

**C as in Curry S as in Seen : Kader Attia - Oier Etxeberria
Minja Gu - João Maria Gusmão + Pedro Paiva
Willem Oorebeek**

invited by HELD

28 February – 24 April 2016 / Thursday – Saturday, 14.00 – 18.00

mariondecannière artspace offers a platform to independent curators who cooperate with emerging and renowned artists alike. HELD (Wilfried Huet, Dirk Engelen, Stella Lohaus & Isabel Devriendt) will open the first season 2015-2016.

For the third exhibition, 'C as in Curry S as in Seen', HELD invites six artists who are regenerating existing or found images in a new artistic context.

Kader Attia

Oil and Sugar #2, 2007

Video, color, sound, 4'30"

Kader Attia (France, 1970) lives and works in Berlin. He grew up in both Algeria and the suburbs of Paris, and uses this experience of living as a part of two cultures as a starting point to develop a dynamic practice that reflects on aesthetics and ethics of different cultures. He takes a poetic and symbolic approach to exploring the wide-ranging repercussions of Western modern cultural hegemony and colonialism on non-Western cultures, investigating identity politics of historical and colonial eras, from Tradition to Modernity, in the light of our globalized world, of which he creates a genealogy.

For several years, his research focuses on the concept of Repair, as a constant in Human Nature, of which the modern Western Mind and the traditional extra-Occidental Thought have always had an opposite vision. From Culture to Nature, from gender to architecture, from science to philosophy, any system of life is an infinite process of repair.

Recent exhibitions include "The Injuries are Here" a solo show at the Musée Cantonal des Beaux Arts de Lausanne, "Culture, Another Nature Repaired", a solo show at the Middelheim Museum, Antwerp, 'Contre Nature', a solo show at the Beirut Art Center, 'Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder', a solo show at Whitechapel Gallery, London, 'Repair. 5 Acts', a solo show at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 'Construire, Déconstruire, Reconstruire: Le Corps Utopique', a solo show at Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the Biennale of Dakar, DOCUMENTA(13) in Kassel, 'Performing Histories (1)' at MoMA, New York, and 'Contested Terrains', Tate Modern, London.

In *Oil and Sugar #2 2007* the gradual collapse of a tower of sugar cubes doused in black oil embodies the crises and contradictions that can emerge within all cultural systems. Kader Attia's videos and installations often address the physical and historical processes affecting human constructs, from built landscapes to wider social frameworks. In this video, crude oil is poured onto a small construction made out of sugar cubes until these become soaked and eventually crumble. This process plays out as a conflict between opposed elements such as black and white, solid and liquid, and order and chaos. However, it also suggests that entropy and decline are essential to the emergence of new forms. The repetition of the sequence on a loop encourages this sense of transformation, while

beginning' and 'end' lose their static meanings.

Sugar and oil are both powerfully symbolic materials, whose production and trade have had profound economic, social and environmental consequences. Attia points out that both substances are fuel sources: not just petroleum but also ethanol, made from sugar cane and other crops. Developed as a 'clean' alternative to fossil fuels, ethanol is produced through a method that is similarly unsustainable. In many ways, what appears at first as a contrast of opposites turns out to be far more complex and paradoxical. (<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/attia-oil-and-sugar-2-t13180>)

Creation through disintegration, presence through absence, fullness through emptiness—such paradoxes inspire the work of the French-Algerian artist Kader Attia. He succinctly describes his artistic aim: "I am interested in the evocation of something through its contrary." To give form to the idea, he puts unexpected juxtapositions of contradictory elements to powerful visual and visceral effect.

Attia's video *Oil and Sugar #2* harnesses layered meanings through the marriage of simple and familiar materials, each selected for the distinct sensual/formal and cultural/political significations it embodies. His camera records in real time a close-up view of crystalline cubes of sugar stacked like bricks on a silver platter. Motor oil is poured onto the structure they form, and as the white solid absorbs the black liquid, it crumbles and pools in the platter as a glistening, viscous mass. Disintegrating the sweet, bite-sized sugar cubes with the crude fuel that powers so much of our contemporary activity, Attia presents a sensually seductive image of destruction, rife with open-ended metaphors in the realms of art, religion, and politics. He describes the form of the white cube as "the core symbol of art, of the space of art, of the institution." Drenched in oil and rendered black, the structure evokes the Kaaba, the Islamic holy site circled by pilgrims on their annual Hajj to Mecca. Once dissolved by oil, it calls to mind the ongoing destruction and violence sparked by religious and political difference and competition for fossil fuel resources in the Middle East. Composed with contrasting color, texture, form, and temporal flow, *Oil and Sugar #2* instills beauty in collapse, seduction in destruction, through means both direct and resonant. (<https://www.icaboston.org/art/kader-attia/oil-and-sugar-2>)

Oier Etxeberria

Instinto-pollos (Chicken Instinct), 2015

– 16mm film on DVD (1932-1935), 4'26" (Credits: José Antonio Laburu Olascoaga. Archivo Histórico y Musical del Santuario de Loyola. Filmoteca Vasca)

