

## Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme

*At those terrifying frontiers where the existence and disappearance of people fade into each other, 2019*

Video, 10:56

In Basel Abbas (1983, Cyprus) & Ruanne Abou-Rahme's (1983, USA) video work, fragments from Edward Said's personal and poetic 1999 book *After the Last Sky* are repurposed to create a new script that reflects on what it means to be an 'illegal' person, body or entity. The text has been turned into a song performed by digital avatars, composite personas drawn from the artists and from participants in the 'March of Return' along the Gaza Strip; an area under siege by the Israeli army since 2006. The artists, who are based in Palestine, and the protestors are therefore brought into close proximity through the work's underlying algorithms. This algorithm also renders missing data and information (due to the low resolution of images circulated online) as scars, glitches and incomplete features on the avatar's faces. By keeping and not 'fixing' these effects, Abbas & Abou-Rahme's work speaks of the violence of the current political reality as well as the invisible, embedded violence that accompanies the circulation and consumption of images.

## Cécile Bart

*Scanning 1, 2008*

Glyceropthalic paint on terylene and aluminium

Cécile Bart's (1958, France) works reveal a sustained exploration of light and colour. By experimenting with different materials and techniques, she creates an immersive encounter between the painting and the observer. In her *Scanning* series, bands of translucent colour are coated onto layered sheets of terylene (a synthetic material known for its resilience and which is often used for outdoor clothing). The intensity of the colours increases as sheets are layered upon each other, while, along the edges of Bart's painting, the outline of the aluminium frame is visible. For Bart, this 'frame' is essential, defining the limits of the painterly field and the relationship of the viewer to the composition. In allowing sections of colour to remain transparent or opaque, she complicates this encounter, inviting the spectator to reflect upon their own position as a distanced viewer.

## Charlotte Moth

*The Absent Forms, 2010*

Video, 10:00

For her work, Charlotte Moth (1978, UK) asked the art critic Francesco Pedraglio to write a text in response to Man Ray's 1929 film *Les Mystères du Château de Dé*, in which two protagonists travel to Villa Noailles, a modernist house built by the architect Robert Mallet-Stevens. In *The Absent Forms*, Pedraglio's text is set against Moth's photographs of the Rue Mallet-Stevens in Paris, while live percussion from a previous screening of the film has been edited into the film. Black-and-white still photographs present various street scenes, populated with a square structure on wheels, stage sets, flood lights, potted plants, mirrors and curtains. Title cards intermittently offer an allusive accompaniment to the action, while the sequence of images and text seem to follow the hectic, staccato rhythms of the soundtrack. In this way, the artist incorporates different critical and creative responses into the work, while allowing space for the viewer's own interpretation.

## Chiara Camoni

*Senza Titolo (mosaico #2), 2012-21*

Marble

The works of Chiara Camoni (1974, Italy) often find their source in materials discovered by chance or through relationships with people to whom she is close. Her installation *Senza Titolo (mosaico #2)* is composed of numerous pieces of marble, in varying shapes and dimensions, collected by the artist during months of walking by the riverbed. These were often thrown into the rivers, where they eroded in shape and color by the action of the water. As the artist explains: "They bear witness to a cycle: the marble, taken from the mountain, is transformed into a man-made object; thrown into the river, it slowly returns to its original state of stone." Camoni thus creates a sort of anti-monument in which the ephemeral nature of the action of man is contrasted with the eternal cycle of nature. The installation can similarly be seen as an ever-changing archaeological site, adapting to the specific architecture of the gallery.

# Étienne Bossut

*Des Gamelles, 1992*

Polyester moulding

After having moulded plastic material for industrial designs for ten years, Étienne Bossut (1946, France) decided, in the 1980s, to apply this knowledge to the creation of artworks. He faithfully reproduces objects taken from everyday life, including cans, tires, refrigerators, skis, puddles of water, mirrors and monochrome paintings. Plastic replaces original materials such as wood, iron, or clay, while allowing the artist to capture and reproduce his chosen objects as often as he likes. In this way, Bossut playfully subverts the traditional conventions between original, copy, artwork and imitation. *Des Gamelles* (or *The Bowls*) is composed of fifty containers in a variety of shapes and forms. While cast in the same, standardised colour, the vessels also reveal the labour of the artist through visible traces of moulding that remain inside the objects.

# François Morellet

*Cube 5°-95°, 1985*

Argon tubes, electric cable, transformer

As one of the first artists to use neon and argon tubes in the 1960s, François Morellet (1925, France) developed a radical approach to geometric abstraction, juxtaposing precision and formality with a subversive playfulness. Working primarily with basic geometric forms, Morellet was committed to a methodology of rigorous objectivity and personal detachment from his work, abandoning ideas of predetermined composition in favour of a rational process of uniform organization. In *Cube 5°-95°*, he positions three blue fluorescent tubes at specific angles, extending from the gallery walls onto the floor and, by implication, designating a three-dimensional volume through simplified, non-continuous lines. The intense light of the installation radiates in all directions to create a glowing atmospheric effect that filters throughout its surroundings.

## Franz Erhard Walther

*Handlungsraum, 1963-71*

Environment: 3 parts; costume, poles, screen, canvas, wood, preparatory drawing

Franz Erhard Walther (1939, Germany) is renowned for his activated sculptures. These consist of fabric objects, with openings, fastenings, or straps which allow volunteers to wear or use the object, individually or in a collective action. Sometimes these were worn over the head, while others involved stepping into or onto fabric structures, or tying a wooden pole to the left arm with fabric straps and standing still and upright. Walther later explained: "The development of this work covers about 8 years. The costume was designed in 1963. This version was lost in 1967. The second execution was made in 1969 with the intention of adding something else. In 1971 I started to make the 'Element Spaces' consisting of wooden panels of different proportions, covered with dyed cotton. For the costume, I developed an 'Angle Space' and two poles, all covered with the same fabric and the same colour as the costume. The idea was to create an 'Action Space' taking up several aspects of the argument around sculpture: the clothing highlighting the idea of plastic, the angle reminiscent of "architecture/sculpture" and the poles for work in space, which can also be read as a constructed drawing, coordinating the elements in action. That was my interpretation at the time and it hasn't changed much since."

## Gil J Wolman

*Sans Titre, 1961-63*

*Sans Titre, 1963*

*Sans Titre (Mao), 1967*

Mixed media on canvas and cardboard

Since the beginning of the 1950s, language has driven the work of Gil J Wolman (1929, France), whether in his first collaborations with Isidore Isou's avant-garde Lettrisme movement or in his career with Situationist theorists and artists such as Guy Debord. Wolman seeks to create a new art combining poetry, music and visual art, defining art as a process of permanent movement no longer distinguishable from life. The series of small works here reveal his radical approach, as in *Sans Titre (Mao)*, where Wolman tore printed pages from a book and used Sellotape to construct new messages and meanings. In the other pieces, densely layered photographs and illegible writing exemplify his use of 'détournement,' the practice of misappropriating or hijacking elements from one context in order to reveal a new, and sometimes contradictory, meaning.

# Hreinn Fridfinnsson

## *22 Paintings, 2000*

Acrylic paint on wood, 22 parts

Hreinn Fridfinnsson's (1943, Iceland) conceptual artworks are poetic and playful, addressing storytelling, nature and time. Often made from found objects, they explore commonplace human experiences and incidents. His chosen medium can be almost anything: a photograph, a story, a tracing, an atmosphere, a quasi-scientific experiment, or a secret. In this way, most of his works often imply a narrative, even if there isn't one. In *22 Paintings*, Fridfinnsson presents an array of stirring sticks, used to mix different colours of paint. The function of these objects suggests other, unseen paintings yet, as his title indicates, these modest tools here become the works themselves. Their presentation – floating weightlessly across the gallery walls – reveals a pattern of recurrence and repetition, capturing the prosaic rituals of everyday artistic practice.

# Isabelle Arthuis

*L'Eclipse 1-5, 1999*

Photographs

Isabelle Arthuis (1969, France) originally studied as a painter at the School of Fine Arts in Rennes and her subsequent photographic practice reveals an ongoing dialogue with art history, perception, place and position. In *L'Éclipse*, she rotates her camera to capture different angles of an event: a group of bystanders peering at the absent eclipse through special viewing glasses, the horizon line of a seascape, nearby trees and rocks, the silhouettes of individual observers. Instead of simply recording the eclipse's momentary disappearance of light, Arthuis captures the impact of the moment, the sense of anticipation and excitement, and the echo of ancient fears. What we see is a landscape without anything immediately remarkable. Yet, through five still images, Isabelle Arthuis manages to represent time and movement, waiting, and the inevitable.

## Jackie Winsor

*Yellow Inside Out Piece, 1984-85*

Plaster, pigment, plywood

Jackie Winsor's (1941, Canada) work is characterized by the attention paid to the intrinsic qualities of materials associated with a repertoire of geometric shapes (circle, square, grid, cube) whose scale always remains close to that of the body. The production of the works asserts itself through a tension between a concern for perfection and the acceptance of defects arising from an artisanal or even laborious practice. *Yellow Inside Out Piece* is a partly coloured cube, made of superimposed layers of plaster and plywood, with proportions close to that of a movable object. The manufacturing process reveals, by a curious reversal, its internal structure. The window on each side allows a glimpse inside the volume, even though the eye is captured by the intensity of the surrounding yellow. The viewer is thus confronted with a physical approach to colour and materials combined with the interaction of interior and exterior.

## Jacques Villeglé

*Rue de l'Echaudé, Saint-Germain, Paris, 1965*

Torn posters mounted on canvas

Jacques Villeglé (1926, France) places his first encounter with art in 1943 when he discovered the reproduction of an abstract painting by Miró. His first works in 1947 were made from iron wires collected on the beach of Saint-Malo. That same year, in the company of Raymond Hains, he extended his collecting practice to taking down posters. These became the main source of his artistic activity, the principles of which he laid down in 1958 in the text 'Des Réalités Collectives,' where Villeglé proposes an idea of collective creation made by the gestures of passers-by or the chance of bad weather. Through posters seized from the palisades, torn from the walls of Belleville or Ménilmontant, from the districts of Saint-Germain and Montparnasse, Villeglé has been, since 1955, the collector of the boarded streets of Paris, classifying his samples according to different themes: the lacerated letter; without letter, without figure; with letter or word fragments; painting in non-painting; transparencies; lacerated objects or characters; dripping and graffiti; newspaper cupboards; various small formats, etc.

## Jacques Villeglé

*Boulevard de la Villette, 1971*

Torn posters mounted on canvas

Jacques Villeglé (1926, France) places his first encounter with art in 1943 when he discovered the reproduction of an abstract painting by Miró. His first works in 1947 were made from iron wires collected on the beach of Saint-Malo. That same year, in the company of Raymond Hains, he extended his collecting practice to taking down posters. These became the main source of his artistic activity, the principles of which he laid down in 1958 in the text 'Des Réalités Collectives,' where Villeglé proposes an idea of collective creation made by the gestures of passers-by or the chance of bad weather. Through posters seized from the palisades, torn from the walls of Belleville or Ménilmontant, from the districts of Saint-Germain and Montparnasse, Villeglé has been, since 1955, the collector of the boarded streets of Paris, classifying his samples according to different themes: the lacerated letter; without letter, without figure; with letter or word fragments; painting in non-painting; transparencies; lacerated objects or characters; dripping and graffiti; newspaper cupboards; various small formats, etc.

## John Armleder

*Sans Titre, 1986*

Acrylic on canvas

In John Armleder's (1948, Switzerland) large painting, a field of pristine white is dotted with a sequence of twinned overlapping circles. These shapes shimmer against the even surface of the canvas, momentarily suggesting an uniform, almost mechanical, process of application, before the slight smudging of paint reveals the artist's hand at work. Often associated with the 1980s Neo-Geometric art movement, Armleder regularly conflates elements of painting, sculpture, design and decoration to parody the masterpieces of modern art. *Sans Titre*, with its formal resemblance to minimalist art and colour-field painting, and its simultaneous evocation of designer wallpaper, demonstrates the artist's playful subversion of high-minded modernist rhetoric.

# John Duncan

*Sinister and Dexter, 1992*

Photographs

Taken during the artist's forays around his home city of Belfast, John Duncan's (1968, UK) photographic series *Sinister and Dexter* depicts debris and refuse, empty spaces and unpopulated streets. A discarded and upturned cabinet, wooden hoardings, alleyways and parking lots: the images portray the residue of prior activity and, in the context of Northern Ireland's 'Troubles,' evoke an aftermath of sectarian conflict. The title of his series refers to The Red Hand of Ulster, a heraldic symbol denoting the Irish province and the differences in meaning depending on its presentation as either a dexter (right) or sinister (left) hand. The relation of Duncan's images to the conflict – and to any specific political position – are left deliberately unresolved and ambiguous.

# Katinka Bock

*So-so, 2017*

Oak wood, bronze

The artist Katinka Bock (1976, Germany) has a predilection for modest and natural materials like terracotta, wood, plaster, ceramic, leather and fabric. Objects are chosen for their capacity to transform themselves, to produce energy, and to embody the passage of time, and, with delicate simplicity, she often sets them in precarious situations. In *So-So*, Bock positions two forms to stand upright next to one another: a block of untreated oak and a tube-like bronze column. The title suggests a momentary equilibrium, balanced between happiness and despair. The pair of objects are imbued with a sense of precariousness, as if on the verge of mutual collapse.

## Maria Nordman

*Standing Pictures: Parc Thabor, 1991*

Diptych box, drawings, glass, pencil, acrylic, wood

Maria Nordman (1943, Germany) is a sculptor and conceptual artist who, in the late 1960s, started to create site-responsive installations employing sensory stimuli such as light, air, ambient sound and the chance encounter with people. Over the last several decades, she has been working with architecture, film, drawing, performance, and interventions in public spaces and museums. Ideally, her work evolves in real time, subtly interacting with everyday life and, by consequence, being accessible to viewers from all backgrounds. Her interest in audience participation informs the *Standing Pictures* series, comprising slim vertical boxes that contain drawings and photographs on sliding metal tracks which can be pulled out by volunteers. By turns geometrically abstract and diagrammatic, the drawings often combine colour shapes with written information and photographs relating to earlier presentations of the artist's work. In this way, Nordman prioritises the experiential encounter over the static form of the work.

## Mark Lewis

*Upside Down Touch of Evil, 1996*

Film, 4:31

Mark Lewis (1958, Canada) is known for short films that conceptually and formally explore how moving images are made and understood. Though he trained and began working as a photographer, in the mid-1990s he started experimenting with film as a means of exploring how moving images are put together and function. Rather than presenting us with narratives, each film by Lewis employs a different camera technique: travelling shot, zoom, dolly pan, fixed camera or 360° camera rotation. Through this investigation of the camera's structuring of film's viewing experience, the film itself becomes the subject. In *Upside Down Touch of Evil*, Lewis appropriates the opening scene from Orson Welles' 1958 film noir masterpiece. The footage has been flipped and the soundtrack removed, creating a sense of disorientation that parallels the original film's tension and mystery.

## Pauline Boudry & Renate Lorenz

*Wall necklace piece (I know where I come from), 2021*

Metal chains, carabiners

Pauline Boudry (1972, Switzerland) & Renate Lorenz (1963, Germany) have been working collaboratively since 2007, producing films, installations and sculptures with a strong connection to performance and dance. Their performers are choreographers, artists and musicians with whom they have had long-standing conversations about the conditions of performance and the violent history of the gaze, but also about companionship, glamour and resistance. The sculpture *Wall Necklace Piece (I know where I come from)* is part of a series that has appeared in and informed several performances and installations by the artists and is composed of varieties of suspended chains, used both to secure spaces and to chain up people. Some of these chains might be used in queer culture and S/M practices, while others evoke the sensuality of jewelry worn directly on the skin.

# Raymond Hains

*Divers Titres, 2006*

Photographs

In 2003, Raymond Hains (1926, France) returned to the scene of his childhood at the invitation of Frac Bretagne. Collecting “coincidences, stories, visual signs”, the artist meandered through the city while reflecting upon his memories of youth. The resulting photographs displayed here reveal a preoccupation with monuments, signage, statuary, and symbols; an imperious bust of François Mitterrand set against the sky, a wooden placard advertising a theatre festival, and the artist himself, relaxing outside ‘Le Soleil du Maroc’ restaurant. Several images portray street signs, indications of the sites and scenes that Hains would have frequented in his wanderings. Through these photographs, he evokes a singular but familiar universe, peopled by little moments that make each of our lives an intimate and tender photo album.

# Sigurdur Arni Sigurdsson

*Correction, 2008-11*

Postcard, collage, pencil and ink on paper

Sigurdur Arni Sigurdsson's (1963, Iceland) work is about how we view the world around us, raising questions about the nature and limits of the field of vision and how it forms the basis of our worldview. He often presents archetypal figures or abstract forms floating against a monochromatic background, while retaining a sense of modesty in scale and subject matter. The *Correction* series are postcard-sized drawn vignettes of commonplace sights, breaching the limits of the picture plane to introduce elements of the absurd or surreal. A depiction of a dog finds a small piece of rock in lieu of its head, while rows of miniature trees or labyrinthine rice paddies spread beyond their central images onto the mounting board. Sigurdsson's delicate compositions override any distinction between the illusionistic space of drawing and the flat surface of the paper.

## Silvia Bächli

*Twelf, 2001*

Ink, gouache and oil pastel on paper, Perspex

Silvia Bächli's (1956, Switzerland) drawings use her body and movement as their starting point. Every day, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., she sits at her work table to draw small format sketches, while the larger-scale drawings are set on the floor and usually take her several days. At the end of the afternoon she explores the city, on the lookout for impressions and images that might inform future works. As in *Twelf*, there is the sharpness and precision of a photographer's gaze in the drawings: fragments of bodies, landscapes or objects, shadows, reflections, in a palette of blacks and grey whose contrasts are never accentuated. As she explains: "In my drawings, there is rarely any question of symbolic meaning. It is simply what is shown. Brief moments of sensation, fleeting visions, the eye lingering a little longer on something we all know but don't usually pay so much attention to." Isolated or in groups, Bächli's drawings are never arranged in a linear fashion, forcing the viewer to move, echoing the initial walks of the artist. "Each drawing is a point of reference in a network of relationships. There is no centre in this network."

# Thomas Tuerlai & Ugo Schiavi

*Loots, 2011-22*

Rolls of graffiti samples, steel, LEDs

Thomas Teurlai (1988, France) & Ugo Schiavi (1987, France) began their collaborative *Loots* series in Nice in 2011. The title of the work, which presents accumulated rolls of graffiti patiently and carefully scraped from public walls, comes from a sentence inscribed on the facades of houses in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina, 'Looters will be shot.' Recalling the large-format paintings rolled up in museum reserves, the installation imbues a certain ironical status to found graffiti, preserving and protecting the scrolls for our collective heritage. As the artists state: "Far from being a desperate act, our approach is no less looting. Archaeological looting in a sense, since the objects of our larceny are exclusively superimposed graffiti, accumulated year after year, the oldest strata of which can sometimes be dated more than twenty years. The history of this accumulation is visible on the multi-coloured slice of the 'skins' removed, detached from their walls. Once harvested, this loot had to be gathered and stored. The space of the gallery then becomes a clandestine warehouse and a place of concealment of stolen paintings."

## Vera Molnar

*Variations Sainte-Victoire, 1989-96*

Ink on paper

Vera Molnar (1923, Hungary) is a pioneer of computer art, whose work draws from constructivism and conceptual art, as well as cubism and other avant-garde movements, while developing her own form of geometric abstraction. She started developing combinatorial images in 1959 and began working with computers in 1968, using the programming languages Fortran and Basic to generate drawings. In this series of laser prints, Molnar pays tribute to Paul Cézanne and Mont Sainte-Victoire, which Cézanne depicted in several of his works: "The first time I saw a Montagne Sainte-Victoire by Cézanne," states Molnar, "it was as a reproduction in Budapest. Much later on, in the United States, I discovered in a book the curve described by Gauss, the famous German mathematician. I made a ton of drawings which were stolen from me. I was furious. I didn't want to know anything else about Gauss. Ten or fifteen years later, I was in Aix one morning and when I opened the window, what did I see? The Gaussian curve: it was Mont Sainte-Victoire."