Petites Ecuries du château de Versailles - dans la galerie des Sculptures et Moulages, malheureusement fermée au public en visite libre.

Certaines pièces reviennent aujourd'hui par la grande porte au palais des Beaux-Arts (Paris VI[e]) pour cette exposition, fruit d'une collaboration avec le musée Calouste-Gulbenkian de Lisbonne, qui confronte des plâtres issus des collections historiques (celle des Beaux-Arts de Paris, donc, mais aussi de la Faculdade de Belas-Artes de l'université de Lisbonne) à des œuvres contemporaines. L'occasion d'interroger la pratique même du moulage, parfois réduite à sa fonction purement utilitaire, documentaire, et qui pourtant soulève de passionnantes questions. Production sérielle, variation, transformation ou changement d'échelle : autant d'aspects qui ont pris ces dernières années une résonance particulière avec le développement des procédés numériques d'enregistrement et de duplication.

Clones

Ainsi retrouve-t-on, aux côtés de la réplique d'un Apollon du I[er] siècle avant J.-C., *Laurent,* modèle vivant scanné en 3D par Xavier Veilhan afin de constituer la matrice d'une série de pièces (variant dans le choix des matériaux, l'échelle ou encore la position). Non loin de là, *Rebekkah,* une jeune Britannique ayant pris part aux émeutes de Londres en 2011 et que Simon Fujiwara a conviée à Xi'an, en Chine, où se trouve la célèbre armée de terre cuite du mausolée de l'empereur Qin. Là, l'artiste anglais a fait produire une centaine de tirages moulés sur la jeune fille, transformée en armée à elle toute seule. Un bataillon de clones en jean, tee-shirt et pesantes boucles d'oreilles, dont trois soldates trônent ici, au milieu de fragments de leur propre corps. A leur gauche, les masques de carnaval bourrés de ciment de Jean-Luc Moulène, déclinaison du masque mortuaire, ces effigies moulées en cire que les Romains désignaient par le terme «*imago*» et qui servaient à fixer le visage de leurs défunts, à garder une trace des généalogies. A leur droite, trois tirages académiques de différentes tailles du *Discophore* du sculpteur

grec Naucydès (IVe siècle avant J.-C.), idéal du type de l'athlète au repos.

Du fond des siècles, ce sont, évidemment, des gestes et des silhouettes qui reviennent hanter la création contemporaine : gardant l'entrée de la salle du premier étage, deux «termes» (des bustes dont le bas se termine en gaine) inspirés de la sculpture dite du *Moscophore* (excavée de l'Acropole en 1864) ne donnent à voir que deux bras maintenant fermement les pattes d'un jeune veau. C'est là l'œuvre d'Aleksandra Domanovic qui, à l'aide de modélisations 3D, évoque le clonage et la gestation in vitro. Au rez-de-chaussée, l'Anglais Steven Claydon, avec son *Voyager Assembly,* prête à un moulage du *Vieux Pêcheur, dit Sénèque mourant* les traits du personnage joué par Wesley Snipes dans *Demolition Man* et place l'*Enfant luttant avec une oie,* d'après un original de la période hellénistique, sur une pile de palettes et sous une antenne parabolique bricolée.

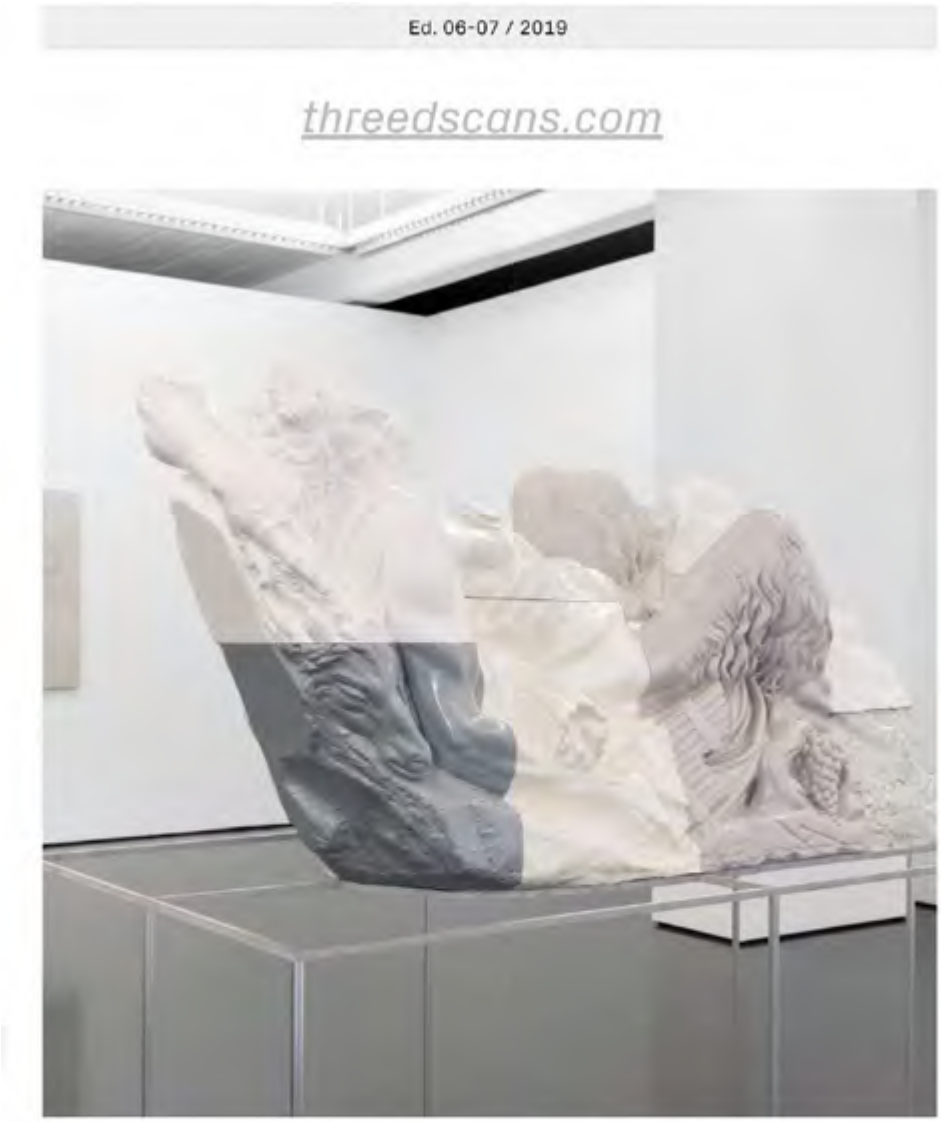
Chifoumi

Loin de se limiter au détournement de classiques, le moulage permet aussi aux artistes contemporains de fixer les surfaces (émouvante série des «Façades de Berlin» d'Asta Gröting) et de révéler l'envers des formes. En scannant les sculptures évidées de Barbara Hepworth (immense artiste britannique à qui le musée Rodin consacre en ce moment une exposition) pour les retourner sur elles-mêmes, Christine Borland en dévoile le volume intérieur. De même pour Francisco Tropa qui a moulé le vide interne d'un buste de Marianne, dont on reconnaît le bonnet phrygien, et baptisé son œuvre *Republica*.

Avec *Sons,* Daphne Wright retravaille délicatement la texture et la chromie d'un moulage sur le vif de ses deux jeunes fils ; avec *LLLLOLLL (Working Title),* Michael Dean coiffe ses grands boudins de ciment teinté d'un bouquet multicolore des mains de ses enfants dans différentes positions (comme dans une partie endiablée de chifoumi). A l'époque victorienne, il n'était pas rare que les parents fassent réaliser des moulages en plâtre des mains de leurs descendants, morts ou vivants. Mais si la pratique du moulage fut rendue désuète par la diffusion de la photographie et l'abandon du canon esthétique classique, elle reste encore aujourd'hui chargée de mystère. Les plâtres trouvaient jadis leur raison d'être dans la représentation de ce qui était absent. En confrontant les collections de moulages aux créations de l'ère numérique vient donc le moment de les regarder non pas comme des substituts, mais bien pour eux-mêmes. Et de célébrer les potentialités d'une technique éminemment actuelle.

Diane Lisarelli

threedscans.com
Contemporanea, June/July, 2019
Susana Ventura



— por Susana Ventura

A obra de arte na era da sua reprodutibilidade digital

(depois de W. B.)

threedscans.com
Contemporanea, June/July, 2019
Susana Ventura

Transpondo a entrada da Galeria Pedro Cera, uma peça no centro da exposição threedscans.com de Oliver Laric (a primeira em Portugal deste artista austríaco), cativa, de imediato, o olhar. Trata-se de uma escultura intitulada *Reclining Pan*, de 2019, que atraiçoa a nossa memória mais sensível. A sua imagem é-nos familiar, assim como o retratado, o deus grego Pã, deus dos bosques, dos campos, dos rebanhos e dos pastores, comummente representado com orelhas, chifres e pernas de bode, tronco, rosto, braços e mãos de homem, segurando uma flauta de pã. No entanto, as matérias, de que se compõe (e a reacção entre estas), revelam um brilho, uma fluidez, um movimento, uma transparência, por vezes, ou uma opacidade, por outras, da ordem do plástico, do artificial, da extrema leveza (que o seu suporte acentua, adivinhando-se o seu interior oco), das superfícies lisas perfeitas, nas quais doces néctares não encontrariam qualquer resistência, de algo que só pode ser criado, não pelas mãos do homem, mas por uma qualquer *outra* máquina, computador ou robô.

Em seu redor, perfazendo três planos distintos da sala, encontram-se três baixos-relevos que, a uma certa distância, se assemelham a tradicionais baixos-relevos em mármore. Contudo, uma vez mais, a sua superfície mostra uma outra matéria que, embora contendo na sua composição pó de mármore e de granito entre pigmentos e resina, se apresenta como algo informe (onde se percebem manchas vagas de variações de intensidade de um mesmo tom), artificial e, paradoxalmente, flexível, uma matéria que expande, alarga e desforma os gestos em relevo até ao limite que os torna ainda reconhecíveis na sua forma como fragmentos de corpos (sobretudo, mãos e pés). Esta plasticidade, movimento e flexibilidade evidenciam o aparente paradoxo, à semelhança da peça central, tanto entre forma e matéria, como entre dois tempos distintos, que surgem nestas peças como coexistentes: um passado que reactiva a nossa memória através de um olhar rememorativo e a conversão desse passado num presente cujos contornos são, ainda, híbridos e ambíguos, definindo, por conseguinte, um tempo virtual.

Por fim, no plano que encerra e circunscreve o espaço da sala, numa prateleira suspensa, estão três livros iguais para consulta, onde se lê que threedscans.com é um arquivo, iniciado por Oliver Laric em 2012, de modelos 3D descarregáveis, que podem ser utilizados de forma livre, sem quaisquer restrições impostas por direitos de autor. O livro apresenta alguns dos modelos digitalizados por Laric com o apoio de vários museus e colecções, assim como algumas das apropriações que o artista procura seguir e compilar, incluindo *Reclining Pan*, digitalizado a partir da peça original, que se encontra no *Saint Louis Art Museum*, atribuída a Francesco da Sangallo (c. 1535). Ao expor este livro completando o círculo implícito na exposição, mais do que revelar o método de Laric, afirma-se que o arquivo do artista é, essencialmente, a sua obra, uma obra em potência. E é neste momento que a obra se torna problemática, também.

Para Laric, a ideia de original e a sua crítica remontam à escultura clássica e pressupõem, desde a génese desta, igualmente, a ideia de cópia, tal como revela o título da sua exposição *Kopienkritik*, que esteve no *Skulpturhalle Basel*, em 2011. *Kopienkritik* é um termo definido por historiadores alemães, atribuído ao processo de analisar cópias das esculturas clássicas, sobretudo reproduções romanas das esculturas gregas, para possibilitar uma melhor compreensão dos originais perdidos. A prática da reprodução era, igualmente, comum na Grécia Antiga e, hoje, o que encontramos nos museus são,

Pedro Cera
Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

com raríssimas excepções, cópias, tanto helénicas, como romanas. Na referida exposição, Laric reorganizou as (cópias das) esculturas clássicas da colecção do museu, e sobre dois moldes de gesso, projectou uma versão do seu projecto-vídeo em construção contínua *Versions*, questionando as ideias de autenticidade, verdade, substância e original, a partir de um modelo de percepção que só poderá ser aquele contemporâneo, inseparável da proliferação de imagens e da velocidade da sua reprodução na *world wide web* (*Versions* poderá ser a versão contemporânea e híbrida do *Atlas Mnemosyne* de Aby Warburg e do *Museu Imaginário* de André Malraux). Os vários conjuntos, de esculturas que agrupou, exemplificavam tanto a variação (sempre semelhante) em torno de um tema, como a proliferação massiva de imagens que essa variação produz, injectando, ao mesmo tempo, nesse intervalo (entre variação e semelhança, entre original e cópia, ou entre-cópias) um pensamento crítico.

A obra de Laric não se limita, por isso, à produção de um comentário sobre a cópia, mas cria, a partir da cópia e, sobretudo, das propriedades e das qualidades que advêm da sua digitalização e reprodutibilidade, uma obra única e original.

São as características ou as qualidades estéticas, que encontramos e descrevemos anteriormente nas peças presentes na Galeria Pedro Cera, que distinguem as obras de Laric dos seus modelos. Poder-se-á, ainda, considerar que a obra de Laric — sobretudo a prática da digitalização 3D — insere a obra de arte (habitualmente, a escultura clássica que já é, por si, uma cópia) no espaço público que José Gil descreve: "A maior gratificação que pode receber um artista é saber que a sua obra entrou no espaço anónimo em que, transformando-se multiplamente, vai fazer nascer outras vozes, outras escritas, outros pensamentos. Ter a felicidade de saber que a sua obra deixou de ser sua, precisamente pelo seu imenso poder de devir-outra". A criação de um arquivo de modelos 3D corresponde, exactamente, à criação deste espaço público, onde a obra de arte circula de forma livre e anónima, podendo sempre transformar-se noutra obra, devir-outra, como demonstra o livro da exposição.

Mais ainda, a reprodutibilidade digital proposta pelo arquivo de Laric atribui outro sentido aos conceitos introduzidos por Walter Benjamin no seu ensaio "A obra de arte na era da sua reprodutibilidade técnica". Como anteviu Benjamin, aplicando-se a análise marxista às tendências de evolução da arte face à alteração das condições de produção, é possível eliminar "alguns conceitos tradicionais — como a criatividade, a genialidade, o valor eterno e o secreto" (W. Benjamin), e fazer surgir conceitos novos em teoria da arte (à data do ensaio de Benjamin, decorrentes da reprodutibilidade técnica e da alteração do modelo de percepção que esta induziu), que se diferenciam "dos correntes pelo facto de serem totalmente inadequados para fins fascistas. Pelo contrário, são

Pedro Cera
Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal
Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain
info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

aproveitáveis para a formulação de exigências revolucionárias em política de arte" (W. Benjamin). A obra de Laric, partindo, igualmente, de uma nova alteração no modelo de percepção, propõe, sem dúvida, uma revolução a partir da reprodutibilidade digital da obra de arte.

Oliver Laric

Galeria Pedro Cera

Susana Ventura (Coimbra, 1978) Arquitecta de formação (darq-FCTUC, 2003), contudo prefere dedicar-se à curadoria, à escrita e à investigação, cruzando diferentes áreas do conhecimento. Gosta de pensar sobre arte, arquitectura, fotografia, cinema e dança, e ensaiar, ora em textos, ora em exposições, outras possibilidades de pensamento. (Por isso, também, doutorou-se em Filosofia, na especialidade de Estética, FCSH-UNL, 2013, sob orientação científica de José Gil). Recentemente, foi co-curadora de "Utopia/Distopia", no Museu de Arte, Arquitectura e Tecnologia de Lisboa (MAAT).

Imagens: Oliver Laric. Vistas gerais da exposição *threedscans.com*. Galeria Pedro Cera. Fotos: Bruno Lopes. Cortesia do artista e Galeria Pedro Cera.

Direitos de Autor sem Direitos
Visão, May 2, 2019
Sílvia Souto Cunha

threedscans.com Lisboa

Direitos de autor sem direitos

Nesta exposição, Oliver Laric, austríaco residente em Berlim, subverte as regras museológicas e a sacralidade do gesto autoral, aplicando a tecnologia da cultura (pop?) digital à escultura clássica

Copiar a realidade com recurso a uma impressora 3D é um feito erudito ou plágio tecnológico? Recriar uma obra de arte pré-existente através de técnicas novas – obtendo resultados diferentes – é uma produção válida ou um ato gratuito? Estas questões não preocupam Oliver Laric, artista austríaco (nascido em 1981) que absorve e traduz as características da cultura digital ("reprodução, variabilidade ilimitada, distribuição instantânea", lembram-nos na apresentação desta mostra) numa produção própria, desde 2009. Isto é, ele pega em obras do património histórico da arte, logo de outros autores, e recria-as através das modernas técnicas de impressão.

Laric efetuou a digitalização 3D sobretudo de esculturas clássicas, pertencentes aos acervos de museus mundiais, assim questionando convenções e os conceitos basilares de originalidade e de autoria na arte – desafiando, de caminho, as definições de legalidade, direitos de autor e propriedade intelectual das obras. O artista defende que neste processo de "virtualização", a produção artística é "libertada" dos muros museológicos e democratizada. À revista *ArtForum*, Oliver declarou que o que lhe interessava era "mover-se na direção da incerteza": "Agrada-me que haja uma abertura ou uma generosidade numa determinada forma, que pode transfigurar-se e continuar a transfigurar-se, e nunca se fixa numa única entidade." É o que acontece com os seus trabalhos, abertos a utilizações alheias, ou com a publicação em livro de impressões sob pedido (na obra intitulada *threedscans.com*) em que reúne uma seleção das suas impressões 3D. Um formato que documenta igualmente a sua "vida pós-download" – que pode ser artística ou comercial.

Na presente exposição, Laric apresenta cinco trabalhos distribuídos por três elementos: a estereolitografia ***Reclining Pan*** (2019), reprodução da estátua do Museu de Arte de Saint Louis que representa o deus grego dos bosques selvagens e dos rebanhos, metade homem, metade cabra (símbolo da "hibridização" da matéria, invocada na digitalização); vários relevos; e o referido livro-obra do *print-on-demand*. **Sílvia Souto Cunha**

Esta é a primeira apresentação a solo de Oliver Laric em Lisboa, artista que já passou por vários marcos do circuito internacional, como o Museu de Arte Moderna – MOMA, o Guggenheim Bilbao, o Centro Pompidou ou a Bienal de São Paulo.

Galeria Pedro Cera > R. do Patrocínio, 67 E, Lisboa > T. 21 8182 032 > 4 mai-22 jun, ter-sex 10h-13h30, 14h30-19h; sáb 14h30-19h > grátis

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

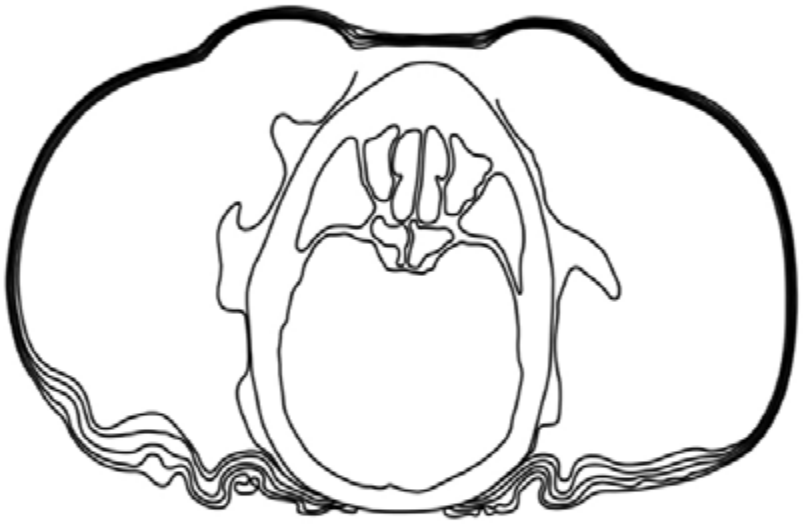
Oliver Laric
Artforum, February 3, 2018
Kristian Vistrup Madsen

ARTFORUM

INTERVIEWS

OLIVER LARIC

February 26, 2018 • As told to Kristian Vistrup Madsen



Oliver Laric, untitled, 2018, 4K video, color, sound, 4 minutes 50 seconds.

Oliver Laric is an Austrian artist based in Berlin. Questioning notions of ownership and originality, he uses 3-D scanning technologies to make historical artworks and other objects available to be copied on his website, threedscans.com. Laric's own ghostly versions of classical and neoclassical statues were exhibited most recently at the Schinkel Pavilion in Berlin. From March 3 to April 14, 2018, he will show new works in the exhibition "Year of the Dog" at Metro Pictures in New York.

I AM INTERESTED in moving towards uncertainty. My work offers attempts to reinscribe or open up the material I'm looking at and make it less categorical. I feel more comfortable with the idea of objectivity—or even authenticity—when it's not bound to a single reality or single narrative. For instance, at one point in history, the objective depiction of a flower was considered to be made by drawing *one* flower that you found, with all its idiosyncrasies and

flaws, and at another, by drawing the average of one hundred flowers, or by depicting ten different flowers. And so objectivity, too, is a very unstable concept.

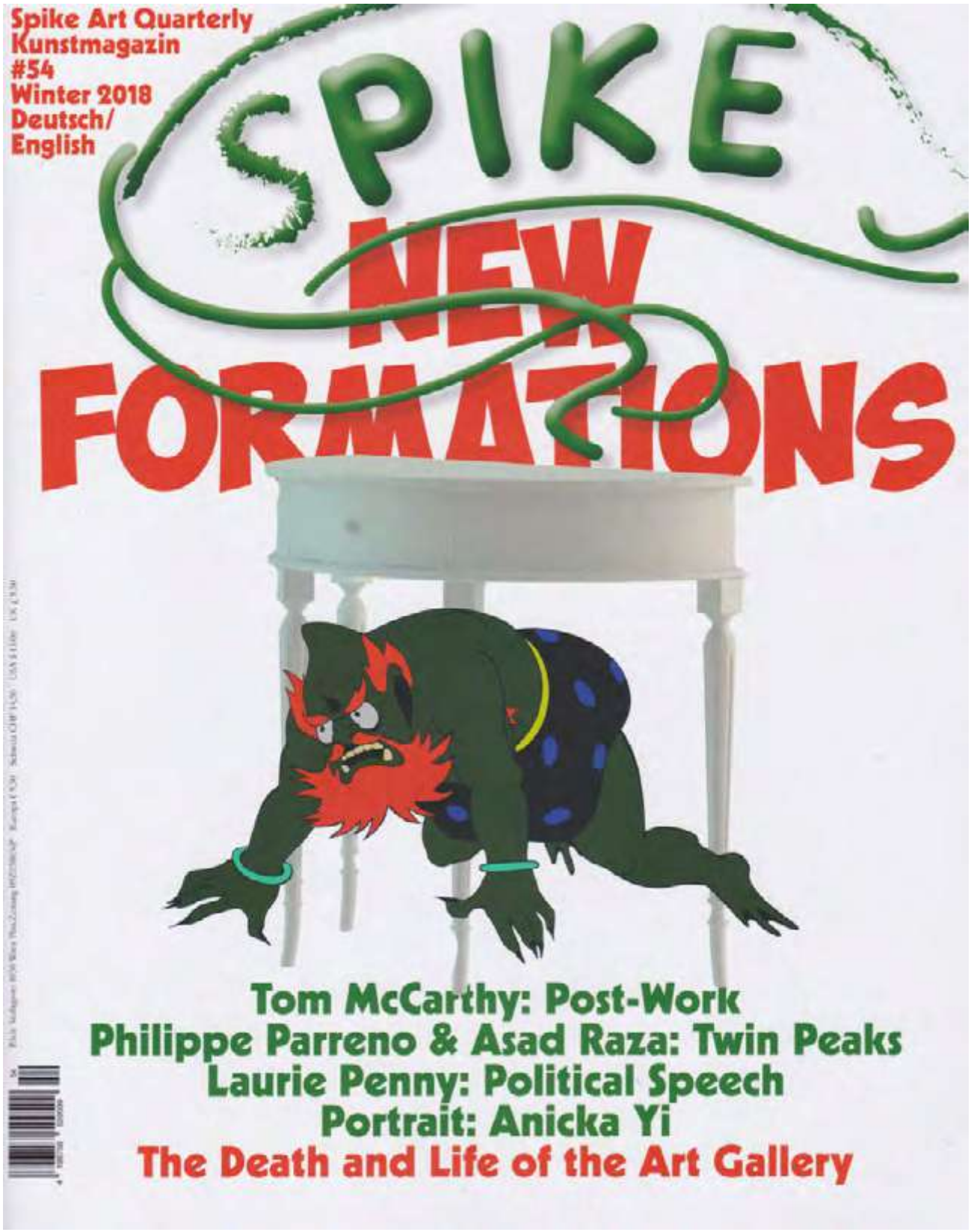
The as-of-now untitled video I'm showing at Metro Pictures is the continuation of one that I was working on in 2014 and 2015, for which I went through extensive parts of the history of animation and looked for scenes in which people, objects, and animals transform. With this new work, I am not focusing just on metamorphosis, but also on the moments in between moments. As such, the aspect of time is more present here; every scene is presented slowed down, and there is never an idea of closure, or resolve. I've become very aware of this in terms of editing: You get to a position where something is final, but that's just a tiny moment, and then it moves on. You never spend time in position A or position B—you just cut between transitions.

Along with the video, I am showing three resin sculptures cast from the same mold of a half-human, half-dog animal holding another smaller dog. The three are like distant cousins, both similar and different, and, in a way, I'm uncovering the process of how that difference is made. To me, the sentiment of the video and the sculptures is quite alike. I wanted to have a sculpture in two layers, where you can't see one without the other. They are hollow on the inside and never completely opaque, so you can always glimpse this inner world.

Usually, I make sculptures completely based on other people's works. The precursor that led to this one is Jean Carriès's *Frog-Man* from 1891, which is at the Musée d'Orsay. A few years ago, maybe I would have made a scan and used it, but now I'm excited about having a slightly different working method where I don't rely so much on an existing form. I chose the dog because I wanted to work with an animal that is closely entangled with humans or, put differently, is a minority in the wild and a majority in captivity. The show is called "Year of the Dog" because it happens to be the year of the dog according to the Chinese Zodiac. But, like in the video, I'm not referring to a specific, charismatic animal. It's not Laika, or Lassie, or Hachiko, or any dog that you would know, but rather the idea of a dog—a generic, basic dog.

What draws me to the generic form is that it is interpreted for different purposes. From early on, that's what fascinated me about neoclassical sculptures, too. They were already the second birth of a type of form and, in that sense, not really final. The cartoons I utilize in the video are also not quite generic, but at the same time they couldn't be assigned to a specific author. They are general depictions of humans or animals—archetypes or allegorical figures—that could be adapted to whatever circumstance. I like when there's an openness or a generosity to a form that can just become and continue to become, and is never fixed as an entity.

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead



The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead

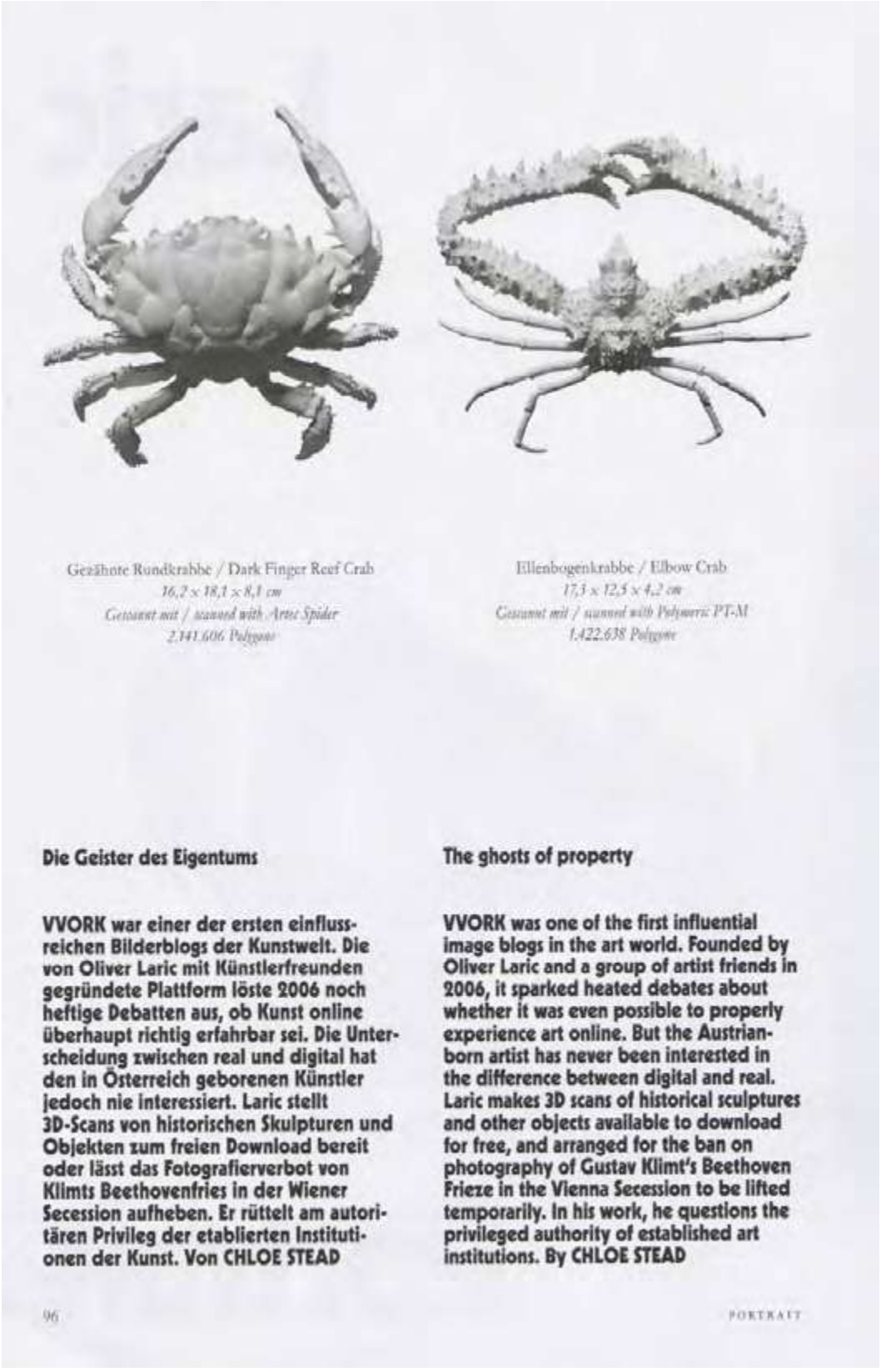
Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead



Gezähnte Rundkrabbe / Dark Finger Reef Crab
16,2 × 18,1 × 8,1 cm
Gescannt mit / scanned with Artec Spider
2.141.606 Polygone

Ellenbogenkrabbe / Elbow Crab
17,3 × 12,5 × 4,2 cm
Gescannt mit / scanned with Polyworx PT-M
1.422.638 Polygone

Die Geister des Eigentums

VVORK war einer der ersten einflussreichen Bilderblogs der Kunstwelt. Die von Oliver Laric mit Künstlerfreunden gegründete Plattform löste 2006 noch heftige Debatten aus, ob Kunst online überhaupt richtig erfahrbar sei. Die Unterscheidung zwischen real und digital hat den in Österreich geborenen Künstler jedoch nie interessiert. Laric stellt 3D-Scans von historischen Skulpturen und Objekten zum freien Download bereit oder lässt das Fotografierverbot von Klimts Beethovenfries in der Wiener Secession aufheben. Er rüttelt am autoritären Privileg der etablierten Institutionen der Kunst. Von CHLOE STEAD

The ghosts of property

VVORK was one of the first influential image blogs in the art world. Founded by Oliver Laric and a group of artist friends in 2006, it sparked heated debates about whether it was even possible to properly experience art online. But the Austrian-born artist has never been interested in the difference between digital and real. Laric makes 3D scans of historical sculptures and other objects available to download for free, and arranged for the ban on photography of Gustav Klimt's Beethoven Frieze in the Vienna Secession to be lifted temporarily. In his work, he questions the privileged authority of established art institutions. By CHLOE STEAD

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead

D Wenn man von Kunst im Internet spricht, sind elf Jahre eine lange Zeit. So betrachtet wirkt Oliver Laries Video „787 Cliparts" aus dem Jahr 2006 heute etwas alt. Beim Anschauen der etwa einminütigen Animation von „787 Cliparts", einer rasenden Abfolge von Kampfsportlern, Tennisspielern oder Rittern, wird man leicht nostalgisch. Man erinnert sich an die Zeit, als diese typischen Grafiken auf Partyeinladungen gedruckt wurden oder „Bitte draußen bleiben"-Schilder an Kinderzimmertüren bedrohlicher wirken sollen. Doch die Nostalgie verstellt die Bedeutung dieser Arbeit, die eine entscheidende Komponente der heutigen Meme-Kultur vorweggenommen hat: der Hang, um über gefundene Bilder auszudrücken.

Ein anderer wichtiger Aspekt dieser frühen Arbeit ist ihre Verbreitungsweise. Der Künstler zeigte „787 Cliparts" nicht im üblichen Ausstellungsrahmen, sondern postete sie auf seiner Webseite, wo sie schnell viral wurde. Das kommentierte er später so: „Ich war sehr stolz, als es ein Video von mir auf die erste Seite von YouTube geschafft hat und eine Million Menschen es sahen. Das ist genauso real wie eine Museumsausstellung."

Sleeping Boy, *2016*
Stereolithografie und selektives Lasersintern, Polyamid, poliertes Epoxid, TurkXC2700T / Stereolithography and selective laser sintering, polyamide, polished epoxy, TurkXC2700T, aluminium base, 55 x 112 x 102 cm

Das Fehlen der Unterscheidung zwischen „digital" und „real" ist wesentlich für Laries künstlerische Arbeit. Sie war auch der Motor hinter VVORK, eines kuratorischen Internet-Projekts, das er gemeinsam mit Studienkollegen der Universität für angewandte Kunst in Wien – Aleksandra Domanović, Christoph Priglinger und Georg Schnitzer – von 2006 bis 2012 betrieb. Zu einer Zeit, als es fast nur Text-Blogs gab (Tumblr startete erst 2007), zeigte VVORK ausschließlich Bilder von Kunstwerken mit kurzen Bildunterschriften. VVORK war als stetig wachsende Ausstellung aus einem „Feed" von Bildern (und hin und wieder Videos) konzipiert. Durchstöbern konnte man diesen nach Tags, die ähnliche Bilder miteinander verbanden. In ihrer besten Zeit hatte die Webseite mehr als zwanzigtausend Besucher am Tag. Ihre Popularität löste heftige Debatten in der Kunstwelt aus, ob man Kunst online überhaupt richtig erfahren könne. Die Diskussionen rund um das „primäre" und „sekundäre" Erleben von Kunst haben sich seit dem Auftauchen von Bilder-Blogs wie Contemporary Art Daily, ganz zu schweigen von Instagram, großteils erledigt, doch VVORK betrat damals

E When it comes to art made on or for the Internet, eleven years is a long time. Oliver Laric's video *787 Cliparts* (2006) – comprised, as the title suggests, of a sequence of 787 examples of clipart – seems quaint now. Watching the animation speed through a range of stock characters (martial artist, tennis player, knight) in just over a minute, it's easy to feel nostalgic for a time when it was the height of sophistication to use graphics like these to illustrate party invites or add menace to keep out signs on pre-teen bedroom doors. But such feelings of nostalgia mask the significance of a work like this one, which appears to anticipate our readiness to express ourselves through found images – a key component to meme culture.

Another important feature of this early work was its mode of distribution. Rather than showing *787 Cliparts* in a traditional exhibition setting, Laric posted the video to his website, where it quickly went viral. He has since said of the experience: "I think my proudest moment is having a video on the first page of YouTube and having a million people see it. That's just as real as showing it in a museum."

This lack of distinction between "digital" and "real" is integral to Laric's practice, and it was also the drive behind VVORK, an online curatorial project he ran with fellow alumni of the University of Applied Arts Vienna – Aleksandra Domanović, Christoph Priglinger and Georg Schnitzer – from 2006 to 2012. At a time when blogs were still mostly text-based (Tumblr was only launched in 2007), VVORK consisted purely of images of artworks with minimal captions. VVORK was thought of as a continually expanding exhibition organised as a continuous "feed" of images (and occasionally videos), or searchable through tags that linked similar works together. At its peak the website had over twenty thousand daily visitors, and its popularity kicked off heated debates in the art world about the validity of experiencing art online. While arguments about "primary" and "secondary" experiences of art are now largely null and void, thanks to the ubiquity of art blogs such as Contemporary Art Daily, not to mention Instagram, VVORK was, at the time, in uncharted territory.

The critic Michael Connor, now artistic director of Rhizome, wrote of

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead

D Neuland. Michael Connor, Kritiker und heute künstlerischer Leiter von Rhizome, schrieb darüber: „Das Projekt macht sich nicht für die Einzigartigkeit von Künstlern, sondern für ihre Vernetzung stark." Auch noch im Rückblick ist VVORK ein radikales Konzept, weil es die üblichen Hierarchien der Verbreitung und Rezeption zeitgenössischer Kunst zerstörte. Man musste nicht mehr Kritiker sein oder die Möglichkeit haben, durch die Welt zu jetten, um die neusten Künstler und Trends zu entdecken. Man musste nur scrollen.

Aus Interviews mit den jungen Gründern von VVORK erfährt man, dass es anfangs auch zum Nervenkitzel gehörte, Bilder jedem zugänglich zu machen ohne um Erlaubnis zu fragen. Diese Laissez-faire-Haltung gegenüber intellektuellem Eigentum trieb Laric 2008 mit dem Video „Touch My Body" noch weiter. Der Titel stammt von einem populären, wenn auch etwas lächerlichen Song von Mariah Carey. Laric schickte das Musikvideo an eine indische Firma, die darauf spezialisiert ist, Objekte auf Fotos zu isolieren, und produzierte dann eine Greenscreen-Version des Originals. Er stellte sie auf YouTube, wo sie allerdings bald auf Intervention von Carey's Plattenfirma entfernt wurde. Doch bis dahin waren schon eine ganze Reihe von Fan-Versionen davon entstanden: Carey tanzt in Dessous über einer Werbung für Backhähnchen, um nur eine zu erwähnen.

Larics Open-Access-Version von „Touch My Body" macht sich eine zentrale Kritik an der Post-Internet-Kunst zu eigen, nämlich dass unmöglich auseinanderzuhalten sei, was Künstler und was andere Internetnutzer kreieren. Cory Arcangel sagt treffend: „Alles, was da draußen gemacht wird, ist wahrscheinlich besser als das, was ich mache …, ich nenne es das ‚Finnische-Vierzehnjährige-Teenager-Syndrom'". Laric geht dieses Thema direkt an und lässt Prosumenten selbst kreativ werden, um ihre Werke dann in die konzeptuelle Logik seiner eigenen Arbeit einzubinden. Auf seiner Webseite stehen die Fanvideos einträchtig neben dem Greenscreen-Video, das jetzt nur noch eine Version von vielen ist.

„Die Tatsache, dass ein Bootleg sich ohne Einschränkungen fortentwickeln kann, macht es überlebensfähiger", erklärt der Erzähler in der ersten Fassung von Larics Videoessay „Versions" (2009). Diese Arbeit gibt der Beschäftigung des Künstlers mit

The Hunter and His Dog, *2016*
Polyurethan, Pigmente, dreiteilig; Stuhlgestell / Polyurethane, pigments, in three parts; steel stand, jedes / each 90 x 66 x 6 cm

E the project: "Instead of arguing for artists' uniqueness, it argued for their interconnectedness." And even in hindsight the VVORK model appears to be a radical proposition, given how it imagined a level playing field when it came to the distribution and reception of contemporary art. It wasn't necessary to be a critic or to have an income level that permitted frequent international travel in order to know about new artists and identify emerging trends: all you had to do was scroll.

It's clear from interviews with its young co-founders that thrusting images into the public domain without asking for permission first was part of the thrill. This laissez-faire attitude to intellectual property was further touted by Laric in his 2008 video *Touch My Body*, named after the catchy but preposterous song of the same name by Mariah Carey. Laric sent Carey's music video to a company in India specialised in isolating objects in photographs and then created a green-screen version of the original. He posted it to YouTube, who soon took it down in response to requests from the singer's record label, but not before it had spawned a number of fan versions: Carey dancing in lingerie over the top of a fried chicken commercial, to name but one notable example.

Laric's open-access version of "Touch My Body" internalises a key criticism of post-internet art, namely that it's impossible to separate what artists are doing with what regular Internet users are doing. If, as Cory Arcangel summarised, "All this stuff out there made by all these people is probably better than the stuff I'm making (…) I call it the fourteen-year-old Finnish-kid syndrome," Laric engages directly with this problem by eliciting the creative response of prosumers and claiming it within the conceptual logic of his own work. On his website these fan videos sit comfortably alongside the green-screen video, now just one version among many.

"The bootleg's unrestricted potential to develop makes it a more viable entity," declares the narrator in the first 2009 iteration of Laric's video essay *Versions*, a work that adds theoretical heft to his longstanding interest in unauthorised copies and remixes. It takes as its starting point a meme based on an inexpertly photoshopped image published by the

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead

D unautorisierten Kopien und Remixen theoretisches Gewicht. Ausgangspunkt ist ein Meme eines amateurhaft mit Photoshop bearbeiteten Bildes, das von der iranischen Revolutionsgarde veröffentlicht wurde, und auf dem vier Raketen zu sehen sind, wo in Wirklichkeit nur drei waren. Das Video untersucht die Elastizität und Multiplikation von Bildern aus den Feldern Religion bis Pornografie und endet mit einem Zitat des Autors und Musikers Momus: „Jede Lüge schafft eine parallele Welt; die Welt in der sie wahr ist." Darüber hinaus hat Laric „Versions" immer wieder neu bearbeitet, sie in einem konstanten „Beta-Zustand" (Laric) belassen. Die Idee, dass Bilder unabgeschlossen sind, wurde Bestandteil des Werks selbst.

2012 begann Laric historische Skulpturen und andere Objekte in 3D zu scannen, die er ohne Urheberrechtsbeschränkung frei zur Verfügung stellt: Auf seiner Webseite threedscans.com kann man fast hundert solcher Scans gratis herunterladen, benutzen und unbegrenzt viele neue Versionen produzieren. Auch Laric selbst verwendet diese Scans zur Produktion von Skulpturen. Die bekannteste davon ist wohl John Gibsons „Der Jäger und sein Hund" (1838), die er für eine Ausstellung bei Tanya Leighton 2015 als Triptychon in vielfarbigem Polyurethan ausdruckte. Im Laufe der Jahre hat Laric immer wieder solche Skulpturen als Unikate im Kunstkontext gezeigt (und verkauft) und gleichzeitig ihre Leben als Scans in der Public Domain verfolgt. Lustigerweise fand eine Variante der Gibson-Skulptur ihren Weg ins Bühnenbild des italienischen Beitrags zum Eurovision-Songcontest 2015. Dank Larics Webseite haben an diesem Abend also fast zweihundert Millionen Menschen „Der Jäger und seinen Hund" gesehen, viel mehr, als im Kunstkontext je möglich wäre. Der Ökonomie der Verknappung, die die Kunstwelt wie auch manche von Larics Skulpturen kennzeichnet, stehen technische Möglichkeiten außerhalb dieser Sphäre gegenüber: fotografieren, kopieren, neu gestalten und wieder verwenden. Da die 3D-Scans für diese Arbeiten online verfügbar sind, können sie sich theoretisch endlos vermehren. Wenn, wie es in einer der Versionen von „Versions" heißt, das Original so etwas wie eine Partitur ist, könnte der Scan so etwas wie eine Notation sein.