– Offset prints (Credits: photographs of the Archivo Histórico y Musical del Santuario de Loyola)

– Sculpture, poster (unlimited edition), Lithography (Edition 1/5), Ring

Oier Etxeberria (Azpeitia / Spain, 1974) lives in San Sebastian. He works as an artist and musician in an archeological sense – always in relation to frameworks of political, theological and cultural meanings – as a way to ordering Reality. In recent projects his research has been formulated through the exploration of eclectic historical sources proceeding from archives and iconographic legacies such as the Historical Archive and Film Collection of the Sanctuary of Loyola (Azpeitia, Basque country). Anachronism is thus a recurrent tool in works – sculpture, collage, texts and sound pieces – that put into question a truth from the past that in its new placing, presented as a "remnant" of history, challenges the present. In a certain way, this is a question of exploring one of the most interesting and misunderstood arguments of the modern Basque sculptor Jorge Oteiza (1908-2003): the way he applied a certain paranoid approach to the anthropological discourse as a form of delirium with which to face the present time. Recent exhibitions include: *The Beast and the Sovereign* (Kunstverein Stuttgart 2016 / Macba, Barcelona, 2015), *Pure Data* (Hamar), (San Sebastián Cathedral basement, 2013) and *Lalana* (Centro Montehermoso Kulturunea, Vitoria-Gasteiz, 2011). Etxeberria works as Head of Artistic Projects at Tabakalera in San Sebastian where he is developing the project *Stimulants: Circulation and Euphoria*.

Instinto-pollos focuses on the unconventional animal testing conducted in the 1930s and 1940s by the Spanish Jesuit priest José Antonio Laburu Olascoaga, who observed and filmed the behaviour of chickens when confronted in their coop with taxidermic animals like foxes or creatures like frogs in a state of hypnosis. For this 'post-Jesuit', biological life confirms that God is the basic principle of human fulfilment; therefore existence resembles a sort of continuous mechanographic activity dictated by a master mind that arranges and directs the actions and media of human beings as a whole. Laburu revisits Ignatius of Loyola's aspiration to direct all organic expression towards the love of God, reconciling human beings with speculation regarding the mystery of divine workings: 'The conceived end has directed the efficient causes, and the directed efficient causes have given the objective end an objective existence'. It's a question of enlightening the dark areas of rational and scientific thought, of making the shadows dance to the rhythm of the doctrine. And it is perhaps this trance that awakens Laburu's interest in automatic reflexes and automatisms, the gap between the animal that moves on impulse and the free conscience of man, a fertile ground for superstition. Laburu studies animal cytology and histology, and in his writings states that hypnosis can only be induced in animals through terror, as in order to be influenced one must be equipped with a superior paraphysiological capacity that these irrational beings are lacking. There can be no abandonment of will when there is no willingness of the mind. The exuberant movements of the living are thus excluded from reflectivity, and fear becomes the physiological principle in charge of organising the farmyard, as in the social model suggested by Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan.

Minja Gu

The Authentic Quality, 2014

Mixed Media: Video 26'50", Text

Minja Gu (Korea, 1977) graduated from the department of Painting at Hongik University with a BFA, from the department of Philosophy at Yonsei University with a BA, and from the department of Fine Art in Korea National University of Arts with an MFA. She participated in various residency program including Ssamzie Space studio program, the Hangar Residency in Barcelona, GCC in Ansan and so on. She had her first solo exhibition "Identical Times" (Space croft, Seoul, 2009) and participated in many group exhibitions: "Taipei Biennial" (Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taipei, 2008), "Now What" (Space Hamilton, Seoul, 2009), "Anyang Public Art Project" (Anyang, 2010), "VIDEO: VIDEO" (ARKO Museum, Seoul, 2010), "Trading Future" (Taipei Contemporary Art Center, 2012), "A Cabinet in the Washing Machine" (Seodaemun-gu Recycling Centre, Seoul, 2012) and "The Part In The Story Where A Part Becomes A Part Of Something Else" (Witte de with, Rotterdam, 2014). In 2013, she was selected as one of the young artists for the exhibition "New Visions New Voices"(National Museum of Contemporary Art, Korea, 2013). In 2015 and 2016 she is participating in the HISK programme in Belgium.

