

Perspectives. Futurisms

Ref. Marcel Duchamp & Marcel Proust
Works from the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection

An exhibition concept of the
Mercedes-Benz Art Collection 2022/23

Curator: Renate Wiehager

Stephen Bram, *Untitled (Two Point Perspective)*, 2007
Archival pigment print, 67 × 95.5 cm



Perspectives. Futurisms

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Foreword

Ben Willikens, *Flur Nr. 13*, 1974/75
Acrylic on canvas, 200 × 160 cm



In March and June of 1912, the French newspaper *Le Figaro* published the first sections of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* [In Search of Lost Time]. At around the same time in Paris, Marcel Duchamp brought an end to his painting activities and began work on the concept of the readymade. Both projects will open fundamentally new paths in the literature and art of the 20th century. For the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection, the seminal artistic concepts of Marcel Duchamp have offered an occasion for research, exhibitions, publications, and digital lecture talks since 2017. Our publication series on Duchamp continues in 2023 with a fourth volume, entitled *Duchamp & Proust: Renaissance of Perspectives*, accompanying our exhibition concept *Perspectives*. *Futurisms* and the current brochure.¹

Within the context of cultural history as shaped by the West, the concept of perspective is often traced back to a day in 1425, when the sculptor and architect Filippo Brunelleschi painted an image based on geometric linear perspective for the first time in Renaissance Florence. Today, moreover, we know that the theory of perspective originated in 11th century Baghdad, where the mathematician Ibn al-Haytham formulated a new visual theory based on geometric abstraction. From these beginnings, the notion of the image as an illusionistic, open window makes its way into art

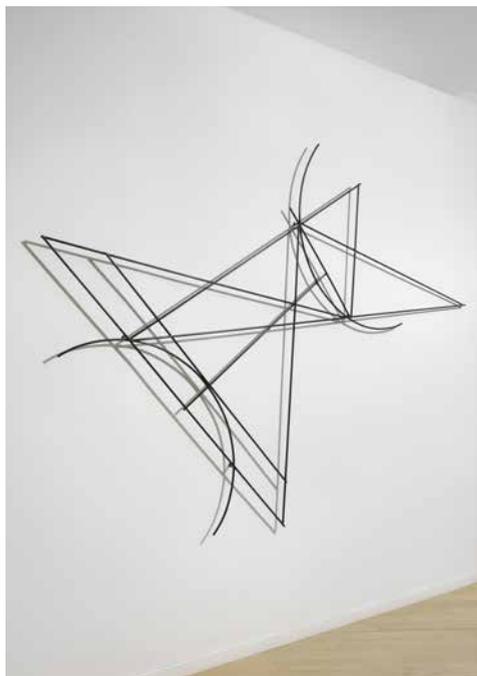
and becomes the norm of pictorial spatial configurations.

Making a leap from art history to the present day, we now interpret the concept of perspective more in the sense of a world-view or personal orientation. For any given person, these are determined by their peculiar rhythms and timelines, their views and interpretations of developments, opportunities, and dangers within their own cultural environment.

Our cognitive abilities are limited. In order to make of the multiplicity of information, images, and shard-like perceptions a perspective oriented towards the future, we must transform complexities into simple narratives that are meaningful to us. 'World' is never an autonomous reality, but an image, a construction of our imagination. Humans have many ways and methods for such 'world building.'

In the early 20th century, Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) and Marcel Proust (1871–1922), two influential representatives of radically new conceptions of individuality and art as means for conceiving of the world, both dealt with the topic of perspective. The Mercedes-Benz Art Collection has been exploring Duchamp's work from various angles since 2017 and is now picking up this thread once more in the context of the essential role that perspective plays in reality and in art.

The second term of our title, 'Futurisms,' may come of some surprise. Seen from a Western view of culture and art, Futurism will first be understood as one of the central artistic directions of modernism. The term itself was coined in 1909 by the Italian artist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, when his "Futurist Manifesto" also appeared in *Le Figaro*. It was read and discussed by the circle of artists surrounding Marcel Duchamp and, without a doubt, by the young painter himself, who was only 21 years old at the time. Soon after this, in 1912, Duchamp will exhibit his painting *Nu descendant un escalier n° 2* [Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2], a programmatic work that existed on the borderline between Futurism and Cubism.



Thus, on the one hand, the term 'Futurisms' in our exhibition title refers back to one of the most potent disruptions among the art movements of the early 20th century. On the other hand, we must also today acknowledge the tradition and relevance of the concepts of 'Afrofuturism' and 'Africanfuturism' alongside it.

"Black to the Future," a chapter from Mark Dery's 1994 book *Flame Wars*, presented a discussion from out of which the term 'Afrofuturism' appeared. At the center of this movement, especially strong in the African diaspora present in the USA, is a return to the cultural traditions of Black African people. These are often expressed in tropes from science fiction, accompanied by artistic revitalizations and reinterpretations of aspects from history, mythology, literature, art, music, technology, and Black perspectives on the present. In this booklet, Nadine Isabelle Henrich explores the significance of Afrofuturism in detail.

Related to this is the Africanfuturist movement, from a term coined by Nigerian-

Heba Y. Amin, *A Mathematical Manner of Perceiving*, 2016
Iron, powder coated, 220 × 185 × 6 cm

American author Nnedi Okorafor in a blog entry in 2018. Africanfuturism takes into consideration the inextricable connection of Black people on the African continent with those living abroad in the Black diaspora, but focuses specifically on cultural, literary, artistic, and political traditions that have emerged in Africa. The movement is primarily driven by people with African roots, and is characterized by the strong will to intervene in the shaping of the future based in a knowledge of one's own point of view, in a cultural rootedness. Africanfuturism lends to this dynamic, strong, and positive perspective musical, literary, and artistic images while also formulating scientific, philosophical, technical, and economic reorientations.

Since 2020, the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection has accompanied these recent cultural developments through its cooperation



Nnenna Okore, *Cycles and Cyclones*, 2017
Burlap, dye and wire, 243.8 × 304.8 × 15.2 cm

with and inclusion of female and non-binary artists of Black African origin, some of whom live on the continent and others in the diaspora. Mbali Dhlamini (ZA), Zanele Muholi (ZA), Nnenna Okore (AUS/NGR/USA), Berni Searle (ZA), Lerato Shadi (ZA), Buhlebezwe Siwani (ZA/NL), Adejoke Tugbiyele (USA/NGR/BF), Kayode Ojo (USA): all of these artists deal with aspects of transculturality, social and political redesigns, postcolonialism, feminism, and contemporary perspectives on identity politics and gender constructions.

Zanele Muholi's work and position appear as a characteristic, thought-provoking representation of Africanfuturism. Their self-portraits as well as the portraits of people around them reveal the physiognomy and charisma of a young generation that confidently integrates references to recent history and critical reflection of the 'now' into a self-image

that is open in perspective and anticipates the future.

The impulse for this exhibition, *Perspectives. Futurisms*, can be traced back to research begun in 2016 and pursued jointly with the Duchamp expert Katharina Neuburger for a symposium and a publication by the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection on the theme of "Duchamp as Curator." These projects investigated Duchamp's curatorial activities and their relevance to his artistic work. Based on this research and extensively expanding on it, a first publication appeared in 2019 in which I chronologically presented Duchamp's curatorial activities in the context of exhibitions, collections, and publications.

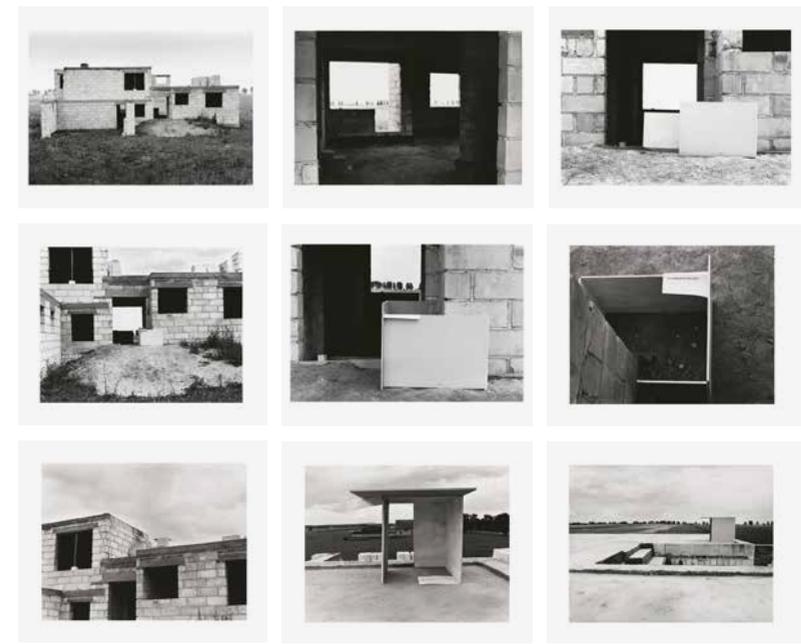
In 2016 and 2017, the centenary of Duchamp's first written mention of the term



Zanele Muholi, *Sine II*, Sheraton Hotel, Brooklyn, 2019
Silver gelatin print, 64.5 × 48.5 cm



Adejoke Tugbiyele, *Musician II*, 2014
Perforated metal, yarn, copper and brass wire
191 × 76 × 127 cm



Monika Brandmeier, *Drei Antworten auf zwei Fragen* (Bydgoszcz), 2000
Black-and-white photographs, 9 parts, each 24 × 30 cm

'readymade' in 1916 and of the first display of his *Fountain* in New York in 1917 prompted the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection to give the concept of the readymade a more thorough grounding both in theoretical terms and in exhibition practice. *On the Subject of the Readymade, or Using a Rembrandt as an Ironing Board: Works from the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection selected by Bethan Huws on the Occasion of 100 Years of the Readymade* was the title of an exhibition at Mercedes-Benz Contemporary in Berlin. The Welsh conceptual artist Bethan Huws devised an exhibition project as well as an artist book specifically for the location, using exemplary works from the collection. As a next step, the exhibition *The Duchamp-Effect: Readymade. Works from the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection at the Kunsthalle Göppingen*, which also took place in 2016–2017, traced the historical significance of the "readymade concept." In 2020, the subject was further pursued with the show *31: Women* (Exhibition

Concept after Marcel Duchamp, 1943) in Berlin. This exhibition was accompanied by the publication *Duchamp and the Women: Friendship, Collaboration, Network*, again in collaboration with Katharina Neuburger. This book offers an unusual perspective on the "artist of the century," Marcel Duchamp. Through art-historical essays and biographical portraits of some eighty leading female figures who shaped Duchamp's life and work from the early twentieth century to the 1960s, it discusses major initiatives and collaborations which accompanied and inspired Duchamp's artistic projects. Furthermore, important texts by women that were previously available only in difficult-to-find sources or published exclusively in French or English are made available and translated into German. The book focuses on the social and cultural activities of female collectors, gallery owners, artist colleagues, and authors, many of whom were leading figures of early 20th century modernism.

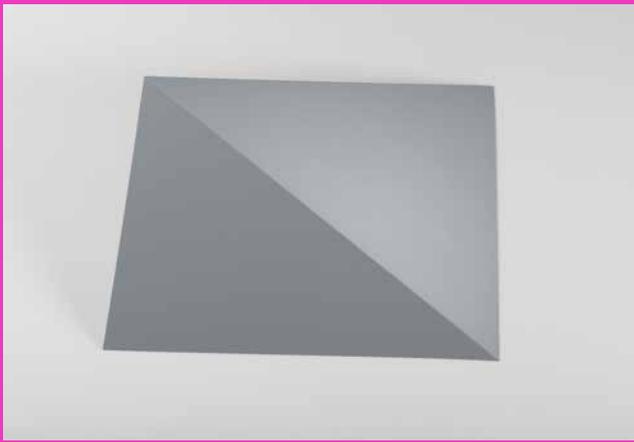
The exhibition *Perspectives. Futurisms*, with nearly 60 works by around 40 artists, addresses a wide spectrum of contemporary and historical interpretations related to perspective. Variations in geometric image construction will be shown alongside conceptual investigations into patterns of human perception, the motif of the window on the world, and spiritual and religious associations. Other sections of the show are dedicated to inversions and rearrangements of scale and spatial orientation as well as multiplications and dissolutions of fixed points of view on the world.

Note

1 *Duchamp & Proust: Renaissance of Perspectives*, ed. by Renate Wiehager with Katharina Neuburger. Cologne: Snoeck [to be released in spring 2023].



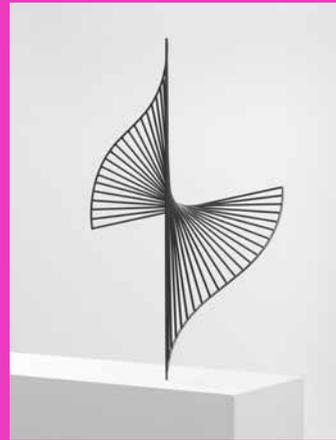
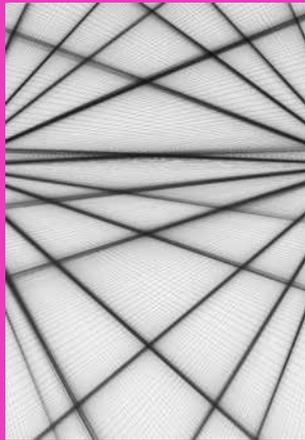
Ben Willikens, *Das All (Entwurf)*, 1988
Graphite and acrylic on cardboard, 42 × 101 cm



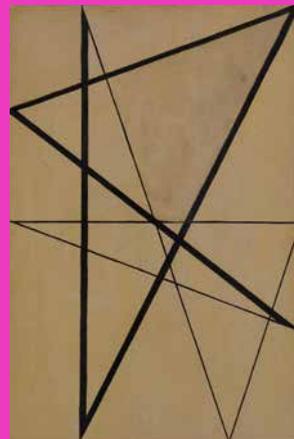
Charlotte Posenenske
Diagonale Faltung, 1966/2009
 Aluminum sprayed grey
 51.5 × 75 × 25 cm

Timo Nasser, *I SAW A BROKEN LABYRINTH*, 2015
 Ink on paper, 89 × 66 cm

MUON, 2015
 Steel, powder coated
 45.5 × 28.5 × 22 cm



Susan Hefuna, *Untitled*, 2010
 Ink on tracing paper
 48.5 × 61.2 cm



Hermann Glöckner
Ohne Titel (Konstruktion mit 8 Zacken), ca. 1930
 Tempera and ink on paper
 34.2 × 23.1 cm

Renate Wiehager

Introduction

In 1913—a year after the first excerpts were printed in *Le Figaro*—Marcel Proust published the initial volume of his seven-part novel *À la recherche du temps perdu*, coinciding with Marcel Duchamp's withdrawal from painting and, while working as a librarian in Paris, his search for new forms of artistic expression. This period saw the birth of the idea of the readymade, as well as the appearance of the first sketches for his masterpiece *The Large Glass*,¹ which came, in his words, from nothing less than “a rehabilitation of perspective, which had then been completely ignored and disparaged.”²

Duchamp and Proust, two defining proponents of a radical conception of art in the early 20th century, were taking up once more the limits and possibilities of perspective. They approached the elementary aspects of perception, cognition, and representation through artistic research that was conceptually grounded in the Renaissance's realm of ideas. Both artists, however, moved far beyond most of their contemporaries in their rediscovery of the era. The materials and motifs that Proust and Duchamp used for this purpose, in writing and in image, reveal surprising correspondences: sketches and notations, lines and glass, aligned constructions, optical devices and everyday objects, windows, doors, and eyes.

On the occasion of this exhibition concept *Perspectives. Futurisms*, which presents pioneering artistic approaches to the subject from the 1960s to the present, the publication of *Duchamp & Proust: Renaissance of Perspectives* now adds Volume 4 to the series on the work and influence of Marcel Duchamp begun by the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection in 2017.³

Boxes, Suitcases, and Optical Instruments – Referencing Marcel Duchamp

With a homage to the work, personality, and spirit of the artist Marcel Duchamp, visitors to the exhibition *Perspectives. Futurisms* will be welcomed and introduced to the ‘multi-perspective’ theme of artworks from the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection spanning seven decades. The initial part of our Berlin exhibition shows Marcel Duchamp's famous miniature ‘museum in a suitcase,’ the *Boîte-en-valise*, here re-edited by Mathieu Mercier, placed in a complex dialogue with other works from the collection: unusually stocked suitcases by Jan Henderikse and Yin Xiuzhen, a painting by Shūsaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins dedicated to Duchamp, renderings of optical themes by Robin Rhode and Kayode Ojo, a carpet object by Elisabetta Benassi dedicated to Jean-Luc Godard, and an enigmatic reflection painting by Sylvan Lianni.



Marcel Duchamp + Mathieu Mercier, *Marcel Duchamp: De ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy (Boîte-en-valise) de ou par Mathieu Mercier*, 2015
Facsimile, 37.1 × 38 × 7.8 cm

Spread out on a large table, inviting visitors to use it, the miniature retrospective museum in a suitcase of Duchamp is found, here in a newly edited version published by French conceptual artist Mathieu Mercier. The title of the work is *De ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy (Boîte-en-valise) de ou par Mathieu Mercier* [From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy (Box in a Valise) from or by Mathieu Mercier].⁴ Mercier worked for five years to produce this recreation of Marcel Duchamp's work, originally produced between 1935 and 1941 with the goal of the increased communication, portability, and salability of his life's work up to that point, here optimized for ease-of-use and price in a contemporary version.

The original, *De ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy (La Boîte-en-valise)* [From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy (The Box in a Valise)], 1935-1941 [Schwarz No. 484],⁵ one of the seminal artistic works of the 20th century, appeared in various series and vary-

ing configurations in about 300 copies. The new edition, initiated by Mathieu Mercier and published by Walther König, includes reproductions of *The Large Glass* on Plexiglas, color renditions of Duchamp's paintings, reproductions of his drawings, and a selection of his humorous texts, as well as a glass vial filled with Parisian air, a urinal, a small dispenser of sugar, some 'canned chance,' and other objects.

Since the publication of Duchamp/Mercier's *Boîte-en-valise* in 2015, Mercier has continued to intensively explore Duchamp's conceptual work ideas. In the making is a 'cabinet de curiosité' based on the work concepts mentioned by Duchamp in interviews or described by him in his notes, as well as on readymades that are today lost; based, in a word, on immaterial works to which Mercier gives a material reality as 'posthumous' readymades. "All items," Mercier says, "are from the time where Duchamp evocated them. In a way the readymades I have are more original



Jan Henderikse, *Money Money Money*, 1986
Plastic suitcase with diverse objects
38.5 × 46.5 × 14.5 cm

than the ones Arturo Schwartz did in 1964! This 'cabinet de curiosité' gives a perfect context of Marcel's work and shows his capacity to find symbols and meaning in his very close environment."⁶

The concept of the miniature museum in a suitcase, first implemented by Duchamp as a portable and marketable mini-retrospective, has created diverse echoes in the 20th century. One of the artists who was already reacting to Duchamp's new conception of what an 'artwork' could be in the early 1960s is Jan Henderikse. Henderikse studied at the Free Academy of Visual Art in The Hague. It was on his initiative that the first Art Informel exhibition took place in the cafeteria of Delft University in 1958, from which the Nederlandse Informel group emerged. In 1959 Henderikse moved to Cologne, where he created his first assemblages using trash and found objects. He made contact with artists from the ZERO and Nouveau réalisme circles and became a member of the Dutch Nul Group. Henderikse

settled on Curaçao from 1963 to 1967, continuing to fill empty crates with trash and creating serial works using photographs—some taken himself, some found by chance and inserted as readymades—along with money and license plates. From the mid-1970s onward, Henderikse again turned to the full spectrum of monetary-related fetish objects: coins, toys, and kitsch ephemera. The artist was interested in the fact that money is a material that occasions a collision of individually, psychologically, and socially motivated yearnings and wishes with a high degree of abstraction in terms of the values and norms connected with monetary exchanges. His suitcase object *Money Money Money* from 1986, which collects toy money from a wide variety of cultural and national sources, can be seen in this context. In parallel, artists' books became an important medium for Henderikse, allowing his conceptual photographic projects to be circulated outside of entrenched museum and gallery contexts.

For her series *Portable Cities*, the artist Yin Xiuzhen creates abstract models of international metropolitan cities in the standardized form of a travel suitcase. From pieces of clothing she collects from the respective cities, the artist sews textile souvenirs that are informed by her memories of the specific place. With its highly typical buildings—landmarks like the central train station, the Staatsgalerie, and the Mercedes-Benz Museum—the model included in the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection can be readily recognized as the city of Stuttgart. From brightly colored fabrics sourced from Stuttgart inhabitants, she forms a new, though not necessarily coherent, ensemble: an eclectic and, in any case, striking miniature city that makes no pretense of being a to-scale depiction. Despite their souvenir-like quality and plush materials, this series of works also reveals certain hard-edged implications critical of consumerism. Painstakingly handmade from old items of clothing, these sculptures

Yin Xiuzhen, *Portable City Stuttgart*, 2010
Suitcase, used clothes, sound installation
120 × 140 × 85 cm



stand in direct contrast with industrial mass-produced textiles, many of which are produced in China under what are often inhumane working conditions. To complete the scenes, Yin Xiuzhen archives the cities' aural landscape: rising from out of the suitcases, one can hear the sounds of the various metropolises.

A decisive turning point for Duchamp, artistically as well as personally, occurred with the rejection of his 1912 painting *Nu descendant un escalier n° 2* [Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2].⁷ His brothers had passed on the message from his fellow Paris artists that the painting submitted by Duchamp did not reflect what the jury had in mind for the 1912 annual Salon des Indépendants exhibition and that he should, at very least, alter its title.⁸ In line with his growing aversion to a 'retinal' painting style wholly based on the sense of sight, this event provided reason enough for Duchamp to stop producing paintings in a traditional

Kayode Ojo, *Let him speak*, 2020
Mixed media, 48.3 × 51.4 × 31.8 cm



manner. The insight he took away from this incident could perhaps be summarized as follows: that the medium of painting seemed contaminated by societal assignments of meaning, outmoded conventions, and interpretations fixed by art history. Any deviating intention on the artist's part would inevitably fall into an abyss of illegibility. It must surely have seemed to him that any forward-looking communication, open to new ideas, between the artist and the public, or even between artists themselves, was scarcely any longer possible. A year later, in 1913, Duchamp received unexpected recognition for his work, as *Nu descendant un escalier n° 2* became a scandalous success at the New York *Armory Show*.

Michael Sayles makes reference to Duchamp's 'painting of the century' with his pictorial object *Naked Woman in African Mask Descending a Staircase*, 2019, a collage of cut-out canvas forms, pencil, acrylic, and glue on canvas. In French, 'nu' is a gender-neutral term. Similarly, both the German 'Akt' and the English 'nude' do not specify a gender. Duchamp's motif is a moving body constructed in the Cubist manner: a mechanical sequence, diagonally traversing the canvas. The title chosen by Sayles for his work defines the figure's gender as female, but crowns 'her' with a West African helmet-mask reserved for men that dominates the picture with its fantastic structure. Thus, Sayles pushes the gender play already inherent in Duchamp's work further by putting a mask reserved for men on 'her,' the nude. According to the artist, the title could also have been "Naked Woman in African Mask for a Male but She Doesn't Care because She Is European," making it clear that here gender determination has been transferred into the canon of appropriated works,

into the discourse of cultural theft and colonial suppression.

The radical concept of Marcel Duchamp's work is responded to in yet another way in the works of Arakawa + Gins. Since 1963, the pair, who resided in New York, were at work on the idea of a Gesamtkunstwerk that could encompass architecture and the human body, poetry and philosophy.

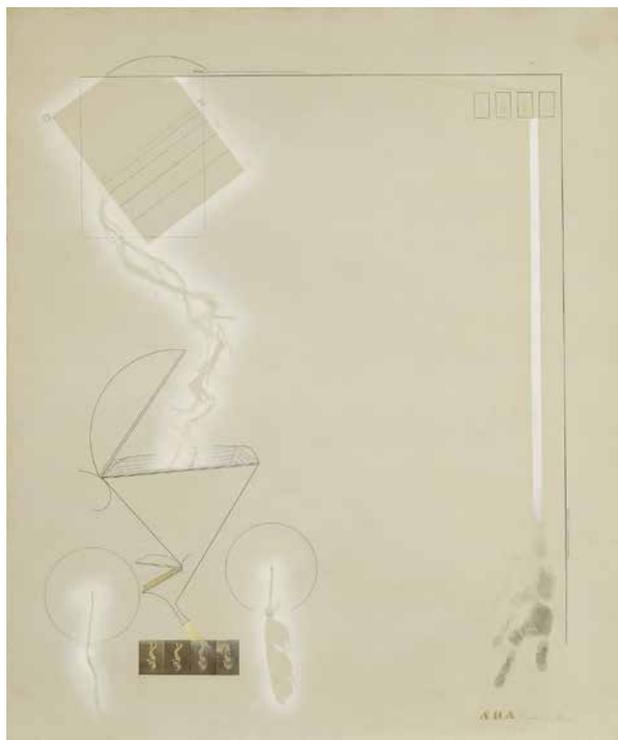
In their paintings from the 1960s, Gins + Arakawa developed their own language of conceptual painting. It is a poetic combination of signs, concepts, and graphic elements set against the white ground of Zen philosophy's 'emptiness.' The conceptual images take on color and form only in the viewer's imagination. Arakawa, who moved from Japan to New York in 1961 and began his studies in philosophy and linguistics there, made friends with Marcel Duchamp, who was 75 years old at the time. Arakawa was active as a painter, filmmaker, and performance artist. In 1963, Arakawa met the artist and philosopher Madeline Gins, and together with her developed a monumental conceptual painting project, *The Mechanism of Meaning*, from 1963–73, that was directed explicitly against what they felt to be the soulless geometries of classical Minimal Art that was dominating New York at the time.

The painting *Untitled*, 1963/64, varies the theme of geometric object drawings typical of Duchamp's early work. The floating form with open lid, resembling a urinal, could refer to Duchamp's famous readymade *Fountain* from 1917 (Schwarz No. 345), just as the interaction of the elements in the painting refers to his early masterpiece *The Large Glass*. The inverted photocopies in the lower part of the work reproduce a detail from one of Eadweard

Arakawa + Gins

Untitled, 1964/65

Acrylic, lead- and color-pencils,
ink and paper collage on primed
canvas, 131 × 109.5 cm



Muybridge's (1830-1904) legendary photographic movement studies from around 1887-90, which in turn inspired Duchamp's early, scandalous image *Nu descendant un escalier n° 2*, which became legendary at the New York Armory Show of 1913.

We can read the work of Robin Rhode in our exhibition in relation to Marcel Duchamp's optical studies, which continued over decades, even if Rhode certainly did not intend any direct reference to a specific work. Rhode's artworks include site-specific wall murals, drawings, performances, photographic series, videos, and sculptures. Their central themes include race, class, and geopolitics. *Pan's Opticon Studies*, from 2009, shows a young Black person in a suit and hat, his face turned away from the viewer. His eyes are connected to the wall by an architect's compass or forceps, evoking associations with anthropological measuring instruments. These technical devices suggest that our view of the world can be defined by constructive and cognitive processes but is also determined by them. *Pan's Opticon Studies* explores the process of art making in its relations with antiquated doctrines of the visual. The title of the series is a play on 'panopticon,' a prison building conceived by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham, in which all the inmates can be observed from a central location without their knowledge. The figure, who represents 'Pan' as a fictional human character, uses an architect's calipers as a tool of 'mass observation,' though he himself is situated under 'observational tension.'

We can also locate Kayode Ojo's sculpture in the context of optical studies and experimental arrangements. Like relics, optical

sample boxes, or sterilized medical equipment in an aseptic environment, Kayode Ojo's sculptures stand as shimmering objects in space. They are seductive, inviting one to touch them, though at the same time they seem to require that a respectful distance be maintained. In 2018, at the age of 28, Ojo presented his first solo exhibitions in Paris, Berlin, New York, and Dallas. The son of Nigerian immigrants, Kayode Ojo grew up in Tennessee and studied photography at the School of Visual Arts in New York. In addition to the medium of photography, he works on installations inspired by film and theater. As the basis of the sculpture *Let him speak*, from 2020, Ojo uses contemporary versions of AMAC boxes, cleanly designed storage boxes created by the American designer Gene Hurwitt in 1965 that are part of MoMA's design collection. The artist acquires most of the integrated technical and optical instruments cheaply on eBay. The display, constructed from Plexiglas, mirror, and wood, upgrades their contents' appearance into jewel-like luxury goods. Theories, objects, and drawings from the contexts of optics, perspective, and technical innovation around 1900, as well as the infiltration of everyday things into the sphere of art, define the early work of Marcel Duchamp—perhaps we can read Kayode Ojo's work in part as a reference to that great 20th-century shatterer of meaning.

We have also integrated into the environment of Duchamp references a pictorial object, a wall-mounted carpet by Elisabetta Benassi, titled *Anyone in the Street*, 2018, which refers to a seemingly insignificant historical detail in film history: in 1968, filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard was invited to give a lecture on his work at the National Film Theater



Marcel Duchamp, *Nu descendant un escalier n° 2*, 1912
Oil on canvas, 147 × 89.2 cm
Philadelphia Museum of Art



Sylvan Lionni, *Reflector (black) II*, 2021
Mixed media on aluminum, 2 plates
Each 116.9 × 87.6 cm

in London. By telegram, Godard curtly declined, suggesting instead that they give his fee to a random person on the street. He writes, with return address Neuilly-sur-Seine: "IF [I] AM NOT THERE TAKE ANYONE IN THE STREET THE POOREST IF POSSIBLE GIVE HIM MY 100 POUNDS AND TALK WITH HIM OF IMAGES AND SOUND AND YOU WILL LEARN FROM HIM MUCH MORE THAN FROM ME BECAUSE IT IS THE POOR PEOPLE WHO ARE REALLY INVENTING THE LANGUAGE STOP YOUR ANONYMOUS GODARD."

The artist Elisabetta Benassi commented: "In 2008 at the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Rome, an exhibition dedicated to Mario Schifano was held. Bill Clinton was visiting. The police stopped the presidential convoy that was to pass in front of the museum because a large "NO" was displayed on the façade and they feared it could suggest a protest. I thought there were a lot of interesting 'No's.' From that idea I transferred various telegrams into image objects: one sent by Jean-Luc Godard to refuse a radio interview. Nono, like Pascali and other artists at the 1968 Venice Biennale, turned the paintings around and said precisely: no! This telegram has nothing urgent to announce and it actually arrives 50 years later. It hangs on the wall even though it is a rug you can walk on. It is an 'anti-gravity device,' that cancels out and defies gravity, a flying carpet that instantly transports us to faraway places. It is also a time machine, a bridge between the past and the present, written by the Italian composer Luigi Nono at the Venice Biennale, from me to you."⁹

The combination of painting and photography, the visual withdrawal of recognizable imagery, and the shadowy thematization of

the artist's studio all work to place Sylvan Lionni's painting *Reflector (black) II*, 2021, in the context of Duchamp. Lionni pursues painting as a kind of mimetic readymade process. The artist dismisses classical painterly decisions as arbitrary choices of color and composition, turning instead to the graphic and semantic surfaces of his immediate surroundings. In a series of large-scale paintings entitled *Reflector*, Lionni explores the meaning of the monochrome in contemporary painting, combining it with an extremely sophisticated use of photographic-painting techniques. The lower half of the painting consists of a photographed section of the studio, with chairs and ladder in front of a blank wall, covered in multiple layers of paint. Door-like in scale, window-like in format, and yet installed like a full-length mirror, *Reflector (black) II* translates the tradition of the black monochrome, as it began with Kazimir Malevich and shaped 20th-century art, into painting that closes itself off and at the same time opens itself to a reflection of the studio as a place of ideation, contemplation, and production. The pictorial object thus reflects the integration of one's own actions into the history of painting, but at the same time, in the photographic reflection of the artist's studio, ventures a perspective view of other, new options and formulations.

Views, Reflections, Perspective Constructions

As a commissioned work for our exhibition *Perspectives. Futurisms*, the artist Albert Weis has designed a spatial installation consisting of two multiply angled wall elements, each of which is laminated with a shiny black-blue metallic mirror film. Weis refers in the work to two characteristic spatial situations

in the foyer of the Berliner Philharmonie, designed by architect Hans Scharoun. The perspectival multiplication brought about by the installation is, as Weis writes “reminiscent of utopian spatial models and the crystalline spatial concepts of Bruno Taut and Scharoun. Through their own movements and reflections, viewers find themselves at the very center of the installation. At the same time, however, via the continuously changing perception of space and the resulting visual effects, they are also subtly and intuitively challenged to confront their own selves as well as their relationship to the immediate surroundings.”

Physically integrated into the installation by Albert Weis, we exhibit recent acquisitions from Zanele Muholi and Ann-Kathrin Müller.

Kirstin Arndt, *Ohne Titel*, 2009
MDF, 120 × 80 × 28.8 cm



Zanele Muholi’s three-part photographic work from 2020, entitled *Zibandlela VI, III and II, The Sails, Durban*, is a portrait of the artist, who, through complexly staged reflections and refractions, eludes and obscures their own physiognomy and facial expressions, whereby, however, gestures, expressions, and the relationship with the viewer via the gaze are almost oppressively condensed in a provocative reversal. The spatial situation remains disconcertingly open and undefined, though seemingly intimate. Both the towel twisted into a turban worn by the sitter and the cropping of the image just above their breast leave open the gender of the person we have before us. In a very immediate manner, the artist comments on gender, queer self-positioning, and identity as a mirrored hall of self-formations that appear and disappear again. Moving

Ina Weber, *Nest of Tables*, 2006
Acrylic on canvas, dimensions variable



beyond this, the artist reflects pictorially on the hair-thin, though almost painfully palpable boundary between, as Rimbaud formulated it, ‘Je’ and “Je est un autre.”

Nora Bergbreiter writes in this brochure about the works of Ann-Kathrin Müller, which refer to the photographic perspective constructions of early Modernism: “The *Le Corbusier* house, a complex of two semi-detached houses designed by the architecture greats Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret on the Weisenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart, one of 33 prototype houses created for the Deutsche Werkbund exhibition *Die Wohnung* in 1927, provides the backdrop for one of Ann-Kathrin Müller’s black-and-white photo series. The square format work *Vantage Point (1)* depicts a light, elegantly pleated curtain that is closed, diffusing the sunlight from outside. The three-part series *Tamerlan* works in a similar vein. The third image in the series, a self-portrait of the artist, was acquired by the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection. The gloved hands of the photographer rest on a reflective surface. With a tense posture and an expressive look on her face, she appears to gaze beyond the static framing of the photograph. The woman’s clothes—her textured bathing cap, black dress, and gloves—recall the fashions of the 1920s and 30s.”

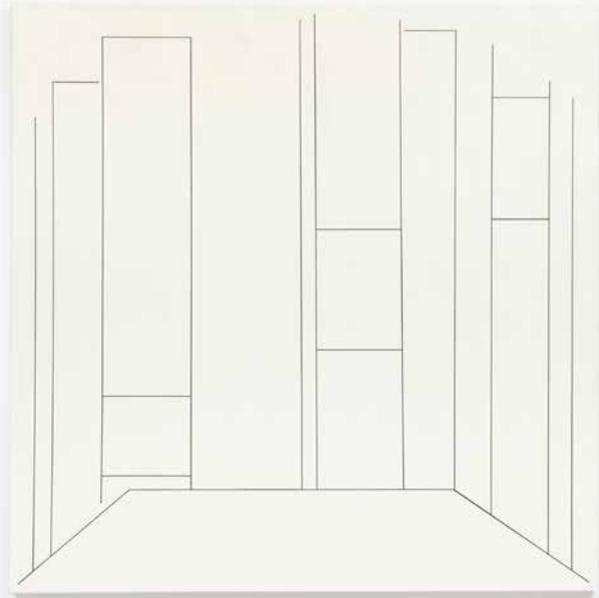
Wolfgang Berkowski artistically deconstructs and analyzes forms of communication as well as their meaning and relationships with each other. The diversity of his materials is iconographic, ranging from video, architectural installations, performance, and objects to drawings. Berkowski began his work group *Daily Paintings*, which, among other things, work with linear perspective spatial constructions, on September 23, 2010 and was, theo-



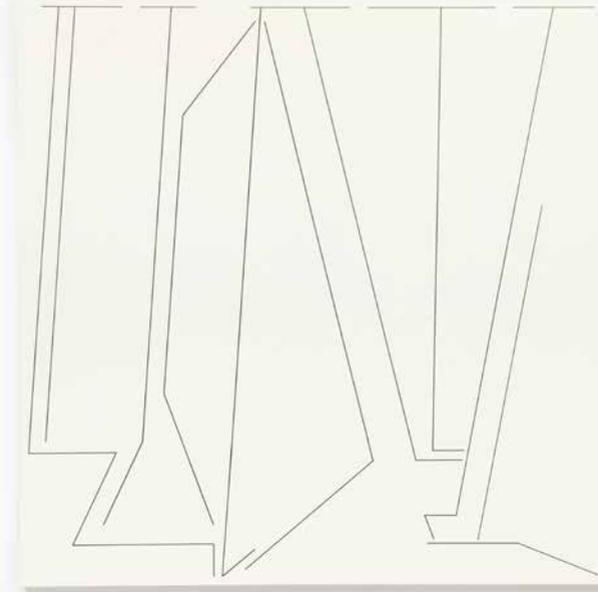
Julian Opie, *Sian Walking 3*, 2013
Computer animation on LCD screen
122 × 70 × 10 cm

retically, designed to go on infinitely. An image was designed every day, paired with a text fragment from a daily newspaper and published as a computer-generated image on the Internet. Two distinct lines of narration emerge: the diagrams on the wall (the diary, the private, the repellent sign, the—by definition—incomprehensibility of strangers) and the titles on the ground (a continuously evolving and dissolving novel, or, perhaps, a reality that takes place in a perpetual continuum between the serious and the banal). These two lines enter into a relationship that defines the work as a whole. As the artist put it: “The form that dominates the painting element comes from my practice of *Präzise Zeichnungen* [Precise

Wolfgang Berkowksi, *Daily Paintings [Upper class Twit Bertie...DP31/23.10.2010]*, 2010
Daily Paintings [An old woman, reporting... DP179/20.3.2011], 2011
Acrylic on canvas, rubber
200 × 200 cm / 130 × 200 cm



Upper-class twit Bertie Wooster identifies six varieties of hangover: the Broken Compass, the Sewing Machine, the Comet, the Atomic, the Cement Mixer and the Gremlin Boogie. (DP31) 23.10.2010



An old woman, reporting her husband's disappearance to the authorities, finally reveals that it had happened 43 years ago and announces: "I'm starting to miss him." (DP179) 20.3.2011



Rupprecht Geiger
Zeichnung Gr. I/94, 1994
 Graphite on paper, 150 × 254 cm

Drawings], a group of works that I began in 1987 and have continued ever since. In this work, art (the publicly presented) and the person (the private) are inextricably linked.”¹⁰

Horizons, Bird's Eye Views

Since the mid-1980s, Ding Yi's work has played a significant role in the reformulation of independent abstract painting in China. *Cross Sketches*, from 2009, oscillates between writing and drawing, with Ding Yi using a text and format that references China's ancient writing tradition. The picture's extremely long, horizontal format references the Chinese tradition of scroll paintings, whilst the technique of drawing in ink on rice paper references Chinese calligraphy. The gestural, intricate, almost ornamental language of the cross motifs can be associated with handwriting techniques. The title of the artwork, rendered in calligraphy, is situated within a verti-

cal field marking the termination of the right-hand side of the picture. Ding Yi's artworks grow, as it were, out of a time-consuming manual process, one which allows the cross shape to emerge as a visually and graphically variable raw material. Each of his paintings is a fragmentary section of a grid that extends beyond the edges of the image: an idealized, imagined hyperstructure offering, ideology-free and suspended in time, a space for communication between the artist-author and viewer-reader.

Rupprecht Geiger, one of the outstanding representatives of abstract painting in Germany, worked as an architect from 1936 to 1962. He began his painterly path as an autodidact. In the 1950s, Geiger became known for his preoccupation with the color red, which remained a major theme until his late work. Geiger's abstract paintings often show horizon lines and thinning color gradients: these can



Hiroe Saeki, *Untitled (HS 239, HS 240)*, 2017
 Pencil and acrylic on paper, 2 parts, each 76 × 163 cm



lift at the lower or upper edge in muted tones, condense into a more intensely luminous color, and with the brighter stripes act to lead the viewer's gaze outwards from the painting. This nature-inspired horizon theme can also be found in the artist's far less numerous works of drawing. An outstanding example, not least of all because of its oversized horizontal format, is the *Zeichnung Gr. I/94*, from 1994, in the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection. Geiger uses graphite to create a delicately gradient ground that merges upward into a luminous horizon. Beneath a large, darkly glistening bar at the lower edge of the picture, the artist places a relief-like, floating form, lighting brightly from behind, all of which can be interpreted as an abstract summary or transposition of vegetation or a sea horizon.

Richard Mosse's *Tristes Tropiques* features a series of large-scale photographic maps describing sites of environmental harm taking place across Brazil's "arc of deforestation." These topographical images in vibrant colors depict fragile organic matter dominated by extractive violence at the hands of humans. The colors are electrifying, but articulated over such detailed organic landscapes that they unmistakably reveal a highly vulnerable biome. They are living maps that show life, but also capture forest dieback, tipping points, and

ecological contamination. In her essay for this brochure, Nadine Isabelle Henrich writes: "Mosse used geographic information system (GIS) technology and processed thousands of multispectral images taken by drone over each site to create depth-perspective maps that highlight areas of environmental degradation. Multispectral imaging is used by scientific groups to detect deforestation and ecological damage and to locate areas of concentrated CO₂ release, toxic pollution, and other aspects of fragile ecosystem degradation."

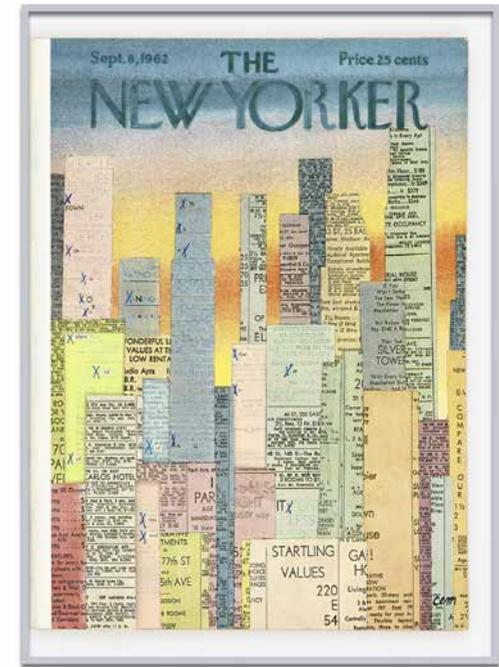
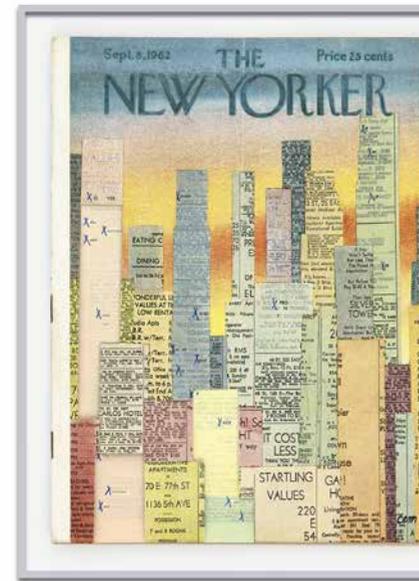
Windows, Doors, Screens

Born in London to Norwegian parents, Magnus Gjoen grew up across Europe in Switzerland, Denmark, Italy, and the United Kingdom. He studied design in London and worked in the Milan fashion industry before a decade-long career working for Vivienne Westwood back in London. Gjoen has described himself as having accidentally becoming an artist after receiving compliments on the creative decoration of his London flat whose walls were adorned by works by Old Masters reworked and recontextualized through additions and manipulations. Gjoen's work *Break Glass for a New Beginning (Adam and Eve): A pair*, from 2021, is inspired by Hans Memling's paintings *Adam and Eve*, 1485/1490, the antique Dutch work

Magnus Gjoen, *Break Glass for a New Beginning (Adam and Eve)*. A pair, 2021
Archival pigment inks on 310 GSM German etching paper, 2 parts, each 125 × 45 cm



Natalie Czech, *A Window View by Robert Creeley (Skyline)*, 2021
Archival inkjet prints, 2 parts
86.1 × 63.2 cm / 99 × 69.6 cm

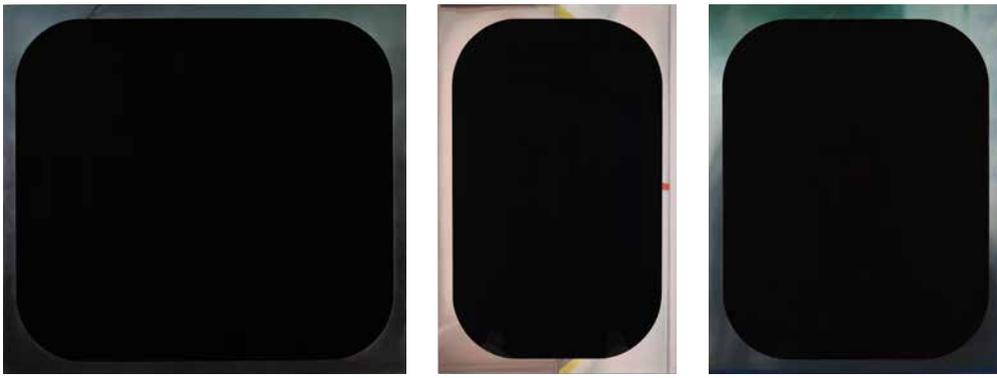


now found in the Gemäldegalerie of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. The *Adam and Eve* paintings were originally the outer wings of the multi-winged *St. John's Altarpiece* belonging to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, but were already separated from it by around 1650 so that they could be presented as independent works. Gjoens replaces the original stone-gray wall niches in which the painted figures stand with glass space capsules secured with metal straps, still marked 'fragile' with shipping tape for an imaginary space journey into the future.

Natalie Czech's photographic series *Window Views* is influenced by the political and social experiences during the 2020 lockdown. The motifs are based on historic covers from the iconic magazine *The New Yorker* from the 1960s, 70s, and 90s. The magazine, founded in 1925, is known for its cover illustrations, often showing interior scenes or window views. Czech's diptych work *A Window View by Robert*

Creeley (Skyline), from 2021, is based on a cover illustration by Charles E. Martin that was published in 1962. Referencing the city's varying standards of living, the cover shows the New York skyline as collaged from clippings of various real estate advertisements. Natalie Czech cut out some sections of the depicted advertisements, revealing the interior content of the magazine, then marked with crosses certain words to "spell out" a poem by Robert Creeley (1926–2005). As Czech has stated: "Original text, motif, and the found poem construct a dialogue that makes palpable all the sidelines between the said and the unsaid, the hidden and the visible, the political and the private."

The works of Florina Leinß are inspired by materials and manifestations from the environment, manufacturing, architecture, and advertising. She creates abstract images that oscillate between surface and space, industri-



Florina Leinß
 High gloss varnish, oil on MDF
 pic174.21black screen, 2021 100 × 100 cm
 pic175.21black screen, 2021 100 × 65 cm
 pic176.21black screen, 2021 100 × 80 cm

ally manufactured qualities and painterly style. Leinß studied at the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart and the Edinburgh College of Art, Scotland. In addition to her artistic work, she has taught at universities and academies since 2013.

At first glance, her three works *black screens*, from 2021, appear to be an unusual contribution to our exhibition, if one judges by the show's title. How can these black, meticulously lacquered, reflective images fit into the theme of 'Perspectives. Futurisms'? Dark surfaces are set atop a diffuse painted ground visible only at the works' outer edges. Viewing them, one is tempted to swipe the eye across their surface as though they are the touchscreens of a smart phone or iPad. The deep black, reflective centers of the images are, on the one hand, like black holes, and, on the other, like projection screens that offer themselves both to their surroundings, through reflection, and to the viewer for as-yet unarticulated images and ideas. The corners are rounded, like the windows in an airplane or train, or like digital screens. A screen that does not itself emit but, rather, leaves space for the imagination of the individual.

Notes

- 1 Full title: *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* [The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even] (1915–1923)
- 2 Pierre Cabanne. *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. Ron Padgett. London: Thames and Hudson, 1971, 31.
- 3 Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Perspectives. Futurisms. Ref. Marcel Duchamp & Marcel Proust. Works from the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection*, September 16, 2022–March 28, 2023. Mercedes-Benz Contemporary, Berlin. Curator: Renate Wiehager. See: *Duchamp & Proust: Renaissance of Perspectives*, ed. by Renate Wiehager with Katharina Neuburger. Cologne: Snoeck, 2017; *Marcel Duchamp. The Curatorial Work. Chronology of Curated Shows and Collections*, ed. by Renate Wiehager. Cologne: Snoeck 2019; *Duchamp and the Women: Friendship, Collaboration, Network*, ed. by Renate Wiehager with Katharina Neuburger. Cologne: Snoeck, 2020. See also: *On the Subject of the Ready-Made or Using a Rembrandt as an Ironing Board: Works from the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection selected by Bethan Huws on the occasion of 100 years of the ready-made*, ed. by Renate Wiehager and Dieter Association Paris, exh. cat. Mercedes-Benz Contemporary, Berlin, 2016. The publication can be ordered online. *31: Women*, ed. by Renate Wiehager, exh. cat. Mercedes-Benz Contemporary, Berlin 2020: 200217_31women_DEUTSCH_Web.pdf [last accessed on June 30, 2022]. Renate Wiehager. "Wanted. Marcel Duchamp. Curating, Networking, and Collaborating with Women of the Cultural Avant-Garde." In *Marcel Duchamp: The Invention of the Present*, Poiesis 5: Schriftenreihe des Duchamp-Forschungszentrums Schwerin. Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 2020: 190–201. Five Lecture Talks (in German with engl. subtitles): <https://www.mercedes-benz.art/duchamp-dialogue-lectures> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].

- 4 *Marcel Duchamp: De ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rrose Sélavy (Boîte-en-valise) de ou par Mathieu Mercier* [From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rrose Sélavy (Box in a Valise) from or by Mathieu Mercier]. Facsimile of the Edition G 1968 + Glissière contenant un Moulin à Eau en métaux voisins. Designed and edited by Mathieu Mercier and supervised by Association Marcel Duchamp. ©2015 VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn, ADAGP, Paris, succession Marcel Duchamp and Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne. Production: C + C Printing, Hong Kong. Green covered cardboard box containing 81 miniature replicas and reproductions of loose sheets of color illustrations on boards, large formats partly folded, and mounted leaves and die-cuts, all with title labels, mostly on black background. 1st edition 2015, 2nd edition 2021 of the bookstore Walther König, edition each of 3,000 copies. Box dimensions: 37.1 × 38 cm, height 7.8 cm.
- 5 In a letter to his friend and collector Katherine S. Dreier from 1935, Duchamp first mentioned his plan to produce a book-like album containing his most important works in miniature form; six years later, in 1941, the first copies of his *La Boîte-en-valise* [The Box in a Valise] were published in Paris. This was the phase in which Duchamp not only shared all essential artistic considerations with his partner Mary Reynolds, but also worked with her on the most important questions of practical execution, and, one may assume, that her book-binding workshop was the starting point and the arena for many technical and conceptual decisions. Ecke Bonk drew attention to Reynolds' collaboration with Duchamp in his major study on Duchamp's *La Boîte-en-valise* in 1989: she stitched some of the small leather objects, *Traveler's Folding Item*, for the *Boîte* and together they developed the design for a version of the *Boîte* in plywood. By 1949, twenty-four editions had been produced in this form; the other editions in a simpler box were completed by the mid-1960s. From 1941 onwards, Joseph Cornell and Xenia Cage were involved in assembling the objects for *La Boîte-en-valise*. In 1954, through his friends Henri-Pierre Roché and William Copley, Duchamp met the French publisher, author, typographer, and bookbinder of Georgian origin Iliazd (Iliia Zdanevitch), who designed an alternative model of the box for him. In March of that year, Duchamp was able to send Iliazd the contents for 175 further copies of *La Boîte-en-valise* from New York, and initially commissioned the completion of thirty copies. In 1961, Jacqueline Matisse Monnier, Alexina Duchamp's daughter from her first marriage, offered to continue the task of assembling boxes in New York.
- 6 Email to the author, July 2, 2022.
- 7 Arturo Schwarz. *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp*. New York: Delano Greenidge Editions, 2000, cat. no. 242, 562.
- 8 Pierre Cabanne. *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*, trans. by Ron Padgett. New York: Da Capo Press, 1987, 31.
- 9 Email to the author, March 12, 2022. See also the BFI Website with the original telegram: <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news/godards-telegram> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 10 Email to the author, December 3, 2014.

Afrofuturisms: Then and Now

— Visions, Imaginings, and Transformations

“The historical reason that we’ve been so impoverished in terms of future images is because, until fairly recently, as a people we were systematically forbidden any images of our past.”¹ (Samuel R. Delany)

In 1987, the African American author and literary critic Hortense J. Spillers introduced her essay “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book” as follows: “My country needs me, and if I were not here, I would have to be invented.”² Her statement neatly embodies the transformative power of imagination that forms the pulse of an artistic practice commonly known as ‘Afrofuturism.’ Almost thirty years after Mark Dery first coined the term, Afrofuturism has advanced far beyond the sphere of literature to become an umbrella term for a wide range of different artistic, cinematic, musical, and design positions. Responding to the popular but, in some cases, imprecise and largely aesthetic use of the term, Magdalena Stotter recently suggested, referencing the work of Milumbe Haimbe, that Afrofuturism be read primarily as “a strategy of queering the genres.”³

The following text seeks to approach the artistic, literary, and popular culture phenomena that fall under the term of Afrofuturism against the backdrop of a shift in perspective.

Afrofuturism is a cultural, artistic, and theoretical phenomenon that can be observed in various communities of the African diaspora, especially since the 1970s. It is distinct from ‘Africanfuturism,’⁴ which is focused on African cultures, histories, and mythologies rather than on the experience of the diaspora.⁵

This differentiation is relevant to this text insofar as it seeks to connect the experience of a radical shift in perspective, by the violent displacement in the context of enslavement, that characterizes the African diaspora, with the dynamization of time and space in the Afrofuturist imagination. In addition to the aforementioned work of Hortense J. Spillers, this text arises out of a dense web of ideas by authors, curators, artists, and theorists with a shared diasporic identity.

As the curator Mark Sealy aptly puts it, in reference to the African diaspora: “Africa is everywhere, isn’t it?” He derives from this the need to reject geographical narratives in favor of more overarching cosmological concepts: “I want to elevate our way of thinking, from geography, to cosmology.”⁶ Himself a member of the African diaspora in the United Kingdom, Sealy’s work approaches ‘Africa’ as a concept, an idea, and a dynamic cultural space, rather



Michael Sayles, *Naked Woman in African Mask*
Descending a Staircase, 2019
Canvas, acrylic and glue on canvas, pencil
145 × 86.8 × 6.8 cm

than viewing the continent as a “place of extraction.”⁷

The works of prominent authors such as Octavia E. Butler and Samuel R. Delany link historical traumas, like the enslavement of African and African American people or the oppression of queer and homosexual people, to fictional scenarios of the future and technological fantasies. The brutality, arbitrariness, and irrationality of fictionalized racist, sexist, classist, and heteronormative power structures as revealed in Afrofuturist stories serves as the basis for questioning supposedly normative conditions in real life. In this way, science fiction deals not only in the imagined, but also serves to dynamize and relativize the perspective of the dominant narrative as presented by white male authors both now and in the past.

In the 1980s, Octavia E. Butler’s *Xenogenesis* trilogy transformed the conventions of binary gender norms by describing the emergence of a third, fluid gender. Butler’s Afrofuturism serves as an example of the practical expression of imagination and empowerment. It is an understanding of Afrofuturism that uses fictional worlds and the allure of their futuristic, technoid aesthetics and hybrid characters as a catalyst for transforming the present day.

Transtemporal Dialogues: Perspective Matters

The preparation of this text occasioned a re-reading of “Black to the Future,” an interview published in 1993 that serves as a kind of foundational work for the dialogue around Afrofuturism. Mark Dery, a white American cultural critic, formulated the first definition of Afrofuturism in the essay’s foreword:

“Speculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-Amer-



Zanele Muholi
Zibandlela VI, III und II, The Sails, Durban, 2020
Silver gelatin print, triptych, each 45.5 × 70 cm

ican concerns in the context of twentieth-century technoculture—and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future—might, for want of a better term, be called ‘Afrofuturism.’”⁸

As such, Afrofuturism emerged in the absence of a term to describe the Black futuristic imagination in science fiction literature. The author re-read “Black to the Future” as a PDF that is freely available to download online from the University of Victoria in Canada.⁹ The PDF includes comments by a reader with the username ‘Lebron,’ who added a total of 98 annotations and comments to the PDF in 2017 before posting it online. In this way, Mark Dery and the three interviewees, Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose, are accompanied by an additional voice who interjects into the conversation at a remove in terms of both time and space. As a result, the voice of Lebron accompanied this author’s re-reading of the essay, creating the impression of a small group of people repeatedly whispering comments to each other as they read the text together.

The perspective of Lebron, which takes the form of marginal notes, unauthorized annotations, and comments in red pen, is particularly prominent at one of the key moments of the text: Mark Dery asks the African American



science fiction author Samuel R. Delany why the latter does not mention the “orbital Rastas” in William Gibson’s *Neuromancer* in his essay “Is Cyberpunk a Good Thing or a Bad Thing?,” with Dery observing that he reads the “orbital Rastas” as a community of autonomous Black fantasy figures who could be seen as predecessors to imagined Black protagonists in cyberpunk and science fiction. What follows is a spectacular passage in which Delany concisely and casually decodes, relativizes, and criticizes Dery’s white perspective in the reception of the Black characters created by the white author Gibson and distances himself from the “orbital Rastas”:

“You’ll forgive me if, as a black reader, I didn’t leap up to proclaim this passing presentation of a powerless and wholly nonoppositional set of black dropouts, by a Virginia-born white writer, as the coming of the black millennium in science fiction; but maybe that’s just a black thang...”¹⁰

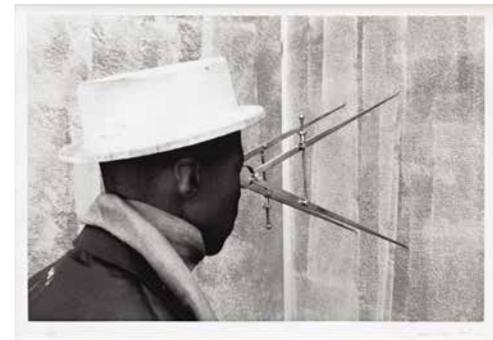
This quote from Delany is accompanied by a euphoric expression of Lebron’s approval: A large “Ha!!!” is scrawled diagonally across the passage. In this author’s imagination, this represents a moment in which Lebron becomes a Black reader who directly identifies with Delany and his criticism. Delany’s reply is no less thrilling for the white reader, but it also echoes the problematic nature of Dery’s question, which



becomes evident only from the white reader’s perspective as a result of Delany’s response. Individual perspective clearly changes the meaning of the text as received—and, in this example, perspective actively impacts the definition of what constitutes the canon of important literature. Black characters in stories by white authors are in no way comparable to Black voices in literature and are distinct from Black characters created by Black authors. The dialogue between the white cultural critic Mark Dery and the Black science fiction author Samuel R. Delany is also an interesting moment in the emergence of Afrofuturism as a cultural practice because it highlights the friction, the differences, the probing, and the dialogue between Black and white perspectives in America in the 1990s and beyond. Perspective matters.

The diasporic experience of a perspectival shift exposes supposedly static orders as local, temporary, and constructed, and counters them in art and literature with alternative imagined worlds in which fundamentally different forms of community, gender, and identity exist.

The poet, cultural theorist, and philosopher Édouard Glissant, born in Martinique in 1928, placed instances of transition, tremors, transformations, and intertwining—natural phenomena in the Caribbean islands that are key themes of his writing—at the heart of his “archi-



Robin Rhode
Pan's Opticon Studies, 2009
 Photo engravings on Somerset 300g
 5 parts, each 54 × 78 cm

pelagic thinking.”¹¹ He contrasts “archipelagic thinking” with “continental thinking,” which is based on a power structure of (supposed) certainty, ossification, walls, and demarcations. In Glissant’s reasoning, the diasporic experience provides the backdrop to the development of central concepts such as “la relation” or “lieu-commun” (common-space), in which variety, diversity, and “creolization” come together in opposition to all forms of segregation, dichotomy, and polarization.

In an interview, artist Grada Kilomba describes the artistic practice of critically reflecting on colonial narratives and power structures in the present day:

“It is a collective colonial history that keeps interrupting our present with new and sophisticated politics of dehumanisation. A past that repeats itself in the present, like a ghost, because it has not been told properly and therefore remains at the level of denial. Denial is followed by guilt, guilt by shame, and shame by recognition, which allows for critical reflection to take place. This has enabled me and many other artists to develop work that experiments with how to elaborate a new language that goes beyond what was originally given to us.”¹²

Grada Kilomba breaks down the central motives, strategies, and concerns of Afrofuturist practice: an awareness of the way in which the present is interrupted by “colonial ghosts” that have to be addressed and transformed through new stories; cultural practice as a space for developing new languages and different stories outside of the traditional normative vocabulary; and literary and visual storytelling as a decolonial practice of “rewriting” and “re-signifying.” Afrofuturist artists and authors recognize the dehumanization described by Kilomba as one of the methods used in colonial power structures. In a next step, they reappropriate it and rewrite it: in Afrofuturist works, the relativization of humanity through classic science fiction tropes such as the man machine, the alien, or the mutant reads as freedom from human limitations and is introduced as a method of empowerment for Black characters and protagonists as a means of restructuring the world.

The American scientist and author Tina M. Campt also engages with futurity, the practice of developing empowering futures, from the perspective of a Black African American feminist. In her “Grammar of Black Futurity,”¹³ she develops approaches for expediting a cultural practice that works with the values, aesthetics, and forms of cooperation of an imagined

future rather than focusing on present-day conditions, thereby giving oppressed people the time and space of which they were systematically robbed in the past and whose impact is still being felt today—or, to quote Kilomba again: “Time and space are often stolen from the oppressed.”¹⁴

Beyond Geography and the Real: Cyberspace and the New Aesthetic

“Unlike what it suggests, Afrofuturism has nothing to do with Africa, and everything to do with cyberculture in the West. Bring on Sun Ra; techno mashups of DJ Spooky and the African American in outer space.”¹⁵

Since the 1990s, cyberspace has been a digital space that has helped to create a parallel world. Postcolonial discourses that engage critically with the colonization of real spaces are also becoming increasingly relevant for the power dynamics pushing to control and capitalize on the digital space. The history of Afrofuturism is closely tied to the development of global cyberspace and its interconnected, hybrid technocultural phenomena. The African American social and media scholar Anna Everett discusses the particular interest in cyberspace among diasporic communities:

“The hyperbolic rhetoric designating the Internet and the World Wide Web as ‘super information highways’ and as the gateway or on-ramp to the information age did not go unnoticed by the African diasporic community. While some remained skeptical of the discursive onslaught of utopic claims for the revolutionary digital democracy, many were affected by the gold rush mentality that seems to have triggered a bout of global cyber-fever.”¹⁶

In her book *Digital Diaspora: A Race for Cyberspace*, Everett traces the rise of Black cultural practice in cyberspace with a focus on the 1990s and shows Black users, online communities, developers, web designers, and initiatives to be key players and innovators in digital culture.

Cyberspace creates a second reality, opening up “a room of one’s own,”¹⁷ to use the words of Virginia Woolf. This creates space for “heterotopias,”¹⁸ a term coined by Michel Foucault in 1967 to describe the physical analogue of these “other spaces,” such as nightclubs, that are subject to different parameters and alternative dynamics than those that prevail in the normative public sphere. In its early days, the Internet offered a new space for people and communities whose real-life existence was



Robin Rhode
Pan's Opticon Studies, 2009
 Photo engravings on Somerset 300g
 5 parts, each 54 × 78 cm

curtailed by racist, heteronormative, neocolonial, repressive, or otherwise discriminatory power structures.

Today, the growing capitalization and commercialization of cyberspace as well as extractive data mining practices have left many of the hopes of the 1990s unfulfilled. At the same time, the continuous advancement of digital tools and virtual reality technologies, as well as the promise of a “metaverse,” are currently heralding the dawn of a new age of digital experience, one that will be fundamentally hybrid, as its constituent elements have become inseparable.

New momentum for the genuinely transformative potential of cyberspace is also being observed in the form of anti-racist and feminist protest movements such as Black Lives Matter

and #MeToo, which would have been all but impossible without the power of digital communication and organization. In 2012, author and artist James Bridle coined the term ‘New Aesthetic’¹⁹ to describe a form of visual language that does not permit the separation of the real and the digital, but that sees human and machine as a symbiotic amalgam. This link between real experience and epigenetic trauma and the possibilities of breaking free from aspects of ethnicity, gender, or otherwise socially constructed identities in the digital world, reinventing oneself in avatars and moving through different bodies, is characteristic of present-day Afrofuturism.

In 2020, the African American author Legacy Russell presented the latest literary iteration of theoretical approaches to the devel-

opment of futuristic diasporic cultural production in *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*.²⁰ She coined the term ‘Glitch Feminism’ in 2012 as a means of engaging with socio-technological constructs of gender and sexuality. Firmly rooted in the Afrofuturist tradition of reinterpreting motifs with negative connotations as empowering, self-determining narratives, she frames the queer perspective as a ‘glitch’ that can transform and reorder the normative structures that are increasingly also shaping capitalist cyberspace.

“Glitch Feminism [...] embraces the causality of ‘error,’ and turns the gloomy implication of glitch on its ear by acknowledging that an error in a social system that has already been disturbed by economic, racial, social, sexual, and cultural stratification and the imperialist wrecking-ball of globalization—processes that continue to enact violence on all bodies—may not, in fact, be an error at all, but rather a much-needed erratum.”²¹

When the values of a system are recognized as being racist, corrupt, neocolonial, etc., this changes the way in which disruptions to their processes are perceived: glitches, hacks, and errors become potentialities and tools of artistic expression.

Afrofuturism understands the futuristic imagination as a fundamental strategy for transforming current conditions. With its diverse approaches to content, methodologies, and aesthetic forms, Afrofuturism is a constantly self-differentiating field that continuously offers up new futures. Like the rising sun, which announces its arrival by illuminating the horizon and initially casts long shadows when it is still low in the sky, Afrofuturist art and literature help us to acknowledge the long shadows of the colonial past while directing our gaze toward a future that will brighten our present day.

Notes

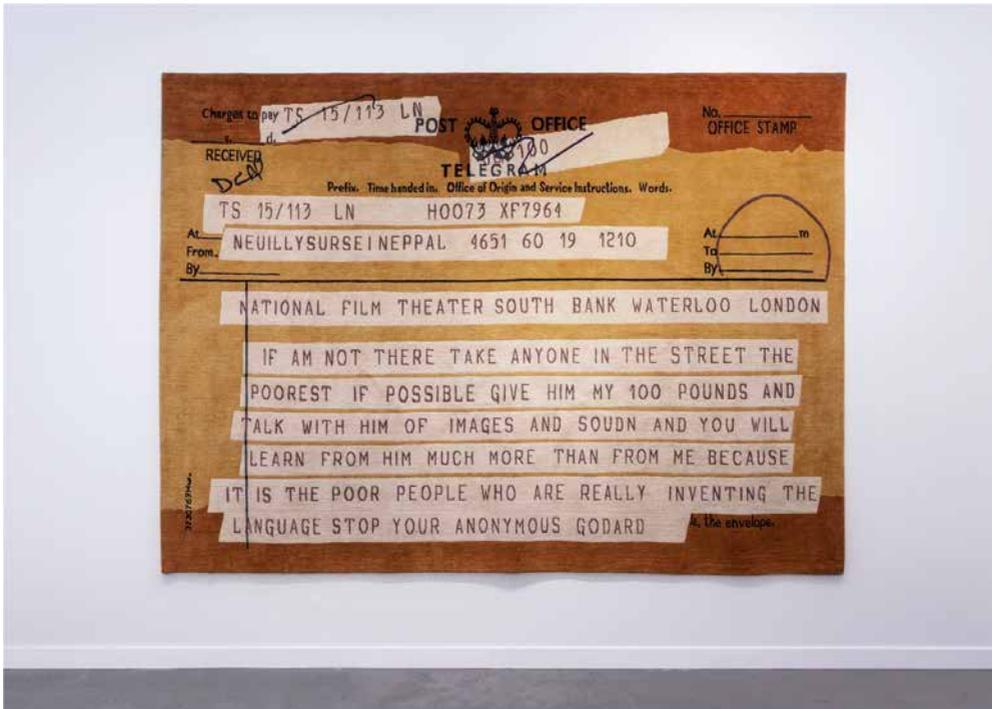
- 1 Mark Dery. “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose.” In *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyber Culture*, ed. by Mark Dery. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994: 190–191.
- 2 Hortense J. Spillers. “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book.” *Diacritics*, vol. 17, no. 2 (1987): 65.
- 3 Magdalena Stotter. “Did you say Afrofuturism? On labelling art.” Freie Universität Berlin (February 3, 2016): <https://wikis.fu-berlin.de/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=646989083> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 4 A term coined by Nnedi Okorafor. See Nnedi Okorafor. “Africanfuturism Defined.” In *Africanfuturism: An Anthology*, ed. by Wole Talabi. Chicago: Brittle Paper, 2020: 9–11: <https://brittlepaper.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Africanfuturism-An-Anthology-edited-by-Wole-Talabi.pdf> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 5 Although ‘Afrofuturism’ and ‘Africanfuturism’ are differentiated by their Afro-diasporic and African perspectives, they also share a range of hybrid and fluid positions.
- 6 Marigold Warner. “African Cosmologies: Photography, Time, and the Other.” *British Journal of Photography* (May 4, 2020): <https://www.1854.photography/2020/05/african-cosmologies-photography-time-and-the-other-mark-sealy/> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Mark Dery. “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose.” In *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyber Culture*, ed. by Mark Dery. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994: 180.
- 9 PDF with annotations available online at: <https://www.uvic.ca/victoria-colloquium/assets/docs/Black%20to%20the%20Future.pdf> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 10 Mark Dery. “Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, and Tricia Rose.” In *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyber Culture*, ed. by Mark Dery. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994: 195.
- 11 Édouard Glissant. *Philosophie de la relation: poésie en etendue*. Paris: Gallimard, 2009.
- 12 Victoria Adukwei Bulley. “Conversation: Grada Kilomba. Travelling between Time and Space.” *Frieze*, no. 228 (June/July/August 2022): 94.
- 13 Tina M. Campt. “Quiet Soundings: The Grammar of Black Futurity.” In *Listening to Images*, by Tina M. Campt. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017: 15.
- 14 Victoria Adukwei Bulley. “Conversation: Grada Kilomba. Travelling between Time and Space.” *Frieze*, no. 228 (June/July/August 2022): 97.
- 15 Tegan Bristow. “We Want the Funk: What is Afrofuturism to the situation of digital arts in Africa?” *Technoetic Arts: A Journal of Speculative Research*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2012): 25.

- 16 Anna Everett. *Digital Diaspora: A Race for Cyberspace*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009: 30.
- 17 Virginia Woolf. *A Room of One's Own*. London: Hogarth Press, 1929.
- 18 See Michel Foucault. "Of Other Spaces," translated by Jay Miskowiec. *Diacritics*, vol. 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 22–27.
- 19 See the blog post where James Bridle first introduced the term: <https://jamesbridle.com/works/the-new-aesthetic> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 20 Legacy Russell. *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*. London and New York: Verso Books, 2020.
- 21 Legacy Russell. "Digital Dualism and the Glitch Feminism Manifesto." *The Society Pages* (December 10, 2012): <https://thesocietypages.org/cyborgology/2012/12/10/digital-dualism-and-the-glitch-feminism-manifesto/> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].

Werktexte

Elisabetta Benassi

Anyone in the Street



Elisabetta Benassi

Anyone in the Street, 2018

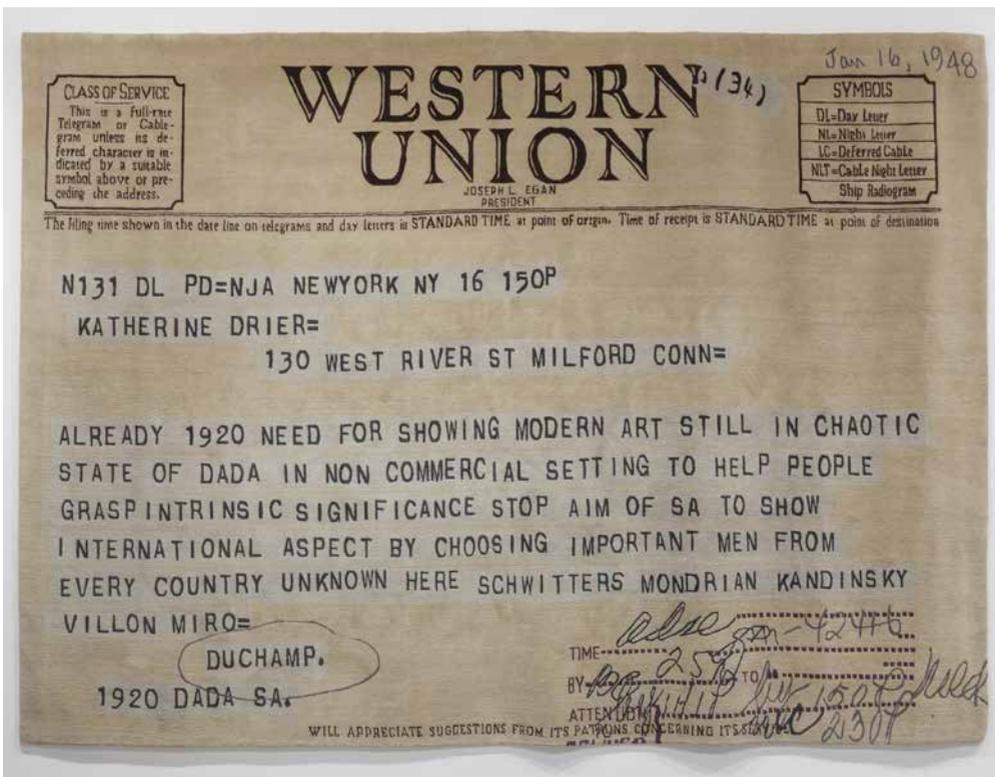
Hand-woven wool carpet, 250 × 347 cm

In 1968, the British Film Institute (BFI) received a cryptic telegram from France. Signed “YOUR ANONYMOUS GODARD,” the sender stated that, in the event of his non-attendance, he wished to be replaced by “ANYONE IN THE STREET THE POOREST IF POSSIBLE.” The filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard had agreed to give a talk at the BFI in London. His flight and his accommodation were already booked. On the morning of the event, Godard pulled out of the event by sending a second telegram: “WILL NOT COME TOMORROW MOVIES HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH CIGARETTES AND REALITY WITH SMOKE YOUR UNKNOWN GODARD.”¹ In the same year, Godard and fellow filmmaker Jean-Pierre Gorin founded the Dziga Vertov Group, named after the director of *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). Among other things, the group opposed the auteur theory that underpinned the French New Wave (which Godard himself had co-founded). The extent to which Godard’s ‘brush-off’ to the BFI was connected to an understanding reached by the group as a whole remains unclear.

The written rejection from the filmmaker, that was probably originally palm-sized, was blown up to 250 × 347 cm and woven into a carpet by the conceptual artist Elisabetta Benassi. She found the telegram in the BFI’s digital archive. The typical characteristics of a telegram are clearly identifiable: the logo of the British Post Office, the signature of the responsible employee, adhesive paper strips, and the

use of an abbreviated writing style to comply with character limits (and save money). Electric telegraphy dates back to the 19th century and, though the technology may seem antiquated in this age of instant messaging services, it was revolutionary at the time for the way it sped up communication over long distances.² With her work, Benassi has conserved not only a piece of correspondence, but also a medium that has now become obsolete.

Since the publication of her artist’s book *All I Remember*, 2011, Benassi has been known for taking the often forgotten illustrations, messages, and notes contained in archives and visualizing them in other forms, such as books, sketches, or even carpets. *All I Remember* consists of the backs of 477 photographs that the artist retrieved from the image archives of major newspapers, which she then photographed and reproduced. The title of the work is taken from the novel of the same name by Gertrude Stein, one which was never published—as the first reproduction in Benassi’s book shows. Through classification notes, dates, stamps, and comments, the traces of the archive are always visible. The information on the back of the press photographs includes the name of the photographer and a description of the image that is as objective as possible. By using archival material and documents directly and with their content unaltered—although she does reproduce individual documents in watercolor



Elisabetta Benassi, *Unknown Here*, 2016
Hand-woven wool carpet, 300 × 400 cm

or sometimes change their proportions—the artist makes specific reference to individual events of 20th century social and political history. It is always Benassi who decides which notes and archival documents are still capable of delivering a message to the present day and which, transposed by her into this new, artistic context, can be given a fresh charge. However, the options available to her are inherently limited by what was collected and preserved, by whom, when, and why.

She adopted a similar approach with a telegram sent by Marcel Duchamp to the artist and collector Katherine S. “Drier” (actually Dreier; the message contains a spelling error). Again, the title of the work is taken from the telegram itself: *Unknown Here*, 2016. In 1920,

Duchamp, Dreier, and Man Ray founded the Société Anonyme, Inc., an artist-led, self-proclaimed “experimental museum” that held exhibitions and talks, maintained a collection, and issued publications. Dreier and Duchamp, the main players behind the Société Anonyme, discussed program planning in their letters, on journeys together, and by telegram. Some of this correspondence is digitized in the Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University—including the telegram that forms the basis for Benassi’s piece.³

The Société Anonyme is the subject of Duchamp’s message. He talks about the importance of showing art by European artists unknown in the United States in a non-commercial context—one of the key concerns of the exhibi-

tion institution.⁴ The telegram bears the date January 16, 1948, in the top right-hand corner, which may be a classification note added by an archivist at a later date. The Société Anonyme’s activities were already coming to an end by this point, and Katherine Dreier donated a large portion of its collection to the Yale University Art Gallery in 1941.⁵

By turning documents into art objects, Benassi brings contemporary history into the exhibition space and creates a point of reference for thinking about personal and collective memory, past events, and their impact on the present day. In selecting Godard and Duchamp, it is notable that Benassi reproduces excerpts from the correspondence of two important figures in the construction and conceptualization of early Modernism in film and the visual arts. She uses the woven documents to cast an eye over the artistic legacy of Modernism, leaving it up to the observer to decide whether that eye is a critical one or not.

Notes

- 1 The original telegram can be seen on the BFI website: <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news/godards-telegram> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 2 For a brief history of telegraphy (in German), see Godehard Weyerer. *Eine Lange Nacht über Telegramme: Jedes Wort zählt* (July 29, 2017): <https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/eine-lange-nacht-ueber-telegramme-jedes-wort-zaehlt-100.html> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 3 See images 33 & 34: <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2040465> [last accessed on June 30, 2022].
- 4 The original message from Duchamp is as follows: “ALREADY 1920 NEED FOR SHOWING MODERN ART STILL IN CHAOTIC STATE OF DADA IN NON COMMERCIAL SETTING TO HELP PEOPLE GRASP INTRINSIC SIGNIFICANCE STOP AIM OF SA TO SHOW INTERNATIONAL ASPECT BY CHOOSING IMPORTANT MEN FROM EVERY COUNTRY UNKNOWN HERE SCHWITTERS MONDRIAN KANDINSKY VILLON MIRO= DUCHAMP. 1920 DADA SA.”
- 5 See *Duchamp as Curator*, ed. Renate Wiehager with Katharina Neuberger. Cologne: Snoeck, 2017: 110–139, and *Duchamp and the Women*, ed. Renate Wiehager with Katharina Neuberger. Cologne: Snoeck, 2020: 140–161, 272–295, 296–316.

Albert Weis

Albert Weis

perspektiven

The expansive installation *perspektiven* refers to aspects of the layout of the Berliner Philharmonie, designed by Hans Scharoun. The work traces the shape of two characteristic spatial situations from that building's foyer.

These layout forms were—figuratively speaking—transferred to the nearby Haus Huth and adapted to the proportions of its exhibition space. Two independent sculptural forms emerge, whose black-blue, highly reflective surfaces fragment the exhibition space and expand it into infinity. They recall the utopian spatial models and crystalline spatial concepts of Bruno Taut and, of course, Scharoun.

Through their own movements and reflections, viewers find themselves at the very center of the installation. At the same time, however, via the continuously changing perception of space and the resulting visual effects, they are also subtly and intuitively challenged to confront their own selves as well as their relationship to the immediate surroundings.

As a sculptor, I am most interested in the potential of the real and the imaginary; to what extent different levels of reality mirror each other, and the ways in which the imaginary or fictional become part of the sculptural process. I artistically circumscribe a moment in which seeing, reality, and imagination overlap. The moment in which reality must be reimagined.

In literature, for example, I am fascinated by how W. G. Sebald interweaves a description of a space with memory, or how Samuel Beckett places space and time, and space and figure, into overlapping relationships.

My work is concerned with architectural, spatial, and historical references and with utopian notions of space in modernism. I investigate their underlying forms and structures in order to translate them into a sculptural language. I am particularly concerned with how various aspects of the everyday and the utopian overlap.

Albert Weis, *changes*, 2018
Mirror plates, dimensions variable
Installation view, Zentrum für Aktuelle Kunst,
Zitadelle Spandau



Zanele Muholi

Zibandlela VI, III and II, The Sails, Durban



Zanele Muholi
Zibandlela VI, The Sails, Durban, 2020
Silver gelatin print, 45.5 × 70 cm

The photographic-activist practice of South African artist Zanele Muholi creates visual worlds characterized by representations of queer intimacy, everyday forms of affection, and togetherness, as well as a self-confident understanding of Black queer identity and stagings of the artist's own body. Over the past two decades, Muholi's work has been dedicated to making visible the people of South Africa who have been, and continue to be, marginalized and threatened by racist, homophobic, and transphobic mechanisms in mainstream society.

In their formal aesthetics, Muholi's photographs are distinguished by clear compositions, striking contrasts of light and dark, and abstracting and geometric design elements. Their portrait photography introduces a distinct visual language that invites the observer to make eye contact without imposing or serving any hierarchies, value judgments, or normative categories. These are images that exist 'among themselves.' They depict communities whose spaces of intended safety, intimacy, and togetherness are threatened by public derogation and discrimination. Series like *Queering Public Space*, 2006–2010, and *Brave Beauties*, 2014–, with their portrayal of Black LGBTQIA+ people, serve as examples of Muholi's efforts to create a queer visual archive. The photographs "create a form of counter-representation against the predom-

inant narrative by creating a positive visual document."¹

The title of the three self-portraits *Zibandlela VI, III, II*, 2020, may be a reference to the lunar month of Zibandlela, which corresponds to the month of January in the Gregorian calendar. According to the Zimbabwean historian Pathisa Nyathi, the etymology of the name comes from the words 'ziba,' which refers to a natural state and can be translated as 'overgrown' or 'covered,' and 'izindlela,' which can be translated as 'path' and refers to the narrow trails that lead through the countryside to water springs or other important destinations. In other words, Zibandlela is the month in which the grass is tall, the paths are overgrown, and nature is lush and verdant. The series was created in Durban, near to Muholi's birthplace of Umlazi, and shows the artist looking directly into the camera, fixing their gaze on the observer in a manner typical of their portrait photography. Through varied gestures and body positions that interact with fragmented mirror reflections, an alienation and doubling of the artist's body is created. This dual presence gives rise to a multiplicity that can be interpreted as a metaphor for a multifarious personality, an attentive and tender encounter with their own body, and as a visual manifestation of same-sex love.

Muholi sees the work of a photographer as not only to observe and chronicle others, but also to direct the gaze towards theirself. The artist's body is the material for their stagings as well as the physical, epigenetic memory of the historical and ongoing traumatic experiences and societal power relations in South Africa.

Muholi performs different roles in their self-portraits, using everyday objects, jewelry, and garments to create arrangements that evoke members of their family and that serve as photographic homages to their existence and agency. The artist's practice of self-staging recalls African photographers such as Samuel Fosso, who uses photographic portraits to deconstruct defined categories and gender roles while calling into question the identity constructs of mainstream society. By combining photography with activism, Muholi systematically creates a world of counter-images that inform the future and, by visualizing them, confront processes of exclusion.

Note

- 1 "Intimate Portraiture: An Interview with Sarah Allen (co-curator of *Zanele Muholi*, 2020)." *Aesthetica Magazine*, no. 96 (August/September 2020): <https://aestheticamagazine.com/intimate-portraiture/> [last accessed on June 24, 2022].

Zanele Muholi

Zibandlela III and II, The Sails, Durban, 2020

Silver gelatin print, each 45.5 × 70 cm



Ann-Kathrin Müller

Vantage Point (1) and Tamerlan (3)

Ann-Kathrin Müller, *Vantage Point (1)*, 2014
Silver gelatin handprint, 110 × 110 cm



“The haute couture of architecture.”¹ This is one description of the shooting location for Ann-Kathrin Müller’s *Vantage Point* series of photographs (2014): a complex of two semi-detached houses designed by the architecture greats Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret on the Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart. Originally conceived as a residential building, it is now home to the Weissenhof Museum. The prototype housing estate of 33 houses was created for the German Association of Craftsmen’s (Deutscher Werkbund) building exhibition *Die Wohnung* in the summer of 1927. In just four and a half months, the buildings—designed by renowned architects from the New Construction movement including Hans Scharoun and Bruno and Max Taut—were built on the slopes of the Killesberg. They were rented out by the city of Stuttgart after the Werkbund exhibition closed.²

The Le Corbusier house provides the backdrop for Müller’s six-part black-and-white series. The square format work *Vantage Point (1)* depicts a light, elegantly pleated curtain that is closed, diffusing the sunlight from outside. Set behind the curtain, the array of windows—one of the striking architectural details of the building—are left to the imagination, with any direct hints as to the location of the shot concealed. This lack of contextual information is shared by the other photographs in the series. They include pictures of plants—indoors and outdoors—and a woman with a cigarette in front of a painting

by the Stuttgart-based artist Willi Baumeister, who was a graphic designer for the building exhibition. Across the series, the abstract structures of the objects and figures depicted stand out, a sense heightened by the monochrome photography. The dynamic effect of the chosen points of view and the sober feel of the photographs also recall the New Vision and New Objectivity movements.³ In a 2017 interview, Ann-Kathrin Müller traces her practice of black-and-white photography back to a “keen interest in the architectural photography of the 1920s.”⁴

The links between her photographs and narrative elements constitute a second conceptual layer. Both *Vantage Point* and another photographic series, *Tamerlan*, 2014–15, include a short text by the artist. In the former work, the text weaves its six handmade silver gelatin prints into a single story—although the photographs work just as well individually. The quote found at the beginning of this essay comes from the text that accompanies the series. It, in turn, was taken from Brigitte Reimann’s novel *Franziska Linkerhand*, about a young architect in the German Democratic Republic. In her open visual narratives, Müller layers images and references in such a way that the objectivity of the photographs seems broken open. The literary texts are reminiscent of excerpts from novels.

The three-part series *Tamerlan* works in a similar vein. The third image in the series, a self-portrait of the artist, was acquired by the

Mercedes-Benz Art Collection. The gloved hands of the photographer rest on a reflective surface. With a tense posture and an expressive look on her face, she appears to gaze beyond the static framing of the photograph. The woman's clothes—her textured bathing cap, black dress, and gloves—recall the fashions of the 1920s and 30s. In 1928, Mercedes-Benz published a promotional photograph depicting a woman, the dancer Elsbeth Böklen, posing in casual white clothing next to, appropriately enough, a Mercedes-Benz 8/38 PS Roadster. The house designed by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret provides a striking backdrop and makes the location of the shoot unmistakable. Mercedes-Benz used the image to depict the lifestyle that went along with the product. *Tamerlan* actively recalls the retro charm of Böklen's look, with her cloche hat and driving gloves.



Mercedes-Benz 8/38 PS Roadster, construction period: 1926–1928
Recorded in front of the Le Corbusier-house, Weissenhofsiedlung, Stuttgart 1928

Notes

- 1 Brigitte Reimann. *Franziska Linkerhand*. Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 2009: 245.
- 2 In addition to the model housing estate, the exhibition included an experimental site at the Weissenhof, a plan and model exhibition, and nine trade show halls dedicated to home furnishings, where companies exhibited materials such as curtain fabrics. An overview of the development of the Weissenhofsiedlung can be found in Christiane Fülcher, Inken Gaukel and Friedemann Gschwind. "Die Weissenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart: 1927 bis heute." In *Der Weg zur Moderne: Werkbund-Siedlungen 1927–1932*, ed. Jadwiga Urbanik. Wrocław: Muzeum Architektury we Wrocławiu, 2016: 42–67.
- 3 For information on the transformation in architectural photography in the 1920s, see Cora Waschke. *Lichte Wechselspiele zwischen Fotografie und Neuem Bauen: Transparenz und Reflexion*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2020.
- 4 Annette Kelm. "Fotografierte Realitäten." In *Kunstsache. Künstlergespräche*, ed. Ulrike Groos and Carolin Wurzbacher. Freiburg im Breisgau: modo Verlag, 2018: 82.

Ann-Kathrin Müller, *Tamerlan (3)*, 2014–15
Silver gelatin handprint, 110 × 110 cm



Gail Hastings

Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow

The central focus of this 'sculptuation' (sculptural situation) is a cylindrical space. Its depth at 250 mm is half its diameter. Without depth, it would be a two-dimensional circle—not a cylinder. Real space gives the circle a thickness. However, we associate thickness with material substance—the opposite of space. It is unorthodox for space to have material thickness. Yet, the cylinder is a circle without it. With a depth that is half its diameter, the space references its diameter; it references itself. The cylindrical space is self-referencing: it addresses itself in a way that a circle, a planar geometrical figure, cannot. Real space enables self-reference.

By addressing itself, does space double itself? By reflecting on itself, is there a mirror image other than itself? Or—has space a sense of self without knowing it, without sensing it? Has it a sense of self without a sense of self? Are we space's sense of self? Is our ability to reason space's reflection? These questions presuppose that space exists prior to us.

Space is our first encounter. Space shocks us into being. Its opposition slaps us into breathing the first difference we experience between ourselves and anything else. Within

our very first moment, space floods us with a language of opposites when we are without boundary to instate ourselves as separate, as opposite; yet gives us the language to do so. Space generates the difference between it and us that enables reason. Without space we would be unable to reason. There would be no point to reason, to breach the divide. Reason occurs as a function of space.

Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow schematizes while enacting thought's relationship with space in our search for meaning in a work of art. Or, at least, in this work of art.

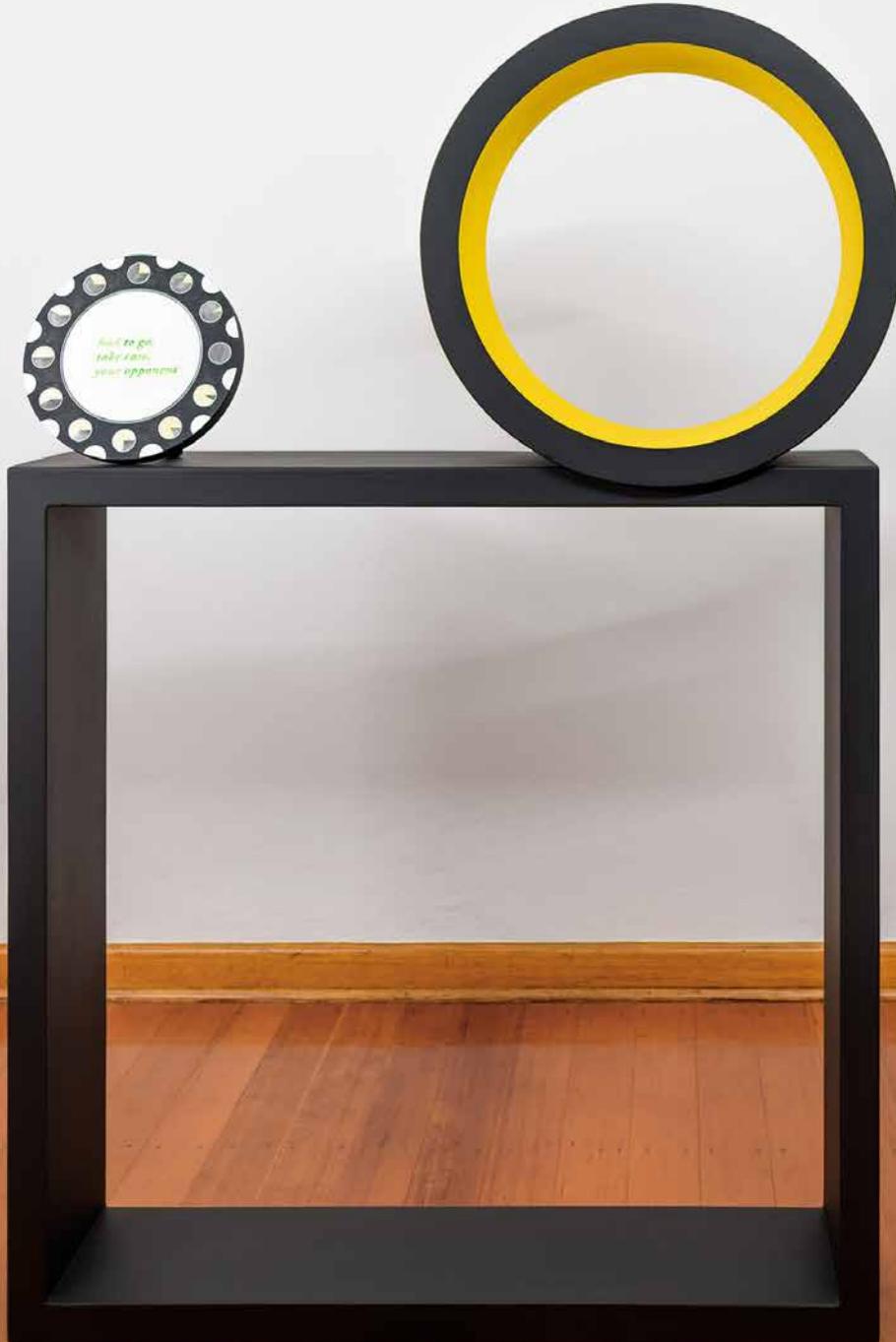
The enactment involves two moments, two directions, a forwards and backwards. We stand at the turning point—in the middle—by facing one then, by turning, facing the other. In each direction, the artwork lacks elements found in the other direction. The 'sculptuation' becomes a spatial continuum with distinct extremes that complete by in-completing the other.

Each direction leaves part of the artwork behind to memory. With the artwork behind us, it becomes background to the artwork before us and vice versa. The void in each extreme enables anticipation of the artwork's future to slot into its past. This void is the plastic form of the artwork.¹ The artwork's form reenacts the depth of the cylindrical space to its diameter.

Gail Hastings

Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow, 2022

Space, acrylic on plywood, watercolor and lead pencil on paper mounted on plywood, dimensions variable



While considering these photographs of *Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow*, there are two things to note. First, that I've been unable to photograph the two directions of the work facing each other due to circumstances in the studio.

The circular watercolor floorplan that is part of the work shows how the opposing parts are set in relation to each other. The distance between the facing sides depends on the space available within the exhibition situation. Ideally, though, it would be about two meters (give or take). Second, unlike these photographs, the 'sculptuation' itself does not include an authorized point-of-view. A photograph of it, however, does due to the camera's mechanism. This is why many prefer to look at art—especially three-dimensional work—in photographs since the photograph automatically establishes an authorized point-of-view through a camera's lens.

It is one reason, if not *the* reason, why spatial artwork such as mine suffers in the current climate of digitized art since, as Panofsky argues in his essay "Perspective as Symbolic Form," a point-of-view is inherent within any two-dimensional representation. Many seek that point-of-view as 'certification' whether this be the certification of authority (the artist's) or of authenticity (again, the artist's). With the increase in forms of deception through the internet, for instance, it is no wonder there is an increased desire for certification in art through an authorizing perspective in representation.

A three-dimensional work such as mine is not, in this way, a representation. The 250 mm depth of space that thickens a planar circle into a cylinder isn't a representation of space, but actual space.

Roland Barthes' 1967 essay "The Death of the Author" is, therefore, still relevant for work such as mine even though the work's

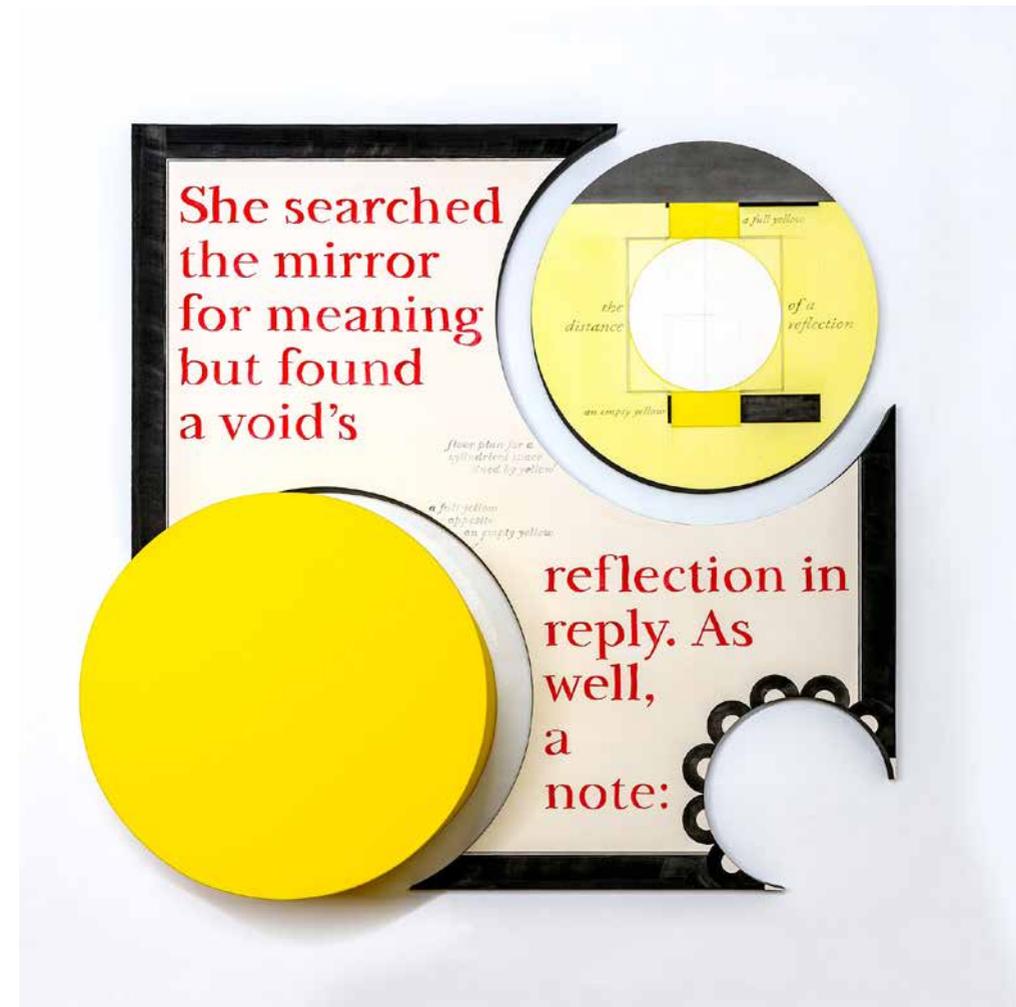
protagonist is described as 'she.' But, having said that, I confess I did model the watercolor note that stands insecurely atop the square space (unlike the cylindrical space that slots in) on the background mirror in the *Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck. Although all the elements of *Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow* were in place before this latter incorporation of the *Arnolfini* mirror, there is a coincidence. Recent scholarship claims the wife depicted in the work had by that time died—that, simply, she was not there.

Note

- 1 This double expectation is not only active in *Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow* (its retrospective and prospective voids), but the watercolor floorplans in most of my works activate this same type of double expectation. Malabou writes: "[...] the process that unfolds is both retrospective and prospective. In the present time in which reading takes place, the reader is drawn to a double expectation: waiting for what is to come (according to a linear and representational thinking), while presupposing that the outcome has already arrived (by virtue of the teleological ruse)." Catherine Malabou. *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*. London: Routledge, 1998: 17, esp. 26–27.

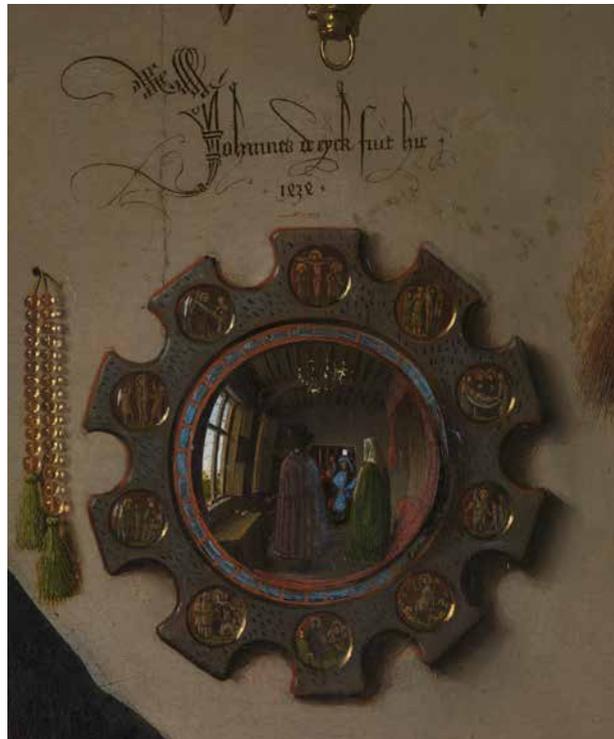
Gail Hastings

Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow, 2022
Space, acrylic on plywood, watercolor and lead pencil
on paper mounted on plywood, dimensions variable



an empty yellow

reflection in
reply. As
well,
a
note:



Jan van Eyck, *The Arnolfini-Portrait (Detail)*, 1434
Oil on wood, 82 × 59.5 cm
The National Gallery, London

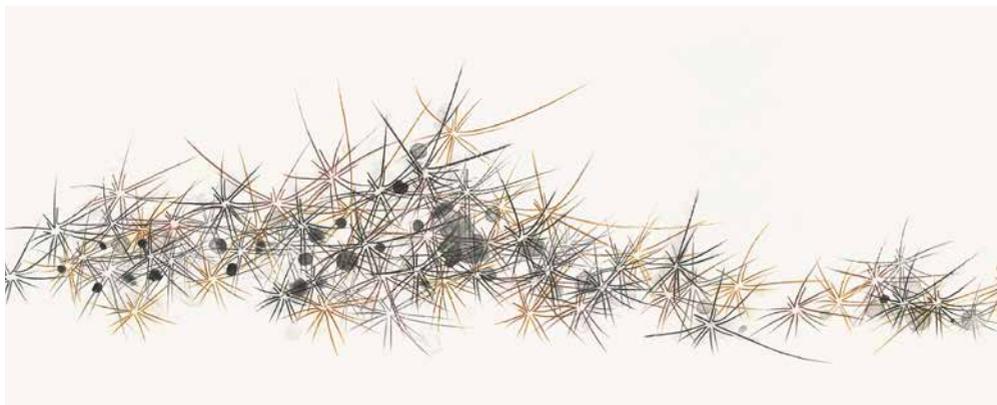


Ding Yi

Cross Sketches



Ding Yi, *Cross Sketches*, 2009
Artist book, color pencil and ink
on rice paper, 35 × 675 cm



Ding Yi is considered to be a significant pioneer in the field of Chinese abstract painting, and an important member of the Shanghai New Wave movement. In the years around 1990, this group strove to bring about a radical renewal of Chinese contemporary art. Since then, Ding Yi has been producing paintings, drawings, and printed graphics in which the motif of the cross is the constitutive—and only—shape element.

The shape of the cross, a sign of modernity, relates to Ding Yi's interest in 20th-century western avant-garde painting. From its early appearances in the works of Piet Mondrian, Kazimir Malevich and other artists associated with constructivism and De Stijl to the modified forms that appeared in minimalist and conceptual art of the 1960s and 1970s, Ding Yi refers to the element of the grid structure as a significant tradition in the history of art. The artist's early pictures reveal that this x-figure was moreover inspired by the urban silhouette seen in the shapes of roofs in early Shanghai.

The drawing acquired by the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection—*Cross Sketches*, 2009—demonstrates new developments. Instead of the previous closed grid network, Ding Yi places partial clusters of star-like forms, derived from the multiple intersections of intercrossing lines, on a pale ground. Ding Yi explains this shift to freer abstract sign configurations with more emotional connotations as a result of his growing interest in the idea of chaos—which he

uses to reflect the world in which the people of China's megacities live.

Cross Sketches alternates between text and drawing, with Ding Yi using a text and format that references China's ancient writing tradition. The picture's extremely long, narrow format references the Chinese tradition of scroll pictures, whilst the technique of painting in ink on rice paper references Chinese calligraphy. The gestural, delicate, almost ornamental language of shapes used for the cross motif has associations with handwriting techniques. The title of the artwork, rendered in calligraphy, is situated within a vertical field that marks the termination of the righthand side of the picture. According to this, the exercise books traditionally used by students studying the Chinese language and calligraphy contain characters within box grid structures. Corresponding to the language and script-related themes, Ding Yi's drawing also functions as an artist book, one that can be read as a sort of opened-up concertina book. Equally, when it is folded up, the individual pages represent independent chapters. Each of his pictures is a fragmentary extract of a grid network that extends beyond the edges of the picture: an idealized, imagined hyperstructure, which offer a time-suspended, ideology-free space for the communication between artist and audience.

Brian O'Doherty

Rope Drawing #118

Patrick Ireland is the alter ego of Brian O'Doherty. He first came into being in 1972. His life came to an end in 2008—an event that received considerable public attention and was commemorated by museums. The year 1972 saw a bloody escalation in the Northern Ireland conflict, and the name that the well-known art critic O'Doherty gave to his artist identity was his way of responding to this.

It was also in this year that O'Doherty/Ireland starts creating his first space-related *Rope Drawings*: the installation created for the *Conceptual Tendencies II* exhibition at the Mercedes-Benz Contemporary in 2013 brings the number of installations created for this series up to #118. In the 1970s, the artist 'drew' with cables and with thin nylon threads, stretched across the space and partly painted, open configurations within the 'white cube' of the exhibition space. In the late 1970s, the *Rope Drawings* became more complex and ambitious, partly due to multifaceted architectural quotations, partly to (frequently elaborate) wall paintings, specifically involving the perception of the viewer. The drawings optical alignment to a central point of view is related to classical central perspective in renaissance painting. In front of the drawing the position is marked, in which the spatial perception is turning into a two dimensional.

O'Doherty says: "Most of the *Rope Drawings* require some self-examination, but what self are we talking about? They ask you not just where you are, but how, insofar as they call on the so-called somatic, proprioceptive self-position, balance, body experienced through the appetite, the passion of the eyes. Maybe that's why dancers always want to dance in them. I've watched people choreograph themselves as they search for sight lines. Each *Rope Drawing* clarifies a grammar of occupancy: 'You are now where I was' and 'they will be where you were.'"¹

¹ Brian O'Doherty. "Strolling with the Zeitgeist." *Frieze*, no. 153 (March 2013).

Brian O'Doherty,
Rope Drawing #118, 2013
Wall drawing, dimensions variable
Installation view, Mercedes-Benz-Contemporary

Olsen

Apollo 11 (Edition ungelesene Packungsbeilage)

We are in the anniversary year of the Apollo 11 mission. Since the first lunar landing, the Earth will have orbited the sun 50 times on July 20, 2019. On that first Apollo 11 lunar mission, the computer was instrumental in helping astronauts land on the moon.

Today, 50 years later, the computer serves, more than ever, to generate new things and to advance into new spheres. In this project, the components of the commercially available model of Apollo 11 (Columbia & Eagle) were entered into a computer. The design of the

project was to use the computer to create something that would not otherwise be possible. Using a machine learning algorithm, the computer created five different ways to assemble the model. These five models were all assembled far from the default of the building instructions, thus demonstrating a push into new dimensions previously untouched by human hands.



Olsen, *Apollo 11 (Edition ungelesene Packungsbeilage)*, 2019
Plastic model, enamel paint,
computer algorithm (3 photographs)
Dimensions variable

Installation view, Städtische Galerie
Villingen-Schwenningen



Richard Mosse

Flooded Municipality, Amazonas

The conceptual documentary photographer Richard Mosse places imaging technologies from business, scientific, and military contexts at the heart of his artistic ideation and work processes. His latest series, *Tristes Tropiques*, builds on the strategies he first introduced in his *Infra* series from 2011. Using Kodak Aerochrome infrared film, Mosse interweaves photographic, conceptual, aesthetic planes to ‘document’ a humanitarian crisis in pink-toned imagery: regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo stricken by civil war are simultaneously fictionalized and made visible in new ways. This deliberate dissolution of the documentary character of the photographic medium as ‘neutral’ and ‘transparent’ is a central media-reflexive practice in Mosse’s work. It emphasizes its own production process and reflects the alienating aesthetics of military-use imaging technologies back onto themselves. Underlying power dynamics and geopolitical interests are evoked through the image technologies chosen by the artist, above and beyond the motifs themselves.

In his recent *Tristes Tropiques* project, Mosse used geographic information systems (GIS) to process thousands of multispectral images he captured by drone above specific locations. Scientific communities use multispectral imaging to identify deforestation in the six million square kilometers of rainforest and to locate areas with high concentrations of CO₂ emissions, toxic pollution, and other forms of

damage to our fragile ecosystem. Meanwhile, however, the agricultural and mining industries use these same multispectral imaging technologies to capitalize on the environment and exploit it ‘more profitably.’

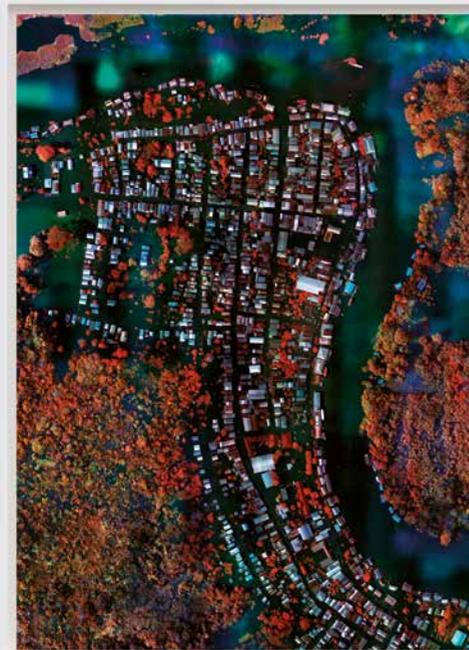
Systematic exploitation and destruction on a dystopian scale are seething just below the surface. These imaging technologies can capture spectrums of light invisible to the human eye, including ultraviolet and infrared, and reveal hidden phenomena. Mosse layers these images to create intensively colored patchwork maps of both visible and invisible environmental crimes, including underground fires moving through root networks, illegal mining operations, deforestation, and flooding.

The title of the series refers to the canonical work *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) by the anthropologist, sociologist, and founder of structuralism, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009). On its publication, the book’s radical cultural criticism of the destructive consequences of the process of civilization was received internationally as a provocative piece of cultural pessimism. In addition to his travelogues (1935–1938) on the Western influence on the Global South, which used the example of indigenous communities in Brazil, Lévi-Strauss reflected on and questioned his own role as an ethnographer. The topic of self-reflection was itself addressed as a scientific method and analyzed in the context of the ethnographer’s supposed

objectivity. This also involved him explicitly scrutinizing the Eurocentric perspective of his own field of study long before the critiques of the postmodernist era.

The reference to Lévi-Strauss in the context of Richard Mosse’s multispectral photographs serves to place the drastic intrusions into the ecosystems of the Brazilian Amazon in a historical context as the continuation of past colonial practices. It also raises questions around the role of the photographer and his visits to regions and societies in order to ‘document’ indigenous communities for an often Western audience. Through the titling of the series, Mosse invokes questions of cultural critique and self-

reflection that, as Lévi-Strauss did in the past, bring the role of Western interests in a global context into a contemporary postcolonial discourse.



Richard Mosse
Flooded Municipality, Amazonas, 2021
Archival pigment print, 216 × 160 cm



Friederike Horstmann

Fang Lu

Cinema

The art of Fang Lu is among those schools of art that operate by questioning and expanding production, reception, communication and interaction in a field of its own that borders on theatre, performance and video art. The artwork *Cinema*, also, has as its theme the transcending of genre boundaries. Like the artist's previous video artworks, *Cinema* has an artificial, staged setting, a theater rather than a conventional cinema space. Four cameras are trained on the actions of a female protagonist, who also takes on the roles of producer and recipient. It is not only the production that is governed by changes of perspective: the views from the differently positioned cameras are presented in three large-scale projections and on four televisions. This seven-channel video installation was not edited; instead, the whole recording process is documented.

At the beginning, a diaphanous blue projected light extends in a cone form through the dark space. Beside the projector, the mixing desk and microphone are standing in a seemingly empty auditorium with ascending rows of violet-colored seating. A young woman in a tight red dress passes through the dark space to take up a position on the public gallery, next to the mixing desk. This area is picked out by a red spotlight, and is also a kind of panopticon: it has four cameras focused on it which are controlled by the performer via the console. When she begins to operate the controls on the console, the strange hissing sound on the soundtrack is overlaid by beeping signals. The way in which the signals are made visible disturbs our percep-

tion of the image, and, at the same time, draws our attention to the way in which the *pictorial* is constituted. The gaze of the young woman is directed toward the large screen, which shows an instantaneous transmission from the cameras as a live feed. She is constantly changing the image framing, watching her own hesitant and slightly stilted movements with an earnest expression.

In a slow and sometimes faltering movement, she zooms in on her own image, directing our gaze and attention. Zoom is a medium for subjective perspective which goes hand in hand with the effects of modulating spatial perception. Superimpositions take the image to the edge of dissolution. Both the image arrangement and the viewing arrangement are governed by layering and splitting: the multiple screens mark an existential split between the subject and the gaze. These (self-)images are revisable at any time. Two musicians, initially offstage, accompany the actions of the protagonist with an abstract electronic score (also improvised and live). Fang Lu uses these unpredictable and expansive layers of sound from beyond the picture frame to achieve a disorientation of the viewers' perception itself. Through the dissonance of the structure that unites image and sound, between 'on' and 'off,' inside and outside, she stages systematic ambiguities. The perception space appears deceptive, because the visual superimpositions and the acoustic distractions generate a large number of perspectives. One's own standpoint is no longer secure.

Farah Al Qasimi

Curtain Shop

The work of photographer Farah Al Qasimi offers insights into the private spaces, friendly encounters, and pastimes of her generation of young women in the United Arab Emirates and the United States. The interiors photographed by Al Qasimi feature the characteristic colors, materials, and ornaments of the Gulf region and form their own aesthetic universes from which theatrical scenes arise. As in a chamber play, a small number of people occupy a single, limited space. Their faces and bodies are obscured or covered by objects as if by chance. Staggered arrangements of ornament-covered surfaces, such as textiles and interiors, and bodies framed by other fabrics turn the visual spaces into a series of overlapping and juxtaposed patterns and textures.

In the double portrait *S and A on the Phone*, from 2020, the daylight falling into the picture creates a brightly lit rectangle on the mustard and lilac dresses of two women who are engrossed in the virtual world of their smartphones. The woman turned toward the observer is handling a large smartphone in a protective case with floral motifs. As she holds the screen directly in front of her face, only a fragment of her right eye remains visible. The second 'eye' is the smartphone camera lens, which the woman aims, without seeming to notice, at the observer. The floral ornamentation on her phone

case completes her hidden facial features associatively.

Farah Al Qasimi uses these kinds of surreal effects in her work to generate seemingly random shifts in perception and activate how the observer experiences otherwise uneventful everyday scenes. Another example is *Curtain Shop*, from 2019, which shows part of the back of a woman who appears to be carrying a large flower while disappearing into a baroque abundance of curtains and visual decor. Visual strategies of fragmentation, concealment, and denial of eye contact serve to connect the protagonists of the images with their surroundings. The mimicry effect interweaves space and subject, suggesting interiors that are their own safe, hermetically-sealed worlds; at the same time, they are spaces where women seem to systematically withdraw from contact with society and the outside world. Al Qasimi's frequent use of flash and the specific color palette of lilac, blue, and yellow tones, as well as floral patterns against white walls, makes the photographs feel like indoor images of springtime even as they also give the impression of suffocating captivity.

As they subtly reference vestiges of colonial influence in the minor details of everyday life, the photographs also play with and critically reflect the Western fascination with



Farah Al Qasimi, *S and A on the Phone*, 2020
Archival inkjet print, 76.20 × 53.34 cm



Curtain Shop, 2019
Archival inkjet print, 102 × 76 cm

imagining Muslim women as erotic subjects. By showing what happens in the private spaces that are hidden from public view and male gazes, the fantasy of the male colonial gaze is met with irony and nonchalance. Farah Al Qasimi counters the phantom of the fetishized Muslim woman with depictions of a young generation of real women who have grown up in the liminal state of an evolving Arab society and who now live largely self-determined lives. Seen in the political and societal context of the present-day United Arab Emirates, Farah Al Qasimi's photographs also serve as portraits of female Millennials/Generation Y, checking their make-up in their selfie cameras and striving for new opportunities while surrounded by the everyday decor of a slowly fading world.

Hartmut Böhm, *or-or (Tischstück #7)*, 2016
Mixed media, dimensions variable



Renate Wiehager

Hartmut Böhm

or-or (Tischstück #7)

The work of Hartmut Böhm reflects some of the most important art movements of the 20th century: readymade art, l'art concret, De Stijl, constructivist art, ZERO art, minimalism, and conceptual tendencies. These movements—both their utopias and their failures—made an impression on him which is to be found throughout five decades of his artwork.

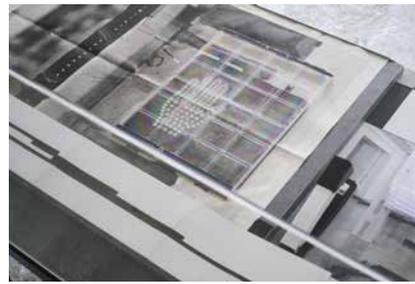
In his drawings, pictorial objects, wall installations, and space installations, Hartmut Böhm analyzes the inventory of forms upon which these artistic developments and their interdependencies and transitional zones are founded, and goes further to analyze their spirit and ethic. His artwork is concerned with serial formations, with scale and proportion, with the translation of everyday materials into mathematically/artistically balanced constructions. It is concerned with aesthetic concepts, the differentiated scalar relationships of which serve to oppose the disorder of the world through an ethos of intellectual will in harmony with the working materials—one that seeks a disciplined finding of form.

Hartmut Böhm began conceiving his new group of artworks, the *Tischstücke* or table pieces, in 2013. Found objects from his studio—drawing instruments, working materials, tools, adhesive tape, card index boxes, invitation cards, and brochures—are arranged on simple tables. The individual object becomes part of a vo-

cabulary that is severely formal in its development, a composed visual configuration.

The commissioned artwork produced for the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection entitled *or-or*—the title references a 1964 essay by the psychologist and art theorist Anton Ehrenzweig—is a continuation of, and a semantically charged refinement on, the table pieces. *or-or* can be read as a visual essay on Böhm's artistic oeuvre. Walking the length of the approximately seven-meter-long display, viewers make their way through the material vocabulary of Hartmut Böhm's intellectual landscape: measuring implements, adhesive tape rolls, staplers, optical instruments, CD cases, magnifying glass, card index boxes, screw and dowel packaging, picture frames, exhibition catalogs, invitation cards. The diverse materials drawn from the areas of typographic art objects, artist materials, and the selected objects from the studio, can be read in a number of different ways. For readers of his artwork, the artist himself offers the following terms: matrix and metaphor, emptiness and volume, overlaying and penetration, system and syntax, form and structure.

Transferred to the concept behind Hartmut Böhm's *or-or* sculpture, this choice of title suggests a specifically intended program that the artwork is, firstly, from a production point of view configured as a steered process in interplay with the unconscious choice of objects,



Hartmut Böhm, *or-or* (Tischstück #7), 2016
Mixed media, dimensions variable

and with conscious planning of syntax and semantics. In terms of its reception, it builds up ambivalences, and intentionally layered and contradictory ways of reading the artwork, with diverging readings.

My reading of *or-or* is primarily transfixed by the at first barely perceptible tension—no less persistent and well-established for that—between the ‘black years’ of the Nazi era in the left-hand side opening section of the sculpture. This part defines a strong contrast to the lightening and widening out of the view toward the right—toward ‘infinity’—to the manifesto of l’art concret: purely historically, two irreconcilable aspects of the circa 1930 era, whilst also representing two mutually repelling poles of the politics and mentality found in the history of the 20th century. Theo van Doesburg declared non-representational art to be a concretion of itself, seeing it as a manifestation of the intellect in a specified historical situation.

To the demands of the members of l’art concret of 1930 for rationality and anti-subjectivity were added, significantly, the belief that the arguments of art should reflect the political and social developments of its times. An ethos that was largely lost to subsequent incarnations

of concrete art throughout the 20th century, and now is discussed by Hartmut Böhm in a fresh way with a new quality for our own historic present era.



Hartmut Böhm, *Bleistiftlinien-Programme*, 1974
20 pencil lines, 3 parts, each 73 × 51 cm

List of Works

FARAH AL QASIMI

1991 in Abu Dhabi, UAE – lives in NYC, USA and Dubai, UAE

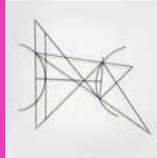
Curtain Shop, 2019
Archival inkjet print
102 × 76 cm
Ed. 4/5 + 2 AP
Acquired 2022



HEBA Y. AMIN

1980 in Cairo, ET – lives in Berlin, D

A Mathematical Manner of Perceiving, 2016
Iron, powder coated
220 × 185 × 6 cm
Ed. 1/3 + 1 AP
Acquired 2021



SHŪSAKU ARAKAWA + MADELINE GINS

1936 Nagoya, J – 2010 NYC, USA
1941 – 2014 NYC, USA

Morning Picture – Portrait of a Civilization, 1969
Oil on canvas
120 × 184 cm
Acquired 2005



Untitled, 1964/65
Acrylic, lead- and color-pencils, ink and paper collage on primed canvas
131 × 109.5 cm
Acquired 2006



KIRSTIN ARNDT

1961 in Otterndorf, D – lives in Düsseldorf, D

Ohne Titel [Untitled], 2009
MDF, 120 × 80 × 28.8 cm
Acquired 2011



ELISABETTA BENASSI

1966 in Rome, I – lives in Rome, I

Anyone in the Street, 2018
Hand-woven wool carpet
250 × 347 cm
Ed. 3/5, acquired 2022



WOLFGANG BERKOWSKI

1960 Salzkotten, D – 2017 Rome, I

Daily Paintings [Upper class Tiv Bertie...DP31/23.10.2010], 2010



Daily Paintings [An old woman, reporting...DP179/20.3.2011], 2011
Both: Acrylic on canvas, rubber
200 × 200 cm and 130 × 200 cm (mat)
Acquired 2015 and 2016

ZANDER BLOM

1982 in Pretoria, ZA – lives in Johannesburg, ZA

The Black Hole Universe, Chapter 2, Scene #9, Berlin, 2010
Photographic print on Fuji Archive Metalic Pearl mounted on Alu-Dibond
60 × 87 cm, ed. 2/3
Acquired 2011

HARTMUT BÖHM

1938 Kassel, D – 2021 Berlin, D

Streifenrelief [Strip-Relief] 16, 1977
Plexiglas slats on Plexiglas board
176 × 176 × 8 cm
Acquired 1995

Bleistiftlinien-Programme [Pencil line-Programs], 1974
20 pencil lines
3 parts, each 73 × 51 cm
Acquired 2004

or-or (Tischstück #7) [or-or (Table Piece #7)], 2016
Mixed media
Dimensions variable
Acquired 2016

STEPHEN BRAM

1961 in Melbourne, AUS – lives in North Carlton, AUS

Untitled, 1993
Oil and acrylic on canvas
35.5 × 27.5 cm
Acquired 2003

Untitled, 1994
Oil and acrylic on canvas
25 × 20.5 cm
Acquired 2003

Untitled (Two Point Perspective), 2007
Archival pigment print
67 × 95.5 cm
Acquired 2010

MONIKA BRANDMEIER

1959 in Kamen, D – lives in Berlin, D

Drei Antworten auf zwei Fragen [Three Answers for Two Questions] (Bydgoszcz), 2000
Black-and-white photographs
9 parts, each 24 × 30 cm
Acquired 2007



NATALIE CZECH

1976 in Neuss, D – lives in Berlin, D

A Window View by Robert Creeley (Skyline), 2021
Archival inkjet prints
2 parts, 86.1 × 63.2 cm and 99 × 69.6 cm
Acquired 2022



DING YI

1962 in Shanghai, CHN – lives in Shanghai, CHN

Cross Sketches, 2009
Artist book, color pencil and ink on rice paper
35 × 67.5 cm
Acquired 2015



MARCEL DUCHAMP + MATHIEU MERCIER

1887 Blainville, F – 1968 Neuilly, F
1970 in Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, F – lives in Paris, F and Valencia, E

Marcel Duchamp: De ou par Marcel Duchamp ou Rose Sélavy (Boite-en-valise) de ou par Mathieu Mercier [From or by Marcel Duchamp or Rose Sélavy (Box in a Valise) from or by Mathieu Mercier], 2015
37.1 × 38 × 7.8 cm
Acquired 2016



FANG LU

1981 in Guangzhou, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN

Cinema, 2013
7-channel video installation, sound
19:19 min, ed. 3/5
Acquired 2014



RUPPRECHT GEIGER

1908 – 2009 Munich, D

Zeichnung [Drawing] Gr. I/94, 1994
Graphite on paper
150 × 254 cm
Acquired 1994



MAGNUS GJOEN

1979 in London, GB – lives in London, GB

Break Glass for a New Beginning (Adam and Eve). A pair, 2021
Archival pigment inks on 310 GSM German etching paper
2 parts, each 125 × 45 cm
Ed. 3/3 AP
Acquired 2022



HERMANN GLÖCKNER

1889 Cotta, D – 1987 Berlin, D

Ohne Titel (Konstruktion mit 8 Zacken) [Untitled (Construction with 8 Edges)], ca. 1930
Tempera and ink on paper
34.2 × 23.1 cm, acquired 2007



GAIL HASTINGS

1965 in Perth, AUS – lives in Melbourne, AUS

Cylindrical Space Lined by Yellow, 2022
Space, acrylic on plywood, watercolor and lead pencil on paper mounted on plywood
Dimensions variable
Loan of the artist



SUSAN HEFUNA

1962 in Cairo, ET – lives in Cairo, ET and NYC, USA

Untitled, 2010
Ink on tracing paper
3 parts, each 48.5 × 61.2 cm
Acquired 2012



JAN HENDERIKSE

1937 in Delft, NL – lives in Antwerp, B and NYC, USA

Money Money Money, 1986
Plastic suitcase with diverse objects
38.5 × 46.5 × 14.5 cm
Acquired 2005



FLORINA LEINSS

1984 in Stuttgart, D – lives in Stuttgart, D

pic174.21black screen, 2021
pic175.21black screen, 2021
pic176.21black screen, 2021

All: High gloss varnish, oil on MDF
100 × 100 cm
100 × 65 cm
100 × 80 cm
Loan of the artist

**SYLVAN LIONNI**

1973 in Cuckfield, GB – lives in NYC, USA

Reflector (black) II, 2021
Mixed media on aluminum
2 plates, total 232.8 × 87.6 cm
Acquired 2022

**RICHARD MOSSE**

1980 in Kilkenny, IRL – lives in NYC, USA

Flooded Municipality, Amazonas, 2021
From the series *Tristes Tropiques*
Archival pigment print
216 × 160 cm
Ed. 1/5 + 2 AP
Acquired 2022

ZANELE MUHOLI

1972 in Umlazi/Durban, ZA – lives in Umbumbulu, ZA

Zibandlela VI, III and II, The Sails, Durban, 2020
Triptych, silver gelatin print
Each 45.5 × 70 cm
Acquired 2022

**ANN-KATHRIN MÜLLER**

1988 in Nürtingen, D – lives in Stuttgart, D

Vantage Point (1), 2014

Tamerlan (3), 2014–15
Both: Silver gelatin handprint
110 × 110 cm
Ed. 2/3 + 1 and ed. 2/3 + 2
Acquired 2018

**TIMO NASSERI**

1972 in Berlin, D – lives in Berlin, D

I SAW A BROKEN LABYRINTH, 2015
Ink on paper
89 × 66 cm
Acquired 2016

MUON, 2015
Steel, powder coated
45.5 × 28.5 × 22 cm
Acquired 2018

BRIAN O'DOHERTY

Rope Drawing #118, 2013/2022
Wall drawing
Dimensions variable
Acquired 2014

**KAYODE OJO**

1990 in Cookeville, USA – lives in NYC, USA

Let him speak, 2020
Pioneer International – Trial Lens Set – Concave/Convex Sphere & Cylinder Used titanium optical trial frame optometry instruments, glass, mirror, Clear Amac boxes, Sunnytech Hot Air Stirling Engine Motors Model Education Toy Electricity Generator Colorful LED (SC001)
48.3 × 51.4 × 31.8 cm
Acquired 2022

**OLSEN**

1975 in Villingen-Schwenningen, D – lives in St. Georgen im Schwarzwald, D

Apollo 11 (Edition ungelesene Packungsbeilage) [Edition Unread Package Leaflet], 2019
Plastic model, enamel paint, computer algorithm (3 photographs)
Dimensions variable, acquired 2021

**JULIAN OPIE**

1958 in London, GB – lives in London, GB

Sian Walking 3, 2013
Computer animation on LCD screen
122 × 70 × 10 cm, ed. 1/4
Acquired 2014

**PHILIPPE PARRENO**

1964 in Oran, DZ – lives in Paris, F

6:00 P.M., 2001
Chromojet print on carpet
Dimensions variable
Acquired 2011

**CHARLOTTE POSENENSKA**

1930 Wiesbaden, D – 1985 Frankfurt/Main, D

Diagonale Faltung [Diagonal Fold], 1966/2009
(authorised reconstruction 2009)
Aluminum sprayed grey
51.5 × 75 × 25 cm
Acquired 2011

**ROBIN RHODE**

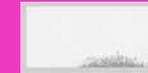
1976 in Cape Town, ZA – lives in Berlin, D

Pan's Opticon Studies, 2009
Photo engravings on Somerset 300g
5 parts, each 54 × 78 cm
Acquired 2010

**HIROE SAEKI**

1978 in Osaka, J – lives in Berlin, D

Untitled (HS 239, HS 240), 2017
Pencil and acrylic on paper
2 parts, each 76 × 163 cm
Acquired 2018

**MICHAEL SAYLES**

1968 in Birmingham, GB – lives in Berlin, D

Naked Woman in African Mask Descending a Staircase, 2019
Canvas, acrylic and glue on canvas, pencil
145 × 86.8 × 6.8 cm
Acquired 2021

**ECKHARD SCHENE**

1941 – 1975 Kiel, D

Trophy III/69, 1969
Wood, artificial resin
156 × 63 × 115 cm and
136 × 63 × 100 cm
Acquired 2002

**INA WEBER**

1964 in Diez, D – lives in Berlin, D

Nest of Tables, 2006
Acrylic on canvas
Dimensions variable
Acquired 2006

**ALBERT WEIS**

1969 in Passau, D – lives in Berlin, D

perspektiven [perspectives], 2022
Mirror plates
Dimensions variable
Commissioned work

**BEN WILLIKENS**

1939 in Leipzig, D – lives in Stuttgart, D

Das All (Entwurf) [The Space (Draft)], 1988
Graphite and acrylic on cardboard
42 × 101 cm, acquired 1990



Flur Nr. 13 [Corridor No. 13], 1974/75
Acrylic on canvas
200 × 160 cm, acquired 1993

**YIN XIUZHEN**

1963 in Beijing, CHN – lives in Beijing, CHN

Portable City Stuttgart, 2010
Suitcase, used clothes, sound installation
120 × 140 × 85 cm
Acquired 2014



IMPRINT

Perspectives. Futurisms

Ref. Marcel Duchamp & Marcel Proust
Works from the Mercedes-Benz Art Collection

An exhibition concept of the
Mercedes-Benz Art Collection 2022/23

Curator

Renate Wiehager

Editor

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