Museen haben mit dem Künstler bei diesen Scans oft (aber nicht immer) zusammengearbeitet, um die Aufmerksamkeit für ihre Werke und die Interaktion mit ihren Sammlungen zu erhöhen. Für seine Ausstellung in der Wiener Secession 2016 kooperierte Laric mit dem Kunsthistorischen Museum, der Albertina und dem Institut für klassische Archäologie der Universität Wien. Doch die Beethoven-Statue (1902) des deutschen Bildhauers Max Klinger aus der Sammlung des Museums der bildenden Künste Leipzig zu scannen, wurde ihm verweigert. Zusammen mit einem Anwalt fand Laric eine Umgehungslösung, da es in deutschen Museen kein generelles Fotografierverbot gibt. Aus Fotos entstand also ein 3D-Grundmodell, mit dem er eine modifizierte Kopie von Klingers Beethoven erstellte. Für die Skulptur war es eine „Heimkehr": Das Original wurde 1902 in der Secession in einer Ausstellung gezeigt, bei der auch Gustav Klimts Beethovenfries enthüllt wurde, der heute für die Identität der Institution zentral ist. Für die Dauer seiner Ausstellung in Wien hatte Laric das Verbot, den Fries zu fotografieren, aufheben lassen, so dass Touristen und Klimt-Fans

E scans, which can be downloaded for free and used to endlessly produce new versions. Laric creates sculptures from these scans, too; perhaps the most iconic of them is an early addition to the website, John Gibson's 1838 sculpture *The Hunter and his Dog*, which he printed in a triptych from multi-coloured resin for a 2015 exhibition at Tanya Leighton in Berlin. Throughout the years Laric has continued to show (and sell) such sculptures as unique works in an art context, while still tracking their lives as scans in the public domain. Bizarrely, a variation of the Gibson sculpture found its way onto the set of the 2015 Italian entry to the Eurovision song contest. Thanks to Laric's website, *The Hunter and his Dog* was seen that night by nearly two hundred million people, far outpacing its potential audience in a contemporary art context. The economies of scarcity that characterises the art world – and Laric's sculptures – is thus set against what technology has enabled outside of that sphere: the freedom to photograph, copy, remake and reuse. If, as one of the versions of *Versions* maintains, the original is like a musical score, the 3D scans for these works might be understood as a form of notation that is available to all, allowing for an endless proliferation of performances, or copies.

Museums have often (but not always) welcomed these scans as a way of increasing audience engagement and interaction with the works in their collection. For his exhibition at the Secession in Vienna in 2016, Laric collaborated with the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the Albertina and the University of Vienna's Institute for Classical Archaeology, but was denied permission to scan a 1902 statue of Beethoven by the German artist Max Klinger, which is in the collection of the Museum der bildenden Künste in Leipzig. After consulting with a lawyer, Laric found a workaround in taking photographs, which is not generally prohibited in German museums. He used these images to form a basic 3D model, from which he created a modified reproduction of Klinger's *Beethoven*. The inclusion of this sculpture at the Secession was a "homecoming" of sorts; the original had been previously shown there in 1902, as part of the same exhibition that also unveiled Gustav Klimt's Beethoven Frieze, which is now feted as

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead

Aus dem Englischen von Thomas Raab

D (legal) ihre eigenen Bilder des berühmten Werks machen und verbreiten konnten.

In seiner aktuellen Ausstellung „Panoramafreiheit" im Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin zeigt Laric neben zwei anderen Arbeiten auch eine neue Version der Beethoven-Skulptur. „Panoramafreiheit" ist auch als „Straßenbildfreiheit" bekannt: das in vielen Ländern gesetzlich verankerte Recht, Gebäude, Kunstwerke und Denkmäler im und vom öffentlichen Raum aus zu fotografieren und diese Bilder zu veröffentlichen. Es ist wenig überraschend, dass sich Laric für diese Einschränkung des Urheberrechts interessiert, ist sie doch wesentlicher Bestandteil des offenen und freien Austauschs von Bildern.

Larics Skulpturen sind keine Klone, sondern weichen visuell von ihren Originalen ab. Die Beethoven-Skulpturen etwa sind so groß, dass sie in mehreren Teilen gedruckt werden müssen. Für jeden Teil verwendet Laric ein anderes Material, was den Eindruck erweckt, dass diese Module endlos neu hergestellt werden können. Sie erinnern an das Paradox von Theseus, der Frage, ob ein Ding dasselbe bleibt, wenn man nach und nach jedes einzelne seiner Teile ersetzt. Laric zeigt, dass die Bedeutung einer hundertfünfzig Jahre alten Skulptur genauso elastisch ist wie die eines Nachrichtenbilds von heute, das in wenigen Minuten mit Photoshop bearbeitet und in ein Meme verwandelt werden kann. In Laric' Welt ist jede Verwendung eine Wiederverwendung, alles kann kopiert und neu verwertet werden, ja vielleicht sogar verbessert – von jedem und allen.

(Chloe Stead lebt als Autorin in Berlin.

Still aus / from Versions, *2012*

Unten / Below:
Still aus / from Untitled, *2014–15*
4K-Video, Farbe, Ton /
4K video, colour, sound, 5'55"

E central to the identity of the institution. For the duration of the show in Vienna, Laric had the restriction on taking photographs of the frieze lifted, meaning tourists and Klimt lovers could and did (legally) take and circulate their own reproductions of this famous work.

In his current exhibition "Panoramafreiheit" at the Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin, Laric is showing a new version of the Beethoven sculpture alongside two other works. The show's title is a reference to the concept of "freedom of panorama": the legal right in many countries to take and publish pictures of buildings, artworks and monuments that are in, or visible from, public spaces. It's little surprise that Laric is interested in this copyright exemption, which, after all, contributes greatly to the open and free sharing of images.

Rather than clones, Laric's sculptures are visually distinct from the originals. The Beethoven works, for example, are so large that they had to be printed in parts. Each section is made from a different material, creating the sense that they could be made and remade endlessly. This brings to mind Theseus's paradox, which asks: Does an object remain the same if all of its individual components are replaced? Laric proposes that the meaning of a 150-year-old sculpture is just as unfixed as that of a contemporary news image which can be photoshopped and memeified in a matter of minutes. In Laric's world, every use is a re-use, everything can be copied, remade and perhaps even improved, by anyone and everyone.

(Chloe Stead is a writer based in Berlin.

Pedro Cera
Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal
Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain
info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

The ghosts of property
Spike Magazine, Winter 2018
Chloe Stead

Beethoven, *2016*
Selektives Lasersintern, Polyamid, Aluminiumsockel / Selective laser sintering, polyamide, aluminium base, 266 x 121 x 181 cm

OLIVER LARIC: *geboren 1981 in Innsbruck, Österreich, lebt in Berlin.* AUSSTELLUNGEN: *„Panoramafreiheit", Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (solo); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (solo), Kunsthalle Winterthur, Schweiz (solo), The Model, Sligo, Irland (solo), Tramway, Glasgow (solo) (2017); „Untitled", Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Ohio (solo); „Photoplastik", Secession, Wien (solo) (2016); „TV", Kaikai Kiki Gallery, Tokyo (solo); Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (solo); „Giving Away the Moulds Will Cause No Damage to His Majesty's Casts", Austrian Cultural Forum London (2015).* VERTRETEN VON: *Tanya Leighton, Berlin; Metro Pictures, New York.*

OLIVER LARIC: *born 1981 in Innsbruck, Austria, lives in Berlin.* EXHIBITIONS: *"Panoramafreiheit", Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (solo); SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, Georgia (solo); Kunsthalle Winterthur, Schweiz (solo), The Model, Sligo, Ireland (solo), Tramway, Glasgow (solo) (2017); "Untitled", Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Ohio (solo); "Photoplastik", Secession, Wien (solo) (2016); "TV", Kaikai Kiki Gallery, Tokyo (solo); Center for Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv (solo); "Giving Away the Moulds Will Cause No Damage to His Majesty's Casts", Austrian Cultural Forum London (2015).* REPRESENTED BY: *Tanya Leighton, Berlin; Metro Pictures, New York.*

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Oliver Laric
Frieze, May 2016
Max Henry

FRIEZE.COM

REVIEW - 12 MAY 2016

Oliver Laric

BY MAX HENRY

Secession, Vienna, Austria

Vienna is a city of monuments to its storied history, from its Roman ruins to the last Russian soldier of World War II. Its urban fabric reminds you of its heyday as empire confronted with modernity, even as today it enters – like the rest of the world – a bionic, technological and robotic revolution full tilt. For his very 'today' exhibition 'Photoplastik' at Vienna's Secession, Berlin-based artist Oliver Laric opted to begin in the slipstream of yesteryear. Laric's research in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, the Albertina, and the University of Vienna's Institute for Classical Archeology served as the basis for new sculptures, all dated 2016.
While conducting research for 'Photoplastik', Laric discovered that in 1860 the French sculptor and photographer Francois Willème patented a device for the mechanical production of three-dimensional portraits, made using 24 cameras placed around the sitter in a circle. Such sculptures were cheap and quick to produce in multiples; a soon-booming industry was born. Touring Europe with his invention Willème eventually found his way to Vienna. Laric found examples of these photo-derived 19th-century sculptures in the Albertina, which then became a series of three-dimensional prints. The homage – in synthetic polyamide – to the Frenchman, François Willème, Self Portrait, around 1860, shows a quartet of figures scaled down to pedestal size in large, medium, small and extra small formats.

Oliver Laric
Frieze, May 2016
Max Henry

Meanwhile, Max Klinger: Beethoven, 1902 – at a height of 2,66 metres Laric's largest work to date – is a 3D reproduction of a Beethoven portrait by Max Klinger originally made from marble, alabaster, amber, bronze, and ivory, and which took Klinger fifteen years to make before it was installed in the Secession's 14th exhibition of 1902, along with Klimt's Beethoven Frieze (1901). In Laric's version, past and present eerily dovetail with information-age rupture; the sculpture's bulky size belies its lightweight hollow core, and from a distance the all-white resin suggests the marble of Greco Roman antiquity. Assembled from 25 prefab components, the joining seams are clearly visible to break the illusionism of a solid mass. Copyright issues surrounded the production for Laric's copy in the Secession. The Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig (where it's on permanent display and where Klinger was born) denied permission to photo document the work. Thus a friend of Laric's surreptitiously took 300 or so photos, which were then painstakingly composited into the Klinger 3D print in Vienna, imperfections and all.

Laric's efforts behind such works are time- and research-intensive: from the moment he locates and opens the archives, to the labour of concisely assembling the photos and translating that information into 3-dimensional scans and ultimately prints. Layers of data such as provenance, original material, institutional copyrights and ultimately precise photographic scanning and reproduction, are the ingredients for a recipe that turns into elaborate 3D scans. They are then 3D printed in piecemeal components and assembled on site. Laric is a sleuth and forensic scientist rolled into one, going to elaborate lengths to show that copy and original are interchangeable sets of data – each containing variations of variations, akin to music. After all, the hand of the sculptor is replaced by machine and software specifications and the information of how to do so freely passed along. No two copies can ever be the same, though the knowledge gets relayed in a different format. Perhaps this is how cultural artefacts will survive another thousand years.

'Photoplastik' bridges a weird netherworld between the flatness of the photo and the instantly gratifying material girth of 3D printing technology. Scattered throughout the 18 sculptures are references to antiquity, and to Neo-Classical copies of Roman copies of Greek antiquity or nineteenth-century naturalist studies. Charming mother and child sculptures based on modern mid-century sculptures are scaled down just so. A single copper relief mask features the celebrity faces of a dozen contemporary actors and actresses, solely from photo sources (Lebendmasken, Living Masks). Gone is the romance of the auratic in these objects. In its place is a romance with information as content, ghosts in the machine – materially present or not.

Where hot-button copyright is concerned Laric revels in the grey zone of the legal system on any continent and – with downloadable scans, concurrently presented on **threedscans.com <http://www.threedscans.com>** – the open-source ethos of Internet culture. Exploiting loopholes, it's an ingenious Byzantine system he's marked out for himself, encrypting the underlying structural dynamics and the recurrent archetypes of our debauched civilization. Bringing a logician's clarity to the murky semantics of legal versus illegal, original versus copy, the sculptures themselves are the evanescent artefacts embedded in the timeline of tomorrow.

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

SSENSE

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna

Artist Oliver Laric Open-Sources Museum Sculptures and Shows How Technology Has Changed Authenticity

For every opportunity opened up by technological development, twice as many questions are posed. Who does information belong to? Why does rarity increase value? What does "original" even mean? The Austrian-born and Berlin-based artist Oliver Laric is concerned with exactly these questions. His videos and sculptures play with the formulas and copies surrounding that which we imagine to be unique. Laric is so disruptive in the normal circuits of intellectual property—from importing North Korean sculptures to creating his own high-security holograms—that the stories behind his work sometimes evoke the feeling a heist movie. For an ongoing project, he focuses on the neoclassicist Greco-Roman sculptures that can be found on display at museums all over Europe, as well as molds taken of the faces of celebrities. The 34-year-old creates 3D scans of these cultural treasures to re-cast them, and uploads the scans to his website as open-source data. Now, they can be recreated anywhere by anyone equipped with the required technology. They can be used as home decor in virtual reality environments, or as models for 3D-printed lamps. It is a gesture that shows how old school ideas of originality and preciousness have been completely changed by contemporary technology.

Bianca Heuser spoke with Oliver Laric, who was visited by Lukas Gansterer during the installation of his exhibition "Photoplastik" at the historical Secession art space in Vienna.

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

Bianca Heuser: How did you go from starting as a graphic designer to being an artist?

Oliver Laric: I had no idea that you can make money in art, so I thought I'd study something practical. I didn't even know there was such a thing as a contemporary art market, but then a collector asked if he could buy the videos on my website. I asked some artists how that works, and that paid my rent for a while.

Which is crazy, since video work has a reputation of being nearly impossible to sell.

Maybe not impossible, but more difficult. Then one thing just led to the next, museum commissions—this and that—until I could slowly live from it. Initially, I just showed work on my website. When I had my first exhibition in a physical space, I thought that I'll just take the work I created for the web and put it in the space. I don't think it worked so well. I started thinking about sculpture as something to put in a space, but still I am more attracted to the image of it than the sculpture itself. The sculpture itself is more of a by-product. The image is the most common perception of exhibitions generally, too. I don't think it's just a market tool, but also an aspect of making work available to people that are not in

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

Berlin, London, Paris, and New York. I experience a lot of art just through its documentation.

What are you showing at the Secession in Vienna right now?

Sculptures. They exist in the space, but also as data made available for free on a website. So most things in the exhibition space can also travel and be consumed and modified elsewhere. I am working with a lawyer to figure out which information can be published. Generally speaking, the author has to have been dead for 70 years. Aside from that, there are moral issues, too, when you're using a depiction of a person. I've been scanning life masks of celebrities that I collected from eBay, which are incredibly detailed and show every single pore—of Christopher Walken, Sigourney Weaver, Ice Cube, Meryl Streep, Robert DeNiro.

When you're using other people's faces, especially those of celebrities who in a way live off of them, there is a thin line between being intriguing and being just plain creepy.

I find it kind of fascinating what the legal limitations are, and how much modification is needed to create a new form. I'm interested in this grey area. These masks are a byproduct of film productions. So if there is a scene in *Alien* in which Sigourney Weaver gets melted in lava, they will use this mask as a dummy. Some of them later land in trash cans, and some studio employee will pick it up and sell it to a subculture of traders.

That sounds really illegal.

I think people are interested in this kind of Hollywood paraphernalia, because it is as close as you can get to your actor of choice. It has really touched their skin! But it also is dead, a lifeless piece of plaster.

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

Is the status of these celebrities as contemporary icons what links them to your other work, casts of Roman and Greek sculptures?

That's one aspect, but these new classical sculptures are fascinating to me because they act as recipes or compositions for new works. They're continuously re-appropriated for different purposes and can be re-inscribed with new meanings. Their bodies become a stand-in for multiple meanings, and these life masks have that potential inscribed in them, too. Some of the other sculptures in the exhibition deal with the history of the Secession. For example, I tried scanning a sculpture that was in an exhibition here in 1902. It was a monument of Beethoven made by an artist from Leipzig named Max Klinger. After the exhibition, the city of Leipzig bought it and it has been at the Museum der bildenden Künste since. I thought it'd be easy to scan, since the two institutions have this shared history—and the author of the work has been dead for over 70 years—but the director was not

very into the idea. In the end, I decided to make the statue without his permission to scan it, which is possible by the use of photogrammetry. Taking photographs is allowed at the museum, and if you take many pictures of a statue you can calculate a three-dimensional model. So I didn't do anything illegal. They couldn't stop me from doing this.

Many of the 3D scans you take can be downloaded from your website. What is the weirdest thing you've ever seen anyone do with them?

Maybe it's not the weirdest, but the one I'm most proud of is this one that appeared at the Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna last year. I almost missed it. Luckily someone tagged me on Instagram. The statue is by a British neoclassicist sculptor from Liverpool, John Gibson. Somebody else made it into a lamp, too.

So you don't have any ownership claims over these scans?

I could, but I'm just happy to give up all my responsibility. To not worry and just let them live their lives, and accept whatever choices they make.

Back to the people who do claim ownership over the artworks you use in your artwork: It sounds like you spend a lot of time trying to persuade them. What's your strategy?

It's a golden handshake. It's just a hundred euro bill and a bottle of whiskey. [*laughs*] I have a feeling it slowly gets easier with every museum I've already worked with. It's becoming more ubiquitous as a technology, since museums are

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

already scanning works for conservation purposes. It's just the accessibility part that is still relatively new territory. Museums are still trying to figure it out. From my perspective, my work is beneficial to them. It's time-consuming and quite expensive to make all these scans. There is a need for them, too. I put a model up and a week later it's been downloaded a few hundred times, another week later a few thousand times. They spread incredibly fast.

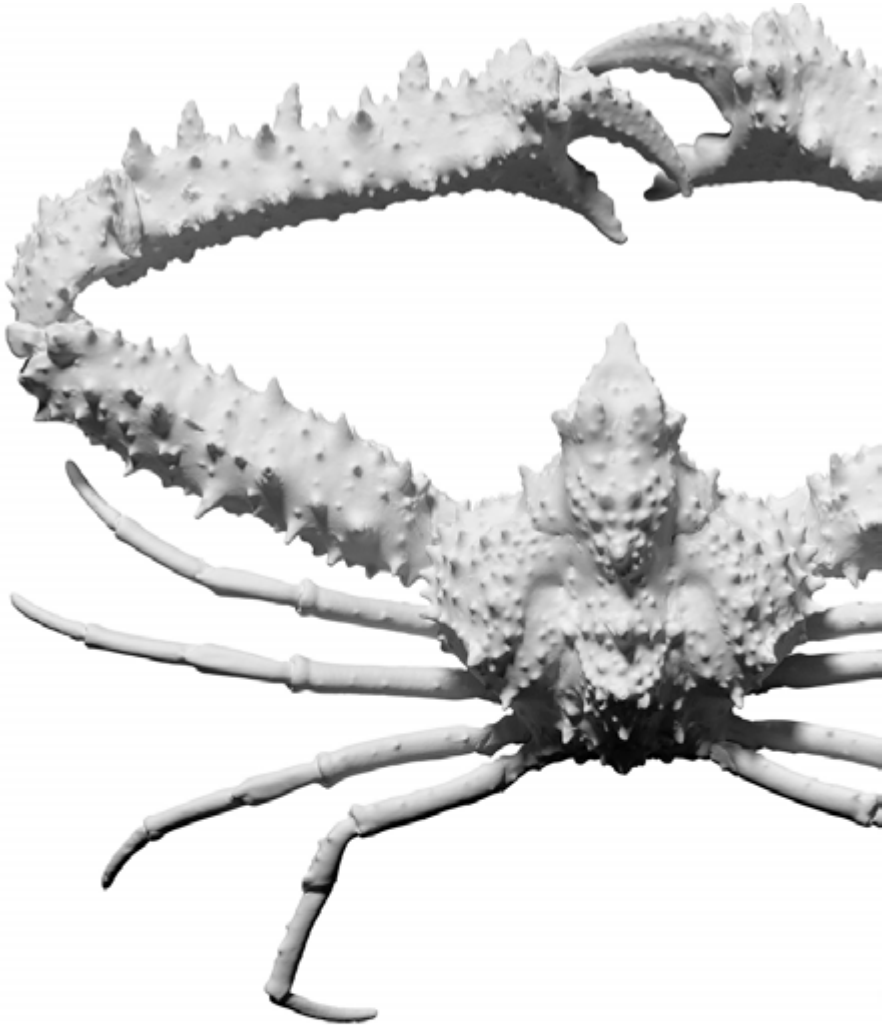
The digital and analog are very much intertwined in your work.

Yeah, I don't view it as such a binary opposition.

Do you think of the digital as an extension of the analog?

Yes, it's just one thing to me. Like I said, my fascination with sculpture is a fascination with its documentation. It's part of the same idea. I also get a bit anxious when something is rare or damageable. It's terrifying for me to have all these sculptures around my studio. Having these digital files, which I can reproduce if they get damaged, calms me down. I'm not drawn to the idea of a single, precious object with charisma, either. It's not the object itself that excites me, but the idea that manifests itself in it. For example, I visited a temple in Japan that is destroyed and rebuilt every 20 years. This has been going on for almost 700 years. There are two plots of land, and for 20 years, this shrine made out of cypress wood will be on one side, and then for the next 20 years on the other. For a few months at the end of each cycle, both exist next to each other. On one side

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser



you have the old one, modified by nature for over 19 years, and on the other a brand new, untouched one. It's such a fascinating thing to see. My initial impulse was to pray to the new shrine, but it made no sense, because the spirits hadn't been transferred yet. Two days later, the ceremony had been performed, and people were praying to the new shrine. It was probably the most emotional moment for me in relation to architecture. It wasn't so much about this specific piece of cypress wood, or a millennia-old tree, as it was about the idea of cypress wood. I like to think of my work in a similar way. It's this idea that can be re-performed over and over again, and is not tied to a single precious object. It's a very continuous repetition, too. The building isn't modified. It's been built exactly the same way for

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

1300 years. You could argue that its current version is much closer to the initial one built in 680 than a building kept alive by the European tradition, which fetishizes patina and decay. UNESCO won't give this World Heritage status. To them, it is 20 years old at most, whereas to Shinto priests, it's 1300 years old.

Questions of authenticity, like ownership, play a big role in your work as well.

It's very flexible. It's changing over time. I think the association in most cases is temporary. Some people in the art world might associate the shape and form of that John Gibson statue with my name, but that might last for maybe 50 or 100 years, and then move on to another name. I don't think of these works I'm making as mine necessarily. I'm just being associated with them.

That's a very modern approach. Ideas of ownership—whether they are concerned with land or romantic relationships—massively complicate things. So what makes them so pressing in regard to intellectual property?

It might be good to ignore that discussion and just take it as a given: That's just how our culture works. I grew up listening to hip-hop and learned that this music I loved already existed in the 1970s and is just being reinterpreted right now.

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

Like Notorious B.I.G. sampling Sylvia Striplin. It does get complicated, though, when the appropriated ideas cross cultures. Macklemore ripping off a Le1f song is weird, because he is appropriating a culture that isn't his.

Obviously, there are nuances and examples that are problematic.

A lot of the Greco-Roman sculptures at European museums prompt similar questions. For example, Germany robbed Greece of these cultural treasures during World War II and still has not returned them. Do you engage with that problematic?

It's a complicated conversation, because it is so case-specific. If you look at the issues that the Neues Museum has, they are completely different from the ones at the Bode Museum, Tate, or Met. I sympathize a lot with the countries that are making these claims. The only time I have had to deal with this conversation was when I scanned columns from the old Summer Palace in Beijing, which was destroyed in the Second Opium War by the British and the French. All the remnants of the palace went to Europe—even the emperor's dog was stolen and named "Looty," because they looted the dogs.

How tacky!

These objects turned up at auction and Chinese government officials have tried intervening and asking buyers to donate them back to China. Allegedly, there was a Norwegian general in the Chinese army who was gifted these columns. So they ended up in Bergen. As I was contacting them to scan them, they were in discussions with a Chinese businessman who wanted to return them to China, which I think has happened by now.

Your efforts to digitally archive these works as well as the aesthetics of your art bring to mind art's current favorite buzzword: post-Internet art.

Oh, what is that? I mean, I don't care much about the term. I don't think it's very precise. I'm more into the idea of a retronym. Like, for example, when color television was invented, what was

Hijacking Classical Sculptures in Vienna
Ssense, May 2016
Bianca Heuser

previously just called "television" became "black and white television." I think it's better to just call everything that happened before "pre-Internet art". But the art world's interest in Internet-related work is kind of recent. I was surprised at how long this major influence was left out of exhibitions. The art world is very far behind in many ways.

It's like your parents who just discovered Facebook.

But it doesn't upset me much. What bothers me is that so many people who were instrumental in the early years of what could be described as part of this movement are left out of the discussion.

Interview: Bianca Heuser
Photography: Lukas Gansterer Art
Images: Courtesy of Oliver Laric

Lizzie Carey-Thomas names 7 innovative young artists on the fast-track to fame
CNN, November 2015
Lizzie Carey-Thomas

Lizzie Carey-Thomas names 7 innovative young artists on the fast-track to fame

By Lizzie Carey-Thomas, Special to CNN

Rachel Rose, still from A Minute Ago, 2014, HD video, 8'43"

Story highlights

Lizzie Carey-Thomas has recently assumed the post of Head of Programmes at London's Serpentine Gallery

She's known for supporting emerging artists from around the world

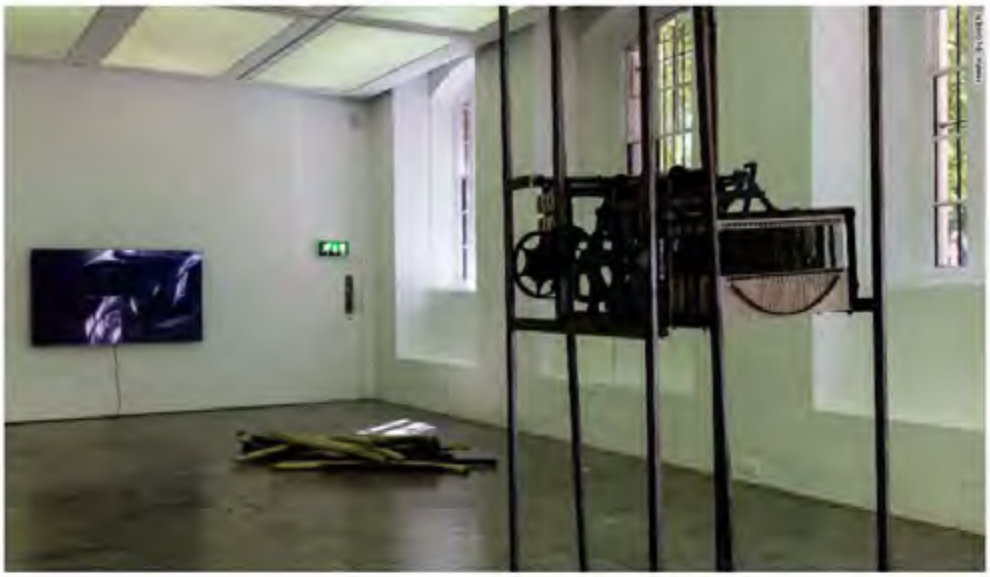
Carey-Thomas has been lead curator of the prestigious Turner Prize since 2002

Editor's Note: *Lizzie Carey-Thomas is the new Head of Programmes at the Serpentine Galleries in London, and lead curator of the prestigious Turner Prize. All opinions expressed are her own.*

(CNN)—For me, some of the most exciting and compelling work being made by young artists today reflects the myriad ways in which new technologies have impacted on our day to day existence, human relationships and connection to the physical world, bringing age-old art historical concerns into direct relationship with how we live our lives now.

Many of these artists operate between real and virtual dimensions in their explorations of the contemporary world, converting information from one state to another.

Lizzie Carey-Thomas names 7 innovative young artists on the fast-track to fame
CNN, November 2015
Lizzie Carey-Thomas



Installation view of Eloise Hawser: Lives on Wire at the Institute of Contemporary Arts London

London-based artist **Eloise Hawser** (b.1985) is fascinated by technology, old and new, and our bodily relationship to it. In her two screen video Sample and Hold (2013-15) she put her father through the process of being 3-D scanned to create a forensically accurate but emotionally disconnected geographical map which she can endlessly animate, manipulate and reproduce. For her recent solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, *Lives on Wire 2015*, she repurposed the color changing mechanism from an old Wurlitzer cinema organ, a short lived but once popular accompaniment to silent movies in the UK, rigging it to the gallery lighting system to create a subtly shifting atmosphere.

Charlotte Prodger, Stoneymollan Trail (video still) 2015

Lizzie Carey-Thomas names 7 innovative young artists on the fast-track to fame
CNN, November 2015
Lizzie Carey-Thomas

Glasgow-based artist **Charlotte Prodger** (b.1974) seeks out moments of intimacy within the boundlessness of the internet, culling material from YouTube, internet forums and personal email conversations that describe interactions with objects at close proximity, exploring distance and desire. Her charged installations bring together sculpture, moving image and spoken word often presented on equipment, selected for its aesthetic appeal as much as its technological capabilities.

co-location, time displacement by Yuri Pattison

Young artists such as **Yuri Pattison** (b.1986) and **Oliver Laric** (b.1981) use the internet as their medium, with the online availability and distribution of the work taking priority over actual exhibitions or even authorship.

Pattison (who is completing a residency at Chisenhale Gallery in London) finds ways of exposing the invisible labor and physical structures behind this intangible, digital other-world, such as in his mesmeric video *co-location, time displacement*, filmed inside the subterranean, unpeopled interior of a former civil defense center in Stockholm now used to house a data center run an internet service provider.

Versions (2012) by Oliver Laric (video still)

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Lizzie Carey-Thomas names 7 innovative young artists on the fast-track to fame
CNN, November 2015
Lizzie Carey-Thomas

Austrian-born, Berlin-based Laric explores how, in an age of digital reproduction, copies and remixes increasingly take priority over the original. From his influential series of video essays *Versions* (2009-12), to encouraging a collective reworking of a Mariah Carey music video in *Touch My Body -- Green Screen Version* (2008) in which all visuals other than the singer were replaced by green screen so any background could be inserted. His recent ambitious project *Lincoln 3-D Scans* (2013) involved scanning and producing 3-D models of the entire collection of the Usher Gallery and the Collection in Lincoln to be used for free for any purpose.

Emissary in the Squat of Gods Live simulation and story, sound infinite duration (2015) by Ian Cheng

New York-based artist **Ian Cheng** (b.1984) is similarly keen to relinquish control in digital works that use gaming technology and often exist as live simulations with unpredictable results. His new commission for the Serpentine Galleries launches in early 2016 in the form of a downloadable video game that users can manipulate.

Rachel Rose, still from Palisades in Palisades, 2014, HD Video, 9'31"

Lizzie Carey-Thomas names 7 innovative young artists on the fast-track to fame
CNN, November 2015
Lizzie Carey-Thomas

New York-based artist **Rachel Rose's** (b.1986) exquisitely edited video *Palisades in Palisades* (2014) moves rhythmically back and forth in space and time. Forensic close-up shots in which the camera seems to enter the very pores of the face or fibers of fabric contrast with locating scenes of the female figure in a wintry landscape -- Palisades Interstate Park on the Hudson River. Close cropped images of Revolution-era paintings allude to the park's history as the site of a battle during the American Revolutionary War, while the clever soundtrack gives bodily effect to the imagery -- overall a meditation on mortality and the interconnectivity of events through time. Her first solo show in London opened at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery on October 1, and she is the recipient of this year's Frieze Artists Award.

Installation view of Trisha Baga, 2014, at the Zabludowicz Collection in London.

Also New York-based, **Trisha Baga's** (b.1985) immersive installations flooded with light and sound borrow much from the rhythms of online browsing in their composition suggesting shifting chains of associations in which the artist is the portal through which information flows. As such her installations often feature items from her studio, as if there is no separation between the context in which she makes her work - her everyday frame of reference -- and the work itself.

Neo-neoclassical art
Finantial Times, October 2, 2015
Francesca Gavin

Neo-neoclassical art

Graffitied, spliced, Photoshopped – the art world is once again in thrall to ancient Greco-Roman motifs, but not as you know them, says Francesca Gavin. Welcome to the playful irreverence of neo-neoclassicism

OCTOBER 02 2015
FRANCESCA GAVIN

In front of me is a man's naked bottom: pert and marble. The ancient Greek relic is instantly familiar and yet, used as part of a contemporary artwork being shown at the Venice Biennale by artist Danh Vo, it's also out of place – and all the more striking for it. Ancient Greco-Roman motifs once again have an increasing presence in the contemporary art world and this neo-neoclassicism is being used as a compelling device to grapple – through sculpture, painting and photography – with subjects from colonialism to feminism.

As Catherine Milner wrote in this magazine earlier this year (see "The rise of antiquities" on Howtospendit.com), contemporary art collectors are now extending their gaze to include ancient pieces. In parallel, "We've seen bidding from antiquities collectors on contemporary

Neo-neoclassical art
Finantial Times, October 2, 2015
Francesca Gavin

works," says Cheyenne Westphal, co-head of Contemporary Art Worldwide at Sotheby's. It's little surprise, then, that the two genres are meeting within one artwork.

"In an uncertain world where values are constantly shifting, ancient Greece provides something more constant, more dependable. If people really look, they'll discover what the Greeks themselves wanted to represent, which is the order behind the chaos of the world," says Ian Jenkins, curator of the British Museum's recent exhibition *Defining Beauty: The Body in Ancient Greek Art*.

Take the opening show of the Fondazione Prada's new exhibition space in Milan this May (and extended in its Venice space for the Biennale), which was proposed by Miuccia Prada with an express desire to demonstrate the contemporary relevance of ancient art. The exhibition of classical sculptures, designed and installed by starchitect Rem Koolhaas and curated by art historian Salvatore Settis, explores ideas of seriality and (mass) reproduction in both the ancient world and ours. But can Jenkins' thesis be true of the contemporary artworks in which classical imagery appears?

In the work of Berlin-based artist Oliver Laric, the Roman process of reproducing Greek sculptures is presented as a blueprint for the infinite reproduction of imagery online. Classical motifs are used to highlight the adaptability of an image – they can be reused and reused "for insurance advertising or for a McDonald's special Greek burger", says Laric. "I'm fascinated by how an image can be really flexible online. It doesn't have a constant ownership. It is mutable and modifiable." In the past year, Laric has exhibited works exploring such themes at the Palazzo Strozzi in Florence and Fridericianum in Kassel, ranging from replicas of classical sculptures in layered multicoloured resins (from €17,000) to 3D scans of historical items at The Collection and Usher Gallery in Lincoln, which he archived on the internet with the intention that they be used by the public. "Lincoln 3D scans" have subsequently been used for thousands of new images and objects – including the set for Italy's Eurovision Song Contest singers. Laric's recent shows include those at the CCA in Tel Aviv and the Austrian Cultural Forum in London, with an upcoming exhibition at Secession in Vienna in 2016.

Laric's work shows just one way in which ancient imagery can be liberated from its original stories and symbolism – and loaded with new meaning. Vietnamese-born Vo, representing Denmark at this year's Venice Biennale, has based much of his recent work (price on request) on found classical objects, but splices them with Renaissance or medieval pieces – melding two civilisations in time like a 3D collage – to explore colonial themes. "I've always been interested in the idea that power structures are not dialectic," says Vo. "Civilisations just break down and others take over. I've explored the history of the United States, so it was a natural path to take things further back." In one work, the dress of a Gothic wooden Virgin sits on top of a Roman marble Adonis, cut at the crotch. In another, a Roman marble boy's legs are combined with a medieval wooden Madonna's head. Both are included in *Slip of the Tongue*, the exhibition Vo has co-curated with Caroline Bourgeois, showing until January 10 at François Pinault's Punta della Dogana in Venice. Vo has no qualms about this destruction and reforming of antiquity, highlighting its precedent in Christian iconography and cultural adaptation. "There's nothing new under the sun," he says.

The endurance of classical works over millennia also means that they naturally become symbols of longevity, the survivor's spirit (through their scars) and authenticity, all of which contemporary artists strive to connect with and channel in their own work. "What happened over 2,000 years as these objects were pushed over and limbs fell off?" asks London-based artist Daniel Silver. "That process is very sculptural. A kind of collage of time." Inspired by this, he creates inventive, misshapen and modern takes on classical sculpture (from £50,000) that recreate the destruction through the ages. Silver has gained recognition for his increasingly raw and unfinished figurative works, ranging from rough figures to tactile busts and beautiful watercolours (from £5,000) of Greco-Roman faces (often with a good beard). His most recent

show, *Plasters: Casts and Copies*, was at The Hepworth Wakefield gallery in Yorkshire this summer, and he is currently working on public art pieces in London, as well as items for private collectors.

Also connecting ancient times to the modern day is American artist Sara VanDerBeek (works from $5,000). Her photographs of ancient statues (coloured an intense blue to heighten their beauty) were first shown at New York's Metro Pictures, juxtaposed with the minimalist sculptures they subsequently inspired. "I hope a comprehension of the classical can be interwoven into a larger, more prismatic approach to understanding and interpreting the world," she says. "I feel that elements of the ancient are ever present in our lives." VanDerBeek's show at The Approach in London opens on October 14.

"The attraction of the neo-neoclassical is the shock one gets from recognising a familiar image in a new context," says Ken Rowe, vice chairman of global business consultancy YSC, who has been collecting art for 25 years. He owns a number of works that draw on the classical, including pieces by VanDerBeek, AR Penck and Markus Lüpertz. "Great artists are always engaged in the process of subtraction from historical motifs," he says. "Lüpertz in particular is a great example – using the classical to explore emotional or political points with freshness." The German painter has just had a major retrospective at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris that included 140 works, many of which have a typically playful, irreverent approach to the ideals of beauty so key to classical imagery, as do works in a current show at the Arnulf Rainer Museum, Baden, which runs until October 26. He has been working for over 40 years and his depictions of classical bodies are more popular than ever, with work leaping from €50,000 at auction 10 years ago to €250,000 in the past year.

Los Angeles-based artist Amy Bessone uses female torsos and reclining nudes – often in strong colours such as hot pink and blood red – to imbue her paintings and ceramics (from $6,000) with a feminist subtext. "I'm interested in female embodiments of power past, present and future," she says. "The classical body was always in my work, but self-awareness around my use of it came later – and is still developing." The truncated female torso, variously detached, put on a pedestal, copied, embellished and more, serves "as a shifting glyph for both art history and myself". A recent two-person show at Salon 94, *Torsos & Buckets*, with Matt Merkel Hess, saw hollowed out replicas of classical female statues inspired by a found vase. Bessone is currently working on a body of large-scale figurative ceramics for an upcoming solo show at Gavlak Gallery, Los Angeles, in January, in what sounds like the perfect neo-neoclassicist studio: "Imagine a female-only ceramic version of the Met's Greek and Roman Galleries in the living room of a funky 1970s stucco house on the eastern edge of the Hollywood Hills."

From feminism to architecture and urban development – and the work of London artist Pablo Bronstein, who zooms in on and pulls apart classical references in city public spaces in his art. "Classical architecture was crucial in the 1980s and 1990s, when public spaces were sold to private developers who dressed them up as neoclassical piazzas with shops and fountains," he says. "They seem public, but actually they are entirely privatised. I've made work about that." His intricate drawings and sculptures (prices from £6,000) focus on details, excess and the classical architectural origins of prefabrication and interiors, and range from proposals for fantasy neoclassical fireplaces and Italian piazzas to a resin replica of a classical column. These are used to examine power, order, democracy and conservatism in contemporary society. Several works will be at Museo Marino Marini, Florence in December, as well as being part of the touring group exhibition *British Art Show 8*, which runs from this month to January 2017.

And it's not just artists from the west who are appropriating these classical Greek and Roman images and motifs. Chinese contemporary artists are also exploring the potent power of their symbolism in a socio-cultural context. Sui Jianguo creates pop sculptural reinterpretations of iconic classical statues (such as Myron's *Discobolus*) – inspired by casts artist Xu Beihong brought to China in the 1930s. In his work, the classical is used to highlight the cultural

Neo-neoclassical art
Finantial Times, October 2, 2015
Francesca Gavin

repression of both political and his own personal history. His discus thrower – clad in a Mao jacket and made of fibreglass painted white rather than marble – is casting aside the bonds of socialist ideology. Made in 1998, Jianguo's *Discobolus* and similar works continue to be much talked about; they fetch ever-higher sums at auction (in 2013, a group of Jianguo's contemporary takes on classical sculpture sold for Rmb10m – about £1,013,000 – at Christie's), while earlier this year the *Discobolus* was exhibited as part of the Saatchi Gallery's show *Post Pop: East Meets West*.

For Belgian collector Alain Servais, bank securitisation advisor and former head of international bond trading at Dewaay, who owns several contemporary works that reference the classical, such "sampling" is most powerful when used for provocative ends: "Contemporary art should open us to the 'other', and surprise, question and disturb," he says. "Art should be a pocket of resistance."

Amy Bessone, see Gavlak Gallery and Salon 94. **Danh Vo**, see Marian Goodman Gallery. **Daniel Silver**, www.danielsilver.org and see Frith Street Gallery. **Frith Street Gallery**, 17–18 Golden Square, London W1 (020-7494 1550; www.frithstreetgallery.com). **Gavlak Gallery**, 1034 North Highland Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038 (+1323-467 5700; www.gavlakgallery.com). **Herald St**, 2 Herald Street, London E2 (020-7168 2566; www.heraldst.com). **Marian Goodman Gallery**, 5-8 Lower John Street, London W1 (020-7099 0088; www.mariangoodman.com). **Markus Lüpertz**, see Michael Werner Gallery. **Metro Pictures**, 519 W 24th Street, New York, NY 10011 (+1212-206 7100; www.metropictures.com). **Michael Werner Gallery**, 22 Upper Brook Street, London W1 (020-7495 6855; www.michaelwerner.com). **Oliver Laric**, www.oliverlaric.com and see Tanya Leighton. **Pablo Bronstein**, see Herald St. **Pace**, 6 Burlington Gardens, London W1 (020-3206 7600; www.pacegallery.com). **Salon 94**, 12 East 94th Street, New York, NY 10128 (+1646-672 9212; www.salon94.com). **Sara VanDerBeek**, see Metro Pictures. **Sui Jianguo**, see Pace. **Tanya Leighton**, 156 Kurfürstenstrasse, Berlin 10785 (+4930-2216 07770; www.tanyaleighton.com).

The Future of Loneliness
The Guardian, April 1, 2015
Olivia Laing

theguardian
Winner of the Pulitzer prize

The Future of Loneliness

As we moved our lives online, the internet promised an end to isolation. But can we find real intimacy amid shifting identities and permanent surveillance?

April 1, 2015
By Olivia Laing

At the end of last winter, a gigantic billboard advertising Android, Google's operating system, appeared over Times Square in New York. In a lower-case sans serif font – corporate code for friendly – it declared: "be together. not the same." This erratically punctuated mantra sums up the web's most magical proposition – its existence as a space in which no one need ever suffer the pang of loneliness, in which friendship, sex and love are never more than a click away, and difference is a source of glamour, not of shame.

As with the city itself, the promise of the internet is contact. It seems to offer an antidote to loneliness, trumping even the most utopian urban environment by enabling strangers to develop relationships along shared lines of interest, no matter how shy or isolated they might be in their own physical lives.

But proximity, as city dwellers know, does not necessarily mean intimacy. Access to other people is not by itself enough to dispel the gloom of internal isolation. Loneliness can be most acute in a crowd.

In 1942, the American painter Edward Hopper produced the signature image of urban loneliness. Nighthawks shows four people in a diner at night, cut off from the street outside by a curving glass window: a disquieting scene of disconnection and estrangement. In his art, Hopper was centrally concerned with how humans were handling the environment of the electric city: the way it crowded people together while enclosing them in increasingly small and exposing cells. His paintings establish an architecture of loneliness, reproducing the confining units of office blocks and studio apartments, in which unwitting exhibitionists reveal their private lives in cinematic stills, framed by panes of glass.

More than 70 years have passed since Nighthawks was painted, but its anxieties about connection have lost none of their relevance, though unease about the physical city has been superseded by fears over our new virtual public space, the internet. In the intervening years, we have entered into a world of screens that extends far beyond Hopper's unsettled vision.

The Future of Loneliness
The Guardian, April 1, 2015
Olivia Laing

Loneliness centres on the act of being seen. When a person is lonely, they long to be witnessed, accepted, desired, at the same time as becoming intensely wary of exposure. According to research carried out over the past decade at the University of Chicago, the feeling of loneliness triggers what psychologists call hypervigilance for social threat. In this state, which is entered into unknowingly, the individual becomes hyperalert to rejection, growing increasingly inclined to perceive social interactions as tinged with hostility or scorn. The result is a vicious circle of withdrawal, in which the lonely person becomes increasingly suspicious, intensifying their sense of isolation.

This is where online engagement seems to exercise its special charm. Hidden behind a computer screen, the lonely person has control. They can search for company without the danger of being revealed or found wanting. They can reach out or they can hide; they can lurk and they can show themselves, safe from the humiliation of face-to-face rejection. The screen acts as a kind of protective membrane, a scrim that allows invisibility and transformation. You can filter your image, concealing unattractive elements, and you can emerge enhanced: an online avatar designed to attract likes. But now a problem arises, for the contact this produces is not the same thing as intimacy. Curating a perfected self might win followers or Facebook friends, but it will not necessarily cure loneliness, since the cure for loneliness is not being looked at, but being seen and accepted as a whole person – ugly, unhappy and awkward, as well as radiant and selfie-ready.

This aspect of digital existence is among the concerns of Sherry Turkle of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who has been writing about human-technology interactions for the past three decades. She has become increasingly wary of the capacity of online spaces to fulfil us in the ways we seem to want them to. According to Turkle, part of the problem with the internet is that it encourages self-invention. "At the screen," she writes in Alone Together (2011), "you have a chance to write yourself into the person you want to be and to imagine others as you wish them to be, constructing them for your purposes. It's a seductive but dangerous habit of mind."

But there are other dangers. My own peak use of social media arose during a period of painful isolation. It was the autumn of 2011, and I was living in New York, recently heartbroken and thousands of miles from my family and friends. In many ways, the internet made me feel safe. I liked the contact I got

from it: the conversations, the jokes, the accumulation of positive regard, the favouriting on Twitter and the Facebook likes, the little devices designed for boosting egos. Most of the time, it seemed that the exchange, the gifting back and forth of information and attention, was working well, especially on Twitter, with its knack for prompting conversation between strangers. It felt like a community, a joyful place; a lifeline, in fact, considering how cut off I otherwise was. But as the years went by – 1,000 tweets, 2,000 tweets, 17,400 tweets – I had the growing sense that the rules were changing, that it was becoming harder to achieve real connection, though as a source of information it remained unparalleled.

This period coincided with what felt like a profound shift in internet mores. In the past few years, two things have happened: a dramatic rise in online hostility, and a growing awareness that the lovely sense of privacy engendered by communicating via a computer is a catastrophic illusion. The pressure to appear perfect is greater than ever, while the once-protective screen no longer reliably separates the domains of the real and the virtual. Increasingly, participants in online spaces have become aware that the unknown audience might at any moment turn on them in a frenzy of shaming and scapegoating.

The atmosphere of surveillance and punishment destroys intimacy by making it unsafe to reveal mistakes and imperfections. My own sense of ease on Twitter diminished rapidly when people began posting photos of strangers they had snapped on public transport, sleeping with their mouths open. Knowing that the internet was becoming a site of shaming eroded the feeling of safety that had once made it seem such a haven for the lonely.

The dissolution of the barrier between the public and the private, the sense of being surveilled and judged, extends far beyond human observers. We are also being watched by the very devices on which we make our broadcasts. As the artist and geographer Trevor Paglen recently said in the art magazine Frieze: "We are at the point (actually, probably long past) where the majority of the world's images are made by machines for machines." In this environment of enforced transparency, the equivalent of the Nighthawks diner, almost everything we do, from shopping in a supermarket to posting a photograph on

Facebook, is mapped, and the gathered data used to predict, monetise, encourage or inhibit our future actions.

This growing entanglement of the corporate and social, this creeping sense of being tracked by invisible eyes, demands an increasing sophistication about what is said and where. The possibility of virulent judgment and rejection induces precisely the kind of hypervigilance and withdrawal that increases loneliness. With this has come the slowly dawning realisation that our digital traces will long outlive us.

Back in 1999, the critic Bruce Benderson published a landmark essay, Sex and Isolation, in which he observed: "We are very much alone. Nothing leaves a mark. Today's texts and images may look like real carvings – but in the end they are erasable, only a temporary blockage of all-invasive light. No matter how long the words and pictures stay on our screens, there will be no encrustation; all will be reversible."

Benderson thought the transience of the internet was the reason that it felt so lonely, but to me it is far more alarming to think that everything we do there is permanent. At that time – two years before 9/11, and 14 years before Edward Snowden exposed the intrusive surveillance it had set in motion – it was no doubt impossible to imagine the grim permanence of the web to come, where data has consequences and nothing is ever lost – not arrest logs, not embarrassing photos, not Google searches of child porn or embarrassing illnesses, not the torture records of entire nations.

Faced with the knowledge that nothing we say, no matter how trivial or silly, will ever be completely erased, we find it hard to take the risks that togetherness entails. But perhaps, as lonely people often are, I am being too negative, too paranoid. Perhaps we are capable of adapting, of finding intimacy in this landscape of unprecedented exposure. What I want to know is where we are headed. What is this sense of perpetual scrutiny doing to our ability to connect?

* * *

The future does not come from nowhere. Every new technology generates a surge of anxious energy. Each one changes the rules of

communication and rearranges the social order. Take the telephone, that miraculous device for dissolving distance. From the moment in April 1877 that the first line linked phones No 1 and No 2 in the Bell Telephone Company, it was perceived as an almost uncanny instrument, separating the voice from the body.

The phone swiftly came to be regarded as a lifeline, an antidote to loneliness, particularly for rural women who were stuck in farmhouses miles from family and friends. But fears about anonymity clung to the device. By opening a channel between the outside world and the domestic sphere, the telephone facilitated bad behaviour. From the very beginning, obscene callers targeted both strangers and the "hello girls" who worked the switchboards. People worried that germs might be transmitted down the lines, carried on human breath. They also worried about who might be lurking, invisibly eavesdropping on private conversations. The germs were a fantasy, but the listeners were real enough, be they operators or neighbours on shared telephone lines.

Anxiety also collected around the possibility for misunderstanding. In 1930, Jean Cocteau wrote his haunting monologue The Human Voice, a play intimately concerned with the black holes that technologically mediated failures of communication produce. It consists of nothing more than a woman speaking on a bad party line – as these shared services were known – to the lover who has jilted her and who is imminently to marry another woman. Her terrible grief is exacerbated by the constant danger of being drowned out by other voices, or disconnected. "But I am speaking loud ... Can you hear me? ... Oh, I can hear you now. Yes, it was terrible, it was like being dead. You're here and you can't make yourself heard." The final shot of the television film of the play, starring Ingrid Bergman, leaves no doubt as to the culprit, lingering grimly on the shining black handset, still emitting the dead end of a dial tone as the credits roll.

The broken, bitty dialogue of The Human Voice underscores the way that a device designed for talking might in fact make talking more difficult. If the telephone is a machine for sharing words, then the internet is a machine for constructing and sharing identities. In the internet era, Cocteau's anxieties about how technology has affected our ability to speak intimately to one

another accelerate into terror about whether the boundaries between people have been destroyed altogether.

I-Be Area, a chaotic, vibrant and alarming film made in 2007, turns on these questions of identity and its dissolution. Its central character is engaged in a war with his clone, and his clone's online avatar. Making lavish use of jump cuts, face paint and cheap digital effects, the film captures the manic possibilities and perils of digital existence. All the cast, starting with the children in the first frame making hyper-cute adoption videos for themselves, are in search of a desirable persona. They perform for an audience that may at any moment dissolve or turn aggressive, which stimulates them into increasingly creative and bizarre transformations. Often seemingly imprisoned in teenage bedrooms, everyone is talking all the time: a tidal wave of rapid, high-pitched, Valley Girl inflections, the spiel of YouTube bedroom celebrities mashed with corporate catchphrases and the broken English of bots and programming lingo. Everyone is promoting, no one is listening.

The creator of this visionary and hilarious film is Ryan Trecartin, a baby-faced 34-year-old described by the New Yorker's art critic, Peter Schjeldahl, as "the most consequential artist to have emerged since the 1980s". Trecartin's movies are made with a band of friends. They possess a campy DIY aesthetic that often recalls the avant garde genius of the 1960s film-maker Jack Smith, the character morphing of Cindy Sherman, the physical mayhem of Jackass and the idiotic confessional candour of reality TV.

These films take the experiences of contemporary digital culture – the sickening, thrilling feeling of being overwhelmed by a surge of possibilities, not least who you could become – and speed them up. Trecartin's work is ecstatically enjoyable to watch, though as the critic Maggie Nelson wryly observes: "Viewers who look to Trecartin as the idiot savant emissary from the next generation who has come to answer the question 'Are we going to be alright?' are not likely to feel reassured."

Watching the precisely crafted chaos, one has the disquieting sensation that it is one's own life that is under the lens. Trecartin's characters (though I doubt he would sanction such a term, with its vanished, 20th-century confidence in a solid knowable self) understand that they can be owned or branded,

discarded or redesigned. In response to pressure, their identities warp and melt.

What is exciting about Trecartin's work is the ecstasy generated by these transformations. It is tempting to suggest that this might even be a futuristic solution to loneliness: dissolving identity, erasing the burdensome, boundaried individual altogether. But there remain lingering currents of unease, not least around the question of who is watching.

* * *

For the past two years, Trecartin has been working with the curator Lauren Cornell to put together the 2015 Triennial at New York's New Museum, which opened at the end of February. This event brings together 51 participants whose work reflects on internet existence. The title, Surround Audience, expresses the sinister as well as blissful possibilities for contact that have opened up. Artist as witness, or maybe artist imprisoned in an experiment none of us can escape.

Over the course of a freezing week in New York in February, I went to see Surround Audience four times, wanting to understand how contemporary artists were grappling with loneliness and intimacy. The most confrontationally dystopic piece was Josh Kline's terrifying Freedom, an installation re-creating the architecture of Zuccotti Park, the privately owned public space in Manhattan that Occupy Wall Street took over. Kline had populated his replica with five human-size Teletubbies dressed in the uniforms of riot police, with thigh holsters, nine-hole boots and bulletproof vests. In their bellies were televisions playing footage of off-duty cops flatly read aloud from the social media feeds of activists. Kline's work makes tangible the growing complication of the spaces we inhabit, and the easy misappropriation of our words. As I sat listening to the feed I watched a beaming young woman with a baby take repeated selfies with one of the helmeted figures.

What is it like to be watched like this? Many of the pieces suggest that it feels like being in prison – or perhaps in the horrifying quarantine bunkers designed by the Hong Kong artist Nadim Abbas. These tiny cells, no larger than a single bed, have been furnished, Apartment Therapy-style, with potted

domesticity at odds with the implicit violence of the space. As in Hopper's Nighthawks diner, there is no way in or out; simply a pane of glass that facilitates voyeurism while making contact impossible. Touch can only be achieved by way of two sets of black rubber gauntlets, one pair permitting someone – a guard, maybe, or a nurse or warden – to reach in and the other allowing the incumbent to reach out. It's hard to think of a lonelier space.

But Surround Audience also includes work that testifies to the internet's ability to dissolve isolation, to create community and closeness. Juliana, Frank Benson's extraordinary sculpture of the 26-year-old artist and DJ Juliana Huxtable, is a triumphant icon of self-creation. Huxtable is transgender, and the sculpture, a life-size 3D print, displays her naked body, with both breasts and penis, those supposedly defining characteristics of gender. She reclines on a plinth, braids spilling down her back, her extended right hand fixed in a gesture of elegant command: a queenly figure, her shimmering skin spray-painted an unearthly metallic blue-green. Juliana shows how the trans community is redefining authenticity. It is not a coincidence that the trans rights movement has surged in an era in which both identity creation and community building are facilitated by technology. Turkle's talk of the danger of self-creation misses the importance, especially for people whose sexuality, gender or race is considered marginal, of being able to construct and manifest an identity that is often off-limits or forbidden in the physical world.

* * *

The future does not announce its arrival. In Jennifer Egan's Pulitzer prize-winning novel A Visit from the Goon Squad, published in 2010, there is a scene set in the near future that involves a business meeting between a young woman and an older man. After talking for a while, the girl becomes agitated by the demands of speech and asks the man if she can "T" him instead, though they are sitting side by side. As information silently flushes between their two handsets, she looks "almost sleepy with relief", describing the exchange as pure. Reading it, I can distinctly remember thinking that it was appalling, shocking, wonderfully far-fetched. Within a matter of months it seemed instead merely plausible, a little gauche, but entirely understandable as an urge. Now it is just what we do: texting in company, emailing colleagues at the same desk, avoiding encounters, DMing instead.

and what it has to say about the future we have fallen into. He was clutching a coffee and dressed in a red hoodie emblazoned with the word HUNT, a leftover prop from a shoot. He spoke much more slowly than the logorrheic characters he plays in films, pausing frequently to locate the exact word. He, too, felt that, with the acceleration in the past few years, we have entered almost unknowingly into a new era, long heralded and abruptly arrived. "We don't necessarily look different yet, but we're very different," he said.

This space, the future now, is characterised, he believes, by a blurring between individuals and networks. "Your existence is shared and maintained and you don't have control over all of it."

But Trecartin feels broadly positive about where our embrace of technology might take us. "It's obvious," he said, "that none of this stuff can be controlled, so all we can do is steer and help encourage compassionate usage and hope things accumulate in ways that are good for people and not awful ... Maybe I'm being naive about this, but all of these things feel natural. It's like the way we already work. We're making things that are already in us."

The key word here is compassion, but I was also struck by his use of the word natural. Critiques of the technological society often seem possessed by a fear that what is happening is profoundly unnatural, that we are becoming post-human, entering what Turkle has called "the robotic moment". But Surround Audience felt deeply human; an intensely life-affirming combination of curiosity, hopefulness and fear, full of richly creative strategies for engagement and subversion.

Over the week, I kept being drawn back by one piece in particular, an untitled six-minute film by the Austrian artist Oliver Laric, whose work is often about the tension between copies and originals. Laric has redrawn and animated scenes of physical transformation from dozens of cartoons, anchored by an odd, unsettlingly melancholy loop of music. Nothing stays constant. Forms continually migrate, a panther turning into a beautiful girl, Pinocchio into a donkey, an old woman deliquescing into mud. The people's expressions are striking, as their bodies melt and reform, a heartrending mixture of alarm and resignation. The film captures our anxieties about image: Am I desirable? Do I need to be tweaked or improved? This sense of being out of control, subject to

The Future of Loneliness
The Guardian, April 1, 2015
Olivia Laing

to be trapped in temporal existence, with the inevitable upheavals and losses that entails. What could be more sci-fi, after all, than the everyday horror show of ageing, sickness, death?

Somehow, the vulnerability expressed by Laric's film gave me a sense of hope. Talking to Trecartin, who is only three years younger than me, had felt like encountering someone from a different generation. My own understanding of loneliness relied on a belief in solid, separate selves that he saw as hopelessly outmoded. In his worldview, everyone was perpetually slipping into each other, passing through ceaseless cycles of transformation; no longer separate, but interspersed. Perhaps he was right. We aren't as solid as we once thought. We are embodied but we are also networks, living on inside machines and in other people's heads; memories and data streams. We are being watched and we do not have control. We long for contact and it makes us afraid. But as long as we are still capable of feeling and expressing vulnerability, intimacy stands a chance.

Oliver Laric
Art in America, March 27, 2015
Tanya Leighton

Art in America
NEWS & FEATURES EXHIBITIONS MAGAZINE NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBE

REVIEWS MAR 27, 2015

Oliver Laric

BERLIN,
at Tanya Leighton

by Hannah Black

Oliver Laric: Untitled, 2014, 4K video, approx. 5 minutes; at Tanya Leighton.

The human is not a fact derived from biology, but a cultural category whose boundaries and definitions are constantly being reworked or violently maintained. Recent protests against police brutality in the United States have highlighted how racial categories operate as vectors through which entitlements to social benefits and even life flow. Processes of racialization mark the boundaries of what is taken for human, and are a terrain of struggle.

Oliver Laric's show did not explicitly engage with these politics, but seemed haunted by their foundational questions. A long essay by philosopher Rosi Braidotti, which functioned as something halfway between a press release and an artwork, ends by praising Laric for his consideration of "nomadic becoming," but notes at the outset that able-bodied straight white masculinity, like Laric's, is an unmarked term, and the capacity for the sort of self-transformation imagined in the exhibition relies on the disproportionate freedoms granted by structural violence.

The triad of polyurethane casts on pedestals in the downstairs room was created as part of Laric's ongoing project with the Usher Gallery in Lincoln, UK. Three-dimensional scans of the museum's collection are available online, and from these Laric has selected an 1838 sculpture by John Gibson, *The Hunter and the Dog*, and recast it three times as a brightly colored relief. The gesture can be read as either a utopian attack on the artwork's singularity, or, less optimistically, as an attempt to bolster the failing citadel of Western classicism with new technology, much as markets dream of better algorithms.

An untitled animation in the upstairs room presents a series of decontextualized and fragmented images, a procedure familiar from Laric's "Versions" video series. Laric has excavated moments of transformation found in what the gallery describes as "over 100 years of animated film and videos." Casting a ragpicker's eye on this century of movement, Laric has filleted out a robot morphing into a car, an Egyptian statue accumulating detail, a snake becoming a dancer and so on. In "Versions," a digitally generated voice opined over the images; here, the soundtrack—sparse sound effects and an instrumental version of Justin Timberlake's "Cry Me a River"—is an atmospheric surround that doesn't quite coincide with the mutating figures.

Oliver Laric
Art in America, March 27, 2015
Tanya Leighton

The history of animation that Laric draws on includes the polyvalent wildness of 1930s cartoons, in which humans become objects becoming humans becoming animals. Racial categories were part of these cartoons' raw material. From Betty Boop to singing crows, the animated figures could circulate black culture without employing the problematic vessel of black people, a white fantasy that recurs again and again (Miley Cyrus was a favorite at this year's Art Basel Miami Beach).

The repetitive arpeggio of the Timberlake cover made its own circular progressions. The original is already half a copy, its title borrowed from a musically unrelated Ella Fitzgerald song in which she musters a self-defensive sneer against a man who "nearly drove me out of my head." Timberlake doesn't seem in danger of being driven anywhere but deeper into himself; the fatal vulnerability of the Fitzgerald song is gone, replaced by a steely masculine fury at being treated as fungible: "Girl, I refuse / You must have me confused / With some other guy." Emptied of its romantic significations, of any voice at all, Laric's rendering of the track signals only the miraculous circulatory possibilities of pop music, ostensibly stripped bare of particularity.

Part-Time Body
Texte Zur Kunst, March 2015
Ana Teixeira Pinto

Oliver Laric, "The Hunter and the Dog," 2014, detail

PART-TIME BODY

Ana Teixeira Pinto on Oliver Laric at Tanya Leighton, Berlin

Metamorphosis is a puzzling thing. In insects and arthropods as well as some amphibians and crustaceans, the embryo can develop into an organism dissimilar to its progenitors, before molting into its mature biology in an abrupt and conspicuous way. Mammals, on the other hand, are barred from this degree of shape-shifting, which for the warm-blooded, can only unfold over millennia. In the animated film, "the mythical potential of moving between species," as Tom Gunning has described it, is unleashed.[1] Ultimately defined by its use of metamorphic motion, animation is metaphor incarnate, the hypostatization of deviancy onto the concreteness of the physical body, stretched and strained to the limits of recognition.

"To be titled" (2014), Oliver Laric's most recent video project, on view in Berlin this winter at Tanya Leighton gallery, is a compilation of animated characters undergoing a process of sequential transmogrifications. Sourced from a century-long tradition (in which Japanese anime featured most prominently), the video displays a loop of continuous transformations: bull-into-

Part-Time Body
Texte Zur Kunst, March 2015
Ana Teixeira Pinto

Oliver Laric, "To be titled," 2014, film still

minotaur-into-android, Pinocchio-into-jackass, frog-into-commode, girl-into-winged-demon, and several takes devolving grown men into embryos. Here, matter is dynamic and all form is provisional. Hands typically morph into roots or claws, humans into gruesome beasts, and the mechanical into the organic. Breasts can open to become horrid jawlike *vagina dentate*, while gender boundaries prove elusive. Out of a sphere of digital clay, we see the figure of Hermanubis – the classical hybrid of Anubis, the Egyptian jackal-headed god of the underworld, and the Greek Hermes – slowly taking shape as the animated counterpart to "The Hunter and his Dog," a sculpture installed in the gallery's lower level, an amorphous mass of pigmented polyurethane congealed into three slabs, taking the form of John Gibson's "Hunter and Dog," (1938).

Among the classical traditions that Laric mines – together with other neoclassical works, Gibson's sculpture features often in Laric's œuvre – even the gods can be cast as unstable. By contrast, the transmogrified form and the metamorphic in modern art (abstraction notwithstanding) are mostly associated with the regressive sentiments prevalent in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists. In film theory, animation and the conventions of plasticity it champions were also largely overlooked. Firmly rooting the genealogy of cinema in photographic indexicality, historians such as Siegfried Kracauer, André Bazin, and Stanley Cavell placed the moving image within the strictly analytic tradition of Étienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge. Only recently have scholars, including Lev Manovich, Tom Gunning, and Esther Leslie, prompted by the surge in usage of digital effects, begun to challenge this ontology, with Manovich claiming that cinema can be described as a subgenre of animation, instead of the other way around. Rather than capturing motion, the digital camera generates visual data: a polymorphic continuum of informational flow, which, eliminating the clear distinction between actual image and rendered image, brings animation, together with its grotesque transgressions, back to the fore.

As "To be titled" makes manifest, these transgressions, though clearly not naturalistic, can offer a realistic depiction of social alienation and self-estrangement. Commenting on property rela-

Part-Time Body
Texte Zur Kunst, March 2015
Ana Teixeira Pinto

Oliver Laric, "To be titled," 2014, film still

tions in Mickey Mouse (to offer one key historical example), Walter Benjamin noted that "here, we see for the first time that it is possible to have one's own arm, even one's own body, stolen."[2] In Laric's video, a boy turns into a coffee vending machine (from the animated short "A Coffee Vending Machine and Its Sword" by Chang Hyung-Yun) codifying the precariousness of part-time labor as the possession of a part-time body. The flow of transmutations comes to a halt with a drawing of Reynard tending to his fallen friend; the anthropomorphic fox of folklore, having been revived in more recent times by "furries" subculture as a "fursona" – a zoomorphic identity that allows the fandom to bypass normative gender roles.

Cartoons are political subjects, and (to cite Gunning again) the "portrayal of the protean body" based on a "fantasy of metamorphosis, change and mutability, unconfined by the forms of actuality" can carry the progressive promise of "a transformation that could be undergone by all – politically, socially."[3]

But metamorphosis is also a metaphor for the artistic process, for the ability to generate a progeny that radically differs from the tradition from which it springs. Where Andy Warhol wanted to be a machine, Laric's tormented, feral characters want to be (in Bruce Lee's words) liquid, like water.[4] Whether or not we are still trading in Warholian currency (appropriation, debasement, iconophilia) is not that clear. "To be titled," seems at odds with the tendency to pictorialize everything the post-net generation inherited from Pop art – and yet it does still fetishize its subject matter.

"Oliver Laric," Tanya Leighton, Berlin, November 22, 2014–January 17, 2015.

Notes

1 Tom Gunning, "The Transforming Image: the Roots of Animation in Metamorphosis and Motion," in: Suzanne Buchan (ed.), Pervasive Animation, New York 2013, p. 66.
2 "Mickey Mouse", fragment by Walter Benjamin, 1931, from a conversation with Gustav Gluck and Kurt Weill, Gesammelte Schriften, VI, pp. 144–145.
3 Gunning, op. cit., p. 55.
4 Quoting Bruce Lee, Laric titled his first solo show, in 2012, "Be Water My Friend."

Previewed
ArtReview,January-February 2015
Martin Herbert

Previewed

Marlene Dumas
Tate Modern, London
5 February – 10 May

Melgaard + Munch
Munch Museum, Oslo
24 January – 12 April

Otobong Nkanga
Museum Folkwang, Essen
23 January – 18 May

By Proxy
James Cohan, New York
through 17 January

Barbara Hammer
KOW, Berlin
10 January – 14 February

Melanie Gilligan
Casco, Utrecht
through 25 January;
de Appel, Amsterdam
24 January – 29 March;
De Hallen, Haarlem
through 1 March

The Lulennial
Lulu, Mexico City
7 February – 17 May

Monika Sosnowska
Museu de Arte Contemporânea
de Serralves, Porto
19 February – 31 May

Nick Mauss
303 Gallery, New York
26 February – 11 April

Garry Winogrand
Jeu de Paume, Paris
through 8 February

2 Bjarne Melgaard, *Untitled*, 2001, drawing,

Previewed
ArtReview, January-February 2015
Martin Herbert

While other painters of her generation lapse
1 into lucrative stylism, **Marlene Dumas** remains gratifyingly exploratory. When *ArtReview* interviewed the South African-born, Amsterdam-based artist in 2012, she characterised art as a leap of faith, a stab in the dark, and the cluster of portraits she was making – constellating Christ, Osama Bin Laden, Amy Winehouse and Phil Spector – felt as precarious and dogma-questioning as any she'd made. Don't expect midcareer dropoff, then, in Tate Modern's Dumas retrospective, *The Image as Burden*. Touring from her hometown's Stedelijk Museum, it's named after a 1993 painting whose starting point was a photograph of actor Robert Taylor carrying Greta Garbo: between the male figure's nudity and the woman's blue face, this small canvas conveys a spectrum of associations ranging from classical pietà compositions to suggestions of sexual violence. That work will nestle amid a hundred or so others, including, if the Stedelijk presentation is followed, early collages, rarely shown drawings and new paintings.

Dumas's London solo show in 2012 featured a soundtrack by Winehouse and Spector, and existentialist painting plus pop is now a thing, it appears: the Munch Museum's unlikely double-
2 header of **Bjarne Melgaard and Edvard Munch**, *The end of it all has already happened*, will include audio by Diana Ross, Dolly Parton, the Carpenters, etc. This, Melgaard apparently said at a press conference, is a counterbalancing of light and darkness that parallels the bright anguish of Munch's *The Scream* (1893–1910). But for Melgaard, who avowedly wants to upend staid perceptions of the older Norwegian, music is just the start. Munch's paintings will hang on wallpaper featuring images of Melgaard's juicy, chaotic previous installations; a new one will be on show too. Meanwhile, we're invited to ponder the surprising similarities between two autobiographical painters orbiting around themes of sex, death and alienation. (And, presumably, not think at all about the idea of an adept controversialist clambering on the shoulders of a relative giant.)

'A species of Land art for the twenty-first century', is how Dieter Roelstraete, in *ArtReview*'s
3 last Future Greats issue, described **Otobong Nkanga**'s blend of drawing, painting, photography, installation and video, where 'land' – such as that in her native Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta – is synonymous with natural resources. Landscape, here, is always filtered through

1 Marlene Dumas, *The Image as Burden*, 1993.
Private collection, Belgium.
© the artist. Photo: Peter Cox

2 Edvard Munch, *Sørgemarsj (Funeral March)*, 1897.
© Munch Museum, Oslo/Munch-Ellingsen Group/BONO 2014

3 Otobong Nkanga, *Whose Crises Is This?*, 2013,
two drawings, acrylic on paper, 30 × 42 cm each.
Courtesy the artist and Lumen Travo Gallery, Amsterdam

Previewed
ArtReview, January-February 2015
Martin Herbert

4 Xu Yhen, *Light Source – Bathsheba Holding King David's Letter*, 2014, oil on canvas, 86 × 98 cm. Produced by Madein Company, Shanghai. Courtesy James Cohan Gallery, New York & Shanghai

5 Barbara Hammer, *Pink Pickup*, 1982, handpainted photograph and collage, 20 × 25 cm. Courtesy the artist and KOW, Berlin

the body, the subjective, storytelling, memory and the treachery of objects and images. Nkanga's Museum Folkwang show will relate to the institution's collection, and she has maximised constrained means before. See her *Diaspore* (2014) at *14 Rooms* in Basel last year, where seven black women carrying Queen of the Night pot-plants on their heads stepped tentatively across cartographic flooring, living sculptures negotiating space and identity. Or *Contained Measures of Shifting States* (2012), her durational performance at Tate Modern's Tanks in 2012, which rifled through Tate's collection and invited viewers to interact with and parse imagery including – as Nkanga recently pointed out to *The White Review* – deceptively placid images of war-torn Sudan.

Speaking of interacting viewers, there's plenty of flex in the Duchampian notion that the work of art is not completed by the artist, at 4 least according to the premise of ***By Proxy***. James Cohan's strong-looking, 13-artist group show. It includes Duchamp's *With Hidden Noise* (1916) and extends the work-completing category from audience to fabricators. The result promises to traverse a century of styles of outsourcing, with participants ranging from John Cage, Alighiero Boetti and Yoko Ono to Jon Rafman, Wade Guyton, Oliver Laric and Xu Zhen. But this is surely only the beginning, and enterprising artists should now start considering how not to have their own ideas at all, not make the work those borrowed ideas are based on and not understand its meaning either.

A pioneer of queer cinema with around 80 5 films under her belt, **Barbara Hammer** has gear-shifted from making experimental films during the 1970s that explored formerly taboo subjects such as menstruation, the female orgasm and lesbian sexuality, to 1980s films using optical printing that made a virtue of the fragility of 16mm, and then archival essay-films such as *Nitrate Kisses* (1992) and poetic self-documenting such as *A Horse Is Not a Metaphor* (2008), made as she battled stage-three ovarian cancer. Over the last half-decade, she's been increasingly recognised by the mainstream artworld, not least thanks to film retrospectives at MOMA in 2010 and Tate Modern in 2012. Her reputation established, Berlin's KOW can now veer away from the core of her work: this show features tough, lyrical collages and painted photographs that Hammer made in parallel to film projects, mostly during the mid-1980s, and has never shown before.

Previewed
ArtReview,January-February 2015
Martin Herbert

6 Still from *The Common Sense*, 2014, dir Melanie Gilligan

7 Gabriel Orozco, *Breath on Piano*, 1993, c-print, 41 × 51 cm.
Courtesy Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris & London,
and Kurimanzutto, Mexico City

8 Monika Sosnowska, *Stairway*, 2010,
metal, PVC handrail, 565 × 250 cm.
Photo: Jens Ziehe. © the artist. Courtesy Capitain Petzel,
Berlin, and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne

6 It's the near future in **Melanie Gilligan**'s largest project to date, the three-part sci-fi film *The Common Sense* (2014), and capitalism-driven technological advancements have created 'The Patch', which allows people to directly experience the bodily lives of others. Then the tech breaks down, causing psychological crises and withdrawals; when it's working again, the population cleaves into those who use the technology and others who form resistance groups. In what sounds like a sequel of sorts to Gilligan's *Popular Unrest* (2010), where all transactions are overseen by something called 'The Spirit', this future is also an allegory for a present in which capitalism's target is no longer just our wallets but, via gadgets and social media, our very minds. Perhaps against that, the Canadian artist is also forcing the issue of physical space. To see it all, you'll have to visit three overlapping shows: at Casco, Utrecht, until 25 January; at De Hallen, Harlem, until 1 March; and at de Appel, Amsterdam, until 29 March. You're not schlepping, though; you're having a 'nomadic viewing experience'.

A trilogy of a different stripe in Mexico, meanwhile: this column often features a biennial – in fact, we can do that, typically, while ignoring several biennials every month, such is their super-
7 abundance – but we've never had a **Lulennial** before, nor a biennial so easily navigable. Held at Lulu, the compact Mexico City space co-run by *ArtReview* contributing editor Chris Sharp, and timed to coincide with the city's art fairs, it's aptly themed around the idea of small gestures that have a disproportionately big impact, and balances older and newer examples of that approach, from Jiri Kovanda's subtle, to-camera interventions in the everyday (gesturing while riding an escalator, for instance) to Gabriel Orozco's minor-but-momentous photograph of condensed breath in the process of evaporating on a piano's polished black top. Other artists range from Lygia Clark to Karin Sander, Lee Lozano to La Monte Young, and so we feel confident in recommending this rather than, say, the New Museum Triennial. Maybe we'll cover that next time.

8 **Monika Sosnowska** mostly doesn't do small. Instead, the Polish artist's tendency is towards big, disorienting para-architecture: MDF mazes, spatially warped rooms and – not infrequently – stairways that lead nowhere. Tatlin's tower is a regular implicit reference here, as the intellectual backdrop of Sosnowska's work is the collapse of

Previewed
ArtReview, January-February 2015
Martin Herbert

modernist idealism that was intertwined, complexly, with the fate of Eastern Europe over the last century. In her hands, once-upright forms melt and buckle, and if the ostensible influence is her experience of seeing Warsaw's modernist architecture torn down around the turn of the century, the entropic associations spread far beyond the local. For *Architectonisation*, Sosnowska takes over seven gallery spaces with a *parcours* of objects and installations from the last dozen years, from corridor and pavilionlike works to discrete and more decisively sculptural pieces – some of which, it seems, are also to be activated by a performance programme.

Over the last decade or so, via drawings, paintings, furniture, painted curtains and more, 9 **Nick Mauss** has outlined a sensibility, a fragmentary but literary-feeling sphere of influence, via imagery including bourgeois eighteenth-century drawing rooms, writers and composers, and patterning reminiscent of old book end-papers, tentatively laid out – as if the New York-based artist were trying to figure out why he's attracted to such things. ('My process involves accumulation, sometimes in ways I'm not consciously aware of, and then sorting things out,' he told *Mousse* magazine a few years ago.) This sweet, cart-before-the-horse confusion is the charm of the work, whether in loose-looking gallery installations or, as in Mauss's stage for a series of ballets for the 2014 Frieze Art Fair in London, a live event. What seems most of emotional value in the work is what's unvoiced, blocked or yet to unfurl; incompletion carries it towards us.

Incompletion carries a different value in 10 **Garry Winogrand**'s work. Though he's now recognised as one of the last century's greatest street photographers – a visual poet of America's vivacity and violence – Winogrand didn't edit or print the majority of his work during his lifetime, and left behind some 6,600 rolls (a quarter of a million images) of unprinted film when, in 1984, he died suddenly at age fifty-six. His first retrospective in a quarter-century, co-organised by SFMOMA and Washington, DC's National Gallery of Art, combs the archives to include a hundred unseen images. Expect freaks on the streets of LA, monkeys riding in convertibles and a lot of beautifully ragged edges. As a talking head says on the accompanying minidocumentary, "What he was trying to do was big and sprawling and messy." En masse is the way to appreciate it.

Martin Herbert

9 Nick Mauss, *F.S. Interval II*, 2014, 24 tiles with reverse glass painting, mirrored (3 panels), 297 × 249 × 85 cm. © the artist. Courtesy 303 Gallery, New York

10 Garry Winogrand, *Los Angeles International Airport*, 1964, gelatin silver print, Garry Winogrand Archive, Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona, Tucson. © artist's estate. Courtesy Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco

Oliver Laric
Artforum, November 29-January 24, 2014
Simone Menegoi

ARTFORUM

Oliver Laric

AR/GE KUNST GALLERIA MUSEO
via museo 29
November 29–January 24

Appropriation, copy, variation, dissemination: Oliver Laric's work hinges on these fashionable concepts. What distinguishes his output from other "post-Internet" artists is the way in which he also investigates similar notions beyond the present, establishing fascinating conceptual parallels between, for example, the reprocessing an image undergoes when it is put out on the Web and the evolution of Greek and Roman sculpture, where both, to different extents, are the result of collective and anonymous processes.

The two works exhibited in this show confirm this approach and cover a broad chronological and cultural spectrum. *The Hunter and His Dog* (all works 2014) is a grouping of three synthetic-resin sculptures that reprise a neoclassical statue by John Gibson with the same title. Beginning with a 3-D scan of the original piece, Laric created a bas-relief on a smaller scale, presented in three chromatic variations. The elegant veining of the resin was achieved using a process similar to that for decorative faux marble, an artisan technique that Laric intentionally contrasts with the fetishized individual touch of the artist/author in a modern sense. The second work in the exhibition, *Untitled*, is a video based on fragments of animated films from different periods, where one character metamorphoses into another character, an animal, or an object. The artist has had film clips redesigned to highlight the intermediary stage between one identity and the other, before adding brief ad hoc digital animations.

View of "Oliver Laric," 2014–15. Foreground: *The Hunter and His Dog*, 2014. Background: *Untitled*, 2014.

What thematically links the two works on view is our relationship with the "other," particularly animals (the young naked athlete of Gibson's statue holds a dog by the collar). Notably, the philosopher Rosi Braidotti explores this theme in a text made available to viewers as a corollary to the show.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

— Simone Menegoi

When Authorship is Beside the Point
The New York Times, November 22, 2014
Randy Kennedy

The New York Times

ART & DESIGN | THE WEEK AHEAD

When Authorship Is Beside the Point

By **RANDY KENNEDY** NOV. 22, 2014

Since Marcel Duchamp's Big Bang of 1913, when he declared mundane store-bought objects — a snow shovel, a dog-grooming comb — to be art if artists said so, cosmic echoes of the ready-made idea have bounded around the aesthetic universe in powerful and unpredictable ways.

"By Proxy," a group show that runs through Jan. 17 at the James Cohan Gallery in Chelsea, tries to chart some of those reverberations in contemporary art by using one of Duchamp's own pieces — "With Hidden Noise," a rattle made of twine sandwiched between two brass plates — as its lodestone.

The show looks at Duchampian legacies like delegation (Alighiero Boetti's embroideries, sewn by Afghan craftswomen); chance (John Cage's drawings made with smoke and river rocks); games (Yoko Ono's all-white chessboard, "Play It by Trust"); and industrial fabrication (Oliver Laric's 3-D-printed copies of marble columns from the Old Summer Palace in Beijing.) The show, as the gallery writes, makes a case for those artists whose chief skills is to "do less and make more happen." (533 West 26th Street; 212-714-9500, jamescohan.com.)

A version of this article appears in print on November 23, 2014, on page AR4 of the New York edition with the headline: Art: When Authorship Is Beside the Point.

Oliver Laric
Cura, December 2014

cura.

cura. is a quarterly magazine, a publishing house, an exhibition space and a platform for editorial and curatorial activities.

About Magazine Books Basement Off-Site

Oliver Laric

As the Italian-Australian feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti states in the essay-press release of Oliver Laric's solo show at Tanya Leighton, Berlin, "the work of Laric expresses and explores in the contemporary global context the challenge that the hybrid, the anomalous, the monstrous metamorphic others throw in the direction of dominant subject positions and their century-old metaphorization habits". The exhibition includes a sculptural work by the Austrian artist (*The Hunter and the Dog*, 2014), composed of three flat multicolored busts of a man with a dog. The sculptures, made of polyurethane and jade, bronze and aluminum powder, are positioned on the top of a minimal pedestal. The 5-minute animated video *To be titled* (2014) shows the organic and monstrous transformations of figures swinging between animals, humans, objects and technological devices. The video work, as well as the sculptures on display, seem to illustrate the concept of "nomadic and metamorphic being" theorized by Braidotti, who writes: "Laric expresses a new cultural and political sensibility that [...] encourages us to think again and think harder about our relationship to otherness".

Die Sckelperspektive
Kunstforum, October 2014
Manuela Ammer

KUNSTFORUM
INTERNATIONAL

DIE SOCKELPERSPEKTIVE*

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Die Sckelperspektive
Kunstforum, October 2014
Manuela Ammer

Im Frühjahr 2011 war in der Secession in Wien eine monumentale Druck- und Kopiermaschine aufgestellt, die einer kleinen tischähnlichen Skulptur als Sockel diente. Die Maschine produzierte eine Broschüre mit dem Titel *Book of Plinths/Buch der Sockel*, die BesucherInnen an sich nehmen konnten. Neben einem Text fanden sich in dem Heft Abbildungen von Sockelskulpturen, die zum Teil auch in der Ausstellung zu sehen waren. Diese Skulpturen wiederum waren in Anlehnung an Bildvorlagen von Arbeiten von KünstlerInnen wie Constantin Brâncuşi oder Robert Rauschenberg angefertigt worden, in denen der Sockel eine wesentliche Rolle spielt. Während die historischen Vorbilder implizit blieben, waren ihre Kopien gleich doppelt präsent – als Objekte und druckgrafische Reproduktionen –, wobei die „Sockelkopien" wiederum als Originale der Fotokopien gelten konnten. Die Xerox-Maschine trug das Ihre zu diesem Vexierspiel bei: Obgleich sowohl Trägerin als auch Produzentin eines Werkes, war sie selbst nur Display und als solches austauschbar. Dessen ungeachtet trat sie mit einer Massivität auf, die die eigentlichen Werke in den Hintergrund treten ließ. Wie aber lässt sich eine Sockelfigur fassen, in der (Re-)Präsentations- und (Re-)Produktionslogiken derart ineinander verquickt sind?

Diese Zusammenstellung des österreichischen Künstlers Christoph Meier wirft die Frage auf, ob ein

OLIVER LARIC, Kopienkritik, 2011, Installationsansichten Skulpturhalle Basel. Foto: Gunnar Meier, Courtesy der Künstler & Tanya Leighton, Berlin & Seventeen, London

211

Die Sckelperspektive
Kunstforum, October 2014
Manuela Ammer

Sockel, der Werke nicht nur präsentiert, sondern buchstäblich hervorbringt, eigentlich noch ein Sockel sein kann. Was hat das Verhältnis von Sockel und Werk überhaupt mit der Relation von Original und Kopie zu tun? Und warum beschäftigen diese Themen gerade eine Generation von KünstlerInnen, deren Bild- und Materialverständnis wesentlich durch digitale Verfahren geprägt ist?

Verfügt der Rahmen über eine Geschichte der theoretischen Auseinandersetzung, die von Immanuel Kant über Georg Simmel bis zu Jacques Derrida reicht, bleiben Philosophie und Ästhetik zur verwandten Figur des Sockels auffällig stumm. Anders als der Rahmen, der in Gestalt der „Rahmenbedingungen" eine postmoderne Wiedergeburt erleben durfte, ist dem Sockel eine vergleichbare Aktualisierung versagt geblieben. Dabei fungiert er in vielerlei Hinsicht als plastisches Pendant: Während der Rahmen das Bild an der Wand begrenzt und von ihr abgrenzt, isoliert der Sockel das Objekt vom umliegenden Raum. Er bereitet seinem Gegenstand eine Basis, trennt ihn vom Boden und setzt ihn sowohl zur Architektur wie zum/zur BetrachterIn in Relation. Wie der Rahmen, der an die Vorstellung des Bildes als Fenster gekoppelt ist, vermittelt der Sockel zwischen dem Raum der Repräsentation und dem Realraum. Rahmen wie Sockel schaffen Distanz, bezeichnen eine Präsentationssituation und stoßen die ästhetische Rezeption des zur Schau Gestellten an.

Rhetorisch tritt der Sockel allerdings wirkmächtiger auf als der Rahmen: Mit der faktischen Erhöhung des Gegenstandes geht stets auch eine ideelle einher, was sich nicht zuletzt an der Geschichte der Skulptur im öffentlichen Raum zeigt: an jenen Figuren, die über die Jahrhunderte auf Sockel gehoben und von Sockeln gestürzt wurden. Überhaupt ist der Sockel eng mit dem Begriff der Geschichte verbunden (man denke an den sprichwörtlichen „Sockel der Geschichte"). Als faktischem Träger ist ihm das Potenzial, auch im übertragenen Sinne die „Basis" eines Objektes zu verdeutlichen, gewissermaßen eingeschrieben. So dienten Sockel immer wieder auch als Medien, die historische Bezüge herstellten, Genealogien oder Traditionslinien suggerierten und Hierarchien zum Ausdruck brachten.

Die wenige Literatur, die sich mit der jüngeren Geschichte des Sockels befasst, sieht seine Bedeutung in erster Linie in seinem Verschwinden.[1] Nach einer Hochzeit in der Denkmalkunst des späten 19. Jahrhunderts, in der Sockel von teils enormen Ausmaßen zum Einsatz kamen, setzte um 1900 ein Wandel der ästhetischen Anforderungen und Problemstellungen ein. Die akademische Auffassung, dass der Skulptur ein eigener Bereich geschaffen werden müsse, sie also der Inszenierung bedürfe, wurde mit dem Autonomieanspruch des Werks in der Moderne fragwürdig. Der Sockel entwickelte sich von einer gestalterischen zu einer strukturellen Herausforderung. Bekanntermaßen waren es Auguste Rodin und Constantin Brâncuşi, die zu dieser Zeit grundlegende Neuerungen in der Bildhauerei initiierten und im Zuge dessen auch den Gebrauch des Sockels einer Revision

CHRISTOPH MEIER, Ohne Titel, 2011, Installationsansicht Secession, Wien. Foto: Gregor Titze, Courtesy der Künstler & Galerie Kamm, Berlin

Pedro Cera
Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal
Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain
info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Die Sckelperspektive
Kunstforum, October 2014
Manuela Ammer

unterzogen. Rodin befasste sich intensiv mit der Wirkung seiner Figuren auf unterschiedlichen Höhen und schlug bereits 1893 für *Les Bourgeois de Calais* (1895) eine Aufstellung ohne Sockel vor. Brâncuşi wiederum behandelte den Sockel als integralen Bestandteil seines skulpturalen Programms und ließ damit die Grenze zwischen Sockel und Werk porös werden.

Die Absorption des Sockels in das Werk sowie der direkte Bezug der Skulptur zum Boden wurden in der Skulptur der 1960er und 70er Jahre zum zentralen Topos. Insbesondere die Minimal Art radikalisierte – und standardisierte – die Errungenschaften der Moderne, indem sie entweder Objekt und Sockel gleichsam in eins fallen ließ (die Kuben von Robert Morris) oder mit dem Sockel die vertikale Ausrichtung überhaupt verabschiedete (Carl Andres „floor pieces"). Diese Neuorientierung des Verhältnisses von Objekt und Umraum bedeutete auch einen grundlegenden Wandel des Verhältnisses von Objekt und BetrachterIn. Eine Kunst, die sich systematisch des Sockels als vertikalem Distanzhalter entledigt und mit dem/der BetrachterIn Grund und Boden teilt, hat ihre Autonomie eingebüßt. Sie liefert sich, so die einschlägige Kritik Michael Frieds an der Minimal Art, den Kontingenzen von Präsentation und Rezeption aus: Der geteilte Boden wird zur Bühne und das Werk „theatralisch".[2] Frieds Beobachtung sollte Folgen zeitigen, allerdings nicht unbedingt im Sinne des Kritikers. Ortsspezifik, Institutionskritik und, später, Relationale Ästhetik – diese und andere auf die Minimal Art rekurrierende Tendenzen arbeiten mit der von Fried konstatierten „Theatralität", indem sie den Fokus auf die ihr impliziten Kategorien der Kontextualität, Performativität und Relationalität legen.

Mit der Verlagerung des Interesses auf die sozialen Strukturen aber – unter der Prämisse eines Kunstbegriffs also, für den Autonomie keine zentrale Bezugsgröße ist –, ist auch die Präsenz oder Absenz des Sockels kein Politikum mehr. Denn selbstredend ist das Motiv des Sockels mit der Minimal Art nicht aus der Kunstproduktion verschwunden, wie Arbeiten von KünstlerInnen wie beispielsweise Isa Genzken, Rachel Harrison, Franz Erhard Walther, Franz West oder Heimo Zobernig belegen. Einzig seine Funktion hat sich verändert: Er ist nicht länger primär Träger (in materieller wie ideologischer Hinsicht), sondern eher eine rhetorische Figur. Er dient als Zeichen, das imstande ist, den Diskurs um die „Verhältnismäßigkeit" von Kunst – um ihre historische, institutionelle und rezeptive Verortung – wachzurufen. „Dieser ‚white cube' ist ein invertierter Sockel", wie Franz West es in einem Interview formulierte.[3]

Wie und warum beschäftigt sich nun aber eine jüngere Generation von KünstlerInnen mit dem Sockel? In Oliver Larics Ausstellung *Kopienkritik* in der Skulpturhalle Basel beispielsweise war der Sockel ebenfalls in eine Auseinandersetzung mit dem Verhältnis von Original und Kopie verstrickt. Laric nahm die umfassende Sammlung von Gipsabgüssen griechischer und römischer Skulpturen zum Anlass, historische und zeitgenössische Techniken des Kopierens miteinan-

SHAHRYAR NASHAT, Factor Green, 2011, Installationsansicht 54. Biennale Venedig. Foto: Shahryar Nashat, Courtesy Silberkuppe, Berlin & Rodeo, Istanbul

Die Sckelperspektive
Kunstforum, October 2014
Manuela Ammer

der in Beziehung zu setzen. Er ordnete die Sammlungsbestände zu typologischen Gruppen, die Differenzen im Ähnlichen sichtbar werden ließen, und integrierte in das Arrangement eigene Arbeiten: So fanden sich auf dem Boden antike Häupter aus farbigen Polyurethan-Schichten, die mit Hilfe von Gussformen aus der Sammlung angefertigt worden waren. Zusätzlich war eine Auswahl von Videoarbeiten zu sehen, die jeweils bereits existierendes Bildmaterial aus unterschiedlichen Quellen kompilieren. *Versions* (2010) etwa zeichnet einen Bogen von der antiken Skulptur zum Walt-Disney-Film, der die Techniken der Appropriation und Multiplikation als wesentlich produktive Verfahren ausstellt. Das Einzelbild ist dabei nur insofern von Interesse, als sich seine Spur in anderen Bildern, Formaten und Medien verfolgen lässt – was nicht „kopiert" wird, schreibt keine Geschichte. Gezeigt wurde *Versions* in Basel als Projektion auf zwei Gipsabgüssen, die der Arbeit gleichsam als „Sockel" dienten; weitere Videoarbeiten liefen auf Monitoren, die wiederum Gipsfiguren trugen. Der Sockel war also zentrales Motiv in der Inszenierung einer alternativen Erzählung: nicht Originalität, sondern der Impuls zu kopieren, als Triebkraft kultureller Produktion.

In Shahryar Nashats Arbeit, die sich mit Fragen des (musealen) Displays und der damit verbundenen Bedeutungsproduktion beschäftigt, ist das Motiv des Sockels ein Wiedergänger. Im Mittelpunkt seiner Videoarbeit *Factor Green* (2011) etwa steht ein quaderförmiges giftgrünes Objekt, das in der Accademia von Venedig unter anderem als Sitzgelegenheit und Sockel genutzt wird, bevor es sich schließlich wie ein Schwamm an einem Tintoretto-Gemälde „festsaugt". Auf der 54. Biennale Venedig zeigte Nashat den Film vor einer Reihe von Skulpturen, die Museumsbänken gleichen und aus Travertin oder auffällig gemustertem Marmorimitat gefertigt sind: Sitzgelegenheiten, aber auch Sockel für Kleinskulpturen, die selbst wiederum aus in Faux-Marmor gegossenen Sockelformen bestehen. Wie das giftgrüne Objekt in *Factor Green* verweigern sich die Bank- und Sockelskulpturen einer eindeutigen Zuschreibung. Sie appropriieren zwar Form und Funktion von Gebrauchsgegenständen, wollen aber zugleich als Objekte ästhetischer Anschauung überzeugen. Sie signalisieren eine Vakanz – die des zu Präsentierenden – und suchen diese im selben Moment zu besetzen. Überdeterminierte Materialien und perfektionierte Oberflächen verleihen ihnen den Charakter von Fetischen, die Begehrensstrukturen nicht nur anzeigen, sondern auch zu aktualisieren vermögen. Durch diese kalkulierten Kippeffekte zwischen Entzug und Erfüllung weisen Nashats Sockelobjekte Orte künstlerischer Präsentation als Umschlagplätze von Bedeutungen und Begehrlichkeiten aus.

Auch im Werk Nina Beiers ist die Thematisierung von Skulptur oftmals an die Vorstellung ihres Verlusts gekoppelt. Die Figur des Sockels übernimmt in diesem Zusammenhang weniger die Funktion, diese Vakanz zu kompensieren, denn die Skulptur vielmehr das Szenario ihres eigenen Verschwindens durchspielen zu lassen. In *Shelving for Unlocked Matter and Open Problems* (2010) beispielsweise verlässt die Skulptur ihren Sockel, um ihrer eigenen Abwesenheit Platz zu machen und sich selbst einer neuen Bestimmung zuzuführen. Die Arbeit besteht aus einer Sammlung vorgefundener Kleinskulpturen, die gläsernen Regalböden als Stützen dienen. Zu diesem Zweck wurden sie auf die jeweils erforderliche Höhe zugeschnitten, was je nach Skulptur den Effekt einer Köpfung oder Amputation hat. Im Ganzen ergibt dies eine Art Regalsystem, das sich entlang der Wand und in den Raum erstreckt und – einem Setzkasten nicht unähnlich – ein zurechtgestutztes Panoptikum bildhauerischer Formensprachen des 20. Jahrhunderts vorführt. Beiers Arbeit konfrontiert uns mit einer Reihe von Umkehrungen und Verschiebungen: Nicht nur tauschen Regal und dekoratives Objekt die Rollen von Träger und Getragenem; auch wird Kunsthandwerk, das Ästhetiken der Hochkunst aufgreift, zum Bestandteil einer skulpturalen Anordnung, die selbst wiederum die Form eines Möbels annimmt. Die Figur des Sockels fungiert hier als eine Art Scharnier, das verschiedene Erzählstränge aneinander knüpft, ohne sie dauerhaft zu fixieren. Die Geschichte der Skulptur bleibt, wie der Titel suggeriert, ein „offenes Problem", das an der Schnittstelle von Bildender Kunst und Design, von materieller Faktizität und kultureller Codierung seiner jeweils vorläufigen Lösung harrt.

So unterschiedlich die Arbeiten von Meier, Laric,

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Die Sckelperspektive
Kunstforum, October 2014
Manuela Ammer

Nashat und Beier sind, scheint ihr Interesse am Sockel doch ähnlich motiviert zu sein. Dabei strebt keine/r der KünstlerInnen nach der Introvertiertheit, die die modernistische Kritik einforderte. Auch ist ihnen nicht an einer Bewegung gelegen, die sich in der fortlaufenden In-Bezug-Setzung von Werk und Beiwerk, Text und Kontext, Original und Reproduktion erschöpft. Angesichts eines ubiquitären Netzwerkdenkens und der digitalen Logik des „copy and paste", die mittlerweile Bilder, Körper und Räume gleichermaßen durchdringt, ist der stete Sinntransfer zur Routine geworden, die keiner Vermittlungsinstanzen mehr bedarf. Wenn aber der Sockel nicht mehr vermittelt, was kann er dann leisten? Er kann, wie die diskutierten Arbeiten demonstrieren, eine Stelle markieren, einen physischen Ort, an dem die Sinnfluktuation einen punktuellen Fokus erhält und Brüche und Kontinutitäten, Kreuzungen und Verschiebungen zwischen zeitgenössischen Formen kultureller (Re-)Produktion und überlieferten Techniken in den Blick geraten. Der Sockel fungiert als Angelpunkt, der Verfahren der Multiplikation, der Übersetzung und der Reformatierung perspektiviert und als solche erst verhandelbar macht. Seine archetypische Form, seine wechselhafte Geschichte als Distanzhalter, Grenzgänger und Indikator von „Verhältnismäßigkeiten" machen ihn zu einem privilegierten Objekt der Verortung künstlerischer, technologischer und theoretischer Entwicklungen. Gerade weil sich die Geschichte der Skulptur ohne den Sockel nicht denken lässt, hat er das anachronistische Potenzial, Kontinuität zugleich zu behaupten und in Frage zu stellen.

MANUELA AMMER ist Kuratorin am mumok Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien. Zuvor war sie wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin des SFB 626 an der Freien Universität Berlin.

ANMERKUNGEN

[1] Vgl. beispielsweise das Eröffnungskapitel „Sculpture's Vanishing Base" in Jack Burnhams *Beyond Modern Sculpture: The Effects of Science and Technology on the Sculpture of This Century*, New York, 1968 und das Kapitel „The Passing of the Pedestal" in Albert E. Elsens *Pioneers of Modern Sculpture*, Ausst.-Kat. London, 1973.

[2] Vgl. Michael Fried, „Art and Objecthood", in: *Artforum*, Vol. 5, Nr. 10, Juni 1967, S. 12-23.

[3] Eva Badura-Triska, „Gespräch mit Franz West", Wien, März 1994, http://www.mip.at/attachments/171, abgerufen am 09.05.2014.

* Eine erste Version dieses Textes erschien unter dem Titel „Das Sockelproblem" in *frieze d/e*, Ausgabe 2, Herbst 2011.

NINA BEIER, Shelving for Unlocked Matter and Open Problems, 2010, Modifizierte skulpturale Objekte, Glas, Installationsansicht Based in Berlin, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2011. Foto: Amin Akhtar, Courtesy die Künstlerin & Privatsammlung Belgien & Croy Nielsen, Berlin

Artist Oliver Laric Truly ‘Shares’his Lincoln 3D Scans from Usher Gallery Exhibit
3DPrint.com, September 24, 2014
Bridget Butler Millsaps

3D Print.com — 3D Printer & 3D Printing News

Artist Oliver Laric Truly 'Shares' his Lincoln 3D Scans from Usher Gallery Exhibit

BY BRIDGET BUTLER MILLSAPS · SEPTEMBER 24, 2014

Oliver Laric

Do we ever really own anything when it comes to art, images, video? We know Google never forgets, but perhaps we can build upon some of its current memories, making new things as we "question the value of the 'authentic' original image over a copy or reproduction." Oliver Laric's art has been deeply rooted in the concept of questioning ownership, with his works over the years not only being interesting and provocative, but also entertaining and humorous at times, as he has made *kopienkritik*, or 'copy criticism' a modern genre and process of his own.

Currently, his latest concepts and work, the Lincoln 3D Scans, are on display, as he works with the Usher Gallery, part of The Collection, which is the county museum and gallery for Lincolnshire in England. There are several interesting events going on simultaneously, all revolving around Laric's exhibit, and 3D printing in itself.

First, is the display of the work of Oliver Laric, who in 2012 won the prestigious Contemporary Art Society Annual Award for his proposal to create and publish 3D scans of The Collection and Usher Gallery's archive. His work will be on display through October 26th. It's easy to see why his idea won, playing on the idea of originality and names being attached to works of art with ownership,

Artist Oliver Laric Truly ‘Shares’his Lincoln 3D Scans from Usher Gallery Exhibit
3DPrint.com, September 24, 2014
Bridget Butler Millsaps

Laric's Lincoln 3D Scans project includes 3D scale models of some of his scans which have been rendered in various textures and colors. Other pieces of his work are included also, as they continue his theme of questioning ownership and authenticity.

Getting in the spirt of Laric's work, the museum wants to shake things up a little in terms of letting loose with original art and opening it up to new creative renderings, free of liability. The public is encouraged to print copies of their artifacts, just enjoy looking at them, or manipulate them in different ways, digitally. The end goal is that the new 'art,' will be shared with the museum and uploaded to their website. The museum has scanned 74 objects for the website, ranging from the museum's *homo heidelbergensis* model, to historical artifacts like the Roman Bordeux Altar cast and 19th Century marble sculptures such as John Gibson's The Hunter and The Dog. The latter two are among the selection which has been printed as part of the exhibition.

Artist Oliver Laric Truly 'Shares'his Lincoln 3D Scans from Usher Gallery Exhibit
3DPrint.com, September 24, 2014
Bridget Butler Millsaps

On October 24th, 2014, the museum will host the symposium, "3D Printing: The Creative Future." Artists, academics and industry professionals will be speaking on various subjects related to 3D printing technology, including:

- James E Smith, who used 3D scanning to create a 'life model' for the recent OPEM3 exhibition.

- Michael Eden, ceramicist, who uses 3D printing and scanning to create contemporary studio pottery.

- The Digital Native Academy who will be discussing their audience facing projects using 3D scanning technologies to engage with arts audiences.

- The Conservation Department of The University of Lincoln who will discuss 3D technology in conservation.

To bring things full circle, October 25th will be '3D Printing Day' at the museum, with demonstrations and activities related to 3D printing open to everyone.

On “Post-Internet” Art
02 nº70, Summer 2014
Benoît Lamy de La Chapelle

On “post-Internet” Art

By Benoît Lamy de la Chapelle

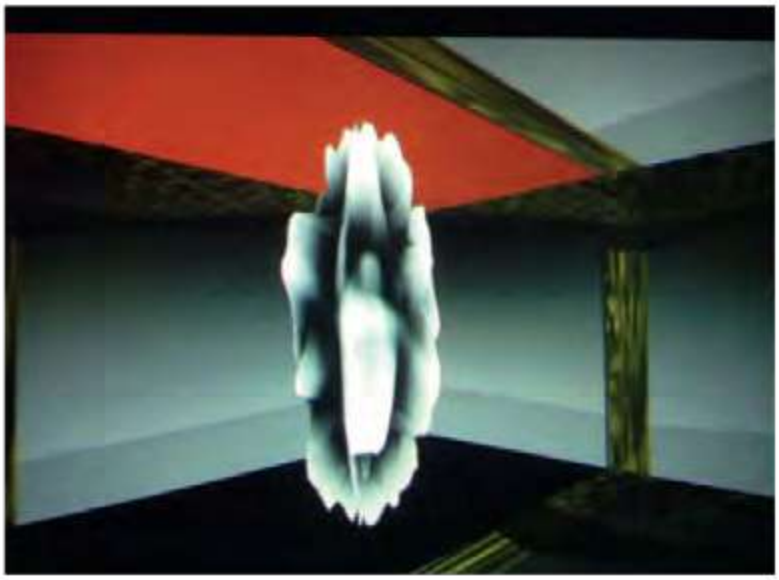
Some time ago the term “post-Internet” came to our attention, used to describe and analyze the activities of a new generation of artists, born in the 1980s and marked by the influence of the Internet during their artistic training in the 2000s. This last decade in fact witnessed the democratization of the web (with its 2.0 version), the peak of social networks, unlimited access to knowledge, and online sales, all tools favourable to artistic creation at a time when the principle of inter-disciplinarity in the visual arts seems to be a given. Yet this term, post-Internet, seems to focus on art praxes which regard the Internet not only as a work tool but also as an aesthetic godsend *per se*, both self-sufficient and making it possible to explore and inform the boundless complexity of our contemporary societies. There is an undeniable connection with Net-art, but post-Internet art should not be understood as a kind of rebirth of the phenomenon. When Net.art appeared in the mid-1990s by way of experiments undertaken by such artists as Olia Lialina, Vuk Cosic and JODI, the Internet was expanding a-pace and represented an object of discovery, with unlimited possibilities, which those artists deemed ripe for making the most of, both as a creative tool accessible to one and all in network form, and as a tool of resistance through its immaterial nature and its virtual and, in theory, non-reifiable features, in the face of the predominance of the art market. What was involved for those artists was making use of a new “site specific”[1] basis on which a “purified”, “spare” art could be produced. Post-Internet art emerged more than a generation later, among artists belonging to social networks, whose reliance on search engines is now irreversible, with a Macbook as their studio and a smartphone close by and at the ready. These artists reject the notion of site-specific art and, on the contrary, lay claim to a whole host of sites in which their works circulate, in an endless to-and-fro between reality and virtuality, on and off the Internet. They belong to a generation that has gone beyond the enthusiasm of the Internet’s early days, taken a close look at the phenomenon’s consequences, and become aware of the various cultural changes under way. What is more, their approaches and methods regard as acquired the principle of re-materializing a world which nevertheless thinks of itself as immaterial (de-materialization of financial transactions, communication, information, human relations, and immaterial work within a service-oriented society where production is for the most part automated, etc), because this overall de-materialization gives rise to new physical and psychological relations with the production/consumption of material goods.[2]

The term “post-Internet”, which is still up for discussion, remains very ambiguous and can lead to mistaken interpretations. The term was supposedly first used by the artist Marisa Olson in 2008, to describe an artistic praxis taking place “… on networks but can and should also exist offline”,[3] in order to realize the Internet’s impact on our lives. The term was subsequently developed between 2009 and 2010 thanks to a series of theoretical and critical writings posted by Gene MacHugh on his *Post Internet* blog. In 2008, artists concerned by this new designation started to meet, form networks, and share online data. Among works produced in networks, the project *Post-Internet Survival Guide* stands out (initiated in 2010 by the artists Katja Novitskova and Mike Ruiz), a catalyst for artists who had taken part in an Internet search for images and texts published online on the *Survival Tips* blog, then in the book *Post-Internet Survival Guide*.[4] That same year, one of the participating artists, Artie Vierkant, published *The Image-Object Post-Internet*,[5] a text seeking to give a definition to post-Internet art in order to situate its praxis and explain its bases. The term then spread as a result of the use made of it by artists, critics and exhibition curators, and became emblematic of this new Internet-associated generation. But its definition is having trouble becoming constant, and is still evolving, which, according to the artist Jaakko Pallasvuo, seems to bode well: “I like that people are disagreeing on its definitions and with each other. I hope post-Internet will begin to stand for this continuous debate instead of being cemented into an art historical one-liner.”[6]

The diversity of the approaches associated with this nebula stems from the many different possibilities offered by the Internet. The common denominator undoubtedly lies in the interest attaching to the distribution, circulation and use of information online. Oliver Laric’s demonstration with *Touch my Body: Green Screen Version* (2008) is especially eloquent on this subject: made from the clip of Maria Carey’s song of the same title, to be found on YouTube, this video has been stripped of its whole backdrop, leaving room just for the singer against a monochromatic background (a technique used on television and in computers to add artificial backdrops to the editing). The artist then posted his pirated version of the clip and left it at the mercy of all web-surfers, free to add any kind of backdrop, from the crudest to the most elaborate. In no time at all, more than a hundred new versions of the clip were then counted by the artist, who included some of them on his website. These freely used videos are made use of again and again, circulating from blog to blog and website to website. This experience reveals an important point, to wit, the future of royalties and intellectual property in the age of web 2.0, especially where artworks are concerned. How is it possible to protect a work immersed in an environment subject to the principle of sharing? *Kopienkritik*, a show at the Basel Skulpturhalle (2011), in which the artist mixed casts of Greek sculptures and their Roman copies with his own works, produced, it just so happens, an interesting parallel between the conceptions of Antiquity and ours: Roman sculptors copied the Greek classics as freely as we copy-and-paste.

The blogs and Tumblr micro-blogs collectively created by these artists adopt the classic format of online sharing and, thanks to Photoshop and other software systems, illustrate how the data are being constantly re-touched, transformed and re-used. Among these latter, we might note *vvork.com*, *r-u-ins.tumblr.com*, *thejogging.tumblr.com*, *xym.com*, *thestate.tumblr.com* and *survivaltips.tumblr.com*. These images, true or false, are visuals of works, photos selected from image banks or found on unusual blogs, and they are sometimes re-used and transformed by other artists. Views of exhibitions can thus be invaded by intruding objects, adding a dash of wit to the seriousness of hanging works. The DIS collective,[7] which specializes in the manipulation of codes introduced by image banks, caricatures this type of imagery in order to create new types of narrative and new stereotypes. In 2012, DIS occupied the exhibition of Katja Novitshova and Timur Si-Qin at the CCS Bard galleries for a photo session, *Competing Images* (2012), staging live models posing alongside the installations, the way that

On “Post-Internet” Art
02 nº70, Summer 2014
Benoît Lamy de La Chapelle



Sara Ludy
Extrait de / *Still from Sphere 2-20*, 2013
Projection numérique, disque Blu-ray /
Digital projection from Blu-ray disc
Dimensions variables
Courtesy Sara Ludy;
Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery, New York

Internet users adulterate images by adding things to them. So the "Photoshop retouch" took place physically and eventually produced an online image like the others. It is disturbing to note that these images, be they original or artificial, are side-by-side on the same exchange platforms with no demarcation, in a context where most works of art and exhibitions are appreciated as a result of online images. This partly corroborates Artie Vierkant's approach in his project *Image Objects* (2011-in progress). The origins of the works in this series are always images which, once affixed to dibond, exist physically to be hung in the exhibition venue. When the moment arrives to document the work by photographs, Vierkant alters their image on Photoshop, thus giving it a new form and a new existence. The viewer's possible perception of it is consequently de-stabilized by a multi-facetted work, though one that is physically intact. The artist's approach in fact does away with any hierarchy between the real work and its image, because these are henceforth grasped on an equal footing.

Kari Altmann, for her part, appropriates the language of online consumption, marketing and technological communication thanks to compilations of images and videos brought together on her website. Her online works are intended to be perpetually evolving and are not externalized, unless somebody proposes this to her for a show. So the work changes states without its online version being affected: her work shown off-line—by way of a video monitor or a print—is always viewable online and still will be after the show. What is more, the artist does not regard her off-line presentations as "exhibitions", but as another way of existence for her productions which are basically being continually exhibited. This relativization of the exhibition space as an end in itself came across again in "Exhibition One", which Kari Altmann took part in, an exhibition organized by Timur Si-Qin in a white cube as a synthetic image, the Chrystal gallery, and presented simultaneously in a physical space—Gentile Apri in Berlin—and online, from 10 May to 10 June 2010. The question of knowing where the work ends and where its documentation begins was, as a result, offset by a digital work including both phenomena at once.[8]

The to-and-fro circulation of images, on and off screen, takes relevant shape in Antoine Catala's *Topologies* (2010). Set up opposite each other, two plasma screens are connected by a wide tube whose ends are covered with a mirror-like surface, reflecting and distorting the images broadcast. This flow of information, endlessly moving from one screen to the other, seems like an amorphous state-of-the-art technological structure, at once fascinating and threatening.

Because of the success of online sales, consumer goods are now part and parcel of this diffusion. Yngve Holen's installation *Parasagittal Brain* (2011) invites visitors to make their way between two long shelves on which are arrayed ordinary items—kettles, water purifiers, irons, etc.—which have the particular feature of being split into two so that each part is placed on either side of the passage. Their innards are thus crudely splayed, even though their presentation remains thoroughly symmetrical, and where they are cut is faultless. Altogether new, on the one hand, these objects are nevertheless inoperative, so they display their uselessness and their forthcoming replacement, which can be made with a few clicks. With *Planned Fall* (2013), Aude Pariset creates a disconcerting atmosphere in which presentation dummies dressed in rotting clothes seem to be on the verge of being swallowed up in garbage bags. By diverting the codes of commercial presentation, this installation throws the contemporary "prosumer's" compulsive habits and desires off-balance. Like jars of formalin, Sean Raspet's plexiglas cubes hold a wide variety of objects—and even digital prints—in a translucent hair gel, reminding us of the sterile atmosphere of laboratories.

If admitting that technological progress generates behavioural and morphological changes among human beings nowadays verges on being a truism, let us add that the Internet has greatly contributed to making this a generalized state of affairs. Portable computers and smartphones are now prostheses which function with us like extra organs, or rather "extensions of ourselves", as Marshall McLuhan might have put it. We end up thinking in accordance with the way they function, and we literally become PC, Macbook or smartphone. N. Katharine Hayles points out that if the technological advances of information cannot fundamentally replace the human body, they can perfectly incorporate it, including our day-to-day habits.[9] Anne de Vries's *Timetables* (2011) present a set of tables printed with cloudy skies, on which are lying ceramic hands/smartphones, conjuring up the host of different

On “Post-Internet” Art
02 nº70, Summer 2014
Benoît Lamy de La Chapelle

Simon Denny
TEDxVaduz redux, 2014
Installation T293, Rome. Courtesy Simon Denny; T293, Naples / Rome
Photo: Roberto Apa

"cloud-computing"-type connections appearing and disappearing as required, activated by prostheses working like extra organs. If the hands of 21st century man are represented like this, it is helpful to see what is going on with portraits of him, and in particular those of the *N.A.D. (NewAgeDemanded)* series (2012-in progress) "sculpted" by Jon Rafman. Borrowing the classic form of the bust, the artist makes a series of hybrid portraits which the acceleration of present time would prevent from becoming fixed. At once virtual and real, these busts are part of "fields of displacements, changes and movements", re-negotiating the principle of representation in an "informational environment"[20]. Social networks, blogs, Tumblr micro-blogs and Instagrams make it possible for absolutely anyone to be in a state of constant representation. Jaakko Pallasvuo points out that these sites also offer the means for constructing identities and inventing an avatar for yourself:[21] his video *Reverse Engineering* (2013) depicts him in different identities, talking about himself and his experience as a 21st century artist with the help of several voices and faces, filmed with a webcam. Involved here is a video posted on YouTube, akin to millions of others, thanks to which numerous users think they can have access to celebrity. But access to the artist's "profile" is not gained because of the image, but through a discourse that is much more representative of his personality, obscured by a number of faces and images which upset web-targetting habits. Katja Novitskova also offers a good overview of the way in which egocentrism and exhibitionism match self-representational systems available online. The digital collages of the series *Earth Call* 1 & 2 (2012), associating landscapes found on Google Earth with selfies of young men posted on Tumblr, emphasize the self-sophistication achieved by the swift retouches and corrections made possible by technology. They illustrate what might be the "self-concern" of the 21st century. The landscape genre is likewise renewed: captivated by *Second Life*, video games and standard habitat imagery, Sara Ludy proposes videos in which the eye nonchalantly floats in perpetually evolving virtual landscapes. *Sphere* 1-20 (2013) consists in the projection of an unidentified floating object in the middle of a moving space which, each and every minute, changes and spins on itself in a new décor. Her immersive environments, which are deserted by any kind of living being, are psychological and meditative zones to be occupied.

Among these so-called "post-Internet" practices, many incline towards an archaeological reading of technological progress, like Aleksandra Domanovic who makes her way through the recent history of Yugoslavia, her native country, via the prism of the Internet. Titled "From Yu to Me", her show at the Basel Kunsthalle (2012) illustrated a powerful attachment to the memory of that now vanished nation, as well as to the ensuing deregulations in matters of identity and culture. The domain .yu, formerly used for Yugoslavia, was done away with in 2010 and replaced by as many domains as there are now new nations. For the artist, this act represents the final elimination of her country within an international political context where the address of the domain now matters more than the national anthem. The series of sculptures resulting from the project *The Future Was at Her Fingertips* (2013), depicting prostheses of hands on tall plexiglas pedestals, draws inspiration from experiments undertaken by Rajko Tomovi, trying to give back the sense of touch to soldiers amputated during the Second World war, using an artificial intelligence procedure. Here the artist aims to reveal the significance of the pioneering work of women like Ada Lovelace, Sadie Plant and Borka Jerman Blazi in the development and creation of cybernetics, virtual reality, multimedia and the Internet. It was also a woman who was for the first time photoshopped in 1987, as we are reminded by Constant Dullaart's project *Jennifer in Paradise* (2013). Depicting a topless woman on a beach at Bora Bora, enlarged then displayed

On “Post-Internet” Art
02 nº70, Summer 2014
Benoît Lamy de La Chapelle

Zach Blas
Facial Weaponization Suite: Fag Face Mask - October 20, 2012, Los Angeles, CA
Courtesy Zach Blas
Photo: Christopher O'Leary

on a wall by the artist (letting viewers see the grid of pixels), this photograph was taken for experimental purposes by John Knoll, co-creator of Photoshop, in order to demonstrate the efficiency of his software; the exhumation of this image reminds us of a time when it was still possible to envisage the authenticity of images.

Speculations about the future are also recurrent with these artists. In his text *A Million years of Porn*, Timur Si-Qin relies on the theory of sexual selection to explain how certain species change morphology on the basis of physical criteria sought during mating, such as characteristics indicating fertility and signs of resistance to parasites. Transferring this principle to the human species, the artist notes, in parallel, that, in 2006, $97.06 billion were spent worldwide on the consumption of pornography and that 25% of Internet searches have to do with this area. He concluded that human beings under the influence will in future seek out partners endowed with physical attributes similar to those of porn actors, which might contribute to the evolution of the human species, in the following ways: in 69 million years, women will have hairless bodies and generous bosoms, and men will have disproportionately large muscles and penises.[12] The updating of evolutionist theories combined with Manuel de Landa's neo-materialist realism also give Katja Novitskova the conceptual tools required for her anthropocene-like vision of the world. The publication resulting from the project *Post-Internet Survival Guide* is presented as a survival guide in the face of the many different changes with which not only the human species but also the organisms constituting the Earth are currently confronted: "… The notion of a survival guide arises as an answer to a basic human need to cope with increasing complexity. In the face of death, personal attachment and confusion, one has to feel, interpret and index this ocean of signs in order to survive."[13] Other writings by the artist remind us that the principles of attraction and repulsion, key concepts of evolutionary biology, are also clearly applicable to the sphere of art. The sight of animals has always stimulated the survival instinct of human beings, along with their affective reactions. Resulting from an autonomous evolutive process, art also produces powerful emotional reactions in man, though for different reasons. To explore this relation, Novitskova has produced a series of sculptures titled *Approximation* (2012-in progress), highly seductive pictures of animals affixed to billboards, designed to produce in the viewer an emotional reaction attributed to a remote atavism. She deduces from this that these pictures of animals will soon represent powerful resources, as attested to by *Intensive Differences 003* (2012), a papyrus on which is printed an image of Justin Bieber photographed beside a dolphin, to promote his brand of clothes, thereby arguing that the intensity produced on seeing these images might become a source of energy that it will be possible to make use of in the near future.[14]

Let us bear in mind that this generation of artists is evolving in a free-for-all neo-liberal economic system which, even if in crisis, always manages to stay the course. Financial power, which is not easy for States to control, is akin to a fast and elusive flux which undoubtedly explains why liquids and fluids—and their representations—are so present in works. The monetary de-materialization at work since the end of the Bretton Woods accords contributed to the making of a financial system in which currency had no more than a fictitious value. Payments by credit card and PayPal contribute to this transactional fluidity. The post-Fordist principles of

the digital economy permit the de-territorialization of capital and the establishment of high-tech companies like Google, Amazon and Microsoft in tax havens, so as to dodge being taxed in countries which they profit from. The duo AIDS 3D (Daniel Keller/Nik Kosmas) is interested in these new aspects of the globalized economy: *Absolute Vitality Inc.* (2012) specifies unambiguously how the art market is part and parcel of this system. Akin to a platform of lectures and encounters, this installation sees itself as the promotional organ of a company purchased in 2012 by artists from a provider of services for front companies, located at Cheyenne in Wyoming (USA). Conceived as a multi-function back-up for their forthcoming projects, the main goal of this company was to use a multi-layered strategy of diversified growth, enabling collectors to invest in works of art at minimum risk, with maximum return on investment. What is more, artists have put forward the idea of devising works based on the data-mining used by marketing agencies to target potential consumers: "we'll use a program like Lexalytics to do semantic analysis on a database of art writing in order to create 'meaningful' descriptions of artworks. Then we'll work with someone to write algorithms that, based on those descriptions, create instructions for new artworks. And then finally we'll exhibit the works and analyze the audiences opinion and behavior"[15] Let us note that, in an interview with Jaakko Pallusvuo and Jean Kay, they are both in agreement about the similarities existing between the interdisciplinarity hallmarking present-day art and the capacity of late capitalism to appropriate everything for itself, even criticism of it.[16]

Creation, economics and state-of-the-art technology are incidentally involved in important encounters, like the TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) lectures, and the more recent DLD (Digital-Life-Design), bringing together artists with start-ups and the most innovative of personalities, so as to share experiences and ideas to do with the future of our society. Simon Denny, who is concerned by the influence of technological progress on our ways of communicating, has been working since 2013 with Daniel Keller to organize a TEDx event, following the invitation extended by the Liechtenstein Kunstmuseum, in the city of Vaduz. By literally adopting the format and content of TEDx encounters, the artists designed the lecture set using communication codes employed in this kind of event. There was a succession of nine participants coming from creative, legal, economic and political spheres, each one with twelve minutes to present their innovative approaches and ideas to the public. Based on an ideological format that is much valued though criticized for its pseudo-scientific decisions, TEDx Vaduz comes across like a false parody whose purpose is the analysis of the values, aesthetics and tendencies conveyed by the technological economy.

What emerges from the above-mentioned practices is the reflection of a troubling, not to say alarming historical situation, linked to important paradigm changes, at the root of which we find the Internet and the new technologies. Faced with such facts, we might expect works with a marked critical content speaking out against the future towards which the digital culture seems to be projecting us. But this is not the direction espoused by the approaches of most of these artists, who, according to Constant Dullaart, are leaving this work to activists, and producing allegedly "post-Internet" works, while these latter are "always shown in the most hierarchic and conservative of media that the art world can offer: the white cube."[17] But can one really stop the other? Constant Dullaart's approach tends, incidentally, to emphasize that the Internet is no longer the "zone of temporary autonomy"[18], the medium of an alternative political culture that it was in the 1980s, nor the space of freedom much vaunted by the media, with these latter reporting, for example, that the Arab revolutions would never have been possible without Facebook… The Internet now represents the principal instrument of the "society of control" announced by Gilles Deleuze, as is shown by the NSA's latest declarations, and the inextricable situations of Julian Assange, Chelsea Manning and Edward Snowden. So how could the Internet be more relevant than an exhibition room to react and resist? As an explicitly politically committed artist, Zach Blas does not seem to ask himself the question. His project *Facial Weaponization Suite* (2011-in progress) reacts to the spread and trivialization of biometric and facial recognition procedures. It consists of a series of masks designed using facial data of different subjects, unfathomable by biometric reading systems. Among these masks, the *Fag Face Mask* (2012), made using facial data of homosexuals, tends to withstand recent scientific studies, postulating that it is possible to determine the sexual orientations of the subjects using biometrics. Worn at large social gatherings and performances, these masks are conceived as opaque props of collective transformation, contesting the predominant forms of political representation. The white cube and the Internet are nevertheless still just as viable means of strategic dissemination for the artist. This plurality of methods of presentation in no way alters the relevance of the critical scope of his involvement. It would therefore be wrong to underestimate the political consciousness of this generation and reduce its work to a cold duplication of Internet imagery in commercial galleries. For these practices can possibly shed light for us on a certain shift of the political struggle, which is no longer imagined the way we think. Perhaps they have found a way of "achieving the organ-less body, without untrammelled de-stratification".[19] In this case, we should see therein, in parallel, postures henceforth situated at another conceptual level than those hackneyed postures of traditional activism.

---

1. Josephine Berry-Slater rehabilitated the notion of site-specificity to describe the experiments of Net.art artists at the *Post-Net Aesthetics* conference which was held in October 2013 at London's ICA. http://new.livestream.com/accounts/5745273/events/2464307
2. Joshua Simon, *Neomaterialism*, Sternberg Press, Berlin, 2013, p. 17.
3. "Interview with Marisa Olson", *We Make Money Not Art*, 28 March 2008. http://we-make-money-not-art.com/archives/2008/03/how-does-one-become-marisa.php#.Uwy2rojdU
4. *Post-Internet Survival Guide*, edited by Katja Novitskova, Revolver Publishing, Berlin, 2011.
5. Artie Vierkant, *The Image-Object Post-Internet*, 2010. http://jstchillin.org/artie/pdf/The_Image_Object_Post-Internet_a4.pdf
6. *Careers are last season: An interview with Jaakko Pallasvuo*, by Tim Gentles, p. 62. http://www.jaakkopallasvuo.com/careers.pdf (traduction de l'auteur)
7. http://dismagazine.com/
8. http://chrystalgallery.info/
9. N. Katherine Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1999.
10. Tiziana Terranova, *Network Culture: Politics for the Information Age*, Pluto Press, New York, 2004, p. 7, quoted by Ceci Moss in "Expanded Internet Art and the Informational Milieu" which appeared on the website *RHIZOME*, December 2013. http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/dec/19/expanded-internet-art-and-informational-milieu/
11. "An interview with Jaakko Pallasvuo" on *aqnb*, 31 May 2013. http://www.aqnb.com/2013/05/31/an-interview-with-jaakko-pallasvuo/
12. Timur Si-Qin, "A Million Years of Porn" in *The Future will be… China: Impromptu Thoughts on What's to Come*, Pinacoteca Agnelli, Turin and UCCA, Beijing, 2012.
13. *Post-Internet Survival Guide*, op. cit., p. 4.
14. On this see Katja Novitskova's oral intervention during the TEDx Vaduz encounter organized by Simon Denny and Daniel Keller at the Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein, 7 December 2013.
15. "KELLER/KOSMAS (AIDS-3D) interview by Simon Denny", in *KALEIDOSCOPE/Web Specials*, 2012. http://kaleidoscope-press.com/web-specials/kellerkosmas-aids-3dinterview-by-simon-denny/
16. "An interview with Jaakko Pallasvuo" on *aqnb*, op. cit.
17. "Beginings + Ends", in *Frieze* n° 159, November-December 2013, p. 127.
18. Hakim Bey, *The Temporary Autonomous Zone: Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*, Ed. Autonomedia, New York, 1991.
19. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

NORKO REALISM

A propaganda poster on Kaesong Street in Pyongyang, North Korea. Photo John Monteith.

In North Korea, art systematically "corrects" reality—much as the leadership guides the thinking of artists through selection, education, employment, collaborative production and retirement care.

by Travis Jeppesen

DAWN BREAKS THROUGH a thin fog over Pyongyang, gray light cascading onto the pale Eastern Bloc-style apartment buildings below. The capital city of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—known outside the country as North Korea—is shrouded in silence. Here and there, a bird chirps—the only sound until a faint, ethereal tune begins to play. At first, its notes are so light and subtle that they seem to be born of the air itself. You might mistake them for the whistling of the wind, until they cohere into an otherworldly melody. The song, "Where Is Our Great Leader?," is the first sound the citizens of Pyongyang hear in the morning, the alarm signal that it is time to get up and greet a new day. It is 5 A.M.

This is the daily scene captured in John Monteith's video *Pyongyang, North Korea, June 5 101 (2012) 5:00am–5:06:48am*, filmed from the artist's room high up in the Koryo Hotel on a trip that he and I took to the reclusive nation in the summer of 2012. Since the near-total collapse of the economy in the 1990s, tourism is one of the DPRK's few ways of generating hard currency. Anyone can visit as a tourist, save for South Koreans and journalists. One must apply through a Western travel agency, which in turn makes all the arrangements, including securing visas, through the state-owned Korea International Travel Company.

North Korea remains a force field of fascination for me. Above all, I am intrigued by the degree to which art—be it propaganda or something else—infiltrates every aspect of life, from the surreal hymn captured in Monteith's video to the astounding and often unintentionally hilarious didactic murals, mosaics and statues that one finds scattered throughout the country in place of advertising. On the street level, it often seems that the DPRK has more art than any other country in the world. Often overlooked or misinterpreted by commentators on North Korea who focus mainly on human rights abuses and the nuclear program, this cultural system reveals a lot about how the nation functions, how it views itself, and how art serves the ongoing project of engineering the ideal citizen and society.

TRAVIS JEPPESEN is a writer and critic who travels frequently to North Korea. See Contributors page.

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

Inside the main entrance of Mansudae Art Studios, Pyongyang. Photo Travis Jeppesen.

The model of artists working alone in their studios, churning out works of art for commercial galleries, does not exist in the DPRK; the very notion would be regarded as bourgeois, reactionary, capitalistic. Art stars, in the Western sense, are conspicuously absent, since such radical individuality would violate propriety and infringe on the leadership's celebrity status. (For a period, North Korean films did not even list actors' names in the opening and closing credits.) Artworks are often unsigned and/or produced collaboratively. Art criticism, as a profession, does not exist, and there are no programs in art history at any of the country's universities.

Formal exhibitions—as compared to public art displays—are relatively limited. Situated in the center of the capital on Kim Il-sung Square, the Korean Art Gallery, the country's principal art museum, contains works dating from the 4th century to the present day. Many of the older pieces are in poor condition, some in dire need of restoration. Elsewhere in the capital, one finds occasional showcases, such as the Sun For All Eternity: National Art Festival in Celebration of the 100th Birth Anniversary of President Kim Il-sung, 2012, which featured works from the "Songun Era"—*Songun* being the "military-first" societal structure instituted by Kim Jong-il in the mid-'90s.

Education is free at all levels. Artists are scouted from a young age, officially on the basis of talent and unofficially on the basis of *songbun*, the pervasive but unacknowledged class system that reflects each family's sociopolitical past and current influence. After training for at least five years at one of the country's art academies, graduates are assigned to one of the professional organizations, the most prestigious of which is Mansudae Art Studio in Pyongyang, boasting some 1,000 artists and 4,000 assistants and administrative staff workers. Once employed there, artists are permitted to paint or sculpt "anything they want," since they have already undergone a rigorous ideological training that results in only "correct" images. Their quotas are purely quantitative, unless a special commission has come in. Certain practitioners—especially those officially designated Merit Artists or People's Artists—may receive individual commissions; otherwise, requests go to the studio as a whole, prompting collaborative production.

As workers in a key part of the national propaganda machinery, artists are paid relatively well by the state. Salary numbers are closely guarded, however, so it is unclear just how much they typically earn. While no one is supposed to be "well off" in this theoretically classless society, the most handsomely compensated citizens—including

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

Statues of Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il by Mansudae artists. Photo Joha Mosteith.

many artists—reside in Pyongyang. In addition, trade on the country's black markets has burgeoned in the past decade, and a large part of a family's income is often generated by the "side job" of at least one spouse—usually female, as women are permitted to take up the occupation of "housewife," which affords them more free time than most men enjoy. Upon retirement, artists are permitted to join the Songhwa Art Studio, which holds its own exhibitions.

Like their compatriots, artists must attend Saturday study and self-criticism sessions where the theoretical writings of supreme leaders Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il are taught. This indoctrination is an extension of the only form of aesthetic philosophy taught in art school.

FROM THE TIME that he emerged as heir apparent to his father's dictatorial rule in the 1970s, Kim Jong-il became the DPRK's chief aesthetician. A film buff—Kim reputably would visit the set of any North Korean production nearly every day to give "on the spot guidance," a trademark practice of the DPRK leadership—the future ruler also penned a number of treatises on art and literature. Much more than his father, founding leader Kim Il-sung (who apparently wasn't all that interested in art), or his son, current leader Kim Jong-un (who so far seems fixated on building ski resorts and fitness centers), Kim Jong-il was the mastermind of the propaganda machinery that endures to this day.

Not immediately considered for the number two role in North Korean politics, since filial succession was perceived as imperialistic in Communist-aligned countries during the Cold War years, Kim Jong-il ingratiated himself to his father through his flattering manipulation of artistic production. In 1970, he became deputy director in charge of culture and arts in the Propaganda and Agitation Department. Over the following decade, he devoted all his energies to building his father's personality cult.

While much of Kim Jong-il's writing is maddeningly dull and crudely tautological, anyone who seeks a professional role in the arts in North Korea must study his thought intensively. What it all boils down to is his "seed theory," wherein each work should contain a seed of ideological correctness. This is not too far from the language of fascism, with its blood and soil metaphors. DPRK propa-

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

ganda scholar B.R. Myers has famously argued that North Korea's ideology can best be described as National Socialist rather than Stalinist.[1] In fact, Marxism-Leninism has long been absent from the country's constitution. *Juche*—a concept often vaguely summed up as "man is the master of his own destiny"—is instead presented as the unique creation of Kim Il-sung.

Whereas Marxism-Leninism, broadly defined, was internationalist in outlook, Juche is extremely nationalistic. More commonly referred to within the country as Kimilsungism-Kimjongilism, it is an ideology by and for the Korean people alone, a shield against the ugliness and hostility of external powers. Juche emerged in the early 1960s, when the DPRK wanted to establish political autonomy, free from Moscow's party-line directives. The doctrine was also one of the key components of the effort to play the DPRK's two great benefactors—the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union—against each other, without ever fully embracing either side.[2] The real impetus of Juche is to produce something that is uniquely and ethnically Korean—something that South Korea could never achieve, as its people have been enslaved to the American imperialists since the end of the Korean War.

The aesthetics of Juche, according to Kim Jong-il, differ from anything that has ever come before: the philosophy is "the first ever to offer a perfect and integral scientific explanation about the standards, rules and essence of beauty. What is beautiful is what appeals emotionally to man and accords with his autonomous desires and aspirations."[3] In his *Treatise on Art* (1992), Kim Jong-il further defines the three essential qualities of Korean painting as clarity, compactness and delicacy. He does not elaborate on this. His pronouncements are written to be memorized and recited on cue, not to be analyzed or discussed.

Whatever Kim Jong-il's vague terminology may mean, one can readily discern that, in practice, the main forms of North Korean art are paintings and sculptures glorifying the leadership (namely, Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il); *chosonhwa*, or traditional Korean landscape painting (particularly featuring Mount Paektu, the sacred mountain where the Korean nation is said to have first come into being and where, according to official propa-

North Korean propaganda poster.

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

North Korean propaganda poster. Courtesy David Heather Collection, London, and Prestel.

ganda, Kim Jong-il was born); Socialist Realist-influenced landscape paintings; and propaganda posters (which are not considered fine art). Photography does not exist as an independent art form in the DPRK, nor does Western-style video or installation work. Instead, popular entertainment predominates, especially acrobatics, mass dances and revolutionary operas.

Propaganda posters are North Korea's most common form of art—and hence its lowest. Nevertheless, they have acquired a certain cachet with Western buyers, as they are dynamic as well as easy and cheap to acquire. Examples are customarily for sale in-country, though on my most recent trip there, in April, I did not see any in the usual souvenir shops and bookstores. (Rather, ink art and oil paintings were being promoted this time.) Yet the posters continue to be available on Western websites, usually run by people who visit the country regularly as tourists and stock up.

Generally, these posters are either local in content or tied to a particular campaign. For example, during the famine of the 1990s, there was a push to get people to start eating potatoes, since rice, a staple of the Korean diet, was in short supply. Other campaigns have sought to increase factory outputs, or to hasten the construction of buildings. The posters often make use of what Korean studies specialist Koen de Ceuster has dubbed the "frog perspective," a from-below POV that makes the viewer a submissive recipient of the towering image. In one popular image, frequently reproduced on postcards and postage stamps, three oversize Korean hands join together in crushing an American soldier beneath one of his own missiles. This is just what North Koreans believe they did in the Fatherland Liberation War (known in the West as the Korean War, which officially ended in a stalemate), and what they promise to do again in the future, should the Americans ever provoke them.

Absolutism is part of the images' naked aggression. There is no back-and-forth here; the meaning is thrust upon you; no alternate interpretation is possible. There are only two kinds of answers to questions in the DPRK: correct and incorrect. The notion of art or philosophy as a means of questioning the nature of reality is unthinkable. Art, and poster art in particular, is meant to educate, inspiring citizens with love of country, love of leader and hatred of the enemies—primarily Japan, the United States and the "puppet regime" of South Korea.

Kim Song-gun, one of the country's best-known landscape painters, specializes in images of waves beating mercilessly against rocky shores. His work landed in the international spotlight in 2009, when Bill Clinton visited North Korea to secure the release of two American

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

Kim Song-gun: *Bright Sea at Kumgang*, 2010, oil on canvas, 65 by 101 inches. Courtesy Galerie Son, Berlin.

journalists who had been taken prisoner and accused of spying. Clinton was photographed seated next to Kim Jong-il with one of the artist's large-scale wave paintings in the background.

While they may seem innocent enough to a Western eye, Kim's pictures are, in fact, as thoroughly infused with state propaganda as the political posters and the depictions of rulers—albeit in a more subtle way. This is where talk of Socialist Realism in relation to North Korean aesthetics begins to crumble. In his landmark study *Totalitarian Art*, Igor Golomstock posited the following subjects as defining characteristics of Socialist Realism in painting: the struggle, the leader and, less importantly, the people at joyful, devoted labor. The most neglected areas were landscape and still life.[4] But in the DPRK, landscape retains a significant and highly codified role. Kim's dramatic waves may pound relentlessly—just like the DPRK's enemies, be they the United States or the natural disasters long blamed, domestically, for causing the 1990s famine that killed several hundred thousand DPRK citizens—but the land, the One True Korea, will always remain solid and strong, even in the face of the greatest adversity.

RATHER THAN CONTINUING to align the DPRK's art with an outdated Soviet style that was internationalist in intention, one would do better to see the foreign influence as melded with North Korea's own artistic forms and aesthetic; let's call the mix Norko Realism. This is a socialist, yet also ultranationalist, "realism" that belongs strictly to the Korean people north of the 38th parallel, and cannot be understood apart from their ideology-infused quotidian life, which has existed for a relatively brief span of time (since the DPRK's founding in 1948).

Of course the major subject one finds throughout Norko Realism is the depiction of the ruler, either "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung or the "Dear Leader" Kim Jong-il. Images of both men are to be seen nearly everywhere one looks. In each car of the Pyongyang subway, in at least one room of every office and every house, the two men's photographs are hung side-by-side, dusted regularly and religiously maintained. To slight either of the leaders is to insult the Korean people personally; indeed, as a visitor, one has to exercise great care when asking one's North Korean guides anything about them.

Not just anyone is permitted to depict the leaders in painting or sculpture. Only the most revered artists, most of whom are employed at the Mansudae Art Studio, have the honor of painting the Kims. (Although these works are ubiquitous, it is difficult for outside researchers to find out who the artists are. Portraits of the leaders are intended strictly for a domestic audience and are rarely included in exhibitions of North Korean art abroad.) Sculptural works, such as the giant statues of the two leaders that all visitors are required to pay respects to in the center of Pyongyang, are manufactured collectively at Mansudae in an area that is strictly off-limits to visitors. Rendered in blocky, almost cartoonish shapes, the bronze sculptures are works of epic kitsch that would have made Stalin blush.

Norko Realism's greatest achievement is that it has managed to produce its own time. It is not so much that, through the limitations placed upon its citizens' expo-

Oliver Laric: *Mansudae Overseas Project*, 2013, polyurethane, Carrara marble powder, jade powder, copper powder, graphite powder, aluminium powder, fluorescent pigment and activated carbon, approx. 28 by 11 by 10 inches. Courtesy Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin.

Norko Realism
Art in America, June-July 2014
Travis Jeppesen

Kim Myong-un: *Night in Pyongyang*, 2012, oil on canvas, 31 by 62¼ inches. Courtesy Galerie Son.

sure to other cultures, the DPRK remains somewhere in the middle of the 20th century, but that it remains oblivious to those aspects of contemporaneity that don't concern it. With its intent on producing something that is "purely Korean," whatever that might mean, the choice of which outside factors are allowed to leak in is always somewhat arbitrary.

One painting style, as seen in works by Kim Myong-un and Choi Kyung-mee exhibited recently in Berlin's Galerie Son, is clearly derived from Impressionism. It's hard to say why a bright palette and feverish, dotted brushwork have become a North Korean fashion—as with everything else in the DPRK, conjecture plays a leading role in an outsider's fathoming—but it is likely in part an expression of longstanding East Asian taste and in part a response to recent orders by foreign clients to Mansudae and the country's other art studios. Then there is the art studio's commercial enterprise, Mansudae Overseas Projects, whose clients tend to be African countries that commission monumental statues of their own leaders or revered historical personages. Recently, Austrian-born artist Oliver Laric elicited controversy when he ordered up several smaller male figures, shown last winter at Art Basel Miami Beach and elsewhere, in keeping with his ongoing investigation of artistic fabrication and authenticity.

Kim Myong-un's *Night in Pyongyang* (2012) depicts the capital city aglow, a myriad of colored lights reflecting off the Taedong River. With an increasing amount of construction taking place in Pyongyang since the young Kim Jong-un took control in 2011 after the death of his father, it is very much how the city might look one day in the near future. But it isn't how the city looks quite yet, and the memory of the frequent power outages and pitch darkness that once punctuated Pyongyang's nights—and that continue to plague most areas outside the capital—remains fresh in its denizens' minds.

Night in Pyongyang is not so much a misrepresentation as it is an image of an ideal state that has yet to be reached. In Norko Realism, the dream of purity and greatness never dies. Promising the perfect unity of leader, state, army and citizen, Ideal Korea is celebrated in the Ariang Festival mass games, the annual 100,000-performer spectacle of synchronized gymnastics that Andreas Gursky famously photographed. It informs Kim Jong-il's opaque, yet mind-numbingly straightforward "philosophies" of Juche and Songun. It is expressed in the unquestioning mechanics of the everyday routine. It resides in the love of the fatherly leader, who alone protects the people from the hostile forces of an evil, uncomprehending outside world.

Thus Norko Realism can never be properly consumed by outsiders, as it can never completely bridge the disparity between what is represented and what we actually see. But for the populace of the DPRK, it is what fills the gap between ideality and the numbing horrors of banality and daily struggle—those variants of the real that we are all submerged in to a greater or lesser degree, no matter the place we call home. ○

1. See, for instance, B.R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves—And Why It Matters*, New York, Melville House, 2010.
2. See Charles K. Armstrong, *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1992*, Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 2013.
3. Quoted in Rüdiger Frank, ed., *Exploring North Korean Arts*, Nuremberg, Verlag für moderne Kunst, 2012, p. 56.
4. Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy, and the People's Republic of China*, trans. Robert Chandler, New York, Overlook Press, 2012 (first published October 1990).

Save the Robots / Internet
South as a State of Mind, Spring/Summer 2014
Stephanie Balley

save the robots / internet

RELATIONAL VALUE

Interview with Oliver Laric by Stephanie Bailey

On the repetition of space, proverbial monologues and landscapes of variation

Stephanie Bailey: How do you view repetition in relation to your work?

Oliver Laric: I am inclined to believe Gertrude Stein, when she said that there is no such thing as repetition. It's a very liberating thought when applied to objects and images. Having seen something once before is different to having seen it twice before.

SB: What kind of ideas or theories feed into the theoretical constitution of your work?

OL: Currently, I'm influenced by the theories of Bakhtin, Borges, Beauvoir, Bhabha and Butler.

SB: How do these theories apply to the composition of your work, especially when thinking about how your pieces relate to the audience, or how you intend the work to exist in the world?

OL: I'm happy if the work can exist for several audiences, as speech takes place between particular people, in a particular situation, for particular reasons. The particularities shape the creation of each utterance and the work is shaped by the audience. The arrow in the diagram should be drawn both ways.

SB: I want to think about this in terms of *The Collection, Lincoln*. This was a result of you being awarded the Contemporary Art Society Annual Award in 2012. The project involved you scanning works from the Lincoln Collection and producing 3D models, which were made available for download, and eventually made available to view online via the New Museum, though this was not part of the original project. Could you talk about the conceptualisation of this project and how it builds on work you have done around the object, the simulation and the repetition of objects in digital space?

OL: The first works I uploaded to my website in 2006 or 2007 were unexpectedly modified by others. This made me realise that the moment of publication can act as a beginning, as opposed to a moment of completion or conclusion. The 3D scans can be viewed and studied, but they also function as starting points. Whenever a blog mentions the project, new iterations appear. And I'm sure that I'm not getting to see everything that is being done with the models. I quite *enjoy* this aspect of not knowing, as it allows me to project

Save the Robots / Internet
South as a State of Mind, Spring/Summer 2014
Stephanie Balley

save the robots / internet

and imagine things that might never be. Possibilities may be in excess of actualities.

SB: The digital models were made available to download and use, free from copyright restriction. Can you talk about how this approach deals with notions around the creative commons or the digital commons? How do you think this affects the practice of art and culture in an online, or even a networked world?

OL: The Lincoln 3D Scans have no copyright. The scans can become anything, also things I don't want them to be. I've given up custody. The work emptied itself to act as a generative and communicative space of inscription. The more it is known, the more it is inscribed. It presents itself like a palimpsest.

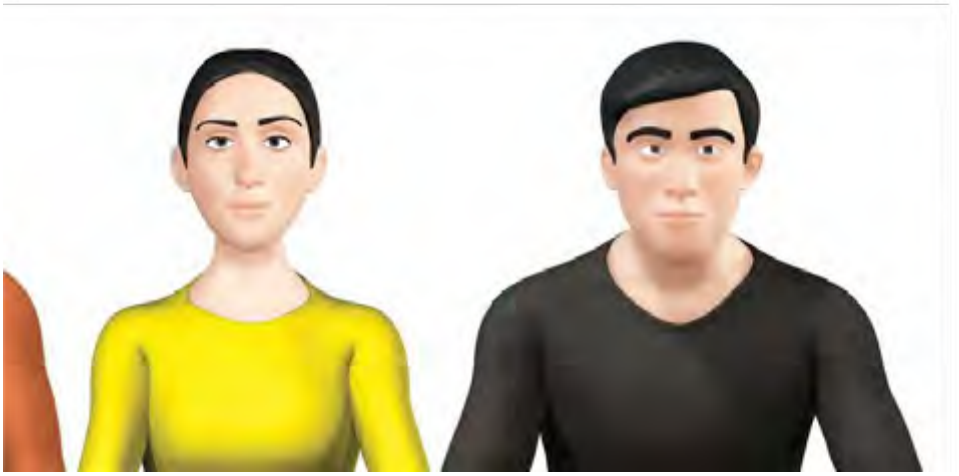
SB: Is there an act of neutralisation going on here, or the reflection of such a process through the repetition of things?

OL: In the project, we've scanned objects that are described as culturally significant, but also office chairs and museum staff members. They are presented in the same manner, without differentiation. The objects lose their texture and get reduced to polygons. But this neutralisation is temporary, as the data will hopefully be modified and charged with charisma.

SB: You named a 2011 show in Basel *Kopienkritik* after a nineteenth-century school of art history in which Roman sculptures – which were copies of Greek sculptures – were pronounced inferior to Greek originals. You produced an archive of casts of famous sculptures made in polyurethane, arranging the artefacts alongside video projections and painted renditions. The effect, as described by Alex Gartenfeld, who mentions this show in his own interview with you, "was a pantheon of heroic figures and deities with no progenitor". I wonder if you could talk about how the notion of simulacra fit into this, if at all, and what your thoughts are on the idea of the simulacrum.

OL: Existing sculptures form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new work among them. The simulacrum becomes a site in which a mere reflection can assert itself. It creates change both in the reflection and the source. It's a play within a

Oliver Laric
5, 2013
HD video, colour, sound, 10 mins
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin



Save the Robots / Internet
South as a State of Mind, Spring/Summer 2014
Stephanie Balley

save the robots / internet

Oliver Laric, *Versions*, 2012
HD video, colour, sound, 6 mins
Courtesy of the artist and Tanya Leighton, Berlin

play, book within a book, monument within a monument, etc. within etc.

SB: Saying that, do you have any thoughts on the notion of Ersatz things?

OL: I tend to favour the Ersatz thing, the secondary, the stand in, the substitute, the by-product, the deuteragonist, the tortoise, secondary literature, metonymy and the B-side.

SB: You also deal very much with the online world as a space of hyper-mediation and hyper-relation. Can you talk about how the notion of relation feeds into your practice?

OL: There's a novel titled ***The Weather Fifteen Years Ago*** by Wolf Haas, written as an interview between a literary critic and the author. There are two layers: the fictional interview and the fictional novel. Over the course of the interview, all details of the plot are revealed through the subjective interpretations of both critic and author. Borges also preferred to pretend that books already exist, to simply offer a summary or commentary on them. And I enjoy summing up these summaries.

SB: You have described your recent exhibition at Seventeen Gallery, *5*, which consists of one video work, as a theatrical version of ***Versions***, a series of videos in which you explore ideas of repetition, since *5* explored ideas in Versions but through people rather than objects. Can you elaborate on this?

OL: *5* is essentially ***Versions***. There are five characters and each one vocalises 15 utterances. The phrases are idiomatic and they don't belong to anyone. Even if I can associate myself with the dialogue, I'm not sure if I have written it. It's a language without a permanent author. I was looking at the proverb in medieval literature and painting, where it had a prominent position. Cervantes let Sancho Panza speak in proverbial monologues and Pieter Bruegel painted proverbial landscapes. The idiomatic language becomes specific through combination and context.

SB: Which fits when thinking about versions and your interest in repetition...

OL: ***Versions*** functions as a basis for further development. I'm hoping that it will lead to alternate incarnations such as poems, short stories, novels, musicals and merchandise.

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

Iconoclash

Oliver Laric uses memes,
movable type, copies and collective agency to make art
that is only partly 'his' *by Pablo Larios*

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

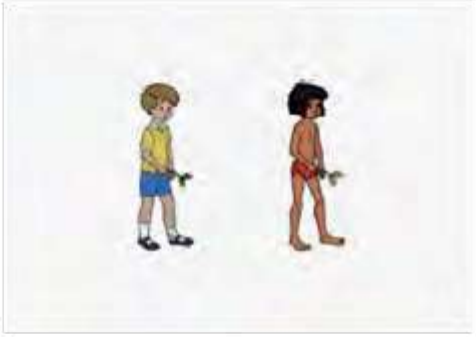
Oliver Laric once showed me a 16th-century print by Flemish court artist Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder. The etching depicts a scene of iconoclasm, or *Beeldenstorm*, during the Reformation, when churches and public spaces in northern Europe were systematically purged of religious imagery, often by mobs. Hallucinatory in its detail, the print shows a swarm of figures on a mount pillaging icons, breaking statues, tossing altarpieces into a fire. Birds in the air shit on monks beside bare trees that crown a bald outcropping; broken relics and shattered crucifixes jut out like gravestones from a pit.

Gheeraerts's work isn't simply a depiction of image breaking. When viewed from afar, the mass of active figures in the print forms a new, anamorphic image: a grotesque, composite illusion of a monk's rotting head. An assembly of small bodies forms a sagging mouth (full of drunken townsfolk), and a group of monks ploughs a field that's also the head's wrinkled brow; a monkey stands inside an ear, and the figure's nose is formed by a crucifix about to be toppled between two hollowed-out eye sockets.

I don't think Laric had ever seen the real *Allegory of Iconoclasm* (c. 1560–70) – which exists only as a smallish, unique print in the British Museum – when he introduced me to Gheeraerts's work during a conversation about his own video *Versions* (2012), the third in his series of that name, in which the monk's head appears briefly. I write 'real', although Laric's information-driven videos and sculptures confound distinctions between real and fake, even making that effacement their subject. I write 'own work', despite Laric's ongoing concern with the mutability of authorship and ownership. An author is fungible, particularly as enabled by recent forms of collective and participatory labour. Internet memes, popular and children's films, super-cut YouTube videos, medieval sculptures, outsourced remakes and the 'participatory' labour practices of North Korean monuments are all found, re-remixed and translated in Laric's works. And although I write 'conversation', that word only partially accounts for the hopscotching, hyper-medial surge of links, flickering images and n+7 web results that the artist retrieves, combs through and reassembles to display and comment on his own material, as well as that of others. 'I sometimes Google terms that seem to have nothing to do with each other,' Laric says. '"Mikhail Bakhtin and prosumer" or "Samuel Beckett and *Teletubbies*". Usually, there's an unexpected link.' In the latter case, it might be Beckett's *Quad* (1981), whose four actors could be proto-Teletubbies; in the former, it's Bakhtin's dialogic understanding of how production oscillates between collectives and individuals – a dialectical motor Laric puts to work in his collectively-based pieces.

There is no distinction between the material Laric finds and that which he presents as his own. Laric's exhibition 'Kopienkritik' (Copy Critique) at the Skulpturhalle in Basel in 2011 took its cue from the 19th-century methodological approach to philology and ancient sculpture, which viewed (inferior) Roman 'copies' in terms of (superior) Greek 'originals', reconstructing those lost originals via the bulk typologizing of inferior later copies. Laric cast and grouped that museum's collection of Greek and Roman plaster casts into typologies, alongside video monitors and heads cast by the artist. 'Copyright did not exist in ancient times, when authors frequently copied other authors at length in works of nonfiction.' This declaration does not come from a history of literary influence, but from the *GNU Manifesto*, written by MIT's Richard Stallman in 1985 to announce an influential, free software, mass collaboration coding project (and the theoretical backbone to much open-source digital content today). 'Be promiscuous,' reads an Open Source Initiative manifesto encouraging coders to distribute their works free of charge. Laric draws on this ethos of collective reworking.

1



2

1 & 2
Versions,
2012, HD video stills

3
Monsudoe Overseas Project, 2013, polyurethane, carrara marble powder, copper powder, graphite powder, aluminium powder, fluorescent pigment, 72 × 27 × 25 cm

4
Touch My Body: Green Screen Version, 2008, screengrab from YouTube

5
'Kopienkritik' (Copy Critique), 2011, installation view, Skulpturhalle Basel

Although you can find it on YouTube, Laric's *Touch My Body: Green Screen Version* (2008) is not really a video but rather a participatory game, or dare, that Laric intended to be appropriated and modified. For *Touch My Body...*, Laric stripped Mariah Carey's music video for her 2008 song of the same name of all but Carey herself, and replaced it with a green screen, against which any background could be inserted. When Laric posted the piece to YouTube that year, users took the cue and began uploading amateurish, witty remixes using Laric's template. (Including one with a background of zombie gore taken from *Scum of the Dead*, 2004). Today, the first result when searching for Laric's piece on YouTube is not his original video, but an amateur mash-up, of which there are many.

Memes – like fame, lies and capital – accrue value and cachet as they circulate. But they also date and flatten, and while *Touch My Body ...* lacks the complexity of Laric's later pieces, it demonstrates the atmosphere in which his work arose: the newly 'social' internet; the advent of the 'prosumer' ('producer-consumer' or 'professional-consumer') technology that enabled easy editing by 15 year olds; online video-sharing platforms; freely accessible, though commercial, image repositories such as Getty Images and Flickr. On a larger scale, the points of departure for Laric's works have been incipient shifts in group structures and collective agency (shifts not limited to the internet), the global political atmospheres of what in the mid-2000s began to be called 'truthiness': a simultaneous reliance on, and distrust of, circulated images and narratives.

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

3

Laric's information-driven videos and sculptures confound distinctions between real and fake, even making that effacement their subject.

4

5

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

'I sometimes Google terms that seem to have nothing to do with each other. "Bakhtin and prosumer" or "Beckett and Teletubbies*". Usually, there's an unexpected link.'*

OLIVER LARIC

The striking succession of historical images that opens the first of Laric's essayistic video series 'Versions' (2009–12) is as much a comment on political shilly-shallying as an assertion of the masses' new claim on image production and circulation. The video, which is a trove of examples of the fraught status of reproductions and copies from recent and contemporary material culture, begins with an image (released by Iran's state media to Agence France-Presse in 2008) of four missiles, which was used to illustrate Iran's missile tests when it appeared on the pages of the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Financial Times*, among many others; following this, Laric inserts a graphic that indicates how that image was clearly manipulated, if not fabricated, using Photoshop (the multiple missiles are effectively copy-and-pasted from within the image). And finally, a series of user-generated spin-offs of the Photoshopped image showing dozens of missiles, their streams in comic curlicues. I can't think of any better way of exemplifying Jean Baudrillard's ideas about simulacra and hyperreality in our age of truthiness than this simple slideshow compiled by Laric.

Until a few years ago, the internet was the main (and often only) way to see Laric's works, and those of sanctioned fellow artists. Before I ever heard of him, I would often look at VVORK.com, the influential blog he ran from 2006 to 2012 with Aleksandra Domanović, Christoph Priglinger and Georg Schnitzer. The set-up was simple: an art work or two posted daily, either by one of the four founders or (usually) by another artist. VVORK would 'curate' not only images of contemporary works but also historical ones, predating that now-orthodox usage of Tumblr, and still contrasting with exhibition-based blogs like Contemporary Art Daily. On a random day in 2009, these posts might include a 2001 tray installation by Brian Jungen, a 2009 work by Markus Schinwald, a 1967 piece by Les Levine, and the 'Silhouettes' series (*Untitled*) by Seth Price, whose 2002/2008 essay 'Dispersion' continues to be one of Laric's conceptual cornerstones. Laric believes – like Price, and as Marcel Broodthaers is quoted as saying at the beginning of the 'Dispersion' essay – that 'artistic activity occurs, first of all, in the field of distribution'.

Laric, whose first solo show in Berlin was in 2012, says that 'for many artists, distributing images of their works online happens secondary to physical exhibition. For me, the online distribution happened first.' Distribution is the aim and theme of his recent *Lincoln 3D Scans* (2013) – the result of his receipt of the Contemporary Art Society Annual Award – for which he is 3D scanning and publishing 3D models of the complete holdings of the Usher Gallery and The Collection in Lincoln, to be used in an unknown fashion, for free, and for any reason – whether advertising, garden decoration, scholarly research or design. Despite the expense and technological expertise required for such a task, Laric is driven by a bootleg, *Samizdat*-like stance, shared by other artists working with the internet as medium, one with art-historical roots in conceptual art's blurring of documentation and event, work and distribution, as well as in the history of design.

More particular to Laric's work is how this axiomatic stress on self-dispersion is also an attempt by the artist to self-efface, to swamp the ego in an ocean of collectivity. Viewed from a distance, this attempt is the allegorical gist of Laric's entire project. Above all, it's the ambiguities of invisible labour that Laric explores. This concern is also perceptible in his discrete objects: the 3D printed sculptures of Reformation-damaged *Icons* (*Utrecht, Worcester*, 2009), or the 2013 'everyman' statuette Laric commissioned from the North Korean Mansudae Overseas Projects, a factory in Pyongyang specializing, controversially and rather terrifyingly, in creating communist 'realist' kitsch monuments.

The paradoxes of collective authorship also draw Laric toward religious objects, as well as memes, whose communal authors are anonymous: both are *acheiropoieta*, or 'made without hands', as Laric points out, using the theological term for icons which are said to have originated without human intervention. 'Long before the hammer strikes them, religious images are already self-defacing,' wrote art historian Joseph Koerner, who also provided Laric with the words for the sweeping iconoclastic scene with which the 2010 *Versions* film begins. In the middle of that video, the narrator announces how 'for the first time several months ago, I spent hours looking at the façade of the cathedral. But only when I bought a book on the cathedral a week later did I really see it. The photographs

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

Opposite page
Discobulus Guilloche (detail),
2012, tamper-evident
security hologram stickers on PET sheet,
with airbrushed
clear coating, 2.1 × 1.3 m

This page
Lincoln 3D Scans, 2013,
3D scans

enabled me to see in a way that my naked eye could not.' Laric's point here – or the narrator's, or Susan Sontag's, who said these words, or the interviewer's, who transcribed the text in a book from which Laric appropriated it – is that experience is always already in a state of double-exposure; all production is a reproduction. And, contrary to Walter Benjamin's ideas, the aura of certain works is not shattered by mechanical reproducibility, but may be paradoxically augmented by it. As suggested by art historian Anthony Hughes, also quoted in *Versions*, 'multiplication of an icon, far from diluting its cultic power, rather increases its fame'.

These assertions might come off as didactic without the weight of the three video works' remarkable examples, culled from material culture, and read over a seamless stream of gnomic, unattributed apercus. Donald Richie's *The Films of Akira Kurosawa* (1998), Jorge Luis Borges's 'The Homeric Versions' (1932), Vitruvius, Michel Foucault, studies of mimesis in classical antiquity, all outlining the artist's 'innate preference for the represented subject over the real one', a phrase Laric borrowed from Henry James's 1892 short story 'The Real Thing'.

Everything in Laric's works seems to be saying the same thing – or, to quote *Versions*, 'same, same, but different'. That's precisely Laric's point, which is that all matter, and all that matters, is repetition. We may have never seen *Where The Truth Lies* (2005), but we may unconsciously recognize Pierre Kōnig's Stahl House, the Los Angeles modernist villa featured in the film, because it previously appeared in *Nurse Betty* (2000) and *Why Do Fools Fall in Love* (1998). Interestingly, the villa was built in 1960 as part of the Case Study Houses programme, before Laric made it his own case study, presenting the three, near-identical portrayals of the villa across three screens in *Versions*. An odd quote from Friedrich Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* (1888) is read over scans of book-printed photographs by Candida Höfer of various cast versions of August Rodin's *The Burghers of Calais* (first completed in 1889). The video ends with a 3D-rendered model of a sculpture by Laith al-Amiri installed in the grounds of an orphanage in Tikrit, Iraq – a replica of the shoe that was thrown by an Iraqi broadcast journalist at George W. Bush during his 14 December 2008 visit to the country. Over one poignant, partly silent minute, we see Mowgli from Disney's *The Jungle Book* (1967) in split-screen next to Christopher Robin from Disney's *Winnie the Pooh and the Blustery Day* (1968), doing precisely the same things: throwing a rock, walking, interacting with animals. Clearly, and rather unnervingly, they were drawn using the same types, just as in real life the same actor, Bruce Reitherman, provided the voices of Mowgli and Christopher. Moveable type, it seems, is not only the backbone of words and letters, but in an extended sense, the atomized unit of material culture.

Although Laric's videos claim to advocate the emancipatory potential of such copies, doubles and remakes, they seem to be at their best when their effects are unsettling or contradictory. Art works that affect us keep up the illusion of uniqueness, and draw upon the strength of repetition even as they play down their sources, their status as copies. The 'Versions' films are poignant specifically because they play up that loss, that iconoclastic betrayal. Viewing these examples provokes the same kind of uncanny feeling you might have when the illusion of a real bond is shattered: finding out that the alluring scent of a lover was actually a perfume purchased and worn by thousands of others – or, worse, that the bond was the result of that very product. And it's that betrayal of ordinariness, of non-uniqueness, that Laric brings to the fore.

In the 1920s, the folklorist Vladimir Propp began analyzing Russian folk tales and found consistent, systematic, irreducible types: the hero, the witch, the donor who provides the hero with a magical object, the false hero who takes credit for the hero's deeds and tries to take the prize. Propp's unfashionably rigid formalist enterprise later fell by the wayside to the more expansive locutions of post-structuralism, after scholars like Claude Lévi-Strauss became suspicious of formalism's strict totalizing impulse. Classification has a tendency to normalize discourse, and all norms are bad, right? But the toppling of 'totalizing' theories such as Propp's – at least until new totalizing theories took their place – was ironic in its timing since it was during the same 1968-era which crowned 'rhizomatic' High Theory that popular works of mass distribution, such as Walt Disney's cartoons, drew profitably and compellingly upon those same types and icons identified by figures like Propp: the good witch, the hero, Christopher Robin, Mowgli. The importance of such icons was, in a way, destroyed by the steamroller effect of theory. But the discovery of moveable types still holds remarkably well in the realm of popular culture, although that culture has since shifted considerably. Like money, monuments or memes on a screen, these icons are efficient, commercial, clean and rather cold. They are immediately recognizable, even when we don't recall them – or their authors – by name.

Pablo Larios is a writer and assistant editor of frieze d/e. *He lives in Berlin, Germany.*

Oliver Laric is an artist based in Berlin, Germany. His work is currently included in 'Damn braces: Bless relaxes' at Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK, and 'Art Post-Internet' at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China. In June he will have solo shows at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., USA, and The Collection Museum, Lincoln, UK; and in November at ar/ge Galerie Museum, Bolzano, Italy, and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin.

Iconoclash
Frieze, March 2014
Pablo Larios

photograph, the artist has interposed such things as soap bubbles, ice, steam, and semitransparent DuraClear—almost literalizing the "haze" of memory clouding these lost moments.

Literalization, plays on words, and double meanings permeate Pirecki's art. Misty photographs in combination with the overlaid DuraClear seem to double the blurring effect of the other, as if expressing the same garbled message twice. GREY is both spelled out on and literally produced from the muddy, multihued painted surface that, moreover, provides the exhibition's overall dominant palette. The paintings are literally "edgy," produced using a straight-edged ruler and occupying the edges of the canvas, like a brushy sort of frame. And the titles of both paintings and photographs are rife with double meaning, with words such as *Persistence* (both "lingering" and "insisting"), *Reflecting* ("pondering" and "mirroring"), and *Generation* (the production of images or of people).

Pirecki's art seems to occupy that space between the words' dual meanings—the blank expanse between definitions—just as gray exists somewhere between black and white: in the noncolors of semitransparent materials, or the shadow of a "white" wall, and across the combination of all painted colors. One thinks of the music of John Cage, of the captivating pauses between the decisive blackness of the musical notes, when everything really happens if only we listen closely enough. Pirecki seems to similarly pursue the gaps between time, words, and colors. The lasting impression is of a definitively unfinished in-between state, ceaselessly pulled back into a recent past captured in a painting that vanished when it was sold, or glimpsed in an afternoon's passing shadow on the studio wall.

—*Gilda Williams*

Oliver Laric
SEVENTEEN

At Seventeen gallery, Oliver Laric's single-channel HD-video animation *5*, 2013, was projected onto a wall built in the center of the space. The ten-minute video, presented on a continuous loop, shows a white room and a single table. This bleak environment is occupied by five computer-animated avatars, Lewis, Alice, Ada, Janus, and Sam, who take turns sitting at the table one pair at a time, engaged in rapid-fire talk, as if on a speed date. Their names suggest a multitude of references, ranging from Lewis Carroll, Alice B. Toklas, and Ada Lovelace (the mathematician and proto–computer programmer) to Janus (the double-faced Roman god of transition) and Samuel Beckett. Yet these figures are also grounded in a further level of symbolism: Each personality corresponds to one of the five Chinese elements, signified by the characters' shirt colors: wood (green), fire (red), metal (white), water (black), and earth (yellow). These identities are fleshed out further through highly structured conversations: ten one-minute dialogues constructed as single-line relays, with each character's fixed script composed of fifteen utterances made up of idiomatic phrases.

One of the more intriguing meetings was between an enthusiastic Alice (fire) and a terse Lewis (wood). The former opens the exchange by expressing her excitement before the latter abruptly asks: "Can we skip the formalities?" The conversation seems painful: "This is my first time," a hopeful Alice confesses, to which Lewis replies: "This is my first and last time." When Alice optimistically states, "This is just the beginning," Lewis counters, "It's over." At the conversation's end, the shot hovers over the couple before cutting to a side view of the next conversation (an editorial touch marking the beginning of each new interaction). Lewis is replaced by Ada (metal), whose responses to Alice are ambiguous: She uses phrases like "It's open to question" in response

Oliver Laric, *5*, 2013, HD video, color, sound, 10 minutes.

to remarks such as "We seem to have a lot in common." The cycle of conversational loops continues, each discussion presenting the potential for something or nothing, and reflecting the artist's interest in Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, which posits that the past (a material certainty, or particular) is influenced by the future (an immaterial projection, or universal) and vice versa.

Along this continuum, another of Bakhtin's theories emerges: that of heteroglossia, the idea that multiple meanings might coexist (and conflict) in a single work. In *5*'s relational web, conversations produce both convergence—as when Alice meets Janus (Alice: "It's going better than expected." Janus: "We're on the same page")—and divergence: When Sam (earth) asks Lewis, "Would you give me a chance?" Lewis replies, "You can't force these things." Such communications hint at another referent: wave-particle theory (the idea that light moves in both particles and waves), one of the profound dualisms structuring the physical world. This subtext is most apparent when Ada responds to Lewis's "I'm just too particular" with "I'm wavering on that." Here, light's contradiction is reflected in the conversation: a relational exchange between two entities contained within a single form, like the screen on which these verbal duels are projected.

In *5*, the screen functions within the gallery as the table does in the video, recalling Laric's description of the hyphen as a "marked or unmarked space that both binds and divides," preventing "identities at either end from settling into primordial polarities." The result is "[a] new area of negotiation of meaning and representation." Yet this "area of negotiation" was produced not only in the interactions among the five avatars but also in the relation between the viewer (the subject) and the work as an object of reflection presented in a space not unlike the white room in the video. The dualism thus expands, underscored by Alice's final utterance, "See you in five"—the operative word being *you*.

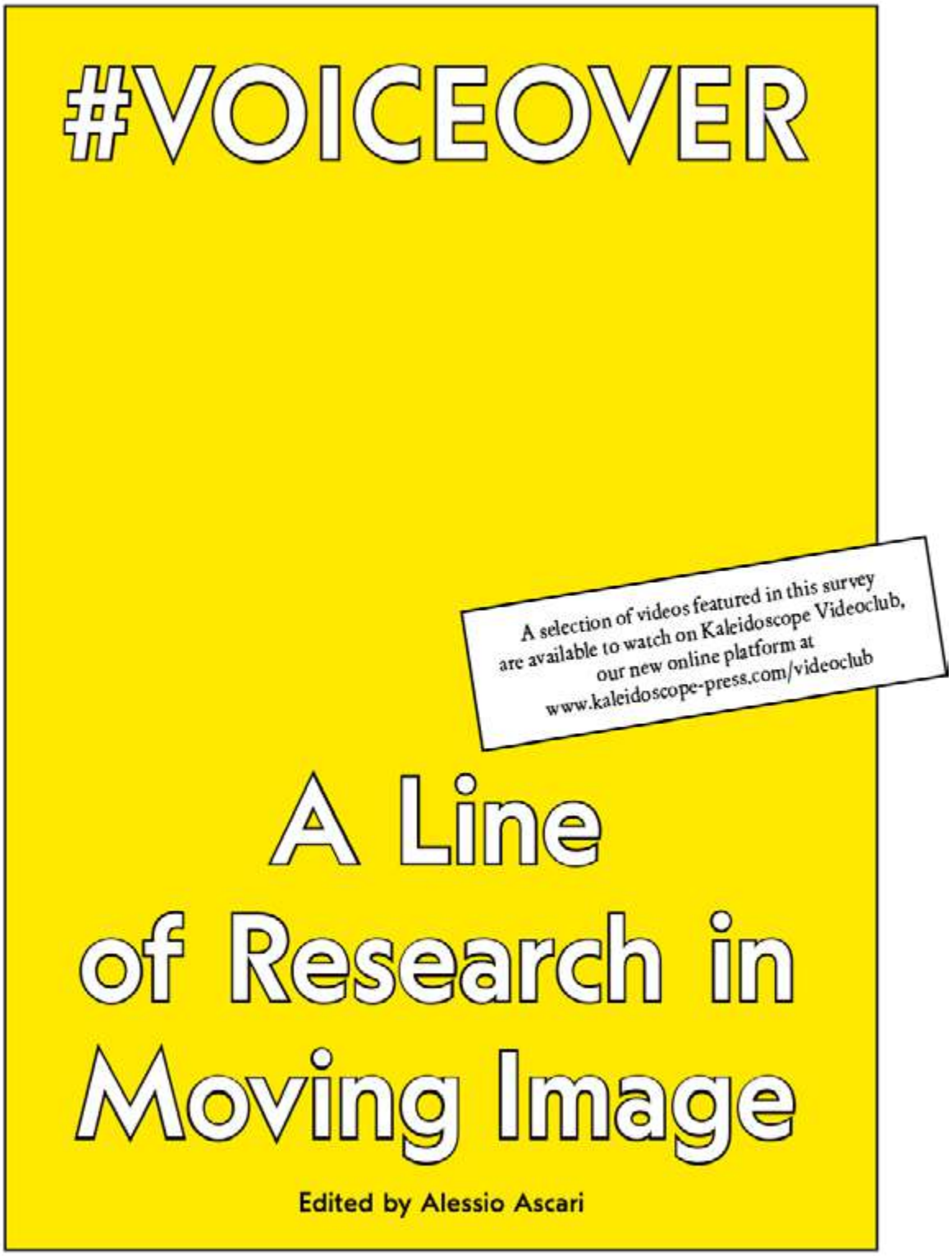
—*Stephanie Bailey*

DUBLIN

Jennifer Tee
PROJECT ARTS CENTRE

Jennifer Tee's installations are marked by a deep psychological ambiguity. If often seemingly designed to stimulate psychic serenity or spiritual uplift, they nonetheless advocate no clearly defined paths to inner peace and higher consciousness. Indeed, Tee's works often leave the viewer with persistent doubts about the possibility of reaching such enlightened states. But this equivocation may be precisely the point. As with other contemporary artists concerned with assorted forms of mystical yearning—Eva Rothschild and Francis Upritchard come to mind—it is in the tensions between aspiration and failure, seriousness and absurdity that the work finds its idiosyncratic energy.

The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey



The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey

MAIN THEME

CONVERSATION
The Electronic Revolution

George Vasey and Oliver Laric

Pedro Cera

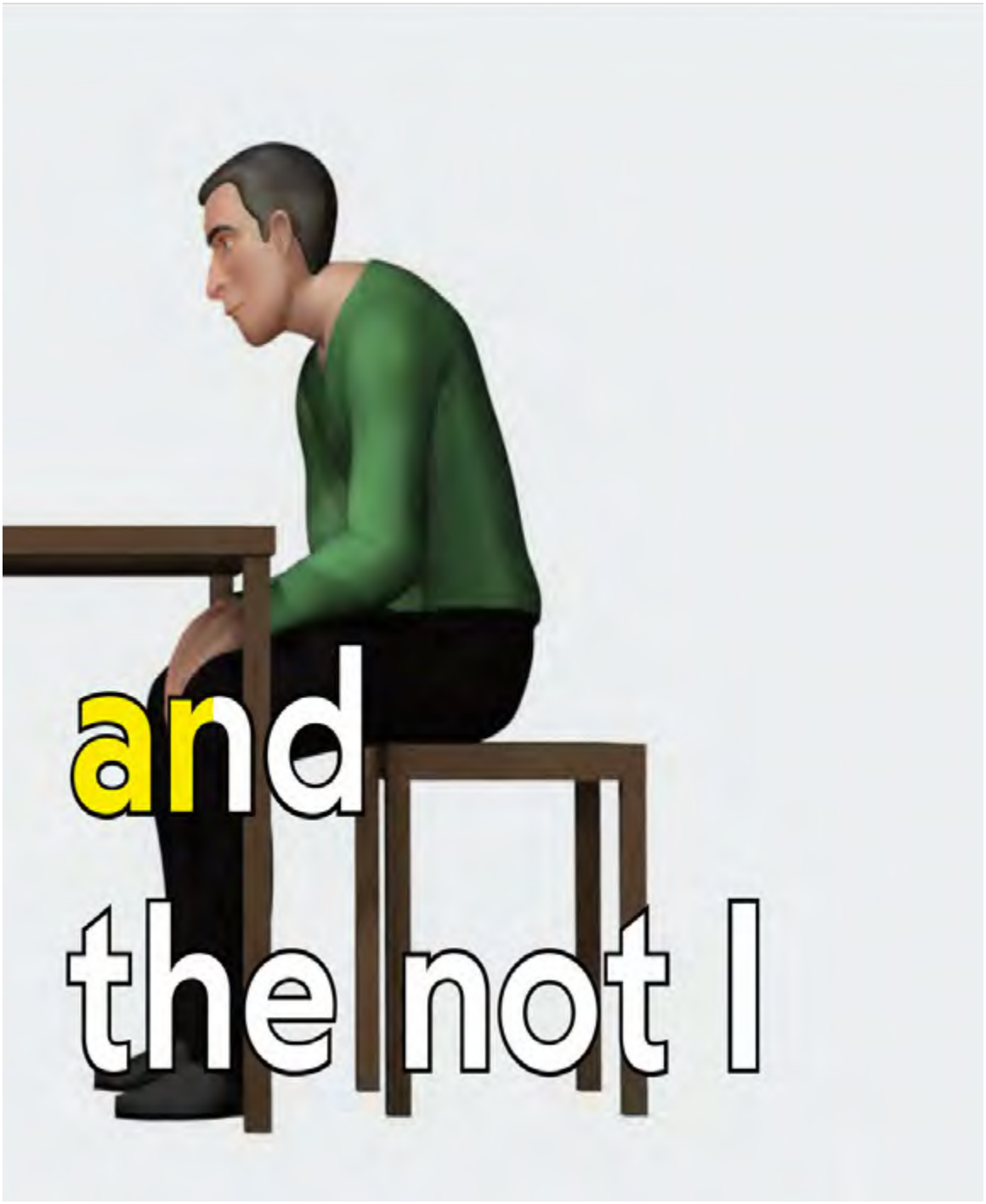
Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey

From advertising and cinema to text-to-speech and Siri, a short history of voiceover in the pop realm calls sampling, translating and overdubbing into question, with related issues of neutrality, animism and miscomprehension.



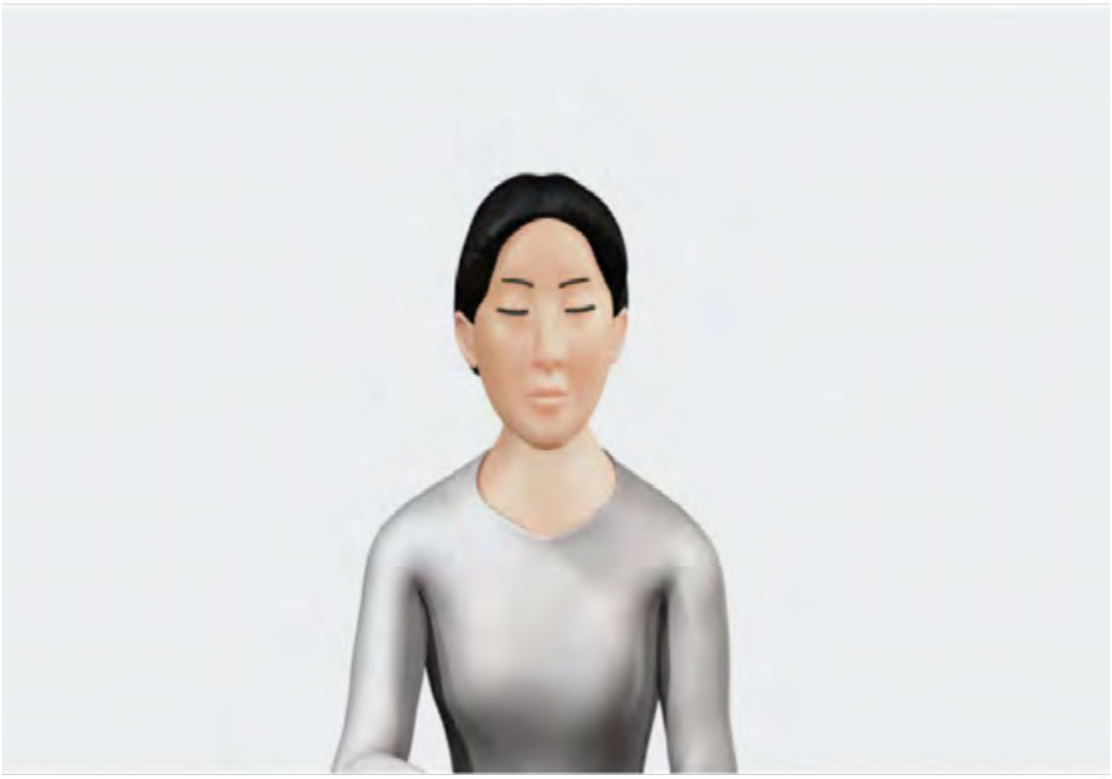
Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey



GV Are there instances of voiceover in popular culture that particularly interest you? One that springs to mind for me is *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). Stanley Kubrick utilizes the novel's first-person narration to great effect. We are continually asked to empathize with the protagonist, who of course is committing all of these atrocities.

OL: I like the unreliable voiceover. The viewer becomes aware of the incompetence of an otherwise flawless authority. It happens all the time in *Forrest Gump* (1994). The humor relies on the naive descriptions of Tom Hanks, which the viewer completes.

GV Early German films such as *Blue Angel* (1930), which starred Marlene Dietrich, were filmed twice: once in German and then completely re-filmed in English to appeal to the American market. This made me think of your work. Of course, translation is never neutral; there is an impossibility of an absolute translation.

OL Moustapha Akkad's *Mohammad, Messenger of God* (1976) was filmed twice, even with different actors. Akkad felt that the Arabic acting style would not work for an international audience, so two different sets of actors took turns filming, once in English, once in Arabic. Borges would have probably supported this double filming; he hated dubbing, describing it as an "arbitrary insertion of another voice and another language." Thomas Bernhard said that the translations of his books are the works of the translators. Beckett wrote in French, to translate back into English. François Julien learned Chinese to better understand Greek.

GV In *The Electronic Revolution* (1970), William Burroughs writes about the tape recorder as a "front line weapon" for escalating riots. He talked about repeating recordings of gunshots and police whistles in riot situations. I'm interested in this (and Burroughs' famous cut-and-paste technique) as a form of audio remixing in real time. Maybe we can relate this to your work. Burroughs innovated a type of cybernetic feedback into cultural production—he was one of the first to see the potential of sampling.

OL Do you remember the scene in *Police Academy* (1984) in which Michael Winslow performs gunshots and helicopter sounds via speakers of a police car to scare thugs? This was a formative movie scene for me. Ignacio Uriarte did a brilliant piece, hiring Winslow to emulate the sounds that typewriters make when typed on. The video shows Winslow in a sound studio, wearing headphones, listening to the sounds of someone typing, while simultaneously mimicking the sounds, beginning with the oldest typewriter and ending with the newest. Perhaps this also relates to the famous "Wilhelm scream," supposedly the most widely used recording of human suffering in film. The scream first appeared in 1951, and has since reappeared in over two hundred movies. Its success can be attributed to being integrated in a Warner Bros. stock sound library. If it hasn't been done yet, someone will definitely make a supercut of all the versions of the scream's appearances in chronological order.

GV I'm interested in your use of text to speech software (or asking voiceover actors to mimic it). For me, it suggests a form of estrangement—how do you see it functioning in relation to your work?

The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey

OL I've used text-to-speech before, but mostly work with voice actresses and actors now. About ten years ago I tried creating my own text-to-speech sound archive, where each sound or syllable came from a different voice. It gave me some sense of the complexity and difficulty of creating words from a limited number of sounds. The same letter demands a different pronunciation, depending on the sound it follows or anticipates. I've asked actresses and actors to emulate synthetic voices. It's counterintuitive to keep the voice so flat. There is a point where it starts sounding robotic, like faux-synthetic voices in older sci-fi movies. If it does not exist already, I would hope for an app that creates a personalized synthetic voice based on your own voice recordings.

GV Text-to-speech doesn't have any of the emotional timbre of the vocal; we lose a lot of the meta-information. I'm thinking of the way that Will Holder talks about performance as another form of typography. Words are merely vessels that need formatting to be activated.

OL In *Don Quixote* (1605), Sancho Panza continuously uses proverbs. He often lists whole series of proverbs in the form of short monologues. The proverbs are very general, authorless expressions, but they become specific within the context of the story.

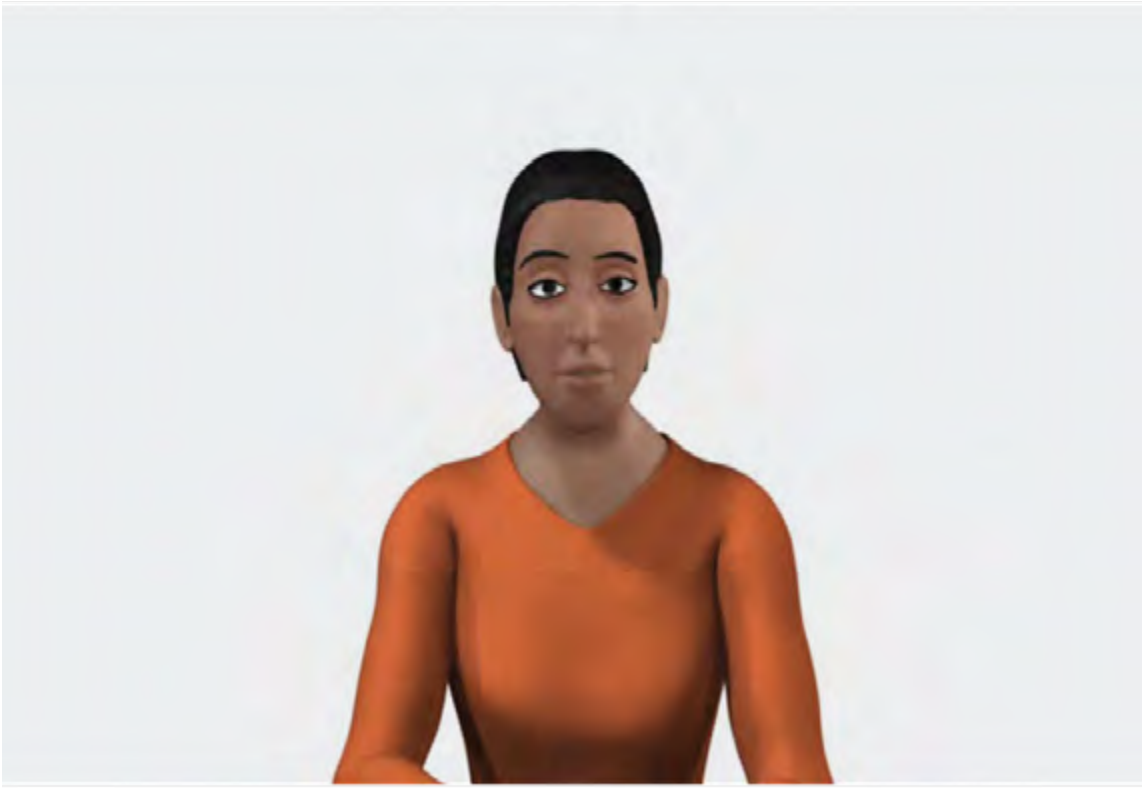
One of my favorite paintings is the *Netherlandish Proverbs* (1559) by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. It depicts 112 proverbial scenes combined in a single landscape. Cervantes and Bruegel transform the objective into the subjective, in a similar manner as contemporary stock imagery is continuously transformed by context.

GV Your ongoing work *Versions* (2009–present) has been remixed numerous times. The vocal and the visual are not static, and you often use different voice-overs. It refutes the master narrative that you often find in a certain type of humanistic documentary tradition.

OL I've used the same actress since the beginning of *Versions*, so the alternate voices that you are referring to might have been the alternate interpretations of *Versions* by other authors. In 2009 I invited Momus, Dani Admiss and Guthrie Lonergan to reinterpret the audio layer. Now these reinterpretations also happen without my involvement. Juilliard school actors recently performed *Versions* as a play. The text was alternately performed by a live actress and a recorded performance of a live actress. And I'm working on yet another version at the moment. The different iterations are dialogical and remain in a constant beta state. The future versions modify the past versions just as much as the past versions modify the future versions.

GV How does something like Siri change our relationship to objects? Can we look to the recent interest in animism by curators and artists such as Anselm Franke and Mark Leckey as a response to objects becoming sentient and talking back to us? We're really at the start of this; I think that vocal interfaces will become much more pervasive. Maybe it's an insidious marketing ploy to create greater empathy between consumers and objects?

OL I was trying to hire the voice actress responsible for the U.S. Siri voice, but her identity was kept hidden. She revealed herself recently, but I had already found another voice for her



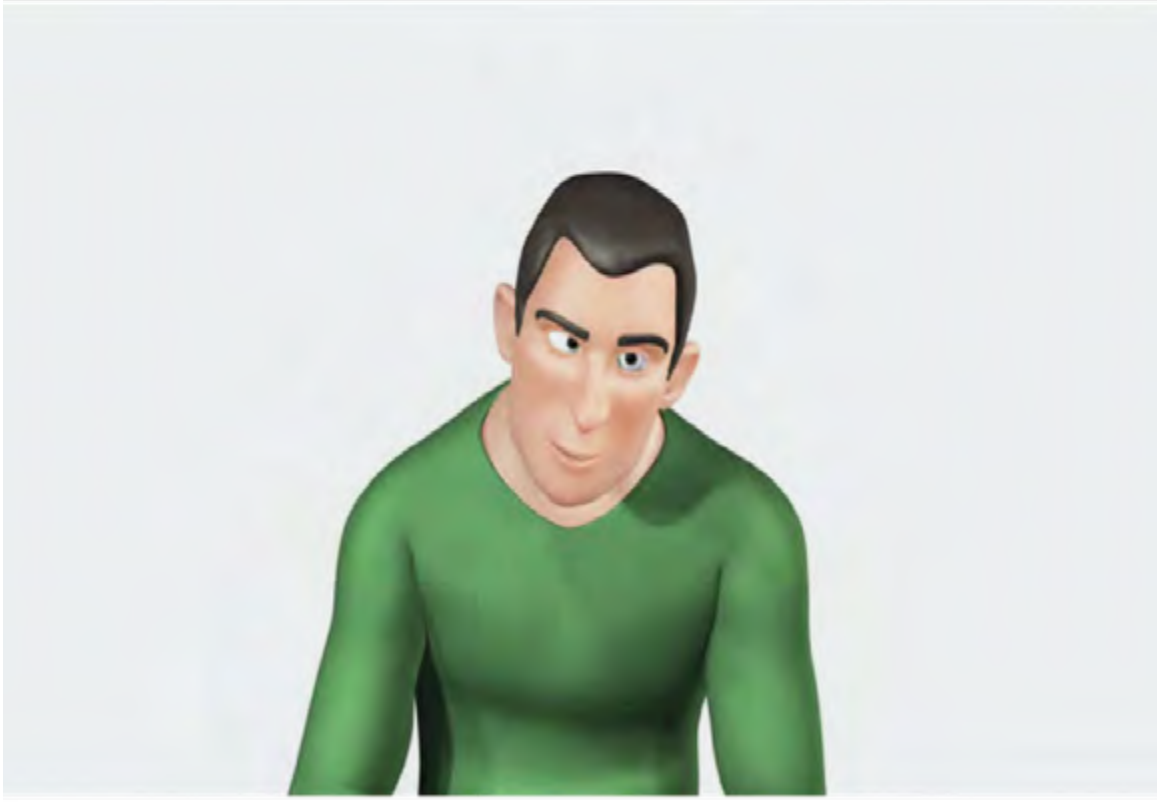
The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey

part. The U.K. Siri and Australian Siri also revealed themselves. I wonder if they get recognized in daily life, or if they are met with immediate sympathy by people who unconsciously recognize them. I could imagine that GPS voices and Siri have an influence on language, in a similar way that birds are influenced by cell phone ringtones. I recently read an article that suggested reading and writing would become skills that only lawyers and notaries will use. The general population will have more effective means of perception and expression to rely on, such as text-to-speech and voice recognition. I think the article was also suggesting that information could be digested more efficiently. If you play a video at double the speed in Quicktime, the pitch is not modulated. The tone of voice remains and the content is graspable. This might hint at a type of speed listening.

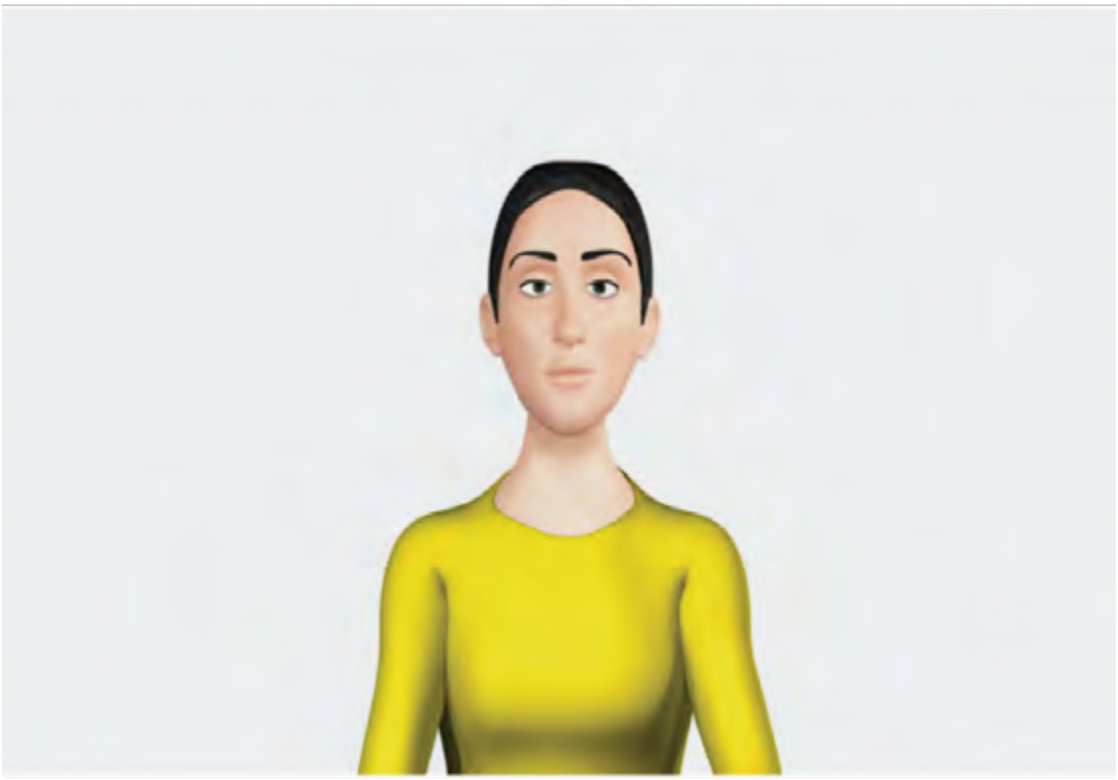
GV How do you see vocal dubbing operating within contemporary cultural production? I'm thinking of the countless ghetto versions of Sponge Bob Square Pants on YouTube.

OL Woody Allen's feature-length directorial debut is an overdubbing of a Japanese spy film. Already in 1966, Allen did what would later become a YouTube standard. Aleksandra Domanović reversed the process in 2007 by exchanging the visual layer of Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977) with stock videos, while keeping the soundtrack. The second incarnation tends to enrich the precursor.

GV Can we see these alternative versions as serving a political function? We could look to Public Enemy sampling Elvis Presley in the '80s as a precursor in some ways. Overdubbing can claim a subversive agenda.



The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey



OL The Sponge Bob remix defines the cultural significance of the official Sponge Bob. Mandarin is spoken by more people than English, but English has the advantage of being spoken by more people as a secondary language. According to the linguist David Crystal, the ratio of non-native to native speakers is 3 to 1. There are more people playing the bootleg remix of English than people listening to the official iTunes release.

GV There is cultural obsession with the unmediated voice. The disdain for auto-tuning and rise in "talent" shows offers a counterpoint to the increased estrangement of the body from the vocal—the cultural need for the natural talent is deeply embedded.

OL Do you know Frank Farian? He is one of my German musical idols. His first single was unsuccessful but his career took off when he began separating the voice from the body. He's the mind and voice behind Boney M and Milli Vanilli, among others. In the current climate of acceptance for constructed bands, this would not seem to be such an event, but at the moment when the story behind Milli Vanilli was revealed in 1990, over twenty lawsuits were filed under various U.S. consumer fraud protection laws.

GV Your new work *5* (2013) reminds me of Samuel Beckett. The vocal is desynchronized from the body. It suggests a compromising of self-determinism. Historically, we equate the right to speak, and the literacy to do so, as part of a social determinism. Do you think that this fragmentation typical of Beckett articulates a particularly contemporary anxiety?

OL The part of Lewis is spoken by Barry McGovern, possibly the best-known living interpreter of Beckett. His voice was recorded in a studio in Dublin, and attached to a body by an Italian 3D animator working in France. The voices of Beckett occupy several positions at once. They are detached from the body and attached to the body. It's a voice that is not mine but can only be mine, the voice that is without and in me, the self that utters and the not I.

GV I'm interested in how gender operates in this work. A man introduces himself as Janice, for instance. In your work you often use the female, rather than the more ubiquitous male, voice-over.

OL I chose to work with a female voice actress for *Versions* as a response to this tiresome tradition of the male voice-over in documentaries. The movie trailer world is even more dominated by male baritone voices like Don LaFontaine. The few trailers dubbed by female actresses are often for movies targeted towards a female audience. I named the character you mention Janus, but I'm happy that it can be misunderstood as Janice.

All images: Oliver Laric, *5*, 2013, Courtesy of the artist; Tanya Leighton, Berlin; and Seventeen, London

The Self that Utters and the Not I
Kaleidoscope, Winter 2013/14
George Vasey

#VOICEOVER
A Line of Research in Moving Image

OVERVIEW
Under the Skin

Author

SHAMA KHANNA is an independent curator and writer based in London. In May 2013 she curated the thematic programme at the Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, entitled "Flatness: Cinema after the Internet," which she developed into the online research and exhibition space flatness.eu.

FOCUS
Out of Sync

Artist Biography

JORDAN WOLFSON (b. 1980 in New York, US) currently lives and works in New York. Past solo shows include Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco; Swiss Institute of Contemporary Art, New York; and Kunsthalle Zürich, Zurich. Wolfson currently has a solo show on view at the Chisenhale Gallery, London until 2 February, and a solo exhibition dedicated to his work will also be shown at David Zwirner in New York from late February to mid-April.

Author

PABLO LARIOS is a writer and editor. He lives in Berlin.

RETROSPECT
The Ventriloquist Speech

Biographies

JEAN-LUC GODARD (b. 1930 in Paris, France) is a film director, screenwriter and film critic who played an important role in the French Nouvelle Vague in the 1960s. In the 1970s, he co-founded the Dziga Vertov group, a collective of politically-oriented filmmakers. He recently co-directed *3x3D* (2013), and his new feature film titled Goodbye to Language 3D (2013) will be released in 2014.

CHRIS MARKER (1921–2012) was a French filmmaker and writer who is often associated with the Left Bank Cinema movement in the late 1950s and is a highly regarded figure in experimental cinema. His best known films are *La Jetée* (1962), *A Grin Without a Cat* (1977), *Sans Soleil* (1983), *AK* (1985) and *Twelve Monkeys* (1995). MIT List Visual Arts Center recently held a survey exhibition of Chris Marker's work in collaboration with the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University, and the Harvard Film Archive, Cambridge.

Author

MARIE DE BRUGEROLLE is an art historian, curator and dramaturge, professor at École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Lyon and guest professor at Geneva University of Art and Design. Recently, she curated "LA Existancial" (2013), at Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles. Additionally, she is preparing "ALL THAT FALLS I" in collaboration with psychoanalyst Gérard Wajcman, to be held at Palais de Tokyo, Paris, later in 2014.

CONVERSATION
The Electronic Revolution

Artist Biography

OLIVER LARIC (b. 1981 in Innsbruck, Austria) lives and works in Berlin. He graduated from the University of Applied Arts Vienna, Vienna in 2007. His solo exhibition, "Lincoln 3D Scans," was held at The Collection Museum, Lincoln and Seventeen Gallery, London in 2013. Recent solo projects were held at MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge; "Art Statements" of Art|43|Basel, Basel; and "Frieze Projects" of Frieze Art Fair, London. Laric's works are currently exhibited in a group show, "Casting a Wide Net," on view at Postmasters Gallery, New York until 18 January.

Author

GEORGE VASEY is a curator and writer based in London. His writing has featured in *Art Monthly*, *Art Review*, and *thisistomorrow*, among other online and print publications. He was recently writer in residence at Jerwood Space, London. Recent curatorial projects include "Alexis Hunter & Jo Spence," Richard Saltoun, London and "A Small Hiccup," a touring exhibition exploring the idea of diseased language.

Edited by
ALESSIO ASCARI

p. 34–35 (in order of appearance)

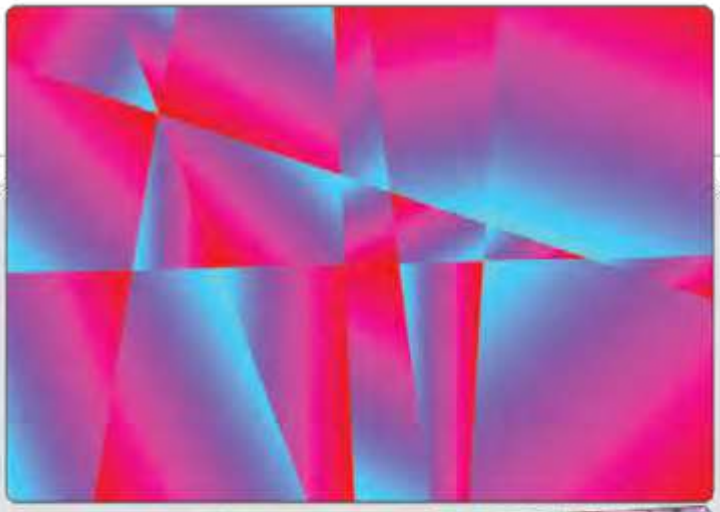
1 Lucy Clout, *Shrugging Offing*, video still, 2013, Courtesy the artist and Limoncello, London
2 Jordan Wolfson, *Raspberry Poser*, 2012 Courtesy of the artist and Sadie Coles, London; T293, Naples; and David Zwirner, New York
3 Jean-Luc Godard, Vivre Sa Vie, 1962
4 Oliver Laric, 5, 2013, Courtesy of the artist; Tanya Leighton, Berlin; and Seventeen, London

Let's Get Digital
The Art Newspaper, November, 2013
Julia Michalska

FEATURE

Let's get digital

The frontier spirit of post-internet artists.
By Julia Michalska



On sale at Phillips (clockwise from top): Rafaël Rozendaal's *ifmoyes.com*, 2013, Molly Soda's *Inbox Full*, 2012, and Addie Wagenknecht's *Asymmetric Love Number 2*, 2012. Below, Oliver Laric's *Manuvdae Overseas Project*, 2013

If you are only just getting your head around net art, you need to catch up. We are firmly in the "post-internet" art age. This does not mean that the internet has stopped playing an important role nor that net art has become irrelevant, says the art critic and curator Karen Archey, but that we are at a point where the internet is "no longer a fascination or taboo, but rather a banal fact of daily living". In other words, "post-internet" art denotes an object "created with this banality in mind, with the centrality of the network assumed".

"Post-internet" art comes under the more generic term digital art, which Archey defines as works that "utilise a digital technical support". This could include anything from Jorge Colombo's iPad paintings to web-based work, such as Olia Lialina's *My Boyfriend Came Back From the War*, 1996, she says. Some also use the term digital art to refer to plastic objects made with digital technology, such as Wade Guyton's inkjet paintings, but Archey finds that usage to be "misleading".

Definitions are sure to be flying around in the panel discussion "The Artist as Technologist", which is part of Art Basel Miami Beach's Conversations programme. It has been organised by Hans Ulrich Obrist, the co-director of the Serpentine Gallery in London, and features the artists Cory Arcangel, Cécile B. Evans, Camille Henrot and Robert Whitman. The Serpentine Gallery appointed Ben Vickers as its first digital curator this year. For the gallery's first "digital commission", Evans created an avatar, Agnes, who lives on the Serpentine's new website and interacts with users. Evans says: "Agnes is a lot like a person, in that it takes several encounters to begin to understand who or what she is. This is very different to the way most art is consumed but is truer to the way that digital media are used and experienced," Evans says. The artist's "fundamental understanding of the shifting state of what we currently define as 'digital'", is, for Vickers, key to "communicating to a broader audience what art can say about technology's place in the world." Agnes will be online until 25 December and the next commission will be announced at the beginning of 2014.

The effect of the internet on our culture is explored online, like Agnes, but increasingly also offline. Where digital artists once created animated gifs, YouTube videos and websites, they are now turning to the physical object. "Digital is translating back from bits and bytes to atoms and molecules", says Marc Spiegler, the director of Art Basel. "There has never been a big market for truly digital art, but now that it is harking back to the physical, it will start having more impact."

Tanya Leighton Gallery (N31) has brought work by two artists widely considered "post-internet": Oliver Laric and Aleksandra Domanovic. Both co-founded vvork.com, a popular art blog that was instrumental in creating the style of art now branded "post-internet", Leighton says. Laric and Domanovic make art that is "internet-aware". "They don't necessarily use the internet as a medium in the sense of formal aesthetics but as a distribution platform; a machine for transforming and re-channeling work – what Oliver calls 'versions'."

The gallery is showing Laric's *Manuvdae Overseas Project*, 2013, (€15,000). These are casts from a bronze statue that the artist commissioned from the Mansudae Art Studio, a North Korean monuments factory in Pyongyang. The studio has been officially sanctioned by the North Korean government to portray the Kim family dynasty, but also runs a lucrative side-business designing and building monuments, sports stadiums and at least one palace, for countries such as Cambodia, Egypt and Zimbabwe. Laric's piece is the first private sculptural commission created by the studio. "It's quite distinct and far removed from being a Classical sculpture, in that it would [almost] never have been able to be realised before the internet was invented," Leighton says. Domanovic's work at the gallery's stand, meanwhile, *Torches of Freedom*, 2013, (€8,000) are casts of prosthetic hands made using 3D modelling.

> *"Digital is translating back from bits and bytes to atoms and molecules"*

Although some digital art is becoming physical, most of it remains intangible, reproducible, and notoriously difficult to commodify. But the art market is beginning to adapt and digital artists are not necessarily doomed to commercial failure. Perhaps the strongest indicator that non-niche collectors are starting to buy digital works was Phillips' digital art auction in October, organised in collaboration with Tumblr and Paddle 8. It was the first auction of its type. The sale featured 20 digitally inspired works, of which 17 sold for a total of $90,600. Phillips did not take a cut from the sales, but donated 20% of the auction's revenues to the digital-media non-profit site Rhizome.

The auction revealed how artists are dealing with an object-based art market. The Dutch-Brazilian artist Rafaël Rozendaal, for example, has created a website sales contract similar to industry standard contracts for video art. At the Phillips auction, his website *ifmoyes.com* went to Benjamin Palmer, the chief executive of the Barbarian Group, for $3,500. The work came with a set of "owner obligations" that included renewing the site's domain name every year. Megan Newcome, the head of digital at Phillips, says the auction was "a huge step forward for the digital art community and the idea that it has a market". Anita Zabludowicz, the co-founder of the Zabludowicz Collection in London, has been collecting digital art for years and recently bought Ed Fornieles' *Dom Daze*, 2011, a "Facebook sitcom", which, according to Ben Vickers, is "arguably one of the largest, most complex digital works to be created, let alone acquired into a collection". Zabludowicz says that digital and online technology is the "new frontier". Just make sure you have paid your wifi bill.

• *The Artist as Technologist*, Sunday 8 December (10am-11.30am), in the Hall C auditorium

“A Different Kind of Order: The ICP Triennial”
Artforum, May 17-September 22, 2013
Xin Wang

ARTFORUM

“A Different Kind of Order: The ICP Triennial”

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1133 Avenue of the Americas
May 17–September 22

“A Different Kind of Order,” the Fourth ICP Triennial, finds itself in a much digitized and image-overloaded world—a state more intensely felt than in any previous installments and made all the more apparent by the show’s default medium specificity. Recognizing the futility of deploying any overarching theory, the curatorial team in this iteration has opted instead to register the increasingly multivalent and networked nature of contemporary image production. Yet in a world where the Internet functions not only as artists’ source and tool but also as a zeitgeist barometer (case in point: Aaron Swartz and Taryn Simon’s collaborative project imagecatlas.org, which indexes the top images returned for given search phrases by a variety of international search engines), the more memorable works in this compact presentation of twenty-eight international artists maneuver against the indiscriminateness of the ever-expanding data-sphere, while at the same time exploiting its free-for-all bountifulness.

Oliver Laric, *Versions*, 2010, HD color video, 9 minutes.

Here, collage and photographic drawing continue to mediate imaginations of identity, locales (Huma Bhabha’s ghostly marks drawn over landscapes of hometown Karachi), and dislocation—as in Walid Raad’s *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: A History of Art in the Arab World*, 2007–ongoing, which wittily problematizes treasures from the Louvre’s Islamic wing on loan to the institution’s Abu Dhabi branch. Meanings of “found images” are renewed in the unintentionally aestheticized pixelation of the Dutch government’s camouflaging of sensitive areas on Google Maps (stumbled upon by Mishka Henner), or the crudely shot clips of “citizen journalism” at the heart and heated moments of the Syrian conflict, salvaged from the Internet by Rabih Mroué. Artists working with analog photography foreground their works’ physicality as results of experimental developing processes, be it Sam Falls’s prolonged exposure of dyed, boulder-wrapping fabrics in the wilderness or Shimpei Takeda’s poignant “contact printing” involving radioactive contaminated soil, post-Fukushima. Idiosyncratic yet candid documentations by Gideon Mendel, Sam Foglia, and Mikhael Subotzky collaborating with Patrick Waterhouse expose unfamiliar conditions of contemporary living shaped by forces natural, ideological, and geopolitical, respectively. Anthropocentric and sometimes archive-minded, these projects collectively counter our skewed focus on affairs and disasters in cultural hot spots; efforts to learn their backstories will prove rewarding. The show’s most trenchant pieces, however, probe the algorithms of today’s image aggregation and dissemination rather than merely mirroring their form or magnitude. Shuffling parallels that range from Greek and Roman models of classical antiquity to identical animation sequences recycled in different Disney narratives to spreads in the acclaimed manga *Slam Dunk* and their NBA-photography prototypes, Oliver Laric’s visually rich, punchy video also explores the distinctive language and psyche of internet memes—among the liveliest forms of contemporary cultural production. Accompanying the video, we find a robotic-toned sound track that muses in lines of sharp wit such as “Same, same, but different.” After all, discerning patterns amid the chaos of boundless information is but one of our most exciting intellectual capacities.

— Xin Wang

What's Real Today (Check Again Soon)
The New York Times, May 16, 2013
Holland Cotter

The New York Times

May 16, 2013

What's Real Today (Check Again Soon)

By HOLLAND COTTER

Digital makes, and the art world takes. That's reality today. So "A Different Kind of Order," the title of the International Center of Photography's fourth triennial, and its best yet, is apt.

In 2003, when the triennial was new, digital photography was a trend in search of credibility, and the Internet merely an optional image source. A decade later, photography is largely dependent on the Internet. Pixelated images flow through the world unstanched. The triennial, organized by four of the center's curators — Joanna Lehan, Kristen Lubben, Christopher Phillips and Carol Squiers — is what new-work surveys strive to be but seldom are: about art precisely now.

Well over half the artists in it use digital technology in their work or mimic its properties. For the youngest participants, born in the 1980s, the mash-up mentality of the Photoshop era is clearly second nature, as they nonchalantly mix photography with painting, sculpture, video, whatever.

Maybe most noticeable is the role of the visual information glut: Some artists embrace it, take what they find, culling and editing; others retreat into overdrive versions of object making, inflected with digital thinking. Either way, a sense of connectivity with a networked world comes through. Global political realities seep through the show like a spreading stain, sometimes apparent, sometimes not.

In certain work those realities are embodied in old-fashioned analog format. The South African-born photographer Gideon Mendel spent the early part of his career documenting racial strife in his homeland. (He was a major figure in the center's "Rise and Fall of Apartheid: Photography and the Bureaucracy of Everyday Life" last year.) Recently, he has focused on potentially catastrophic climate change, evidenced in increased flooding worldwide. Flooding is particularly destructive to countries too poor to prevent or quickly recover from it. In his "Drowning World" series we see people in Africa, India and Southeast Asia forced to lead amphibious lives knee-deep and shoulder-deep in water that refuses to recede.

In photographs by other artists, disaster is more opaque. Try to find the hovering drone

in a skyscape by Trevor Paglen. Mite-size, it's hard to see, but it's there. And what appear to be fields of stars in pictures by Shimpei Takeda are in reality quite earthbound. To make them, this young photographer placed soil samples gathered near Fukushima, Japan, the site of the 2011 nuclear disaster and 40 miles from where he was born, on sheets of photosensitive film. The constellationlike forms that emerged, without the use of a camera, are traces of radiation soaked into the earth.

By contrast, there is no mistaking the content of the short 2012 video "Touching Reality," by the Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn. Shown in a space of its own, the piece consists entirely of images of terribly ruined human bodies, the casualties of wars and rebellions around the globe. The pictures, mostly anonymous cellphone shots, are of a kind routinely rejected by the news media as too gruesome to print. But all are available on the Internet, and in Mr. Hirschhorn's video we see a succession of them being scrolled across an iPad screen.

The scrolling hand, apparently female, moves quickly, but now and then stops to enlarge a detail of a blown-away face, or blank, dead eye, or detached limb. The pauses feel all but unwatchable. Mr. Hirschhorn has incorporated similar images in sculptural installations, but nothing he's done is as gut-level powerful as this. The video lasts only about five minutes, but if you take it all in, the effect is almost neurological: You walk away, and the environment around you feels changed, distanced and disordered.

Disorder and distortion are built into this show, which includes a good amount of work that is either shaped by digital methods of editing, morphing and remixing, or uses cut-and-paste collage techniques to get the same shape-shifting results.

The Kenyan-born Wangechi Mutu invents a species of splendidly monstrous hybrid beings using clips from anatomy manuals and pornography. Walid Raad, a native of Beirut, photographically blends Islamic and non-Islamic art objects to create a new transcultural, interfaith species of art.

The New York artist Nayland Blake offers a visual disquisition, through a display of archival objects, on the changing look of gay identity since the 1960s. (He will take a look of his own invention out onto the streets of Times Square in June in a series of performances.) Finally, Hito Steyerl, a conceptual artist based in Berlin, interweaves images from her past and present in effort to reconstruct the mysterious life of a dead friend, doing much of her investigative work through pictures taken on an iPhone.

A very specific digital application underlies the work of Mishka Henner, a Belgian artist living in England. His aerial views of Dutch landscapes are interrupted by what look like patches of Modernist abstraction, though he didn't insert them in the pictures; the Dutch

government did to hide military sites. As for Mr. Henner's contribution, he simply downloaded the photos, already altered, from Google Earth. And in what could be taken as a hands-on, labor-intensive simulation of Google Earth omniscience, the Japanese artist Sohei Nishino constructs giant maps of major cities — New York, Jerusalem — by puzzling together thousands of fragments of on-location photographs that he shoots while walking those cities, block by block.

Is one view, analog or digital, "realer" than the other? All image making, and in particular photography, with its conflicted reputation for factuality and falsification, raises issues about authenticity. What are we looking at in an image? Is it what it appears to be? If it's artifice — and photographs and digital images, like paintings, are basically artificial — why should we care about it, invest belief in it? Such questions are always implicit, but this show asks them, straight out, time and again.

A remarkable video by the Austrian artist Oliver Laric is almost entirely about the unreliability of visual truth, particularly in the digital realm, where anything and everything can be invented. As an example, Mr. Laric points to photographs released on the Internet in 2008 by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, purporting to show four missiles built in Iran and capable of attacking Israel. The pictures, however, had been inexpertly faked, and soon comically exaggerated versions of them, with dozens of missiles, proliferated online. Yet at least briefly, when they first appeared, the pictures did what they were meant to do: cause fear.

More recently, the Lebanese artist Rabih Mroué, spurred by the blackout in media coverage of Syria's murderous civil war, starting collecting Internet images posted by civilians trapped in the conflict. Among them he found videos of soldiers pointing guns directly toward people taking photographs, and of cameras abruptly falling to the ground.

The surviving images are assumed to have been retrieved from the cellphones of people killed while photographing, which makes them poignant relics, and Mr. Mroué dramatizes them by blowing up the images of the gunmen. At the same time, in video, he admits that what appear to be fatal encounters might have been staged for Internet consumption, like scenes from action films. Digital photography makes this possible, but we'll probably never know what really happened.

Staged for sure is one of the show's formal pièces de résistance, Elliott Hundley's 2010 mural-size "Pentheus." An immense collage incorporating digital photographs and inkjet prints, it's based on Euripides' play "The Bacchae," a very 21st-century tale of revenge, violence and twisted faith. Mr. Hundley, who was born in 1975 and lives in Los Angeles, makes a fantastically entertaining thing of it, with dense, mossy patterns of words and

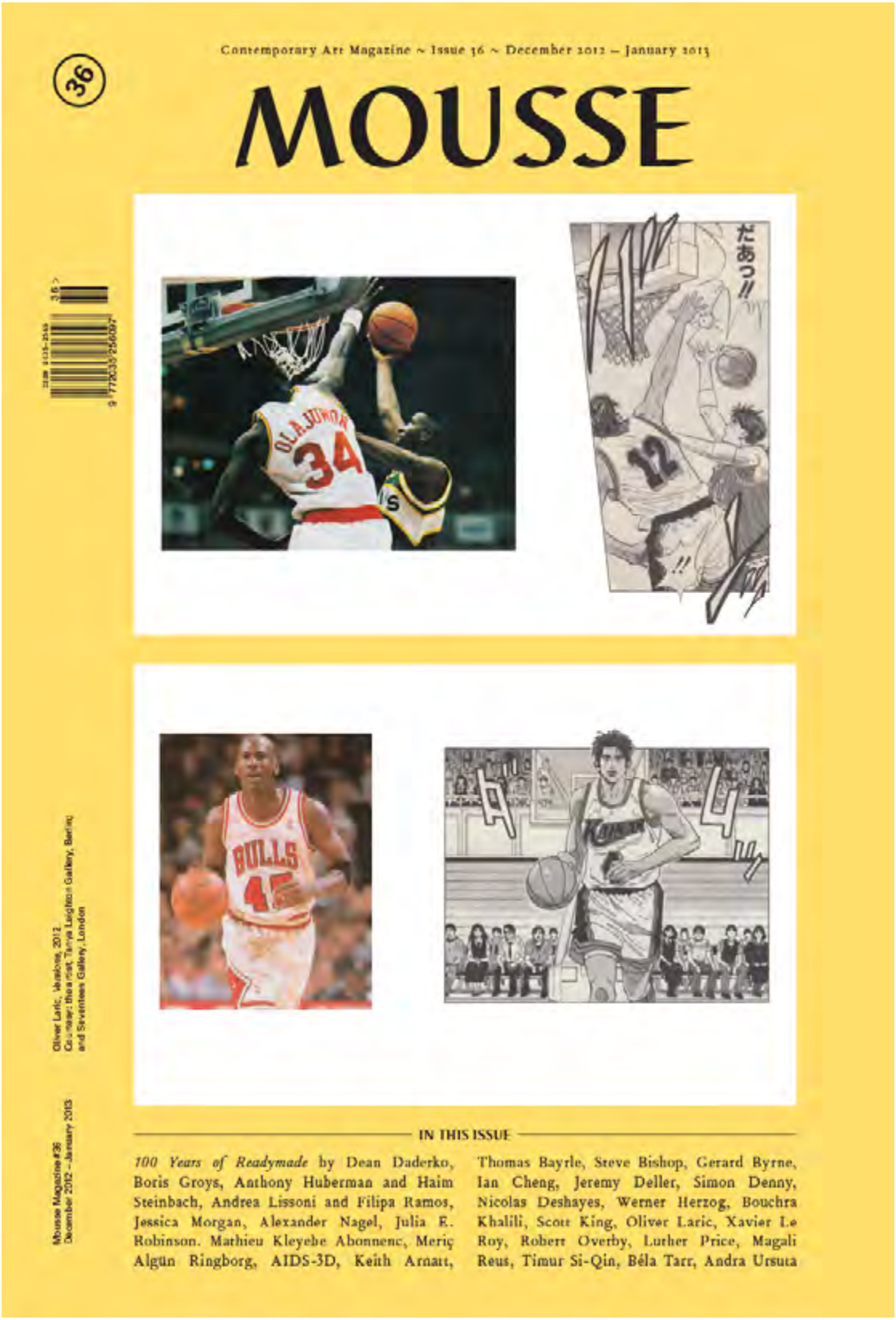
What's Real Today (Check Again Soon)
The New York Times, May 16, 2013
Holland Cotter

images pasted on a solid ground, and more images, tiny ones, projected from the surface on long pins.

The result has the textural complexity of painting, the depth in relief of sculpture and the data overload of the digital environment. All that, and it also tells a moral story about the confusion of fact and fiction, truth and lies, and the grave consequences such confusions can, and do, have. Like any genuinely adult art, it speaks equally to mind and eye, as does this up-to-the-minute status report of a show.

"A Different Kind of Order: The ICP Triennial" continues through Sept. 8 at the International Center of Photography, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, at 43rd Street; (212) 857-0000, icp.org.

Repetition Is the Source of Life
Mousse Magazine, December-January 2012/13
Thomas Bayrle



Repetition Is the Source of Life
Mousse Magazine, December-January 2012/13
Thomas Bayrle

Repetition Is the Source of Life

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN
THOMAS BAYRLE AND OLIVER LARIC

Thomas Bayrle, Feuer im Weizen, 1970. Courtesy: Cardi Black Box, Milan

Thomas Bayrle's world consists of a reality similar to what we see recorded on holographic film, in which each detail contains the whole. His Pop-derived subjects never cease to inveigle the eye with their minute particles. These are deformed to create three-dimensional effects, as though each one contained the DNA of the whole. The very young Oliver Laric, for whom Bayrle was probably a model of inspiration, enters into an enlightening conversation with the latter about the German artist's career and about the astounding complexity and modernity of his work, revealing a remarkable affinity of thought.

Repetition Is the Source of Life
Mousse Magazine, December-January 2012/13
Thomas Bayrle

Oliver Laric: Did you also live in China for a while?

Thomas Bayrle: Not so long, no. I lived in Japan. I went many times. The first time was in '78. I also had a gallery there.

ol: That was in Tokyo?

tb: Yes, I worked with this very conservative man. A very touching character.

ol: Who was that, if you don't mind me asking?

tb: He was called Masaomi Unagami and I worked with him for over fifteen years. He had a large collection of mine, around sixty works. And I value him as a person. But the program did not convince me, simply because nothing was happening. So I would take him along with me, to the triennial in Yokohama and so forth, but he just did not look at anything. Anyway he was not flexible. Which you have to be, of course, as a modern gallerist in Japan.

ol: Did he build up a Japanese collection?

tb: Yes, he had Inoue YU-ICHI, who was a hugely important painter. He somehow did not grasp his work. That doesn't matter now.

ol: Gertrude Stein said: "There is no such thing as repetition". This becomes especially clear when reading Stein, listening to James Brown, or looking at your work. It may be boring talking about the impossibility of repetition. Perhaps we should talk about the productive potential of repetition?

tb: OK, so it always works like this: I have this metaphor with weaving that I learned. A fundamentally important metaphor. Because weaving is different from printing, where it is possible to produce different intensities. With weaving, you have to be clear: the thread goes over or it goes underneath. It is a different materiality and stringency. So I just went on from there without having too much of a plan. One thing led to another. Of course you have questions of reproduction and of course I also see repetition as the source of life and art. It is not possible without repetition—nature is not possible, nothing is. I worked through that with a certain mentality. And once through, there was another version, and after that, oddly enough, yet another. At first I had not thought it would carry through for so long. And quite the opposite, it kept growing.

ol: Looking at your works from the '70s, they seem like they could have been made in 2012. With some artists, writers or filmmakers, it seems the dialogue intensifies from decade to decade, that present technological developments actualize your earlier works. In that way, works are retrospectively affected and works made in the '60s or '70s are now being changed.

tb: That is right; I did not see this angle at the time. Nowadays you see it from another point of view. You automatically see it through the Internet.

ol: Holograms have a curious quality. If a hologram film is cut into two halves and only one half is exposed with laser, you can still see the whole image. It does not have the same focus, but still it is completely preserved. This discovery led neurophysicist Karl Pribram to study how information is saved in our memory. Up until the second half of the 20th century, knowledge was believed to be stored in specific groups of neurons. But in fact, people who have had parts of their brain removed after an accident do not lose any selective memory. All the information is preserved; it might just be slightly blurred.

tb: For instance, I had a lot to do with Wolf Singer who is a brain researcher and had a concept very similar to my own, which is that there is no brain center and instead, as with holography, the whole is contained in each splinter. Each cell makes up the whole and they are, from thought to thought, merely called upon and combined in different formations. There are billions of constellations. This magnificence need not be seen only in the brain. Even just a cell is something quite inconceivable and complex, so what I do happens, in a way, out of dignity. Though I do not approach the whole thing like a science writer, or like someone who has to come to direct terms with this complexity, like a doctor or a scientist, I can still understand that the material we are made of and working with is unbelievably magnificent. Perhaps this is why we do not tire of it, and we like twist it just ever so slightly, to be able to see it from a completely different perspective.

ol: Regarding individual elements in your work, if you look at the microscopic realm, further worlds open up like Mandelbrot fractals.

tb: I am interested in this holographic approach or the link to an entirely hermetic reality that is contained in every leaf—that each leaf contains the entire genetic information of the oak tree—not only in the leaf but also in each cell. It is this extreme assurance that nature is predetermined up to the level of the cell: this will become an oak. For me, all this presents a great challenge—of how to address the biological, societal, the challenge of anarchy. Mass production, for example, was flowing over in 1965 and since then all sorts of pull-ups have had to be carried out so this whole madness can actually get sold. So it can carry itself on and become actually anarchic. The organism to which this is attached is huge. To sit inside a plane, knowing what goes into the front and what comes out in the back, so to speak. Same with the car, this overwhelming feeling we are all part of, like a huge lump, pulls us down into melancholy, though the feeling is actually not that depressing. I've always tried to stay afloat of depression, though coming quite close to its surface. I believe it is important for an artist to have both: positive utopia and desperate reality.

ol: I also perceived this in your works, that they occupy a kind of intermediate space—neither entirely tragic nor euphoric.

tb: That is very true. This intermediate space narrows between potentialities towards a center, not towards an extreme. I never wanted to jump over the edge of the plate, but to be right in its center, like the Chinese.

ol: As well as German philosophy, I find. For example, the hyphen has a major function in German language, the being-in-the-world...

tb: Right, where something is happening in this moment, between 49.9 and 50.1 — it is a vast space. This percentage comprises a totality, just like the leaf. Decisions are happening in this one degree: is it cold now or is it still warm? I do not even see it with despair, it is a challenge created by the rise of technology and reality. For that reason I never tried to obtain an overview but stayed with the detail, knowing that the detail comprises the whole.

ol: Were you ever concerned with quantum physics?

tb: I am really only peripherally interested; somewhere between Heisenberg and quantum physics.

ol: I was thinking of granularity. For example, drawing a distinction between digital and analog, you could say that the digital has a grid, a small, singular unit you come across at some point. The analog does not have an endpoint. It can be pulled apart and cut into smaller pieces. There always remains an even smaller piece. The hourglass, then, would be digital since it has the grain of sand as a unit. The themes you raise seem to be analog because you can go further inside or out. Vectors in graphic programs have an undefined size—they can be blown up to a kilometre or reduced to a millimetre.

tb: The pixel is magnificent, but impoverished compared to the analog. If you blow it up you can see that the dot is not round, it is missing something, whereas the shaping of the pixel where it meets us is much narrower. The eye immediately notices and reports this to the brain. Materially, the eye is bored after seconds and wants the next image. Which is of course the reason for the pivotal presence of painting, because it does not stop but has a material richness that cannot satiate the brain. Technical images and image contents have to deliver a constant narrative in order to surpass their material emaciation. This is how I understood the rise of images. I am not against the digital. I also made a couple of digital films.

ol: Recently I had an idea for a sculpture and it occurred to me that the idea already belongs to you—actually ideas do not belong—perhaps it is rather a work for you. 3D printers make possible to produce a sculpture in which a basic element is repeated to construct the whole sculpture. An object made of objects. This is actually a Thomas Bayrle work. You already made the watering can out of watering cans. Have you done this more often, a sculpture made of sculptures?

tb: Yes, there are a few examples: the cup made of cups, the Maggi bottle made of Maggi bottles, the can made of cans... they were important at the time, you had the graphic drawing and suddenly there was this monster made from 4300 cans. Because this was the exact quantity necessary to construct the can. They are somehow grotesque, but I never took them very seriously as sculptures.

ol: Concerning the watering can, I think there is a generosity, in that I could construct it in my living room if I wanted to. Have you ever run into someone who imitated your work?

Repetition Is the Source of Life
Mousse Magazine, December-January 2012/13
Thomas Bayrle

tb: Yes, well, in Japan, Unagami had a good saying: the more you are copied in Japan, the better you are.

ol: I think this could apply internationally... I am not surprised by your proximity to Japanese thinking and I can imagine, as you say, that you get stronger feedback in Japan and China. Especially in terms of de-individualization—away from the individual and the artist genius. For instance, I am going to Japan next year to visit a temple that is destroyed and reconstructed every twenty years. It has existed for 1300 years. The craftsmanship is passed on from one generation to another. It is not so much about the value of the wood, but more about the form, ritual and use of the space. UNESCO was considering adding the temple to the list of World Heritage Sites but then realized it was only twenty years old. For the Shinto priests of course this does not make sense, in their view the temple is 1300 years old. I sympathize more with this approach. Even when someone in Japan imitates your work, although it did not come from your studio, it is still Thomas Bayrle.

tb: It is true, and such things are very important, where everything is present and time delays do not occur anymore. In nuclear physics, present is everywhere. There is no "from here to there—10 seconds"; it is everywhere. In research and consciousness we are continuously coming closer to the point where every reality is present everywhere.

ol: There is a statue I particularly like, at Basel city hall, which originally used to be a Virgin Mary with Christ Child. During the Reformation, Jesus was removed and replaced with a set of scales to create a personification of Justice.

tb: Not bad at all.

ol: And perhaps one day she will become Buddhist, in 100 years. Nobody knows what the future has in store for her.

TB: Well, it is too late for her to become Mao... I still think the whole of Christianity is connected to the car; that it was in a way developed by Christianity. After all, that is how it is.

ol: The car was developed by Christianity?

tb: It was developed in Christian Europe. It is closely connected to this inner disengagement (*Gelassein*) and what happened 800 years ago. I realized this through Worringer. He was an art historian who wrote a small doctoral thesis in 1913, "Abstraction and Empathy". He proved that Expressionism occurred as a way to compensate for Greek pleasure and Egyptian abstraction. I carried on with this though. They made columns in the south of France, windows in the west, and floors in the north. Joined together, they mark the beginning of the prefab parts industry. Assemblage was in a way developed by the automotive boom where 4300 parts come together. But it is archaic. Thinking is in everything. It is not a division but an area of study that has its specific ways and raises specific questions.

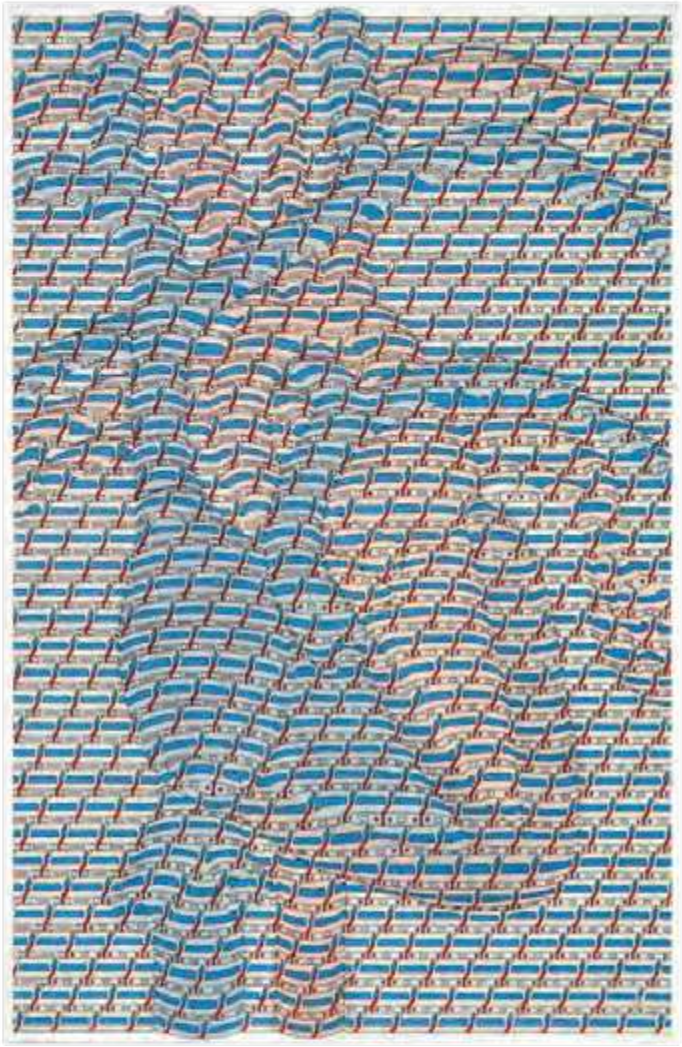
ol: Do you know Robert Pfaller? In his system of 'interpassivity', someone or something takes over one's activity. He also mentions the Tibetan prayer mill, which you turn and it then prays for you. Or the video recorder, which records a movie and watches it simultaneously. You do not have to do it yourself.

tb: For me it is important that it does not relieve me because that would be as if someone worked on my behalf. I would not want that. It should be more like something sliding into a new materiality, as if diffusing into the machine. Like blotting paper becoming saturated. Because you cannot be relieved of the work itself. Like you said about Tibet, the people there are working incredibly hard, up until having to throw themselves to the ground hundreds and thousands of times, in order to wear off their guilt. But here in the West we are running the risk of relieving ourselves from our work. I have not thought it through. But I know that it would not relieve me from making my way. There are other topics, like the Way of the Cross, which is so dangerous because it typically ends up becoming folkloric. There is also a danger in the telling of a story that in its essence is highest abstraction.

Repetition Is the Source of Life
Mousse Magazine, December-January 2012/13
Thomas Bayrle

Repetition Is the Source of Life

una conversazione tra Thomas Bayrle e Oliver Laric



Thomas Bayrle, Infarkt, 1972. Courtesy: Air de Paris, Paris

Il mondo di Thomas Bayrle si compone di una realtà simile a quella registrata da una pellicola olografica: ogni dettaglio contiene l'intero. I suoi soggetti di derivazione pop non smettono di irretire lo sguardo nelle loro minute particole, deformate a creare effetti di tridimensionalità, come se ciascuna di esse possedesse al suo interno il dna dell'intero soggetto ritratto. Il giovanissimo Oliver Laric, che in Bayrle ha probabilmente uno dei padri ispiratori, intrattiene con quest'ultimo una conversazione illuminante sulla carriera dell'artista tedesco e sulla stupefacente complessità e modernità del suo lavoro, da cui emerge una grande affinità di pensiero.

Oliver Laric: Hai vissuto in Cina per un po'?

Thomas Bayrle: Non così a lungo. Ho vissuto in Giappone. Ci sono andato molte volte, la prima nel '78. Avevo anche una galleria laggiù.

OL: Era a Tokyo?

TB: Sì, ho lavorato con un uomo molto conservatore. Un personaggio molto commovente.

OL: Chi era, se non ti spiace che te lo chieda?

TB: Si chiamava Masaomi Unagami e ho lavorato con lui per circa quindici anni. Aveva una grossa collezione di miei lavori, circa sessanta. È umanamente lo stimo, ma il programma non mi convinceva, semplicemente perché non succedeva niente. Così l'ho portato con me, alla triennale di Yokohama e così via, ma semplicemente non si guardava intorno. Voglio dire, non era flessibile. E devi esserlo, ovviamente, in quanto gallerista d'arte contemporanea in Giappone.

OL: Aveva raccolto una collezione e di arte giapponese?

TB: Sì, aveva Inoue YU-ICHI, che è stato un pittore enormemente importante. In qualche modo non riusciva a cogliere il suo lavoro. Ma adesso non è importante.

OL: Gertrude Stein diceva: "La ripetizione non esiste". Affermazione che si chiarifica specialmente leggendo Stein, ascoltando James Brown, o guardando il tuo lavoro. Può essere noioso parlare dell'impossibilità della ripetizione. Forse dovremmo parlare del suo potenziale produttivo?

TB: Sì, dunque, funziona sempre in questo modo: m'ispiro alla metafora della tessitura. Una metafora di fondamentale importanza. Dal momento che tessere è diverso da stampare, dove è possibile produrre differenti intensità. Nella tessitura, devi essere chiaro: il filo va sopra e sotto la trama. Si tratta di una diversa materialità e di un diverso rigore. Io procedo senza avere un piano preciso. Una cosa conduce alla successiva. Certamente ci sono interrogativi circa la riproduzione ed è indubbio che anch'io la

Repetition Is the Source of Life
Mousse Magazine, December-January 2012/13
Thomas Bayrle

veda come la fonte della vita e dell'arte. Non sarebbe possibile senza la ripetizione – e neppure la natura lo sarebbe, niente lo sarebbe. Procedo in quest'attività con un determinato atteggiamento mentale. E una volta finito, c'è un'altra versione, e dopo, strano a dirsi, ancora un'altra. All'inizio non avrei pensato che questo tipo di lavoro sarebbe proseguito così a lungo. E invece al contrario, ha continuato a crescere.

OL: Guardando ai tuoi lavori degli anni '70, sembrano fatti oggi. Con alcuni artisti, scrittori o registi, sembra che il dialogo si intensifichi di decennio in decennio, sembra che gli attuali sviluppi tecnologici attualizzino i tuoi primi lavori. In questo modo, i lavori sono influenzati retrospettivamente e i lavori fatti negli anni '60 e '70 sono visti sotto una nuova luce.

TB: Sì, è così; ma all'epoca non vedevo questa prospettiva, che oggi, invece, è praticamente automatica, con l'avvento di Internet.

OL: Gli ologrammi hanno una qualità curiosa. Se una pellicola ologrammatica è tagliata in due e solo una metà è esposta al laser, si può ancora vedere l'intera immagine. Non ha lo stesso centro focale, ma è ancora completamente preservata. Questa scoperta ha condotto il neuropsichiatra Karl Pribram a studiare il modo in cui l'informazione si fissa nella memoria. Fino alla seconda metà del Ventesimo secolo, si credeva che la conoscenza fosse immagazzinata in determinati gruppi di neuroni. Ma, in realtà, persone cui, dopo un incidente, sono state rimosse parti di cervello non hanno perso alcuna memoria selettiva. Tutta l'informazione si è conservata; potrebbe essere solo leggermente offuscata.

TB: Per esempio, condivido molto il concetto di Wolf Singer, un neurologo ricercatore, e cioè che non esiste un centro cerebrale e che invece, come nell'olografia, l'intero è contenuto in ciascun settore. Ciascuna cellula compone l'intero ed esse sono chiamate, da pensiero a pensiero, a combinarsi in diverse formazioni. Ci sono miliardi di costellazioni. Questa magnificenza non la si vede solo nel cervello. Anche solo la cellula è qualcosa d'inconcepibilmente complesso, quindi ciò che faccio scaturisce, in un certo senso, da questa bellezza. Sebbene non mi avvicini a tale complessità come un etnografo o come qualcuno che debba venirci a patti – come un dottore o uno scienziato per esempio – posso ancora avere un'idea che la materia di cui siamo fatti e con cui lavoriamo è incredibilmente magnifica. Forse questo è il motivo per cui non ce ne stanchiamo, abbiamo bisogno di ruotarla anche solo leggermente per essere in grado di osservarla da una prospettiva completamente differente.

OL: Riguardo agli elementi individuali nel tuo lavoro, se osservi il regno del microscopico, si aprono ulteriori mondi come con i frattali di Mandelbrot.

TB: M'interessa questo approccio olografico o il collegamento a una realtà completamente ermetica che è contenuta in ciascuna foglia – e cioè che ciascuna foglia contiene l'intera informazione genetica di una quercia – non solo la foglia, ma anche ciascuna cellula. È questa sicurezza estrema che la natura sia predeterminata fino al livello cellulare: questo seme diventerà una quercia. Per me, tutto ciò è una grande sfida – il modo con cui mi confronto con la biologia, il sociale, e con la sfida dell'anarchia. La produzione di massa, per esempio, dal 1965 cominciò a straripare e, da allora, ogni sorta di supermercato, emporio, grande magazzino ha continuato a proliferare così che questa follia totale fosse smerciata. Così che potesse autoriprodursi e diventare pura anarchia. L'organismo a cui tutto ciò è connesso è enorme. È la stessa cosa con l'auto, questa sensazione opprimente da cui tutti siamo schiacciati, come un enorme groppo che ci spinge verso la malinconia. Ho sempre cercato di nuotare con la testa sopra questo mare di depressione, sebbene talvolta mi avvicini alla sua superficie. Credo che sia importante per un artista possedere un'utopia positiva, ma anche fare i conti con una realtà disperata.

OL: Anch'io ho percepito questa qualità nei tuoi lavori, e cioè che essi occupano un certo tipo di spazio intermedio – che non è né interamente tragico né euforico.

TB: Sì, è esattamente così. Questo spazio intermedio si restringe fra due poli verso un centro, uno stare in bilico. Non ho mai voluto saltare oltre il bordo del piatto, ma essere proprio al suo centro, con un atteggiamento orientale.

OL: O come nella filosofia tedesca, credo. Per esempio il trattino ha un'enorme funzione nella lingua tedesca, lo stare-al-mondo...

TB: Giusto, il punto in cui qualcosa sta succedendo in questo momento, fra 49,9° e 50,1° – non si tratta di un piccolo intervallo. Questa percentuale comprende una totalità, proprio come la foglia comprende l'albero. Si prendono decisioni in quest'unico grado: ora è ancora freddo oppure è già caldo. Non credo neppure che sia una sfida da affrontare con disperazione, è semplicemente creata dall'emergere di tecnologia e realtà. Per questa ragione non cerco mai di ottenere una veduta d'insieme, piuttosto mi concentro sul dettaglio, sapendo come quest'ultimo comprenda l'intero.

OL: Ti sei mai interessato di fisica quantistica?

TB: Me ne sono interessato in maniera solo tangente: qualcosa a metà fra Heisenberg e la fisica quantistica.

OL: Sto pensando alla granularità per esempio, tracciando una distinzione fra digitale e analogico si potrebbe dire che il digitale abbia una griglia, una piccola unità individuale che a un certo punto incontri. L'analogico non ha un'unità minima. Può essere fatto a pezzi e sminuzzato in parti più piccole. Ci sarà sempre un pezzo ancora più piccolo. La clessidra, allora, potrebbe essere digitale dal momento che ha il granello di sabbia come unità. I temi che sollevi sembrano essere analogici perché puoi andare più a fondo, verso l'interno o verso l'esterno. I vettori dei programmi di grafica hanno una dimensione indefinita – possono essere allungati a 1 km o ridotti a 1 mm.

TB: Il pixel è magnifico, ma impoverito in confronto all'analogico. Se lo ingrandisci puoi vedere che il punto non è rotondo, gli manca qualcosa, mentre la conformazione del pixel, quando la possiamo percepire è più densa. L'occhio nota questo fatto immediatamente e lo riporta al cervello. Materialmente, l'occhio è annoiato dopo pochi secondi e desidera l'immagine successiva. Che è senza dubbio la ragione per la fondamentale presenza della pittura, perché non smette mai di possedere una tale ricchezza materiale che non satura la mente. Le immagini tecniche e i contenuti dell'immagine devono fornire una narrativa costante al fine di compensare la loro povertà materiale. Spiego così l'emergenza delle immagini. Non sono contro il digitale, anch'io ho fatto un paio di film in digitale.

OL: Recentemente ho avuto l'idea di una scultura e mi sono accorto che era tua – in realtà le idee non hanno un padre – forse si trattava piuttosto di un lavoro per te. Le stampanti 3D rendono possibile produrre una scultura in cui un elemento di base è ripetuto per costruire l'intera scultura. Un oggetto fatto di oggetti. Si tratta quindi di un lavoro da Thomas Bayrle. Hai già fatto l'annaffiatoio di annaffiatoi. Hai fatto qualcosa di simile più spesso, una scultura fatta di sculture?

TB: Sì, ci sono diversi esempi: la tazza fatta di tazze, la bottiglia di salsa Maggi fatta di bottiglie Maggi, la lattina fatta di lattine... Sono stati molto importanti all'epoca, avevi il disegno grafico e improvvisamente si materializzava questo mostro fatto di 4.300 lattine. Perché quella era esattamente la quantità necessaria per costruire la lattina. Queste creazioni sono in qualche modo grottesche, ma non le ho mai prese seriamente in quanto sculture.

OL: Riguardo all'annaffiatoio, credo che ci fosse un aspetto di generosità, dal momento che avrei potuto costruirlo nel mio soggiorno, se avessi voluto. Sei mai incappato in qualcuno che ha imitato il tuo lavoro?

TB: Sì, in Giappone, Unagami aveva un bel detto: più ti copiano in Giappone, più sei bravo.

OL: Credo che questo si possa applicare a livello internazionale... Non mi sorprende la tua prossimità al pensiero giapponese e posso immaginare, come dici, che hai avuto una risposta più forte in Giappone e Cina, specialmente in termini di de-individualizzazione – allontanamento da tutto ciò che è individuale e genio artistico. Per esempio, andrò in Giappone il prossimo anno per visitare un tempio che è stato distrutto e ricostruito ogni vent'anni. È esistito per 1.300 anni. L'abilità artigianale è stata trasmessa da una generazione all'altra. Tutto ciò non riguarda tanto il valore del legno, ma piuttosto la forma, il rituale e l'uso dello spazio. L'UNESCO stava considerando la possibilità di aggiungere il tempio alla lista dei siti patrimonio dell'umanità ma poi si è accorto che il tempio aveva solo vent'anni. Per i preti scintoisti certamente tutto ciò non ha senso, dal loro punto di vista il tempio ha 1.300 anni. Simpatizzo maggiormente con quest'idea. Anche quando qualcuno in Giappone imita il tuo lavoro, sebbene esso non esca dal suo studio, si tratta ancora di un lavoro di Thomas Bayrle.

TB: È vero, e queste cose sono molto importanti, quando ogni cosa è presente e i differimenti temporali non hanno più luogo. Nella fisica nucleare, il presente è ovunque. Non esiste "da qui a là – 10 secondi". Nella ricerca e nella nostra consapevolezza stiamo continuamente avvicinandoci al punto in cui ogni realtà sia presente ovunque.

OL: C'è una statua che mi piace particolarmente nel municipio di Basilea, che in origine era la Vergine Maria con Cristo bambino. Durante la riforma, Gesù fu rimosso e rimpiazzato da una bilancia per creare una personificazione della giustizia.

TB: Non c'è male.

OL: E forse un giorno quella statua diventerà buddista, fra 100 anni. Nessuno sa cosa il futuro abbia in serbo per lei.

TB: Beh, è troppo tardi per diventare maoista... Credo ancora che l'intera cristianità sia connessa all'automobile; quest'ultima è stata, in un certo senso, sviluppata dalla cristianità.

OL: L'automobile è stata sviluppata dalla cristianità?

TB: È stata sviluppata nell'Europa cristiana. È strettamente connessa al suo intrinseco disimpegno (*Gelöstsein*) e a ciò che è successo ottocento anni fa. Ho capito questo attraverso Worringer che era uno storico dell'arte, autore di una piccola tesi di dottorato nel 1912 intitolata *Astrazione ed Empatia*. Egli dimostrò che l'espressionismo si era manifestato come modalità di compensazione del piacere greco e dell'astrazione egiziana. Amo il suo pensiero. Hanno prodotto pilastri nel sud della Francia, finestre nell'ovest e pavimenti nel nord. Uniti insieme, essi segnano l'inizio dell'industria delle parti prefabbricate. L'assemblaggio in un certo senso è stato sviluppato dal boom automobilistico quando 4.300 parti vengono unite. Ma l'assemblaggio è arcaico. Il pensiero è in ogni cosa. Questa dicotomia non crea una divisione, ma un'area di studio che ha le sue modalità specifiche e che solleva specifiche domande.

OL: Conosci Robert Pfaller? Nel suo sistema di "interpassività", qualcuno o qualcosa prende in carico l'attività di qualcun altro. Egli ricorda anche il mulino da preghiera tibetano, che fai girare e che prega per te. O il videoregistratore, che registra un film e lo vede simultaneamente. Non devi farlo tu.

TB: Per me è importante non essere sollevato dal lavoro perché sarebbe come se qualcuno lavorasse per mio conto. Non lo vorrei. Sarebbe come se la mia energia si spostasse in un nuovo stato materiale, diffondendosi nel meccanismo. Come carta assorbente che si satura. Perché non puoi essere sollevato dal lavoro stesso. Come hai detto del Tibet, le persone laggiù lavorano sodo, finché devono gettarsi a terra centinaia e migliaia di volte per cancellare la colpa. Ma qui, in Occidente, stiamo correndo il rischio di liberarci del nostro lavoro. Non ci ho pensato ancora in maniera approfondita. Ma so che non mi solleverebbe dal continuare sulla mia strada. Ci sono altri metodi, come la Via Crucis, che tuttavia è pericolosa perché tipicamente finisce per diventare folcloristica. Questi sono i pericoli in cui incorre chi persegue tali pratiche, c'è il rischio di raggiungere un'eccessiva astrazione.

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios

WARENWAHN

Mit der stärkeren sozialen Bindung zwischen Konsumenten und Unternehmen verändert sich auch die Art, wie Künstler mit Konsumgütern arbeiten

Pablo Larios

PURE PRODUCTS GO CRAZY

The growing social bond between consumers and corporations has changed the way artists are working with commodities

Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios

Es kommt heutzutage gar nicht so selten vor, dass Überschneidungen zwischen ästhetischen Phänomenen und aktuellen Wirtschaftsthemen erkennbar werden. Fujifilm hat vor Kurzem bekannt gegeben, das Unternehmen habe wegen des Niedergangs der analogen Fotografie begonnen, Restbestände an Antioxidantien aus der Filmproduktion in ein neues Unternehmen einzubringen: Astalift, Anti-Aging-Produkte für die Hautpflege. Die menschliche Haut altert nicht anders als Filmmaterial, nämlich durch die Oxidation und die Zersetzung von Kollagenen. Die Antioxidantien in Astalift bewahren Filme genauso wie die Haut vor zukünftigen Beanspruchungen („Asta" ist ein Homonym zum japanischen Wort für morgen, „ashita"). In ihrer rubinroten Färbung wirken diese Produkte wie Zeitkapseln aus einer Zukunft, in der niemand mehr altert. Wer hätte nicht gerne einen seidenmatten 35mm-Schimmer in zartem Sepia? Wird von uns nicht ohnehin erwartet, dass wir aussehen wie Filmstars?

1
Christopher Chiappa
Speed Stick
2006–8
Guss, Speed Stick
30×40 cm

Christopher Chiappa
Speed Stick
2006–8
Cast, Speed Stick
30×40 cm

Wenn es hier eine Liebesgeschichte gibt, ließe sie sich wohl am ehesten zwischen Firma und Verbraucher finden, die einander zur zweiten Haut werden. In einer Zeit, in der niemand sich dem Sog der Markenwelt entziehen kann, vereinen sich Unternehmen und Nutzer in rauschhafter Verehrung. Man denke nur an die Flut von Lobeshymnen nach dem Tod von Steve Jobs, an all die „Unboxing-Videos", die auf YouTube hochgeladen werden, und in denen man Käufer dabei beobachten kann, wie sie stolz ihre Einkäufe auspacken; oder daran, wie wir alle ganz aus dem Häuschen sind, wenn Mark Zuckerberg mal wieder unverständlich in das Mikrofon eines Journalisten stammelt. Die Binsenweisheit aus der alten Welt, dass Produkte für die Nutzer gemacht sind, wird auf den Kopf gestellt. Die Konsumenten selbst sind – in der vernetzen Welt der sozialen Medien wird das schnell deutlich – zu Produkten geworden. Sie sind es, die für Unternehmen getrackt, etikettiert und verkauft werden, nicht umgekehrt. Auf jeder Nachrichtenseite im Netz nehmen Nutzerkommentare mehr Raum ein als die Artikel selbst. Der weltweite Erfolg von *Mad Men* (seit 2007) – ein Blick zurück in die amerikanische Werbebranche der 1960er Jahre – ist wohl auch unserer Fixierung auf Image, Markenbildung und der Verschmelzung von Person und Produkt geschuldet. Oder wie es der aussichtsreiche amerikanische Präsidentschaftskandidat Mitt Romney – beunruhigenderweise – auf den Punkt brachte: „Unternehmen sind auch nur Menschen."

Auch Künstler lassen sich von dieser Verbindung inspirieren und schaffen ein Amalgam aus Konsum, abgepackten Waren und Wegwerfprodukten aus der Massenproduktion – das alles in wilder Mischung und fließenden Übergängen mit traditionellen Medien wie Malerei und Skulptur. Christopher Chiappas *Speed Stick* (2006–8) macht aus einem Männerdeo einen monochromen grünen Regenbogen. Mit seiner Arbeit *Axe Effect* (Axe-Effekt, 2011) wählte Timur Si-Qin einen noch direkteren Ansatz: Er steckte ein Schwert durch Axe-Duschgelflaschen und ließ sie ihren nuklear anmutenden Glibber ausbluten. Natürlich gibt es eine lange Tradition von Künstlern, die in ihren Arbeiten Alltagsprodukte verwenden und verfremden. *Speed Stick* wirkt wie ein entfernter Verwandter von Alan Belchers *Energizer No. 2* (Energizer Nr. 2, 1985) – zwei Pepsi-light-Dosen, zwischen denen statt des Regenbogens Flammen lodern – wobei *Axe Effect* den ikonoklastischen Twist einer Arbeit von Isa Genzken und die slapstickhafte Kombinatorik einer Plastik von Rachel Harrison vereint. Im Unterschied zu ihren historischen Vorläufern beziehen sich diese neueren Arbeiten jedoch auf jene gegenwärtige Überlappung von individuellem und kollektivem Körper, wie er für ein Unternehmen, eine *Corporation* (lateinisch für „in einem Körper vereinen") charakteristisch ist. Bedenkt man diese besondere Bindung zwischen Unternehmen und Konsument, ist kaum verwunderlich, dass Chiappa und Si-Qin sich Hygieneartikel für Herren vornehmen, Produkte, die direkt „am Körper" verwendet werden. Wie ihre älteren Künstlerkollegen mögen sie Markenzeichen klauen oder die Schockstrategien der Werbung nachahmen; und doch arbeiten sie unter anderen Bedingungen: denen einer Mobilisation der *Crowd* in den sozialen Medien und der ungreifbaren Massen der *Cloud*.

Was die Produktion angeht, sind sie geschult an den Ebenen und Filtern von Photoshop und AfterEffects, an Tumblr und mobilen Upload-Diensten. Dass man kulturelle Kontexte ausschlachtet und manipuliert, in verbalen Übertreibungen oder verhackstückten Songs, wird als gegeben vorausgesetzt und ist kaum der Rede wert. Photoshop ist hier keine Metapher mehr, denn das Verhältnis zwischen Bildbearbeitungssoftware und Objektcharakter verschwimmt – beispielsweise bei Anne de Vries' Plastiken aus Photoshop-gestylten Bildern, *Steps of Recursion* (Stufen der Rekursion, 2011), oder bei Marlie Muls Seidenschal *Cigarette Ends Here (The Global Cigarette)* (Kippen enden hier, die globale Zigarette, 2011), der mit verknoteten Zigaretten, anthropomorphem Rauch und Globus-Männchen bedruckt ist, die ebenso bedrohlich wie comichaft wirken. Was die Vermarktung angeht, setzen diese Künstler auf die schnelle Verbreitung ihrer Werke über Onlinemedien; selbst ihre Plastiken sind nicht wirklich plastisch, sie existieren zunächst als flache Bilder auf dem Display, haben den unmittelbar eingängigen, gleichsam gedopten Kultstatus des Pop: Sie stehen bereit, um in Form von JPEGs in Foren oder Blogs in Umlauf gebracht, adaptiert, parodiert zu werden. Die formalen Verzerrungen – die Produkte sind entstellt, wie von einem Hacker manipuliert – erinnern weniger an eine kunsthistorische Strömung wie den Surrealismus als vielmehr an jene CAPTCHA-Abfragen, die eingesetzt werden, um zwischen Computern und Menschen unterscheiden

It's not infrequent these days to glimpse parity between aesthetic currents and business headlines. The ageing Fujifilm corporation recently announced that, since the demise of film photo, the company had begun repurposing its leftover stock of antioxidant film chemicals into a new enterprise: Astalift cosmetics for anti-ageing skin care. Human skin fades somewhat like film, through the oxidization and deterioration of collagens. Astalift's antioxidants ward film and skin from future wear and tear ('Asta' is a homonym of the Japanese word for tomorrow 'ashita'). The products are ruby-red, like space capsules to a future where nobody gets old. Who wouldn't want to have that silky, sepia 35 mm sheen? Aren't we supposed to look like film stars anyway?

If there's a love story here, it's the tale of a bond between the corporation and the consumer, which become a second skin to each other. In an age where no one is free from the pull of branding, companies and users unite in delirious adoration. Think of the laudatory wake at Steve Jobs's passing, the 'unboxing' videos posted on YouTube or our committed outrage at Mark Zuckerberg when he stutters blankly at an interviewer. Upended is the old-world truism that a product is something created for buyers. As social networking teaches us, consumers are now products to be logged, tagged and sold by corporations, not the other way around. On any news site, more page space is taken up by user comments than articles. The global success of *Mad Men* (2007–ongoing) – a look back at the American ad world in the 1960s – might be attributed to our obsession with public image, brand-creation and the fusion between the person and the product. Or as American presidential hopeful Mitt Romney said, disquietingly, 'Corporations are people,' too.

Inspired by this bond, artists are creating amalgams of consumption, pre-packaged products and mass-produced disposables – all mashed and morphed alongside traditional media like painting and sculpture. Christopher Chiappa's *Speed Stick* (2006–8) turns the men's deodorant into a monochrome green rainbow. With *Axe Effect* (2011), Timur Si-Qin takes a somewhat more literal approach to the men's shower gel brand Axe and puts a sword through the bottles, which are left bleeding nuclear-looking goo. Of course, there's a long tradition of artists using and deforming commodities in their works. *Speed Stick* seems like a distant cousin of Alan Belcher's *Energizer No. 2* (1985) – two Pepsi Light cans joined by flames instead of a rainbow – while *Axe Effect* has the iconoclastic twists of an Isa Genzken work and the slapstick combinations of a Rachel Harrison sculpture. Yet this new tendency addresses today's overlapping relation between the individual body and the collective body proper to the corporation (from the Latin *corporare* for 'combine in one body'). In light of the bond between corporations and commodities, it's no surprise that Chiappa and Si-Qin revamp men's personal hygiene products which are used directly on the body. While stealing brands and deploying advertising shock strategies like their older peers, these younger artists are enabled by the mobilization of the crowd in social media, by the Cloud's ethereal masses.

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios

zu können. Wie Josef K.-Cyborgs sitzen wir vor diesem Tribunal der heutigen Torwächter der IP-Adressen.

Für Marx war die Ware eine „gesellschaftliche Beziehung" – und nicht in erster Linie eine monetäre. Diese Künstler scheinen dagegen zu fragen, welche Veränderungen Beziehungen erfahren, wenn alles – von Marketingaktivitäten bis zum Netzwerk – das Etikett „sozial" erhält. Welche Beziehungen sollte jemand zu einer Gemeinschaft unterhalten in einer Zeit, in der das Individuelle zwar offenkundig an Macht gewinnt, doch nur in Form einer Statistik, die Seitenaufrufe zählt? Was ist der Preis, den wir für persönliche Daten zu zahlen haben, und was sollen wir von der Quantifizierung des ästhetischen Urteils durch Nutzereingaben halten, was von Trendforschung und den Algorithmen der Märkte? Die heute zu beobachtende Nähe zwischen dem Konsumenten und dem Produkt – zwischen Individuum und Unternehmen – tritt durch die von den Künstlern verwendeten Produkte noch deutlicher in Erscheinung: Es handelt sich nicht nur um traditionelle Produkte der Populärkultur wie Limonade oder Seife, sondern auch um Elemente, die einst die absolute Grenze der Kommerzialisierung markierten – Wasser wäre ein solches Beispiel. Wasser tauchte als Spur oder Motiv in letzter Zeit in verschiedenen Ausstellungen immer wieder auf, von der unter die Haut gehenden Installation mit Garra rufa-Fischen (*Fish Spa*, Fischtherme, 2012) in Oliver Larics orientalistisch angehauchter Ausstellung *Be Water My Friend* (Das Wasser sei mein Freund, 2012) in der Berliner Galerie Tanya Leighton (Frühjahr 2012) bis zu Pamela Rosenkranz' hautfarbener Flaschenserie *The most important Body of Water is Yours* (Das wichtigste Gewässer ist deines, 2010). Oder nehmen wir Josh Klines gegossene „Quellwasser"-Flaschen (*It's clean, it's natural, we promise*, Rein und natürlich, das garantieren wir, 2011) oder Yngve Holens Haushalts-Wasserbehältnisse. Wasser, das für die körperlichen Bedürfnisse, das Flüssige, den Wandel von Zuständen und für Transparenz steht, ist längst auch zu einem Luxusgut geworden, zu einem durch Umweltverschmutzung bedrohten Gut und zu einer Frage der politischen Identität: Es ist zugleich frei zugänglich und kann gekauft werden, natürlich und Vitamin®-versetzt, geschmacksfrei und als Zeichen guten Geschmacks. Das gewöhnlichste aller Elemente auf Erden wie im menschlichen Körper ist für Hersteller und Markenkommunikation der flüssigste Träger von Botschaften.

Holens skulpturale Aufschnitte etwa erkunden die Anatomie einer Reihe von wassertragenden oder -führenden Haushaltsgeräten. Für seine Arbeit *Parasagittal Brain* (Parasagittales Hirn, 2011) in der Ausstellung *Based in Berlin* hatte er eine Wasserstrahlschneidemaschine verwendet, um Geräte wie einen elektrischen Wasserkocher, einen Wasserkühler, einen Duschkopf oder eine Wasserflasche von VOSS zu spalten. Die beiden Hälften wurden getrennt und derart auf tresenartige Sockel montiert, dass der Besucher durch die Mitte dieses Objektkorridors gehen konnte, die ausgespart war, als fehle hier ein Organ. Die Kammern und Windungen des Kochers ließen an ein Hirn

2

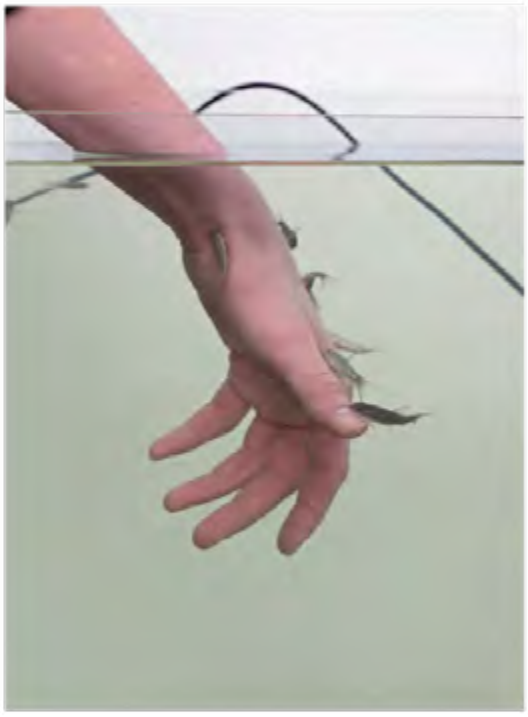
Photoshop is no metaphor here, since the relationship between visual editing software and objecthood is blurred.

On the production end, they are trained by the filters and layers of Photoshop and AfterEffects, Tumblr and mobile upload feeds. Their insistence on culling from and manipulating their cultures, like verbal exaggerations or chopped-and-screwed musical vocals, is taken as given, as ho-hum. Photoshop is no metaphor here, since the relationship between visual editing software and objecthood is blurred – for example, in Anne de Vries's sculptures of Photoshopped images *Steps of Recursion* (2011) or in Marlie Mul's *Cigarette Ends Here (The Global Cigarette)* (2011), a silk scarf printed with twisted cigarettes, anthropomorphic smoke and globe-like men, menacing and cartoonish. On the distribution end, the artists aim for the rapid dissemination of their works online; even their sculptures are not quite sculptural but exist first as flat screen images with an instant, Pop-like, amphetamine iconicity: ready to be circulated, adapted and parodied as JPEGs on message boards or blogs. The formal distortions – the commodities seem corrupted or hacked – are reminiscent, not of Surrealism, but of CAPTCHA tests used to distinguish between computers and people. We sit, like Josef K. cyborgs, before the law of today's IP gatekeepers.

If Marx's commodity was a 'social relation' – not primarily a monetary one – these artists seem to ask how relations change when everything bears the imprint of the 'social', from marketing to networking.

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios

3



4

Wasser ist längst zu einem Luxusgut geworden: zu einem durch Umweltverschmutzung bedrohten Gut und zu einer Frage der politischen Identität.

2
Anne de Vries
Steps of Recursion (Stufen der Rekursion), 2011
Fotoprint auf Acrylskulptur
30×130 cm

Anne de Vries
Steps of Recursion, 2011
Photoprint on acrylic sculpture
30×130 cm

3 – 5
Yngve Holen
Parasagittal Brain (Parasagittales Hirn), 2011
Detail
Dimensionen variabel

Yngve Holen
***Parasagittal Brain*, 2011**
Detail
Dimensions variable

4
Oliver Laric
Fish Spa (Fischtherme), 2012
Detail

Oliver Laric
***Fish Spa*, 2012**
Detail

5

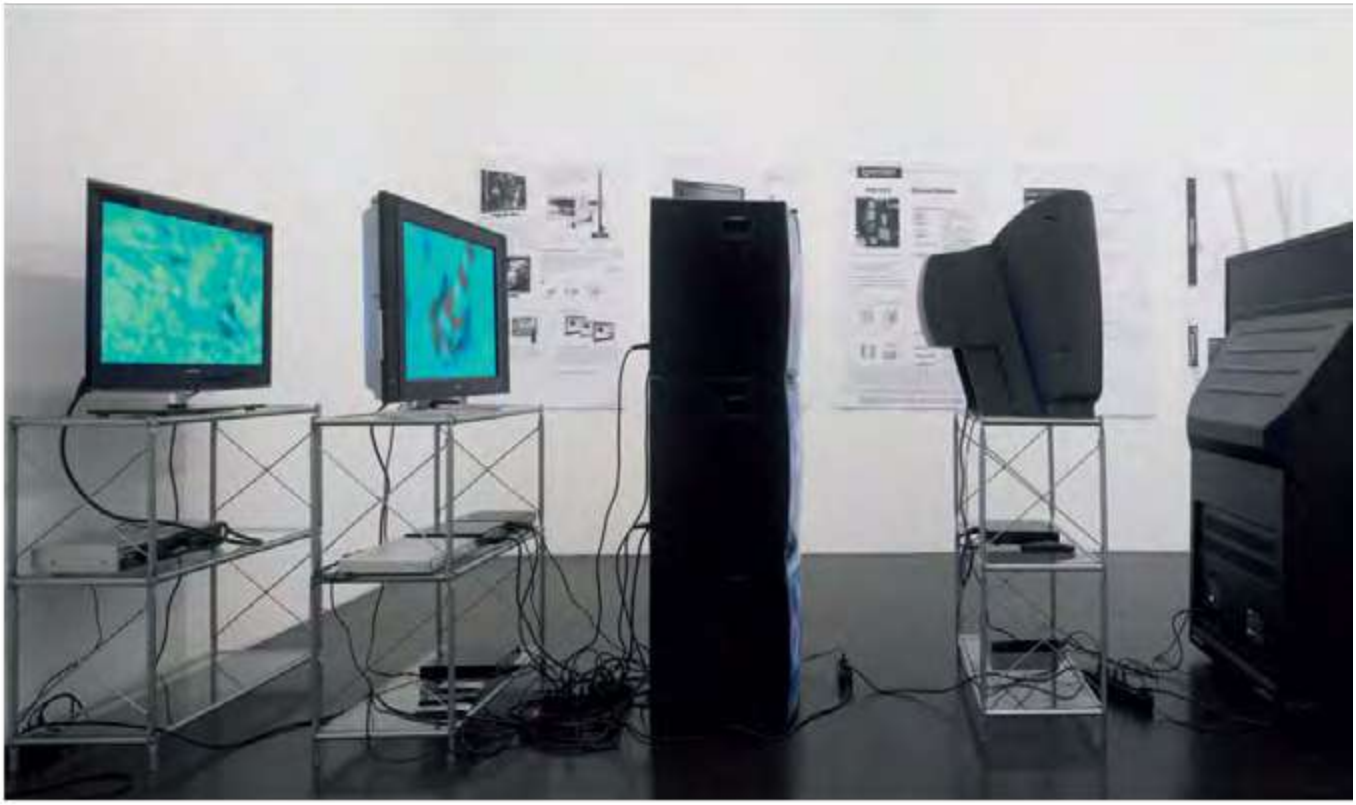
Pedro Cera

Lisboa
Rua do Patrocínio 67 E
1350–229 Lisboa, Portugal

Madrid
Calle de Barceló 13
28004 Madrid, Spain

info@pedrocera.com
www.pedrocera.com

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios



denken oder die Umrisse von großen Eingeweiden, doch mit den durchscheinenden Umrisslinien eines digitalen 3-D-Modells oder einer Vektorgrafik. Man mag angesichts dieser Serie an Jeff Koons Ausstellung *Pre-New* (Vor-Neu) von 1979 denken, bei der Reiskocher und Teflonpfannen mit Leuchtstoffröhren an einer Wand kombiniert wurden. Doch Holen interessiert sich nicht nur für Warenfetischismus oder marktkonforme Aneignungsprozesse, sondern auch für einen biologischen Humor, bei dem die Marke und der menschliche Körper, Wasser und die Apparatur insgesamt, ununterscheidbar werden. Foucaults Begriff für das Gefüge von staatlichen Institutionen, das Individuen reguliert und kontrolliert, lautet „Bio-Macht"; Holen präsentiert eine aktuelle Analogie, die man „Bio-Marke" nennen könnte: der Körper nicht als *corpus*, sondern als *corporation*, als politischer und wirtschaftlicher „Körper", sprachlos, schwammig, wie ein leidenschaftsloser Konsument, der zwischen verschiedenen Waschprogrammen wählt.

Die Arbeiten von Simon Denny dagegen verwenden die Geräte und Displays von Unterhaltungselektronik. *Deep Sea Vaudeo* (Tiefsee-Vaudeo, 2009) beleuchtet einen weiteren Aspekt von Wasser als Ware, diesmal im Medium des Visuellen. Denny zeigt hier Unterwasser-Filmmaterial aus einem Entspannungsvideo. Die Bilder laufen auf historischen Fernsehapparaten, die hintereinander – vom ältesten zum neuesten, vom dicken zum flachen, vom analogen zum digitalen Gerät – aufgereiht sind, eine Art Evolutionsreihe der Technik. Indem hier Fernsehgerät und Aquarium miteinander verschmolzen werden, wird eine gezähmte „Haushalts"-Version der Weltmeere geschaffen, eine Metapher für den Strom der Information: ein in sich wiederholender Bildschirmschoner, den man zu Hause genießen kann, ein Platzhalter für Inhalte. Das Wort Vaudeo war in den 1950er Jahren ein Name für Talkshows, die ihrerseits wieder vom fahrenden Vaudeville-Theater beeinflusst waren. Im Zuge des technologischen Fortschritts wird der klassische Begriff der Form zu dem, was wir heute unter einem Format verstehen: eine kommerzielle Kategorie, die festlegt, wie Informationen angeordnet werden, und wie Daten zu interpretieren sind (A4, mp3, HDMI). Dennys Fernseher haben mehr zu bieten als die Beschäftigung mit technologischem Positivismus; sie zeigen exemplarisch, wie der Wert von Objekten (Fernseher ebenso wie Skulpturen) durch Markenbildung, Märkte und Zusammenbrüche steigen und verfallen kann. Diesem Thema der Ökonomie begegnet man noch einmal in *Corporate Video Decisions* (Geschäftliche Video-Entscheidungen, 2011): Hier reiht Denny sieben fingierte Bildschirme aneinander, auf denen Collagen aus Bildern zu sehen sind, die aus Fachzeitschriften der krisengeschüttelten 1980er Jahre stammen. Für seine Installation *Cruise Line* (Kreuzfahrtlinie, 2011) im Neuen Aachener Kunstverein waren Taue, wie man sie auf Schiffen verwendet, entlang einer Wand vor Leinwandbildern mit Labyrinthen angebracht: sowohl Hilfestellung wie Absperrung für die Besucher. Auch hier geht es um die Frage: Wie ändert sich die Rolle des Betrachters, wenn sich die Technologien des Displays weiterentwickeln und wie sollen wir durch diese Inhaltsströme navigieren?

Wirtschaft, Pseudopolitik und der Materialismus des Pop durchziehen Helen Martens skulpturale Videoarbeiten. *A is for Anarchy … (half Baked)* (A wie Anarchie … halbgar, 2010) besteht aus Pepsi-Flaschen, die unter ein A-förmiges Aluminumzelt gestellt sind, während in *A is for Anarchy … (ABC)* (A wie Anarchie … ABC, 2010) zwar

6
Simon Denny
Deep Sea Vaudeo
(Tiefsee-Vaudeo), 2009
Ausstellungsansicht

Simon Denny
Deep Sea Vaudeo, 2009
Installation view

Courtesy: (S) Galerie Daniel Buchholz, Köln/Berlin

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios

ein ähnliches Zelt vorkommt, das nun aber mit dem Designer-Schottenmuster von Burberry überzogen ist: die Primitiv- und die Edelvariante des politischen Eskapismus. Es wurde darauf hingewiesen, dass Marten mit physischen Objekten umgeht, als wären sie in Photoshop bearbeitet; entscheidend ist aber, wie sie das Ikonische als Bedeutungsträger einsetzt. Ihre Arbeiten zielen auf die Fähigkeit des Betrachters, kulturelle Zeichen zu lesen: Schottenkaro, Soft Drinks, Songs, Handys. Ihre skulpturalen Stücke inszenieren – und konterkarieren – Bedeutung und Identifikation. Ikonische Objekte – eine Handtasche, ein Sanduhr-GIF vom Mac, ein Nokia-Logo – stehen im gleichen Verhältnis zum Kunstwerk wie Akzente oder Witze zur Sprache: Sie markieren gesellschaftlichen Status. In diesem Sinne werfen Martens Arbeiten soziale Fragen auf: Welchen Einfluss haben Waren auf Zugehörigkeit und Ausgeschlossensein? Für *All the single ladies* (All die Single-Frauen, 2010) drückte sie neun altmodische Mobiltelefone in eine pinke Platte aus Corian – ein versiegeltes Material, das für Küchenoberflächen und Badezimmerwaschtische verwendet wird. Die Telefone wirken ein wenig, als hätten sie den Anschluss an die gegenwärtigen digitalen und sozialen Zustände verloren, ganz so wie ein müder, alter Popsong, der aus dem Umlauf gezogen wurde. *Do it yourself!* (Mach' es selbst!, 2010) zeigt eine ausgestopfte Katze auf einem Stuhl, der an den

Formal distortions – commodities corrupted or hacked – are reminiscent of CAPTCHA tests used to distinguish between computers and people.

How should one relate to a collectivity at a moment that seems to empower the individual, yet only as a statistic, as more page hits? What is the price of personal data, and how should we feel about the quantification of aesthetic taste through user input, trend forecasting and market algorithms? Today's proximity between the consumer and the commodity – individual and corporation – is foregrounded by the commodities used in these art works: not only traditional Pop products, like soda or soap, but also elements that once stood for the absolute limits of commodification – water being a case in point. Traces and motifs of water have recurred in several recent exhibitions, from the skin-eating garra rufa fish (*Fish Spa*, 2012) at Oliver Laric's Orientalism-influenced *Be Water My Friend* (2012) exhibition at Tanya Leighton Gallery in Berlin this past spring to Pamela Rosenkranz's skin-coloured bottle series *The most important Body of Water is Yours* (2010). Or take Josh Kline's molted 'spring water' bottles (*It's clean, it's natural, we promise*, 2011) or Yngve Holen's water appliances. Water – standing for bodily necessity, fluidity, changes of state and transparency – has also become a luxury object, an environmentally fraught commodity and an identity politic: both free and purchased, natural and Vitamin®-infused, tasteless and a marker of taste. The most commonplace element on the planet and inside the human body is our most fluid vehicle of manufacturing and branding.

Holen's sculptural cut-ups are forays into the anatomy of the 'aqua' appliance. For his work *Parasagittal Brain* (2011) at the exhibition *Based in Berlin*, the artist used a waterjet to bisect appliances like an electric water kettle, a water cooler, a shower head and a VOSS water bottle. The halves are separated and lined up on counter-like plinths, so viewers can walk through the excluded middle of this object corridor. The chambers and coils of the kettle summon the brain or the contours of a large intestine but with the translucent contour lines of computerized 3D-renderings or vector graphics. This series may recall Jeff Koons's 1979 exhibition *Pre-New*, which paired rice boilers and Teflon pans with fluorescent lights on a wall. Yet Holen is interested not only in product fetishism or market appropriations but also in a biological humour, where the brand and the human body, water and the appliance all become indistinguishable. Foucault's term for the set of state-related institutions that regulate and control individuals was 'biopower'; Holen suggests a contemporary analogue, which might be termed the 'bio-brand': the body not as *corpus* but as *corporation*, as political and economic 'body', speechless, flabby, like an irreverent consumer choosing between wash cycles.

Simon Denny's works draw on tech appliances and consumer product displays. *Deep Sea Vaudeo* (2009) offers another take on water as a commodity, this time visual. Denny screens underwater ocean footage from a relaxation video on a series of historical television monitors – lined up from oldest to newest, thick to flat, analogue to digital – like a natural evolution of technology. Fusing the television set with the aquarium, the piece suggests how both domesticate the oceans, which become a metaphor for the flow of information: a repetitive screensaver to be enjoyed at home, a place holder for content. The word vaudeo is a 1950s term for talk shows, which were themselves inspired by travelling vaudeville theatre. In this technological progression, the classical notion of form evokes today's concept of format: the commercial category that determines how information is arranged and how data is understood (A4, mp3, HDMI). Denny's televisions are not only an exploration of technological positivism but also test cases for the way the value of objects (televisions and sculptures alike) can surge and decay through branding, markets and crashes. This economic theme recurs in *Corporate Video Decisions* (2011): Denny lines up seven faux-screen canvas collages made with images from a trade magazine dating from the economic crisis era of the 1980s. His *Cruise Line* (2011) installation at the Neuer Aachener Kunstverein placed ropes – not velvet but the ones used on ships – along the wall in front of canvas paintings of mazes: both 'don't touch' barriers and hands-on guides for the exhibition. The question recurs in these pieces: How does spectatorship change with the technology of display? How should we navigate these streams of content?

Economics, pseudo-politics and Pop materialism run through Helen Marten's sculptural and video works. *A is for Anarchy... (half Baked)* (2010) houses Pepsi bottles under an A-shaped aluminum tent while *A is for Anarchy... (ABC's)* (2010) features a similar tent but covered in the designer plaid Burberry tartan: a low-end and a high-end take on political escapism. It has been noted that Marten handles material objects as if they were Photoshopped, but what's crucial is how she negotiates the iconic as a vehicle of meaning. Her works feed on the viewer's cognizance of cultural signs: plaid, soft drinks, songs. Her sculptural pieces stage – and frustrate – signification and identification. The icon – a handbag, the Mac hourglass .gif (graphics interchange format), a Nokia logo – has the same relation to the art work as accents or jokes have to language: markers of status within a community. In this way, Marten's works interrogate the social: how belonging and exclusion are influenced by

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios

7

Welche Veränderungen erfahren Beziehungen, wenn alles das Etikett „sozial" erhält?

Klassiker von Gerrit Rietveld erinnert, allerdings ohne die charakteristischen Primärfarben. Stattdessen überziehen vier schwarze Streifen, die an Raymond Pettibons Logo der Band Black Flag erinnern, das Fell der Katze wie Reifenspuren. Martens visuelles Universum changiert zwischen Ernst und trockenem Humor – nicht anders als ein Remix, der ebenso ein Schlag ins Gesicht des Originals ist, wie er ihm Tribut zollt.

Man könnte in der Auseinandersetzung mit der neuen Nähe zwischen Konsument und Produkt – in burlesken Konstellationen wie dem Biobranding, dem Neo-Readymade oder einem photoshop-gestützten Product Placement – eine Komplizenschaft mit dem Markt, vielleicht sogar eine neoliberale Marktorientierung sehen. Diese Kritik passt zu den Vorwürfen, die manchmal gegen die Generation der „Digital Natives" vorgebracht werden: Sie seien apathisch, verwechselten echte politische Aktion mit virtuellen Effekten auf YouTube und Twitter. Doch wer die Apathie dieser Generation beklagt, hält die Gegebenheiten fälschlicherweise für planvolle Absichten. Wenn man einfach nur alte kritische Einwände – der 68er, der Frankfurter Schule oder aus Naomi Kleins *No Logo* (1999) – aufwärmt, so schreibt man der Gegenwart eine melancholische Sehnsucht nach der Vergangenheit zu. Wer Kritik in dieser Weise seriell und repetitiv vorbringt, bedient sich letztlich klassischer kapitalistischer Verfahrensweisen. Selbst die Occupy-Bewegung weist taktische Entsprechungen zu ihren Gegnern auf, etwa die Selbstregulation, die als Funktionsweise freier Märkte gilt. Die Künstler verzichten darauf, in diesen Konflikten Position zu beziehen. Stattdessen lassen sie sich offensichtlich auf das unentrinnbare Dilemma ein, mit dem man konfrontiert ist, wenn man in einer Gesellschaft lebt und arbeitet, deren Probleme immerzu selbst gemacht und reproduziert werden. Man denke nur an paradoxe Wortprägungen wie glocal, Humanressourcen, Crowdsourcing oder auch freie Marktwirtschaft. Wer ihre Werke – auf dem Bildschirm oder IRL („in real life" – in echt), also in einer Galerie – betrachtet, kann sich ihrer Mentalität kaum entziehen, die irgendwo zwischen quirlig und abgebrüht angesiedelt ist. Solche Werke können nur in einer Zeit entstehen, die auf der einen Seite durch die technologische Befreiung des individuellen „Nutzers" einen internetgestützten Populismus hervorgebracht hat, auf der anderen Seite aber Ungleichheit und individuelles Elend. Kritiker und Experten sind Teil des Systems, das sie beurteilen – ein Dilemma, auf das auch Marten in ihrer 3-D-Lithografie *An economist is particularly hard to represent* (Ein Ökonom ist besonders schwer darzustellen, 2010) verweist: Hammer und Sichel, erzeugt durch ein Rapid-Prototyping-Verfahren. In *Die deutsche Ideologie* (1846) zeichnen Marx und Engels die utopische Vision eines Alltagslebens, in dem es jedem möglich sei, „morgens zu jagen, nachmittags zu fischen, abends Viehzucht zu treiben [...]". Heute wird erwartet, dass wir morgens glutenfreie Speisen essen, uns mit routiniertem Lächeln durch den Tag schlagen, am Abend skypen, unter der Dusche twittern, nachts ins Fitnessstudio gehen, die Pseudovertrautheit mit unseren Produkten genießen und von Computer und Smartphone in den Schlaf gelullt werden – während diese treuen Gefährten unterdessen jede unserer digitalen Aktivitäten zurückmelden in eine dunkle Cloud vermarktbarer Informationen. So streifen wir umher – Bildern gleich – ohne große Wirkung auf unsere Marken und Gesichter.

Übersetzt von Michael Müller

Pablo Larios lebt als Autor und Kritiker in Berlin.

the commodity. *All the single ladies* (2010) sticks nine outdated cell phones into a pinkish slab of corian – a non-porous material used for kitchen countertops and bathroom vanities – although the phones seem to have missed out on current digital and social connections, like a tired pop song out of circulation. *Do it yourself!* (2010) includes a stuffed cat sleeping on a chair which recalls Gerrit Rietveld's classic but without its trademark primary colours; instead, four black stripes – the Black Flag logo made by Raymond Pettibon – cross the cat's fur, like tyre marks. Marten's visual cosmology is at turns earnest and deadpan, the way a remix seems to violate the face of the original, even as it offers a tribute.

The new proximity explored in these works between the consumer and the commodity – through corporatized burlesques like bio-branding, the neo-ready-made and Photoshop-ready product placement – may appear as a complicity with the market, if not a neoliberal savviness. Such a critique would gel with the charges sometimes levied against the digital native generation: from being political apathetic to confusing real activism with the virtual effects of YouTube and Twitter. But to decry this generation as apathetic confounds topicality with collusion. Rehashing past critiques – the generation of '68, the Frankfurt School or Naomi Klein's *No Logo* (1999) – would give the present a melancholic desire for the past. Critique would become mere serialization and repetition, which are capitalist devices par excellence. Even the Occupy! movement mirrors the tactics of its opponents, like the self-regulation associated with the free market. Instead of choosing sides, these artists seem to embrace the catch-22 of living and working in a society whose contradictions are self-generating. Think of paradoxical coinages like Glocal, Human Resources, crowd-sourcing or free market. Viewing their works – on a screen or IRL (in real life) in a gallery – means taking in their temperament, between effervescence and bleakness. Such works could emerge only from a time that advances, on the one hand, an Internet-aided populism with the technological liberation of the individual user and, on the other, capital inequality and individual paltriness. Critics and experts are part of the system they evaluate – a predicament evinced by Marten's stereo-lithograph *An economist is particularly hard to represent* (2010): the Communist hammer and sickle – uniting factory and farm labour – reproduced through rapid prototyping. In Marx and Engels's utopian vision of daily life in the *German Ideology* (Die Deutsche Ideologie, 1846), we 'hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening ...'. Today, we're expected to eat gluten-free in the morning, wear a corporate smile to get through the day, Skype in the evening, tweet in the shower, go to the studio at night, enjoy a quasi-intimacy with our products and be lulled to sleep by our smartphones and computers – while these close companions are feeding our every digital gesture into a black cloud of marketable information. In short, we are wandering – just like images – with little purchase on our brands and faces.

Pablo Larios writes fiction and criticism and lives in Berlin.

Warenwahn: Pure Products go Crazy
Frieze, Summer 2012
Pablo Larios

7
Helen Marten
All the single ladies
(All die Single-Frauen), 2010
Mobiltelefone, CNC-gefrästes und gegossenes Corian
55×85×3 cm

Helen Marten
All the single ladies, 2010
CNC machined and cast Corian, mobile phone handsets
55×85×3 cm

8 + 9
Helen Marten
Do it yourself! (Mach' es selber!), 2010
Verschiedene Materialien
97×68×58 cm

Helen Marten
Do it yourself!, 2010
Mixed media
97×68×58 cm

8

9

Oliver Laric
Exberliner, 2012

Berlin in English since 2002
EXBERLINER

Photo by David Ghione

Having conquered Youtube and the blogosphere, artist Oliver Laric prepares for his first Berlin solo show.

Known for his influential art blog vvork.com, Berlin-based Austrian artist Oliver Laric achieved internet fame for his 2006 compilation of clipart graphics. At the time of publishing, *787 Cliparts* has nearly half a million hits on Youtube. As the video went viral, people began to remix, re-edit and upload it, participating in a cyclical dialogue between artist and viewer, and Laric started to see his website "as a site of primary experiences, not representation or documentation".

A fan of anachronistic compilations (stemming from his interest in hip hop), Laric recontextualises often-overlooked material and media output, creating new links in old chains.

Your projects are not tied to one medium, or even one platform. What's the importance of not restricting yourself and being fluid?

The ideas I utilise are not specific to a single shape and can be continuously reinterpreted by myself or others.

In Bruce Lee's *Tao of Jeet Kune Do*, he uses water as an analogy to emphasise why flexibility is a significant trait: "Empty your mind, be formless, shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot it becomes the teapot. That water can flow, or it can crash. Be water my friend."

There is a certain simplicity and clarity in your work, but your process is often layered with lots of influences. How difficult is it to distil everything that you want to express down into one clear action?

Deciding what not to do is as essential as deciding what to do. There is so much unused B-material after each project. Some of it takes months, so it hurts to shelve it, but it's simultaneously liberating.

A Chris Marker documentary on Akira Kurosawa shows the production of a very elaborate scene for the King Lear adaption *Ran*. A field is delicately painted gold, but the scene didn't survive the edit. This scene is probably an essential missing part.

“After 1968: Contemporary Artists and the Civil Rights Legacy”
Artforum, November 2008
Philip Auslander

What's your concern with defaults, presets and readymade software?

There is a generous quality attached to them; they are made to be used and adapted. The modification is already implied in its conception. I try to make some works that act as presets waiting to be activated.

In 2008 you reverse-engineered Mariah Carey's music video "Touch my Body", isolating her body from the background and placing her against green, then uploading it so that soon people were creating their own backgrounds, often featuring themselves. How did this come about?

Mariah Carey addressed a new audience with her song "Touch my Body". She portrays a viewer that can simultaneously touch and be touched. I've just followed her call and amplified her message. And people utilising my material help extend the trajectory.

What interests you about the possibilities of anonymous collaboration in your work, for example, the stock footage you shot and made available online for Frieze Projects 2011 and "Touch My Body (Green Screen Version)"?

There are only few things as satisfying as involuntary collaborations. I stumbled upon the possibility as it happened naturally; in 2006 numerous viewers modified one of my videos ["787 Cliparts"] without my knowledge. As a response to these responses, I began creating scenarios that necessitate continuation. If it doesn't happen, it feels like the work is not working.

In 2010 you showed the reproduction of a relief defaced during the Reformation alongside your online visual essay "Versions". What draws you to objects like this?

Some historic images make sense, as they echo current concerns and feel urgent and contemporary. The relief from Utrecht stands out... it's probably the most impressive leftover from Reformation iconoclasm. It is in perfect destroyed condition; the damage is so well preserved. It has become an attraction because of its modification. That exemplifies the contradiction emblematic of iconoclasm; destroying an image always creates an image.

For a recent project you officially named a breed of orchid, "Doritaenopsis Aung San Suu Kyi", after the Burmese opposition leader. This is a pretty provocative move and a highly political one – what prompted this?

I don't know if it's so provocative. I've gotten more into Burmese politics after meeting a Burmese refugee in Thailand who loaned me his collection of activist publications.

What are you showing at Tanya Leighton?

The show will focus on 'Chinoiserie', the 17th-century fetishisation of Chinese culture by Europeans. Jesuit priests working as missionaries in China brought back overly optimistic and utopian depictions and stories that caused a fascination with a distant and exotic space. There is possibly another period of Chinoiserie taking place right now, and that's the hypothesis of the show.

OLIVER LARIC, Mar 10-Apr 15 | Tanya Leighton, Kurfürstenstr. 156, Schöneberg, U-Bhf Kurfürstenstr.

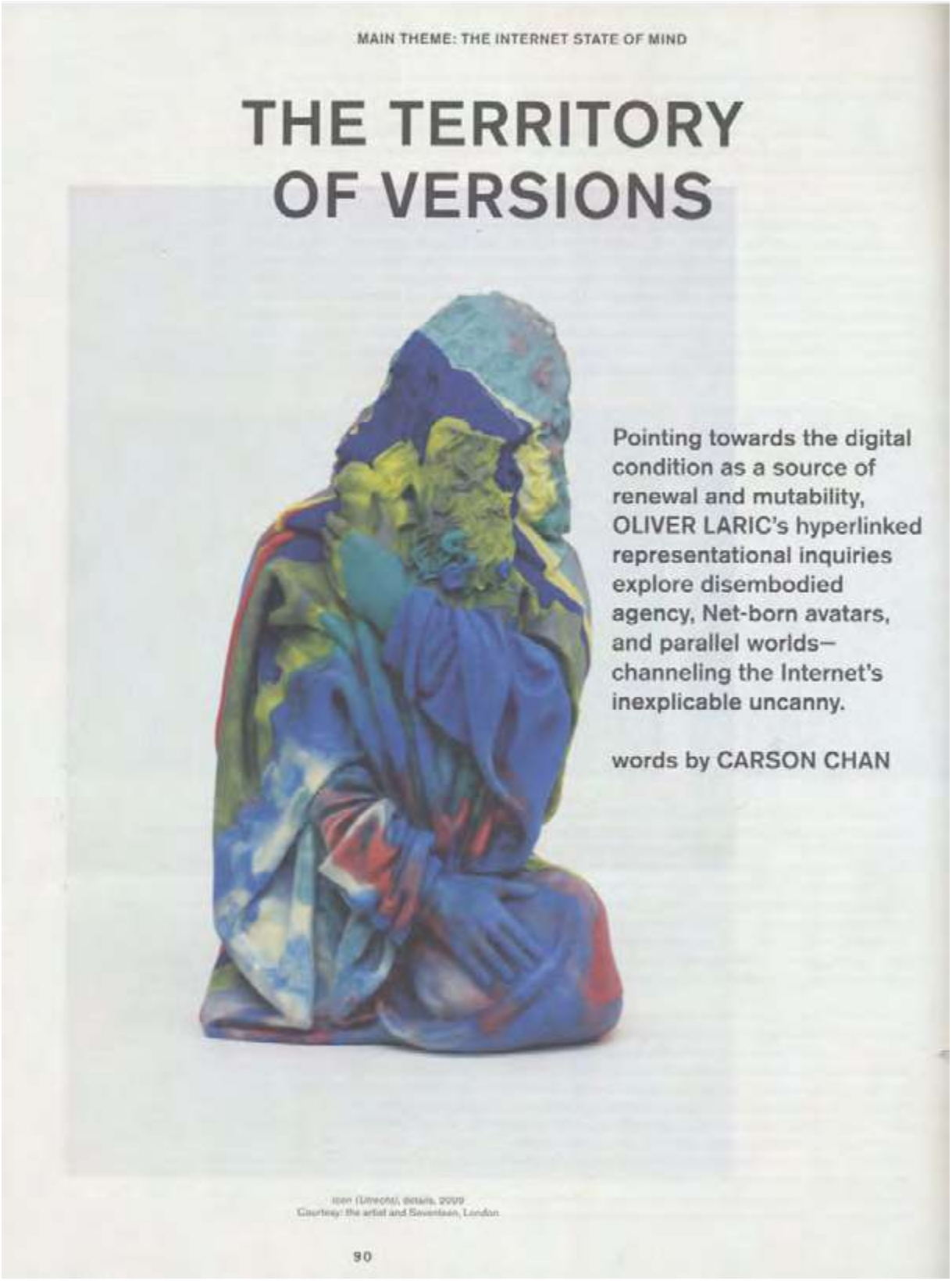
OLIVER LARIC

LAUNCH GALLERY »

Thirty-year-old Oliver Laric calls himself a "facilitator." That's a rather selfless designation to describe the poetry of someone who allows interactions with art to happen by surprise. Commissioned by the 2011 Frieze Art Fair, Laric roved the London exhibition last October with a video crew, capturing banal art-world moments. He shot the top of the head of a Kiki Smith sculpture with flies on it and the hermit crabs in an installation by Pierre Huyghe. Afterward, he uploaded the videos on Frieze's stock footage Web site in hopes they'd be useful as atmosphere. Whether the clips, which are beautiful but not necessarily cheery, will find much use—an image of transparent liquid hitting a concave porcelain surface, titled *Urinal*, seems particularly unlikely—is beside the point.

The Austria-born artist has lived in Berlin's Kreuzberg neighborhood for the last five years, and there his art has proliferated amidst the city's endless space and limited market. One of Laric's ongoing fascinations is with the idea of the original, which he's applied to classical sculpture, particularly marbles, and their endless reproductions. He named a 2011 show in Basel "Kopienkritik" after a 19th-century school of art history in which the Roman sculptures' copies were pronounced inferior to Greek originals. For the exhibition, Laric showed an archive of casts of famous sculptures made in colored wax, arranging the artifacts alongside video projections and painted renditions. The effect was a pantheon of heroic figures and deities with no progenitor.

The Territory of Versions
Kaleidoscope issue 9, Winter 2010-2011
Carson Chan



MAIN THEME: THE INTERNET STATE OF MIND

THE TERRITORY OF VERSIONS

Pointing towards the digital condition as a source of renewal and mutability, OLIVER LARIC's hyperlinked representational inquiries explore disembodied agency, Net-born avatars, and parallel worlds—channeling the Internet's inexplicable uncanny.

words by CARSON CHAN

Courtesy the artist and Seventeen, London

90

The Territory of Versions
Kaleidoscope issue 9, Winter 2010-2011
Carson Chan

MAIN THEME: THE INTERNET STATE OF MIND

While movable type, radio, television, and telephones have successively changed the way we communicate, it was only when Tim Berners-Lee wrote the code for the World Wide Web on Christmas Day 20 years ago that the linearity of thought that has characterized Western culture was challenged by the world view of the Internet. Today, the web accounts for almost half of our waking attention. We search through its data, click on its hyperlinks, skim its texts, download, upload, email, and Tweet. In *The Shallows* (2010), technology writer Nicholas Carr argues that Internet use is eclipsing our ability to think deeply and creatively. "The Net seizes our attention only to scatter it," he warns, adding that the environment of distraction cultivated online inhibits learning. "We become mindless consumers of data." Given this trajectory, Carr implies, we may one day do away with long narrative structures that string and weave ideas inefficiently for the near instantaneous apprehension afforded by RSS feeds and text-messages.

Much of Carr's reasoning is supported by solid research published by science and medical journals; objectively, it appears, his is an incontrovertible claim. But we would be amiss to leave it at that. The world of facts, as is often the case, is only able to describe a reduced picture of the creative mind. To analyze creativity one synapse at a time, as scientists have done, is to harden a human function whose beauty and value lies precisely in its potential for unexpected flights, moments of self reflection, and whimsy. For many working in the arts, the suggestion that developments in technology limit rather than expand the imagination is specious, if not completely misguided. For those who grew up in the 1980s, when both home computing and mobile telephony arrived on the scene, life is naturally one that is interconnected. This generation of artists is maturing in a world mediated by the Net; the digitized [illegible] is the condition in which they experience the world. What is [illegible] that the Internet has changed some very fundamental operations of daily living, and there is no question that, for those engaged in the world of ample information and instant correspondence, we learn not in long, uninterrupted stretches of concentration, but in abbreviations and fragments of video and text, and where private life is laid bare by online social networking—we're not less creative, we're creative differently than before.

Internet art, a loose genre powered by a growing number of artists who may or may not use the Internet in their work, has been gaining recognition as we increasingly see aspects of the world and ourselves refract and proliferate online. Internet art is art made with an Internet state of mind. It communicates the non-linear reality we find ourselves in, and it reflects on the disparity between [illegible] offline values, original and represented moments—however [illegible] these distinctions may be at times.

Like Guy Debord before him, Oliver Laric firmly believes that everything directly lived has moved into representation. In Laric's *Versions* (2010), a video piece viewable on the artist's website, we're told by a narrator of his inclination for "the representation over the real one." The defect of the real is its "lack of representation." One might also add that representations offer variations and [illegible] that come from a necessary dismantling of some of the original's meaning. *Ancient Copies* (2010), which Laric presented with Seventeen gallery at Frieze Art Fair this year, is a stack of copies of Margarete Bieber's 1977 book of the same name on Roman copies of Greek sculptures. Out of print and difficult to obtain, the book, which some critics found problematic in terms of its overall accuracy and for its misleading emphasis on draping, was on its way to oblivion. The books from the sculpture were bought from Lulu, a publish-on-demand website that will reprint the book from a PDF file that, incidentally, Laric uploaded. Laric appropriated the book for its interest in antique statues, a type that, in the artist's words, "doesn't belong

91

The Territory of Versions
Kaleidoscope issue 9, Winter 2010-2011
Carson Chan

MAIN THEME: THE INTERNET STATE OF MIND

to a single author and can be performed over and over again, like a photoshopped image." In Laric's sculpture, Bieber's book is given new significance that depended not on the accuracy of its words, but on its own digital metamorphosis. Object and subject are elided here to unexpectedly pleasant effect: for a middling book about ancient reproductions, its existence today is predicated on its newfound reproducibility afforded by its rebirth in cyberspace. Where for Carr, the demise of the book and the long linear narrative is a lamentable effect of digital culture, Laric points towards the digital condition as a source of renewal and mutability, a space of un-mined meaning and unarticulated aesthetics that is a consequence of the way we have chosen to evolve. Sitting in the art fair, browsed, perused, it is as if the real becoming of Bieber's little known book happened through Laric's representation.

Mutability and evolution is familiar to Oliver Laric's practice. Born in 1981 in Innsbruck, Laric grew up in Munich and studied in Vienna at the University of Applied Arts. His earliest output was mainly in the form of graffiti—tagging and bombing. In 2003, together with Christoph Priglinger and Georg Schnitzer, Laric started *Mi*, a so-called "magazine within a magazine" that lasted a few issues. Magazines are expensive to produce, so the conceit was to intersperse a single page of *Mi* into other magazines, parasitically benefiting from the staff, layout, print, and distribution networks of participating publications, which included *Bidoun*, *Parnass*, *Numéro*, *idN*, and *Site*. To judge by the range and caliber of the artists they involved, the project was well regarded. Jonathan Monk, David Shrigley, Piero Golia, and Gelitin all lent their time and thoughts. The idea of mass expression and widespread engagement for free was stimulating for Laric, Priglinger, and Schnitzer, and in 2006, together with artist Aleksandra Domanovic, they started vvork.com—an image (and sometimes video) blog that features other people's artwork. The format is simple and intuitively navigable; each entry comprises an image of an artwork captioned by its title, year, and author. The site is visited by about 15,000 people each day. Independent curator Joseph del Pesco wrote on his SFMoMA blog that the site has become not only the one he "most frequently recommends and regularly visits; it has become a familiar resource, a routine stop for informal research." "Vvork is closer to a train of thought," he continues. "One image leads to the next in an associative flow." Perforating the formal and disciplinary lines that protect art from invading pressures, vvork appears to illustrate the contentious conclusion to Boris Groys's 2002 essay, "Art in the Age of Biopolitics." Groys claims that in the order of post-capitalism, the distinction between the artwork and its documentation is fast becoming obsolete.

Art has entered into a time in which the economy of the infinite is fast overcoming one that is bounded. Hierarchies are flattened—think Google—and it would seem that the old shackles of class, privilege, and wealth will fall away, allowing art and its institutions to move into a networked system of mass exposure and access. By his own admission, Laric originally made a website for his artwork to cut out the middleman and expose his work easily and directly to interested parties online. While performance offers a direct line of communication between artists and their audience, the intimacy of Internet art is different from its traditional counterparts in every other way. Online the work exists—outside of space and time—the moment it is accessed. "My website is not a space of representation but of primary experiences," Laric said in an interview with Domenico Quaranta. "You are viewing the real thing. And when the work travels to other sites, it is still the real thing." This freedom of access inscribes a new aesthetic for both the artwork and its viewing. As cultural categories that once operated within social and spatial limits, the Internet has all but eliminated such borders. "I really enjoy putting up work for free and not asking for anybody to pay to see it," Laric said on LumenEclipse.com. "It's less elitist... You don't have to be in one of the art capitals to go to one of the galleries... you can just get the information from wherever you are and participate."

The web's store of raw material and its open access are clear boons for any young artist. As a medium, it grants and amplifies most artists' desire to show their work. More than just the web's conveniences, it is the online state of mind along with all its epistemic effects that lies at the heart of Laric's work. *Webchat with Andy* (2007) channels the Internet's inexplicable uncanny. Commissioned by *Blend Magazine*, *Webchat* is a video capture of an online video-interview between the artist and a medium who is channeling Andy Warhol. Mediated contact has become the status quo, the piece seems to say, and by communing with Warhol's ghost via a medium via video-chat, Laric reveals the distances between mouth and ear that broach nature and reason, which when presented as an online experience appear routine to our web-enabled lives. Like speaking to ghosts, the current mechanics of video chat—its jumpy frames, inevitable lag, the unsynchronized delivery of sound and motion—separate the person from the voice, and have the effect of disembodying the communication it enables. The piece begins with a technical problem: Laric's in-

ARTIST'S BIO

OLIVER LARIC (b. 1981) is an Austrian artist currently living in Berlin. In 2006 he founded, together with a group of friends, VVORK, an art blog acting as an exhibition space and, occasionally, a curatorial platform that organizes events in brick-and-mortar venues. He recently had a solo exhibition at Sweetwater Gallery in London.

CURRENT & FORTHCOMING

OLIVER LARIC's solo exhibition entitled "Versions" will be staged at Skulpturhalle Basel in 2011.

92

The Territory of Versions
Kaleidoscope issue 9, Winter 2010-2011
Carson Chan

MAIN THEME: THE INTERNET STATE OF MIND

From top:
50 50, video still, 2007

Touch My Body (Green Screen Version), video still, 2008
Courtesy: the artist and Seventeen, London

93

The Territory of Versions
Kaleidoscope issue 9, Winter 2010-2011
Carson Chan

crophone doesn't seem to be picking up sound, so he must type out his questions. With the web-cam trained on his face—and his keyboard out of view—Laric's questions manifest on screen as ghostly as Warhol's replies.

Versions (2009) and *Versions* (2010) are alike in the way step-siblings are: they have physical resemblances, but these only play up the deep-rooted differences. Both are video essays about disembodied agency, parallel worlds, Net-born avatars, and other memes that have been generated online. Doubling is an organizing process in these videos—through the split-screen presentation of comparisons between studio-released DVD movies and leaked versions of the same film posted online by people who filmed it at a movie theater; between snippets of different hand-drawn animated movies that share the same preliminary drawings, before features are added, to cut costs; and between original and "celebrity-fake" versions of porn movies, where celebrity faces are grafted onto the body's of porn actors. If film ic processes *double*, the Internet gives rise to a *multiplicity* of realities. *Versions* (2009) opens with the following observations:

AUTHOR
CARSON CHAN is an architecture writer and curator. He is a regular writer for cultural publications like *Wire East Magazine* (Hong Kong) and *032c* (Berlin), where he is also a contributing editor. Carson is the co-director and founder of PROGRAM, an initiative for art and architecture collaborations in Berlin. He is currently working on a series of essays on exhibition-making and curating

An image published by the media arm of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard in 2008 shows four missiles. The above illustration [in which portions of the image are highlighted] suggests that the second missile from the right is the sum of two other missiles in the image. The contours of the billowing smoke near the ground, and in the immediate wake of the missile, match perfectly. Three days after the initial doctored image was published, an alternate version was released, showing only three missiles. This exposed enhancement was followed by a public continuation of image manipulation. Anonymous authors, all over the world, played through numerous possibilities of missile potency. Variations spread with online forums, news blogs and image boards acting as platforms for the communal call and response. When Googling this missile incident, different versions of the image appear. The initial four missile version coexists with the forty missile version. Authenticity is decided on by the viewer. The more often an image is viewed, the more likely it makes the top of search results. An image viewed often enough becomes part of collective memory.

Online, it continues, "logical reality is almost always omitted." *Versions* also exists in many versions, due to the fact that Laric re-edits the film every time it is exhibited. However, even as different narrators are used, what remains constant is the soullessness of their tone. Like the prerecorded voices often heard over airport PAs—inhumanly articulating each word in a mechanical cadence, kind-sounding but insouciant—the tone is the same comfortless lull that Kubrick gave HAL, the computer in *2001* programmed with artificial intelligence and a logic that would ultimately lead to its user's demise.

Touch My Body (Green Screen Version) (2008) is an edited version of the music video to Mariah Carey's song of the same name. Having downloaded the video from YouTube, Laric stripped each video frame of its background, leaving Carey to writhe in front of a green screen. The simple operation casts Carey into a space without context or location, the green background signifying a limitless number of replaceable settings. However, when Laric uploaded the video on YouTube, users of the website took the video, unprompted, and replaced the green background with other videos. Carey now sings in front of a surreal mix of backdrops: an endoscopic video of a larynx, a billiard table, a surgically opened eye, snow-capped mountains, and so on. If verity is now up for a communal vote and no longer a universal fact, as the quote from *Versions* (2009) suggests, then the question of the original is rendered irrelevant, unhinged from its pertinence by the fickle shifts of popular consensus. To date, more than fifty new versions of the Carey video coexist as a result of Laric's version. The video demands only a few short minutes of attention.

The Territory of Versions
Kaleidoscope issue 9, Winter 2010-2011
Carson Chan

Versions, video stills, 2010
Courtesy: the artist and Rivington, London

Nicholas Carr may be right that our state of distraction online undermines long, reflective reveries, but contemplation on this state of thoughtlessness through art may be a way to consolidate the discrepant fragments of our new, digital way of life. Online, what we lose in foregoing singular experiences, we gain in unprecedented levels of reciprocity in what some call the feedback loop. An attempt to map out the interpenetrating frames of reference between author, subject, object, and technology in *Touch My Body (Green Screen Version)* suggests the degree to which these categories have become unbound. The lyrics to Carey's song, in a way, are about the transference of physical interaction ("Touch my body, put me on the floor") into online values. In the chorus, we hear Carey warn her lover of the unhappy consequence if he should try to secretly film them making love. ("If there's a camera up in here, then I'd best not catch this flick on YouTube, YouTube. 'Cause if you run your mouth and brag about this secret rendezvous, I will hunt you down.") It is as if Laric takes on the role of her lover, the admonishment about revealing the secret rendezvous *is* the secret rendezvous (in the video, Carey is seen in negligee), and the subsequent viral transformations of said rendezvous represents the consequences. Through this piece, YouTube—at once Carey's narrative referent, the technology Laric employed for its download and re-upload, and the means for the video's ensuing incarnations—is shown to be a self-referencing machine that is form, function, context, and content, or that is, in short, everything.

Western culture has always found circularity of expression beautiful. In lectures, architecture theorist Val Warke has explained these meta-exegetic moments similarly through song. According to Homer's *Odyssey*, the most beautiful song in the world, Warke recalls, is the Song of the Sirens. Its music is so powerful that sailors, entranced, run their ships into cliff-sides. The Song of the Sirens is a song about singing.

> *Bring in your ship so that you might hear our voices.*
> *Never has a black ship rounded this cape*
> *Without listening to the honey-dipped airs which drip*
> *from our lips.*

In 1959, Ella Fitzgerald performed "Mack the Knife" in Berlin to appeal to an audience she knew would know the melody from Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera*. Though under rehearsed, Fitzgerald added it to the end of her set. The crowd roared as they recognized the tune, but halfway through, Fitzgerald forgot the words. True to form, she improvised the rest, and the words she made-up on the spot to Weill's melody were about the song being sung. The song was about itself: She sang about how she was making up the words, and how she was making a wreck of it. She sang about Bobby Darin and Louis Armstrong who, separately, had previously made the song popular as pop and jazz hits. For a few bars, she scatted in Armstrong's trademark growl. She sang about the performers on stage with her, describing them before embarking on an impersonation of Armstrong imitating a trombone—a reference of a reference of a reference. It seemed that many thought this was the most beautiful song in the world, at least in 1960, when she won two Grammy awards for the live recording of this concert. For decades after that night in Berlin, Fitzgerald would continue to sing made-up lyrics every time she performed "Mack the Knife." New versions came into being with each show, and with each subsequent recording, another version would henceforth coexist with all the others. As if by magic, like a clown car from which emerges an endless succession of clowns, it would expand and reshape our expectations of the known world. ◊