

FASHION SHOW

Clothing, Art and Activism

29 July – 6 November 2022

The Glucksman

University College Cork

Artists: **Anna-Sophie Berger, Alicia Framis, Gluklya, Sibyl Montague, Sinéad O'Dwyer, Lucy + Jorge Orta, Malick Sidibé, Tenant of Culture, Wang Bing, Evelyn Taocheng Wang**

Curated by **Chris Clarke** and **Fiona Kearney**

as part of the Creative Europe **BEAM UP** project

Fashion Show presents works by Irish and international contemporary artists that look at clothing as subject matter, material, and a form of advocacy. From explorations of the ways in which fashion lends itself to self-representation to investigations into the economic and ecological effects of 'fast fashion,' the exhibition reveals how clothing becomes a means of activism and protest.

Alicia Framis' series *Is My Body Public?* presents images of fourteen women holding forth sheets of transparent fabric, each embroidered with the title phrase in their respective languages. While resembling pieces of lingerie, the dresses are actually banners for demonstrations, having been worn in the artist's public performances. Framis challenges ideas of privacy in her practice, with her participants literally undressing to confront the sexism prevalent in today's society. **Anna-Sophie Berger** originally studied fashion design in Vienna and her work playfully subverts notions of desirability implicit in luxury clothing. Her sculpture *The Wearer of Clothes* takes the shape of a classic ballgown with an underlying iron

skeleton similar to historic crinolines. However, a central opening also alludes to tents, suggesting that fashion and personal style can serve as a mode of protection and shelter.

Tenant of Culture's practice also stems from a background in design, with the artist's textile works revealing the relations involved in the production, distribution and consumption of fashion. Her 'chore coats' - practical utilitarian outerwear that has become fashionable amongst middle-class urbanites - are displayed as large sheets of fabric, printed with ready-to-cut outlines of sleeves, collars, vests. **Sinéad O'Dwyer's** sculptural works in silicone utilise techniques in design, tailoring and casting to trace the undulations of the female body. The artist situates her work within the context of fashion, as the luxury garment industry sets a standard for all to adhere to – even if we don't see it directly – through both its representation of an idealised form and the cutting of garments to fit a singular shape.

In **Malick Sidibé's** iconic photographic portraits of Malian youth culture, the artist invites his subjects to present themselves in their best, most stylish, outfits. Through his Bamako-based Studio Malick, his images capture the particular shift in atmosphere as society transitioned from French colonial rule to independence in the 1960s. This sense of self-discovery was mirrored in his studio portraits, as added personal objects, vibrant clothing, and the careful orchestration of point of view intimately captured the sitter's character. **Lucy + Jorge Orta's** collaborative practice includes wearable objects that enable participation, communication and interaction between strangers. *Anticipation Accessory* comprises a series of backpacks, outfitted with a selection of seemingly ordinary objects that at closer inspection reference various states of emergency: water and food shortages, the loss of love and affection, pollution or environmental disasters.

Wang Bing's film *15 Hours* was shot in Zhili, Huzhou, in the province of Zhejiang, and home to around 18,000 small factories for children's clothing, manned throughout the year by over 300,000 migrant workers. In the 1980s, Zhejiang saw the emergence of a private capital-based garment industry open to any and all operators prepared to invest in flexible business models based on mutual credit or leasing. This film documents one day in the lives of the workers of 68 Xisheng Road in Zhili, and marks a radical meditation on the state of labour in contemporary China.

Made from everyday materials such as clothes, rags, blankets, and wool, **Sibyl Montague's** textile-based works explore our need for intimacy, sustenance, nurturing and survival, the places in which we find solace, and our complex relationship with commodity culture and fast fashion. Her blanket-like sculptures foreground domestic and gendered crafts of sewing, wrapping, weaving, quilting and needlework, taking form through acts that are synonymous with caregiving. **Tenant of Culture** also uses tactics of recycling in her practice, presenting items of clothing that have been 'customised' with dried flowers, plastic and silk to create one-off originals.

Anna-Sophie Berger's *Fashion is Fast (Fitting 2013)* presents a sequence of deadpan black-and-white images modelling her 36-piece clothing line. Outfits and shoes are marked with their sizes and seasons, wittily deconstructing the hype that accompanies the promotion of designer clothing. **Gluklya** often uses clothing as a tool to build connections between art and everyday life, and her installation *Clothes for demonstration against false election of Vladimir Putin* was originally created for the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. The work was influenced by street protests in St. Petersburg in 2011-2012, and represents the different political positions of the demonstrators. Items of clothing are adorned both with slogans shouted during the protests and utopian ideals invented by the artist and her friends that envisage a better, more just, society.

Gender, ethnicity, class and the ways in which these identities are culturally determined play an important role in **Evelyn Taocheng Wang's** work. In *Photosynthesis*, fifty colour photographs, each taken in a different European location, show Wang in outfits by the French designer agnès b.. For Wang, the label represents an ideal of European sophistication marketed to Asian women. Her shirt banners incorporate watercolour, ink and rice paper on stretched white fabric, referring to the artist's training in traditional Chinese art and her status as an immigrant within contemporary European society.

Fashion Show is part of **BEAM UP**, a Creative Europe funded project to encourage the participation of people who are visually impaired in the planning and experience of museum activities. The displays will include a range of tactile elements, navigation and audio resources available in the gallery.

Fashion Show: Clothing, Art and Activism is supported by Creative Europe, the Arts Council of Ireland, University College Cork, and private philanthropy through Cork University Foundation.

It is possible to arrange for press interviews with some of the participating artists. For further discussion of the exhibition, press images or more detailed information, please contact:
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The Glucksman is open:

10 am – 5pm Tuesday – Saturday

2 – 5pm Sundays Closed Mondays.

Admission to the Glucksman is free / Suggested €5 donation.

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