Minja Gu entails the long process of presentation for cooking that begins from her question on certain surroundings that are familiar to us. Would someone be able to exactly actualise the exemplary food printed on the package that is consumed in daily life? In order to take a suggested exemplary image as a norm and precisely represent this, she needs long hours of discipline for technique, study, and efforts. By persistently investing impossible time in daily life, the artist's work shows euphemistic resistance to standardised sense and perception. If art has portrayed the real through the imaginary, the artist bring the virtuality of the image back to existence. The fact that one cannot arrive at the same result as the image of the food package, even though he/she follows the recipe, is an obvious non-trick trick. Although Gu knows that the image is a good-looking fake made as an "example," she follows it to the very end. In regards to the course of this work, that has no coerciveness yet is just being strict to itself, the question "Why you don't prefer not to do it?" would be more appropriate than merely asking "Why do it?" Dedicating a

considerable amount of time and energy in adjusting the angle of a single grain of rice with a pair of tweezers does not seem a mere exposé of the real behind the illusion of an image. Rather, this work can be viewed as an extension of the artist's continuous inquiry into the issue of speed and practice, through the experience of labour. Gu focuses on the fact that one can spend infinite time on this kind of "endless work." If we accept the accustomed notion that the image and the real are not identical, curry will be ready in three minutes, and cooked-rice will be done within a minute and a half. If we accept this, there is no disappointment, but once we start to question it, the problem expands to three hours, to six hours. One can even readily devote two years to it. The time of the "instant" continues endlessly.

(Haeju Kim / Extract from 'Taste and Flavour' on Minja Gu's work 'The Authentic Quality')

João Maria Gusmão + Pedro Paiva

Papagaio, 2014

16mm film, colour, no sound, 43' (Produced by Fondazione HangarBicocca, Milan)

João Maria Gusmão (Lisbon, 1979) and Pedro Paiva (Lisbon, 1977) live and work in Lisbon. They started working together in 2001 on the "InMemory" exhibition at the Galeria Zé dos Bois in Lisbon. Their works have been shown in monographic exhibitions in several contemporary art museums and centres, including MUSAC - Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla y León (2007), the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Art (2008), the Kunstverein Hannover (2009), the Ikon Gallery (2010). Between 2011 and 2012, IMO Projects, Le Plateau, the Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Marino Marini Museum and the Kunstnernes Hus all devoted solo exhibitions to their works. They have taken part in international events such as the Gwangju Biennale (2010), Manifesta (2008) and the São Paulo Biennale (2006). In 2009, they also represented Portugal, with "Experiments and Observations on Different kinds of Air" at the Venice Biennale, where they were invited to the main event, "The Encyclopedic Palace", in 2013. The works of João Maria Gusmão and Pedro Paiva are now in several public collections, including FRAC - Fonds régional d'art contemporain d'Île-de-France (France), MUDAM - Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (Luxembourg), MNAC - Museu Nacional de Arte Contemporânea, Museu do Chiado, (Portugal), Tate Modern (UK), Serralves Foundation (Portugal), Nasjonalmusset (Norway) and Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Spain).

Gusmão and Paiva's work involves the creation of movies on 16mm and 35mm film as well as photographs, sculptures and installations, including devices that create projections of moving images, called Camera Obscura. Their works are characterized by the use of anti-spectacular analogue forms of expression (silent films first and foremost). These enter into an intimate relationship with the viewer, in stark contrast to the compulsive, immediate consumption of images typically found in digital culture. Gusmão and Paiva's films portray simple "poetic-philosophical narratives", as the artists themselves call them, presented as primordial documentaries about inexplicable phenomena and incongruous scientific experiments, or as accounts of events with unexpected, comical or pathetic endings. Forever suspended in an indeterminate zone between reality and artifice, these "short stories" do no more than convey the irrationality of existence and of the events that take place around us, with their resulting irresistible magnetism related to all that is not immediately clear and comprehensible.

A recurrent theme in Gusmão and Paiva's work is ventriloquism. A practice once attributed to oracles, and later adopted by illusionists, in the artists' works ventriloquism becomes a partontological, part-pathetic representation of man's inability to give meaning to reality through logos - in other words, through the word viewed as a rational element. The sense of absurdity and uselessness is further heightened by the fact that the film is silent, so words and sounds cannot be heard in any case. The subject also appears in the film *Papagaio* (2014), shot in the archipelago of São Tomé and Príncipe and shown in a small cinema which is itself part of the exhibition. The film

introduces a change in the work of the artists, who have so far only made short features. shot, at times as though it were under the same spell as the dancers, and the fact that it is silent, turns this work into a metaphor of inaccessibility and incommunicability. Those who watch the film are taken silently through this subjective camera shot, as though they shared the same beliefs, striving towards the transcendental and coexisting with the living dead.

Willem Oorebeek

Les secrets de la mémoire, 2004

lithografie on offset, on dibond, 50 x 50 cm

P-screen, 2008

litho on offset, on aluminium, 180 x 240 cm

Dutch artist Willem Oorebeek (Pernis/The Netherlands, 1953) lives and works in Brussels. Willem Oorebeek studied at the Academy of Art in Rotterdam, was a lecturer at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht, at De Ateliers in Amsterdam and the Hochschule der Künste in Hamburg also visiting professor at the university of Applied Arts in Wenen. Reflecting on the representational power of images and information disseminated by mass media, Oorebeek selects printed matter to manipulate and transpose into other media, typically utilizing techniques from the graphic arts to explore themes of repetition, reproduction, seriality, and order. His conceptual works, installations, and book projects have been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions.