

**Fiction  
Nonfict-  
ion  
Story-  
telling in  
Art Crit-  
icism**

Node Center  
Notebooks Vol. 3  
Ed. An Paenhuysen

A collection of exercises from  
the online course Creative Forms  
of Art Criticism and Writing.



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**Introduction**  
An Paenhuysen

“Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping.”

Sometimes more truth is to be found in the telling of non-truths. Virginia Woolf thought so when writing her *A Room of One's Own*. The controversial topic of sex could only be talked about while “making use of all the liberties and licences of a novelist”: “Lies will flow from my lips, but there may perhaps be some truth mixed up with them; it is for you to seek out this truth and to decide whether any part of it is worth keeping.”<sup>1</sup>

It was in 1952 that Lillian Ross introduced reporting as an art. *The Picture* was the first reportage written in the form of a novel. With a scrupulous objectivity Lillian Ross gave a minute-by-minute account of the making of the film *The Red Badge of Courage*. Yet there was certainly a good amount of imagination at work in her writing as she was convinced that “literal gabble often misleads and obscures truth.”<sup>2</sup>

In 1966, Truman Capote followed suit by publishing *In Cold Blood*, calling it a nonfiction novel —“a narrative form that employed all the techniques of fictional art but was nevertheless immaculately factual.”<sup>3</sup> To Capote, journalism was one of the most underestimated literary mediums and he was out to make it into a serious new art form.

Imagination and fantasy are, however, rarely associated with art criticism. But isn't art criticism all about opening up an art work to the imagination of the reader? Often art reviews stick to the stiffening facts of the artist's biography, career and place in art history, forgetting that the art works takes place in the head of the beholder and not so much on the wall. This immaterial art work is hard to be captured into words. That's why a properly done piece of art criticism requires imagination. “What I cannot see I attempt to call”, Patti Smith writes in *M Train*.<sup>4</sup>

In the following pieces, art writers make an attempt at storytelling and while doing so they touch upon a genre that can be called fiction nonfiction.

<sup>1</sup> Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Lillian Ross, “Introduction”, in: *Idem, Reporting Always. Writings from The New Yorker* (New York-London 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Truman Capote by George Plimpton, “The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel”, *The New York Times*, January 16, 1966.

<sup>4</sup> Patti Smith, *M Train* (London-Oxford 2015).



**You're a Germ**  
Michelle Huynh Chu

**T**hey call it *magic hour*. It's sunsets on steroids. It's when pink fades into purple and bounces on tangerines handpicked from Mexico and without fail end up in postcards with 'Sunset Blvd,' or 'Los Angeles' slapped across. Teddy and I stood on the corner of Franklin and Vermont; on our right, a peep of a backyard pool and on our left, the diner *Astro Pies*. No surprise: pink flamingos and baby-pink lawn chairs floated across this pool scene—or were they baby blue lawn chairs? (*Always baby something!*) "It just looks like a fake crime scene," I said, "too much CSI or Law and Order in this town." "Yeah and what's with Asssss-tro Pies?" Teddy mocked while its fluorescently lit logo twirled overhead like a spinning billboard attached to some space station where they serve car-jet culture, space-atomic coffee, and—who knows, vacuum-dried fruit thrown into a pie dish? We much preferred our pink flamingos from John Waters and our chairs from Mary Heilmann—but they, too, love their pastel, plastic, trash and babies. In any case, we were angry and hungry from hours of speculations and definitions. Not ours but those of Kim Gordon, Rita Ackermann, Paul McCarthy, and Richard Jackson.



I could identify with the list of oxymorons printed in stanzas on those press flyers. Poetry for the press, I guess. *Fine Mess*, it writes. ‘Definitely,’ I thought. I gassed and braked maniacally like a New York cab driver on the way over; slipped into one open spot after circling around; and suffered a serious case of ‘too anxiously changing in and out of ten outfits to keep up with time’ and now, I’m paying for it with all the sweat and *Balanced Insanity* —the next phrase on the list. Then, *Wise Fool*: papers passed around like propaganda and rows of folding chairs all swallowed up by the Gris concrete of the space with its open-air courtyard, which is not unlike Isa Genzken’s concrete bricks and steel pipes. I mean, we were one orange jumpsuit away from being in prison. After all, this was an event titled *Civilized Disobedience*. Then the list goes on with, “*Crash Landing, Arrogant Humility, Delicious Torment, Gregarious Recluse,*” recites Ackermann, her voice was soft and in a high soprano range, heavy in an Eastern European accent. I couldn’t make out her words even with the help of a microphone saying, “Listen! Here’s your platform, now explain!” Instead, her drawn out sentences were like a humdrum beat to three very large and loud paintings of hers hung behind the panel of speakers, all of them boxed in like a diorama. “Speak up!” a man in black Goth t-shirt yells. “Into the mic!” a lady in all-white linen chimes in.

Kim Gordon proceeds. More than half the audience straightens up, scoots to the edge of their seat, and strains their neck to catch a view like a flock of flamingos. “Performing in front of a big audience has always been easy to me because it’s abstract,” she tells the flock. Some nodded in unison as if saying, “Yes! Feed me! Our dying kinds...” Richard Jackson pounces, “...everyone is an artist these days because there aren’t many options presented to us in society!” —the punctuation quite suited to Jackson here; for whatever anonymity he holds among A-listers like Rita, Kim, and Paul, he compensates in exuberance and magnetism. Then, Paul McCarthy begins to talk. Bodies wiggle back into a slouch and hands dive into tote bags.

Beat.

Paul is still talking. At this point, more than half the room has emptied out and continues doing so, enough so that when it was all over, Kim Gordon could wander in the space alone. Only Rita’s paintings were up, all of them soaked in fluid menstrual red with flashing hot pink girls. Kim fluttered around in an orange shift dress in satin or fabric of shimmering iridescent sorts looking fluid like the female figures on the walls.

Then, Rita and Kim retreat to a corner. Their lips are moving, though no audible sounds. Extra-terrestrial much? Or a cult united by telepathic thoughts and subdued bodily movements? “The phrase *Painting as Performance* has been dropped many times today,” I thought. Coco Gordon-Moore squeezes in with a red SOLO cup in her hand and a melancholic gaze into the distance. A dachshund on a red leash scoots into the ring of girls. None of them silent or lonely now and the group migrates toward the stairs with the dog.

“Omg, omg, Kim is heading towards me,” Teddy texted from the stairwell. I followed them from the back, Teddy in the front. Our train slowly moves to the bathrooms, passing Isa Genzken’s rose, Louise Bourgeois’ spider, and a row of Maria Lassnig’s paintings and finally, disbands at Hannah Wilkes’s pleather thumbtack lip piece. “What happened???” I squealed. Teddy’s left shoulder was smeared in blood, the back of her left calf bleeding some *Fine Mess*. Is this a gallery, or a “kunsthalle,” or a crime scene, or the red carpet, or just Hollywood?

*Noble Savage.*



# The Gist of Ist/A (Non) Fictional Gallery Exhibition Review of the Opening User Experience At The Museum of the Art Institute of False New Art & Fake Art World Island, Over There.

Pete Driessen

Art Fairist  
Art Gallerist  
Art GoatSackist  
Art DoNotist  
Art Schmuckist  
Art Contemporaryist  
Art Definitivist  
Art Fascist  
Art Feminist  
Art Shitist  
Art Supplementalist  
Art Misuserist  
Art Communicationalist  
Art Deploymentorist  
Art Counsellingist  
Art Readerist  
Art Jargonist  
Art Structuralist  
Art Linguagist  
Art Sourcerist  
Art Textist  
Art Pitfallist  
Art Powerfulisticalist  
Art Hickeyist  
Art Kraussist  
Art Bishopist  
Art Enwezorist  
Art Organizerist  
Art Fuckerist  
Art Workerist  
Art NYTimesist  
Art PoModoist  
Art Ist-Ist  
Art Suckerist  
Art Authorist  
Art Pancapitalisticalist  
Art Productionist  
Art Visualisticalist  
Art Networkingist  
Art Venueist  
Art Openingist  
Art Closingist  
Art Closerist  
Art Provokerist  
Art Saltzyist  
Art Whinerist  
Art Administratorialist  
Art Tacticalist  
Art Documentationalist  
Art Decentralizationist  
Art Deterritorializationist  
Art Engagerist  
Art Writerist

Art Professionalist  
Art Engagerist  
Art Teacherist  
Art Curatorialist  
Art Curatorist  
Art Assistant Curatorialist  
Art Huermenuedicalist  
Art Revolutionaryist  
Art Guardianist  
Art Involvementalist  
Art Finalist(Against)  
Art Thinkerist  
Art OverSimplifierist  
Art Overduerist  
Art Hipocriticalist  
Art Aspiringist  
Art Radicalist  
Art Essentialisticalist  
Art Studentist  
Art Practicalist  
Art Travelorist  
Art Tourist  
Art Sensualist  
Art Sexualist  
Art Sexist  
Art Masculinist  
Art ButtFuckerist  
Art Fistist  
Art Academicist  
Art Librarianist  
Art Catalogueingist  
Art Aspiringist  
Art Horderist  
Art WideRangerist  
Art Supremicist  
Art Textualist  
Art Bloggerist  
Art Exhibitionist  
Art Museumist  
Art Institutionalist  
Art Labelist  
Art Cubist  
Art WhiteWallist  
Art Excluderist  
Art Essayist

Art Reviewerist  
Art Op-Edist  
Art Journalisticist  
Art Auctioneerist  
Art Websiterist  
Art Didacticist  
Art Publishist  
Art Navigationalist  
Art Semioticalist  
Art Semanticalist  
Art Situationalist  
Art Seductivenessalist  
Art Counselingist  
Art OxfordCommaist  
Art Commonist  
Art Researcherist  
Art Compellingist  
Art Analyzerist  
Art PreSupplementalist  
Art Snottyist  
Art Snobbyist  
Art Elitisticalist  
Art Fetishisticalist  
Art Flaneuristicalist  
Art Constructivistalist  
Art Deconstructivisticalist  
Art (Very)Uninterestingist  
Art Abstractorialisticalist  
Art Printerist  
Art Self-Publisherist  
Art Downloaderist  
Art Acknowledgmentalist  
Art Apologisticalist  
Art SpecialistShowOfficalist  
Art AdvisoristHighestHeelist  
Art NonPlaceMakingArtistist  
Art BigWordyTranslatorialist  
Art ThirstyOut-of-Waterist  
Art Unintentionalisticalist  
Art Specificityist  
Art Defenderist  
Art Pacificist  
Art CryBabyist  
Art Traditionalisticalist  
Art Framerist  
Art Archiverist  
Art CriticalistThinkeristicalist  
Art Fearist  
Art Substantiatist

Art NonSpecialist  
Art Censorist  
Art Blatherist  
Art Celebrityisticalist  
Art Republicanist  
Art Nationalisticalist  
Art MotherFuckerist  
Art Piggyesticaltaliaist  
Art SiteSpecificisticalist  
Art Signifierist  
Art Pictorialisticalist  
Art Reinforceristicalist  
Art Performancerist  
Art Birtherist  
Art Phenomenologicalist  
Art Subliminalist  
Art Liminalisticalist  
Art Representatoristicalist  
Art Applicationist  
Art Aphorismist  
Art Notationist  
Art Journalisticaliaist  
Art Formerist  
Art Colorist  
Art WhiteSquarialist  
Art Hystericalisticalist  
Art Postitionist  
Art AntiCulturalist  
Art Herstoryist  
Art Manifestoist  
Art ContentProvideristicalist  
Art Materialist  
Art DegreeZeroist  
Art Autonomyisticalisticalist  
Art Untitledist  
Art Entitledist  
Art Declarationisticalist  
Art Perplexingist  
Art ChicagoDinnerPartyist  
Art Technologicalist  
Art BlackMountainist  
Art Bauhausisticalist  
Art YaleGradSchoolist  
Art Projectionisticalist  
Art Satellitestist  
Art Videographerist  
Art Destructivist  
Art Proposalist  
Art Amplifiedisticalist

Art Mortalist  
Art PaintCanist  
Art Environmentalist  
Art Installationisticalist  
Art Meaninglessnessist  
Art Formlessnessist  
Art Disasteristicalist  
Art Behavioralisticalist  
Art Subversionist  
Art Nobodiist  
Art Mapperist  
Art Territorializerist  
Art Nonsequiturst  
Art Justificationist  
Art Transformationist  
Art Transubstaniatorist  
Art Distinctist  
Art Consciousnessist  
Art Opaquerist  
Art Xenophobist  
Art Misogynisticalist  
Art Fighterist  
Art Disapproveristicalist  
Art Feelingist  
Art Diminisherist  
Art Narcisisticalist  
Art Fearist  
Art Spaticalist  
Art CounterProductivist  
Art Volunteerist  
Art Fundraiserist  
Art Citizenryist  
Art Peerist  
Art Purist  
Art Marginalist  
Art Alignmentist  
Art Proximalisticalist  
Art Authoritarianist  
Art Witnessist  
Art Vulnerablist  
Art Disdainist  
Art SayNothingist  
Art Tumblerist  
Art Fragilitist  
Art Vulgarist  
Art Simplifieristicalist  
Art Anxietyisticalist  
Art Demonstratorist  
Art Resolverist

Art Providerist  
Art Reflexorist  
Art Demagoguerist  
Art Protectionist  
Art DisTemperist  
Art Dispossessionisticalist  
Art Deaccessionist  
Art Resentmentisticalist  
Art Conspirationalist  
Art Cynicalist  
Art Mainstreamerist  
Art Manipulatorist  
Art Oustracizerist  
Art Discounterist  
Art Uninterruptedisticalist  
Art Televisionisticalist  
Art Disconnectedist  
Art Institutionalist  
Art Governorist  
Art Boundariesationalist  
Art Resilientist  
Art Articulatorist  
Art Scandalizorist  
Art FlimFlamist  
Art Purveyoristicalist  
Art LowResolutionalist  
Art Populisticalist  
Art Disparagerist  
Art ConveyorBelteristicalist  
Art Accumulatorist  
Art Launderoristicalist  
Art Reinforcerist  
Art Temporaryisticist  
Art Attributionalisticalist  
Art Audiencesist  
Art Spectatoristicalist  
Art Isolationisticalist  
Art Cohesionist  
Art Identifieristicalist  
Art Internationalisticalist  
Art Worksmanshipperist  
Art Capitalist  
Art Identifierist  
Art Pscycologicalisticalist  
Art Fabricationist  
Art Intentionalist  
Art Receiverist  
Art Morphologicalist  
Art Multiversalisticalist

**Fame Is Not**  
Vivi Touloumidi

**B**erlin was cold and grey as Berlin is at this time of the year. They had been planning to visit the Manifesto exhibition at HBF for so long, but they never seemed to manage. Luckily enough the duration of the show was extended for two more extra weeks, so they just had to get this done now. Fellow artists had been talking about it constantly... it had become awkward not to be informed... they couldn't join the discussions... it was really embarrassing to not have an opinion... it was just not cool at all.

When they arrived, the installation room was already full with people watching the 13 large channel screenings, switching loosely from one to the other. They gazed around for a while, then just chose one randomly that seemed to be less occupied. It was the right moment to squeeze in just below the megaphone and the movie was on! A few minutes later, the famous actress, playing a school teacher, spelled out the magic quote to her class of artist-offsprings: —“no-thing is ori-gi-nal!” That was enough to make their daily routine roll once more.

*(a snowball of thoughts about their own artistic talent, authenticity and original intellect has triggered. Or was it maybe a relief?)*



**tall\_B:** —Ah yah! I told you, remember? “NO-thing is original!” Here you go! The next time you start complaining about me stealing chord progressions, think twice right?

**short\_a:** —Could you be more quite (?!)... People are trying to listen...

**tall\_B:** —I am just telling you that I can use whichever field recording sample I like to, as long as a new song comes out of it... This is what everybody is doing! Watch!

**short\_a:** —I am watching...

**smart\_C:** —Actually I think he’s right. Originality is so overrated. It does not exist. Period. It is all about remix, remix, remix and then remix again (!)

**short\_a:** —Ok. BUT he just puts one thing on top of the other, then plays a little bit around with his gadgets and this is it. It is really so impressive...

**tall\_B:** —People do not know that and anyhow only the result matters.

**short\_a:** —Exactly my point.

**tall\_B:** —It’s the way I do it, you see? It is the how (?!), not the what (?!)

**stranger\_d:** —SSSSSSSSSS... Please, you are not alone (!)  
*(silence with tension)*

At a further scene another advise of the school teacher pops up: —“The director should not be credited, alright?”

**short\_a:** —Oh! That’s for you!

**tall\_B:** —I am OFF!  
*(short\_a and smart\_C watch tall\_B departing from the show... They stare at each other with understanding).*

In the end, not being able to debate about this show within their circles was not such a bad idea in the first place. They returned to that place.



## The Exhibition

Kenesha Julius

I was wet and cold; shoes caked in mud from the summer storm outside and to make matters worse it's been almost 10 hours since I've last eaten, but I'm here, as promised, to the *I Want More...* exhibition hosted by the Bamboo Curtain Studio in Taipei, Taiwan. This was a favor and a big one too. I usually don't make time for 'small' shows like these from graduates, barely anything comes from it but the curator is a friend of mine and I owed her one so... that's that.

"I want more..." I mumbled the topic in my head as I unwillingly crossed the entrance and joined others jostling about in the hallway. I knew tonight's theme played on the topic of consumerism but I was predicting the possible ways this night could play out. "I want more... I want more... I want to leave." I was already over it.

"Kora!" A female voice emerged shouting my name. Curator Lena Smith, all dressed in white, approached me with all smiles and as dry as can be with not a speck of mud in sight. I frowned at the thought that this lady didn't have to travel to hell and back just to get here.



“I’m so glad that you made it. At first, I thought the sudden bad weather would drive everyone away.” She continued cheerfully as she began escorting me to the showcase rooms. “It’s about to start. Come.”

I responded with a heavy sigh as I pushed myself forward. Upon entering the room, I was met with the unexpected sound a slow Japanese Samisen (a traditional 3 stringed instrument, similar to a guitar). Three performance artists in torn shards of white clothing stepped from the darkness and stopped in the center of the open showcase room. I was always skeptical of musical performances at exhibition shows. Only with a keen ‘eye’ can they blend absolutely well together. As the music gained tempo, the dancers scattered about the space, synchronizing their movements with the music. They skipped and frolicked about the art pieces-hands and cloth wildly flared about. And then, the room buzzed to life as the dancers broke formation and began interacting with the artwork present. One mimicked the odd crooked stance of a large installation of twisted cans and then, another pranced among a series of Roy Lichtenstein inspired Pop art paintings. I stepped forward, glancing at this introductory display of the statuette art pieces.

The music softened to the calm Japanese blend while the dancers kept to the center of the room, this time, allowing the visitors and myself to make rounds and view each art work. The lulling, repetitive trance of the smooth sound played as I passed a mural sized abstract painting of Koi fishes. Their soft colors and gold trimmings heightened as they merged well with the delicate solo intervals of the Japanese harp playing. There was a sudden contrast when the space fell silent for a moment as I approached the soundless static video installation of repeated, undulating letters forming recognizable household name brands. The music resumed but this time with the eerie sound of a bamboo flute. I spotted the dancers slowly marching, with every lingering note, through the aisles of a sea of distorted designer heels laid out neatly on the floor. The dancers' faces were now covered with a wire type mesh as they lightly treaded through the art piece in 4 inch Geta sandals (traditional Japanese footwear). When the dream-like performance ended, the dancers exited the space and the music returned to its soothing Japanese blend. Entranced, I continued my way along the space stopping ever so often, carefully examining what I may have missed and taking notes on who the new artists were.

“So, are you enjoying the night?” I met up with Ms. Smith later into the show and it took me a moment to respond. But I think the answer was already there. For my wet clothes were forgotten. The mud on my shoes —a thing of the past. I shook my head and raised my hands in defeat for there was no point in denying it.

*...I Wanted More...*



**Shhh**  
Kadiatou Diallo

“**W**ho the hell does she think she is? Coming here and telling us Swiss how not to behave.”

“Shhh, not so loud.”

“Oh, please, don’t try to be witty now. I mean even the title of the show is offensive. SCH. Really.”

“I wasn’t trying to be funny. People are looking at us already. Keep it down.”

Bigna had opened a small art bookshop and event space in the old part of Basel two years ago. Things were going well and in order to keep it this way, she had become a vigorous networker who sometimes attended up to eight art events in one week. On a few rare occasions she succeeded in coercing Divico, her boyfriend of seven years, to accompany her.

They had met during their first year at university and became lovers soon after. Both had started out as business students. But while she kept gravitating towards an increasingly diversified curriculum (“watering it down”, as he called it, with a growing number of art-related subjects), he pursued a linear (fool proof) trajectory.

Within five years, his ambitions had catapulted him into a top position in a major pharmaceutical company. Generally he considered all things art an indulgence and when he indulged Bigna on evenings like this, he considered that a momentous sacrifice on his part. A couple of years ago, he had visited South Africa with an old colleague; some kind of Adventure-Safari in the North West Province near the Botswana border, followed by a long weekend of beach fun in Cape Town. An exhibition by a guest curator from South Africa, he calculated, might rekindle some of these good memories, at least this event seemed like a bearable choice.

The show was called SCH; as in the first three letters of the German words Schweiz (Switzerland), Schützen (protect), Schwarz (black), Schweigen (silence) and like the silencing sound that Bigna had just hissed at him a few moments ago.

“Did you read this?”, Bigna ventured in a pacifying voice holding the curatorial statement in front of his face, “I really quite like the idea of this not being a finished exhibition but a series of different encounters with local artists. Like an on-going interrogation.”

They had moved a little closer to the edges of the room and away from the critical gazes. Their movement was obstructed by an expansive installation that stretched across the entire floor. An Egyptian artist who has lived in Basel for the last twenty-five years, had created what he calls a ruin, an intricate landscape assembled from found materials; the elephant in the room. On opposing walls, two projections were in a rhythmic call and response with one another. On the one side photographs depicting Southern Africa as seen during the colonial period by European and Swiss explorers, sourced in the archives of the Basler Afrika Bibliographien, on the other photographs of post-colonial advertising echoing these gazes in the present day. Around a small table at the centre of the room sat a Kenyan-Swiss theatre director, an Indian-Swiss academic, a Somali-Swiss slam-poetress and a Trinidadian-Swiss author, deeply engrossed in a debate about whether or not so-called people of colour should be eating bananas in public. They seemed unaware of the audience that was scattered across the gaps left vacant by the floor installation and who were listening attentively.

“Encounters? Don’t make me laugh. Seems like anything goes as art nowadays”, he mumbled.

“You should know” she replied in an affronted tone.

“And interrogating what exactly? What’s wrong with Switzerland?” He raised his voice again. A few heads turned.

“I really think you are missing the point here” she whispered, “This is about the kind of stuff people — including the local art scene, mind you— prefer not to talk about because Switzerland is all so very perfect and neutral?” Her speech was getting more passionate. “Switzerland had nothing to do with colonialism, didn’t benefit from the colonial efforts of the imperialists and racism doesn’t exist here, because we have always been so very neutral, right?”, she closed ironically.

“I don’t have to listen to a bunch of Secondos<sup>1</sup> telling me how shitty life is in Switzerland”, ignoring her comment, “If they don’t like it here, they should go back to where they came from.”

“Excuse me?”, Bigna squeaked wide-eyed and hitting the X like a whip, “You might have forgotten that I come from a family of immigrants too. And yes, comments like that do make life very shitty indeed. When on Earth did you become such a bigot? It’s like I am dating Donald freaking Trump!”

“Shhhh”, shushed someone from the audience.

<sup>1</sup>The term *Secondo* (male) or *seconda* (female), stemming from the Italian word for second, was initially used in Switzerland to refer to the children of migrants who were born in Switzerland, who have lived in Switzerland for many years or who have been nationalized. Today the term is also used in other countries to refer to the second generation of immigrants. The term itself is not derogatory, in fact is often used by secondos to refer to themselves.





## Two Fools Walk Into the Same Old Joke and Trip Over the Punchline

Maria Martens

- A:** *I think the first floor set my expectations too high.*
- B:** *Are you talking about the art or the space?*
- A:** *I wasn't expecting much from the space —from the outside it looked boring. I was surprised when we walked in —it's the opposite of how I thought it would be. The concrete is so smooth, and there is light coming from everywhere!*
- B:** *It's true. The building is beautiful. You know how usually you have to stop yourself from touching the art? Right now I have to stop myself from touching the walls.*
- A:** *I think we're allowed to touch the walls.*
- B:** *And look at the way everything reflects on the floor...I didn't know you could polish concrete to this point.*
- A:** *This raw material is perfect for presenting art. It's just a shame about the art.*
- B:** *Is this your first Richard Prince show?*
- A:** *It is. I feel like I "get it", and just when I bring myself to enjoy it, he kills it.*
- B:** *The cars mounted on the cement and his play with movement is strong, though.*
- A:** *That's what I thought on the first floor. Now that we've seen it all, I have conflicting emotions...*



**B:** *I get that especially with exhibitions that take place over several floors. You make your way up, and then you come back down, and you get to experience the show in reverse, like you are unraveling your thoughts...*

**A:** *I wonder how I would feel about this show if I saw it in a different place. Right now, I feel like the space is doing a lot of the work.*

**B:** *Not a Prince fan, I guess?*

**A:** *Guess not. He has a certain attitude that comes through in his pieces... and I can't bring myself to separate the art from the artist. I don't like the artist so I don't like the art. I don't know how I feel about that, though... it doesn't seem fair.*

**B:** *I don't know if it's possible to separate them.*

**A:** *Yes, but the artist is not here to defend himself.*

**B:** *Defend himself against what? Our opinions? We are just the audience. I doubt Prince really cares what you think. Or what I think.*

**A:** *Well, he has to care what somebody thinks. But, this is exactly the type of attitude that comes across in his work—that whole fuck it mentality that you also find in Hirst, Koons... how can you criticize someone who doesn't give a shit?*

**B:** *Listen, if you ever want to drive someone crazy—and this goes for anyone—just be indifferent. Love or hate someone, it only shows you're thinking about them. Indifference drives people crazy. So, while it doesn't really matter to these guys what you think, it matters to them that you are thinking something.*

**A:** *And here I am, playing right into it.*



## Discount

Kirsty White

**T**he sculpture is a sex shop assemblage of dildos and office furniture. When I squint, it is the figure of a woman. Looking closer, it dissolves into its composite parts: the wheels from a desk chair, the limbs from a blow up doll, a bondage taped torso... It is now more sculpture than woman. I haven't read Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*, but I feel that if I had, I could make an insightful reference here.

I am at a two-person exhibition in Edinburgh's Patriothead Gallery by artists Kirsty Boutle and Eilidh McPherson. They are friends of my boyfriend, and the crowd at the gallery is mainly Edinburgh College of Art graduates and the odd family member. We are now well into the private view —I arrived late, straight off a train from London via the shower— and the wine is running low. People are starting to trickle out.

"It's very Louise Bourgeois", I say, nodding at the dildos. "Yah," says Fintan, my boyfriend, "Kirsty's big into her." The textile details too are reminiscent of LB. Crochet protrusions that add a dash of village fete to the cyborg-feminism.

We walk across the room to look at Eilidh's paintings. We stop in front of one —a giant yellow foot roped to an even-larger paving stone. It is painted in block colors and large brushstrokes. I hear the word 'gestural' mentioned in the conversation to my left.

“It’s amazing how much influence this woman Dana Schutz has had on painting in the last 7 years,” Richard says walking over. He is a Canadian artist in his late 50s. For the last year or so he has been unemployed, and when I meet him at events like this he usually tells me about the bargains he has found in the M&S discount bin. Tonight though, he is all about the art.

“Do you mean in subject matter?”

“Sure, and in the way they’ve been painted. Look at this one, the paint is very applied.”

“What do you mean?”

“There’s a directness to the paint on the canvas. The colors too, they’re disarmingly emotional.”

I look at the paintings again. I can see their resemblance to Schutz’s in the bright colors, the flattened, simplified forms, and the absurd subject matter. Richard is right that they are not as skillfully executed as Schutz’s, but I’m interested in where Eilidh is coming from. Why the yellow foot roped to the paving stone? Is it any old slab, or is it a tablet? Does it hold an inscription? I realize they remind me of Greek legends. Glancing again at one of Kirsty’s sculptures I wonder if there is something mythic too about her well-endowed women. Their effortless androgyny feels caught between the ancient past and the near future.

I have drifted to the corner of the room, and Richard wanders over to me. He opens the M&S tote bag at his side and encourages me to look at the contents. “You won’t believe how much I paid for this mashed potato.”



## We'll Come Back Later

Lea Hamilton

**W**e had walked up the flight of stairs to the second floor. The show we had come to see was on the first floor, but it was so crowded at the opening that there was hardly room to schmooze, let alone properly view works of art. Not that I cared for schmoozing; in fact, I detested it. In such a crowd, I had found it so stifling that any inspiration I took from the work sagged out of me like the breaths I exhaled.

“What was that painter’s name?” he asked.

“Wanda Koop.” I said.

“Didn’t we see her work in Montreal? That name is familiar. You know, the hyper-realistic ones.”

“No, that was Karel Funk. Completely different painter.” I sighed, exasperated. I regretted my tone instantly, but he seemed to brush it off.

We wandered along the top floor. I tried to walk swiftly, preoccupied with feeling self-conscious about the sound my boots made as I walked across the floor. Each step reverberated with a loud clack off the hardwood and echoed back throughout the gallery. The security guards gazing down upon us didn’t help the feeling that I was an intruder. I smiled, nodded, and quickly passed them into the next room. He trailed behind me.

This room was filled with photographs, snapshots

not meant for viewing, captioned with bits of poetry that struck me in the chest. I could see the snap judgements he made as he walked by each work. I knew he could only appreciate so much before he would want to leave. Maybe I shouldn't have asked him to come to the opening. I tried to absorb as much as I could before my time ran out.

Time meant nothing but the slow decay of meaning, said the work.

Too late. He had moved across the hall to another exhibition. This room was filled with sculptures and vitrines, strange materials and natural ones. Naturally, I gravitated toward the boomerang and the mirror. Two objects that return —one returns physically, one returns visually.

Where beauty was separated from its shadow by a magnifying glass, said the work.

Maybe if some surfaces weren't so reflective, I wouldn't have to dwell on my own image. But then again, we gaze into the surface of the pool in order to know ourselves.

“Hey. Can we go?” he asked, fidgeting slightly. He was more anxious to go and see the Bertram Brookers and the El Lissitzkys. I smiled and nodded. At least he had tried, I thought, and I can certainly appreciate that.

Forgetfulness never dwelled anywhere but in the details, said the work.



**Some documents,  
found by our researchers**  
Alexandra Shestakova

**T**he employees of the Possible Worlds Research Center recently got the document below in their possession. Nothing is known about the author of these notes. As our employees have already put the document into the institutional archive, the numbers on the notes correlate with their archival numbers. Some parts of the document are missing, there are comments from the archive employees in brackets.

**00144** It was a weird day from the very beginning, everything was going slightly wrong. I overbrew my coffee but the foam the cezva didn't spill on the cooker it kind of froze for a moment the way it happens in slow motion. Usually when I wake up I hear my neighbor old lady watching the TV news, but on that day I could only hear some knocking and whistling sounds at that time I didn't pay much attention to it as I was going to the archive

*[this part of the document is missing]*

I didn't know that my watch had stopped at 11:46 as I was entering the building a woman at a reception desk greeted me in a robotic voice I thought she just had caught a flu. I was going through folders looking

for the relevant information for my research when I noticed a black unmarked folder which I had never noticed before I decided to have a look at it. It was filled with some schemes writings and black and white pictures.

**00663** I found two pieces of paper stapled together each of them had a stamp 'Apocalyptologic congress. Top secret' maybe I should have asked myself how secret documents ended up in a public archive. I found something like a scheme of a double wall or a false façade in which they put buildings that are under construction behind the false façade that according to a scheme, looked like the wall it was covering

*[this part of the document is missing]*



On the second piece of paper there was a sound scheme and below some sound vibrations signs there were notes saying ‘applause.’ I got quite confused and I thought it was a part of a script for some conference in which every audience reaction had been predicted. I was looking at this scheme for so long that I heard someone clap hands, or maybe these were some time aberrations already.

**00133** While looking at a stamp that said ‘apocalyptologic congress’ I was wondering: why ‘apocalyptologic’? *[this part of the document is missing]* “Because every archive starts from a catastrophe or from its expectation” maybe it wasn’t me who remembered that, rather it was some weird voice that got inside my head and told me about that.

**00448** On the reverse side of the black and white picture of the Moscow State University building process there was a note saying “this building is not being built, it’s being disassembled” at first I thought it was absolutely untrue, *[this part of the document is missing]* Everything I knew about that building I knew from the photographs and maybe the captions under these pictures didn’t tell the whole truth. I didn’t notice the strange knocking sounds and when the plaster started to fall I reckoned that the building of the archive was just too old

*[this part of the document is missing]*  
**00368** Every document in this folder had a sign that said ‘Agency of Singular Investigation’ it was the first time I

heard about that organization but I thought its size and influence could be compared to giant corporations like coca-cola maybe I hadn’t known about it because the Agency was dealing with top secret research, which meant that its eluding nature was a part of it’s marketing strategy.

**00194** A black and white picture of something similar to an iron fence was captioned ‘Historical coulisse. Two sides. Experimental’ a further caption said: ‘can be used to change the system of past perception, turned on the flip side it can be used to change the objects’ possibilities’

*[this part of the document is missing]* probably they hadn’t been working before but when I left the archive I felt some strange vibrations in the air the historical coulisse was turning on.

*[The document is interrupted here, probably the author of this document couldn’t finish it for some reason. As nothing is known about the author of this diary, except for those notes that were found by our employees near the ruins of the state archive building, she was probably lost in the time-space layers.]*



**Passing Through**  
Andrea Souza

**I**n red shorts, white tank top, and strap sandals, the nine-year-old Sarah rushes into the big white cube and a gentle wind escapes from the air-conditioned room. Outside feels more like the dry hinterland than a tropical forest, so I hurry in. As the door closes on my skirt, I turn around to unstuck it, and running Sarah disappears into the room's dusk. I see these two guys seating on the floor with their backs against the wall, chatting:

“It reminds me of World War II...”, says one of them in a husky voice.

And the other guy asks, with a sarcastic tone:

“How come this thing reminds you of the war? All the barbed wires, and fences, and broken glasses... Kristallnacht. I mean, how come? Aren't you too young to remember that? Not like that, stupid. Like the movies, you know...”



Still trying to adapt to the dim light and search for Sarah, I think that the steel fencing reminds me of Warren Richardson's press picture of the year: amongst the blurry light of dawn, a Syrian father hands his baby under a razor wire barrier to another refugee who managed to cross the border between Serbia and Hungary. I have this sense of hearing a baby crying in the distance, but there isn't.

One of the silhouettes behind a white curtain whispers: "Did someone break a thousand glasses in this place?" The floor is entirely covered with shattered pieces of glass. Sounds of breaking glass surround me and splinter the air. Crunch, crack, clink. I worry about Sarah... those strap sandals... But then I see her strumming her fingers along a Venetian blind. Passing through a maze of curtains, wires, and fishnets, I arrive at a gigantic translucent ball. Around it, a strange and eccentric scenario takes place: a group of hippie-looking young men and women [with long and wavy hairdos and piles of necklaces and bracelets] chant on a high-pitch note: "Let yourself go, Let yourself go." That's when I hear this eighty-something woman with purplish hair, warble:

"How odd. I'm not letting myself go anywhere, anytime soon. I'm staying right here, for as long as I can."

I smile and look at her. Bending a little bit towards her ear, I say in a low voice:

“Do you think this is a glass roof house? Should we throw stones at it?”

“You know what they say about that, dear. Sometimes, we just need to go with good and old common sense.

“You think that people still have common sense?”

Sarah passes by, almost running. The lady adjusts her glasses, shakes her head, and exhaling, says:

“Not children. Children just do whatever they want. Until their parents show them how to behave.”

“But don’t you think that is kind of sad?”

“No, why sad? There is nothing sad about behaving.”

I remember this poem in which Jesus Christ comes down to earth as a child again, running away from god, from his everlasting image on the cross, so he could be a kid again. I turn to the lady and say:

“So, I think there is a lot of sadness about it.”

“Eh?”

“Like we were saying before, about being tamed and growing up.”

“Well, like I said, I don’t think it’s sad at all, but being sad or happy won’t change its outcome, will it?”

“So, all these barriers... fences, what do you think about them?”

“Those? Those are for protection, honey, and that’s just law of nature...”

Standing on the doorstep, Sarah and I squint to adapt to day light. She looks up and asks enthusiastically: “So...what did you think?” as the door closes behind us.



*Através (Through, 1983-2008) is an art installation by Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles permanently displayed at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil.*

## Moonstruck

Christine Burger

**T**here are quite a few people in the exhibition space, coming to see the Pipilotti Rist exhibition. On this sunny Sunday afternoon, they find themselves in a dark, small universe of intricate and meticulously arranged video installations. The layout of the exhibition reminds of a big living space with desks, a bed and a few sofas. And somewhere amongst all these pieces of furniture, TVs and fish tanks is the box that I am staring into, overhearing a conversation of two fellow visitors. Two young women, like me in their early 30s, facing me from across the box:

“What do you think has happened here?”, the woman with a dark blue jumper, matching the twilight exhibition space, asks her companion. Obviously the two of them did not make use of the audio guide and neither did I. It’s the only way of getting information about the works, since there are no texts in the exhibition space, leaving the three of us without any clues.

“Don’t you see that the moon has crashed into her bedroom? There is a big hole in the wall and the moon has crashed into it.” —her tall and gangly friend responds with a rather instructive tone in her voice. It is only now that I myself see the partial planet in the box.

Despite the severe damage the moon has caused to the room, the big wooden box that we are all staring in is left untouched from the outside. No hole in its walls would hint at the destruction that has happened. The walls of the box are very high, so that most people, including me, have to stand on their tiptoes to get the full view of the inside. That is why I notice the moon only now, with the two women pointing at it.

“Sure, yes! The moon has fallen down on the earth and it

just happened to crash into her bedroom. It has torn down a wall and damaged the floor. But still, I think it looks so romantic! The moon has this nice silvery shine to it, and you could explore all its craters if you were small enough to stand inside that box. And it seems just like the room is floating through the Milky Way with all its stars.”

Silence. Staring.

“You know what, I think her room looks a bit like yours...”, the woman in the blue jumper says to her friend, looking at her expectantly for a sign of approval.

Why is it so obvious to the two of them that the room must be inhabited by a woman, I wonder. And where has she gone? The fragmented interior is lit from within by a small video projection on the walls of the room, coming from a projector in the floor of the box. There is a mattress on the floor with a green duvet and pillow, left just so after waking up in the morning. Next to the bed is a lamp that is still lit, a mirror, a cactus, a chair with a blanket and a purse. Scattered on the floor are magazines and books; there is a box with a half eaten pizza and a knife. And strangely enough, a single big false eyelash stuck to the wall as if it was a piece of decoration. But there is no sign of the person that inhabits this peculiar space.

Silence.

“So what do you think has happened? Why is the moon in her room? I find it quite odd... Also, the sky seems to be this close, as if the room is in a spaceship.”

“Maybe the moon just fell down from the sky... I don’t know, this could happen, just like in all those films... Or maybe she is moonstruck, so she tried to get it into her room. She just kept staring at it, longing for it, until it came down. I think she must quite like the moon.”

“Maybe...”

Pause.

Neither of them says another word.



## The Women

Freye Dooley

**T**he Women. Squeezed up in a line. Numbered. Not saying anything, just gazing out, smiling. Not a sweet smile, not a shy smile. Not one of Vermeer's smiles, or Manet's, or Peyton's. A maniacal one. A proper grin. Their shoulders are tense. Their bodies are knotted. They are dancing within their confines. All tits and ass and teeth.

Woman I is something like nothing else. She's been sculpted, pulled apart and pasted over; stretched and squashed and slapped. She makes the Museum Assistant uneasy. He's not paid enough to try and like the work. He shuffles about from leg to leg, on his phone, swiping right, not looking, or seeing, that she is making some movements of her own.

It starts with a drip. A single glob of paint falls from her chin onto the marble floor. The sound, wet and slight, is the sound you feel when you step on a slug with bare feet. One drip, two drips, three, four. The low murmurs of the passers-by, the clip clopping of their high heels, the soft mutterings of judgement and admiration, the coughs and sniffs and shuffling, are punctuated by this metronome of drips. It gets louder and louder, until it's the only sound to be heard.

Her eyes swivel about the room, plotting its potential. She is leaking, spreading, glistening. It's happening. The museum stands still around her, aghast, frozen in time, backed up against the wall, feeling two sizes smaller than before. We are watching it unfold, watching her unfold.

She is crawling out of her frame and sliding out onto the floor. She lifts herself off of the ground, one heavy limb at a time. She is in an uneasy balancing act, top heavy and uncoordinated. Parts of her body lop off as she staggers into action.





## Vernissage

Gelly Grindaki

**E**very age, in black or in color, walking slowly and talking loudly and shouting and waving to their friends and admiring each others' clothes and pointing at each other and commenting each other, putting off their coat, putting on their coat, ready to leave or just coming, giggling, whispering, glancing or hiding, eventually looking at some drawings, indicating a certain detail, laughing secretly at another, dragging each other to show something specific, exchanging telephone numbers and business cards, drinking red wine, spilling red wine, putting red lipstick, eating salty snacks, looking at mirrors, taking selfies, browsing catalogues, flirting, fighting, socializing. Beautiful women in elegant dresses and high heels, handsome men in ties, art students, girls in doc martins and mini skirts, tall boys in all stars and tight jeans, artists in eccentric eyeglasses or peculiar haircuts, hats, colorful shirts and designers' coats.

“Look what she is wearing”, “Is he here?”, “Oh, this it is so emotional”, “How do I look?”, “How much you think would it cost?”, “Should I invest?”, “Let me tell you about it”, “What an improvement of style”, “What a crap”, “I love this place”, “What a masterpiece”, “Let me take a picture of you”, “Who are you?”.

The tall girl with the long hair wearing black got inside the gallery jostling and pushing people around managing to reach the north wall of the main gallery where a huge black and white drawing was placed.



A flock of colorful exotic birds talking about art or around art or within art or without art. The meaning of art, the price of art, the evolution of art, the revolution of art, the fall of art, the whole of art, the art of art.

“She is so influenced by K. S. isn’t she?”, “So banal, so conservative”, “Have you read his critic about her previous work?”, “She sells”, “Does art turn in to drawing again?”, “Is he a collector?”, “It is because of the crisis”, “He is such a lousy artist”, “It is a research on the art of Islam”, “Is she a curator?”, “Let me tell you about it”.

The tall girl with the long hair wearing black stays there standing and staring at the drawing like there was nobody in the enormous white room. Starring at the drawing of a figure like a woman with long hair gathered in something like an elegant bun and wearing something like a long black dress with something like a white collar holding something like a big book of words. Words somehow known and recognized but threatening in their excessive multitude.

I was the slightest in the house, I took the smallest room, “She dealt her pretty words like blades, Their summer —lasts a Solid year, they can afford a sun, Behind Me— dips Eternity, He flung a Hand full at the Plain”, Life’s empty Pack is heaviest, “A Lava step at any time”, “That I might have the sky, Are You-Nobody-Too?”

The tall girl with the long hair wearing black was just standing and staring and hoping that the precious words were spreading all over the room, shallowing every other word or sound or conversation or laugh or cry.

Every age, in black or in color, walking slowly and talking loudly and shouting and waving to their friends and admiring each others’ clothes and pointing at each other and commenting each other, putting off their coat, putting on their coat, ready to leave or just coming.



## **Forbidden Fruit**

Helen Gramotnev

“Are you touching?”

I was startled. When everyone tells you to never touch art, this question only has one answer.

“Trying to resist the urge,” I replied. I was raised to never tell lies.

“You must touch,” Zygmunt Libucha was standing right behind me. His warm eyes twinkled. “My work is made to be touched.”

I reached out my hand and ran it over the thigh of the bronze woman reclining playfully in front of me. The bronze felt cool at first. But the longer I allowed my connection with her enticing skin, the warmer it felt. He was right, she was meant to be touched.

“She is beautiful.” It is strange how unexpected emotions cannot be put into words. Then the most intelligent thing you can come up with is the most banal one.

Zygmunt’s enthusiastic smile filled my hand with the courage to feel more. Or was it the glass of wine? Who knows? But I felt like I could really experience the nakedness in front of me. My fingers landed on her thigh again, tracing her smooth, glistening skin down to her knee. The shine of her legs —lustrous, luminous— made it hard to pull away. Back towards the thigh, over the luscious curve of her hip. This woman was unapologetically expanding with an exuberant lust for life. The intricate details of her face flirted with me as her lips parted in a smile. Open. Honest. Naked.

Was it this Polish artist's charisma that shone through the shapes on display? This was Rodin with a sense of humour. From Soviet Poland to sunny Australia, from silversmith to sculptor. There was a real thirst for beauty here. The quirky names of the works seemed like a reflection of his flirty personality. Slim Neighbour, Tight Dress, Good Neighbour, Afternoon Nap, The Morning After...

“Was it really a good neighbour?” I could not resist.

“Ahhh...” It was a magical non-word. It translates freely into all languages and can hold entire histories of multiple meanings. Was there a story behind every object? Probably. As I made my way through the pieces, Zygmunt revealed his own struggles about the work, “This one was hard. I started it, and then had to leave it...”

Or

“I didn't like the hand here...”

Starting my second round through the exhibition I declined the second glass of wine. I amused myself by watching visitors stare in shock as I explored the changing textures of the abstract pieces with my fingers. The granules of the stone tickled the palm of my hand; then the polished surface reassured it again with squeaky smoothness. The exhilaration of this tactile experience took me back to St Petersburg: I recalled standing overpowered by a statue of Voltaire in the Hermitage Museum —fighting the desire to touch the marble fingers of his hand casually draped over the rest of his armchair. After what felt like an hour of magnetic attraction to the marble figure, I gave in and felt the rush of tasting the forbidden fruit. Perhaps this ‘fruit’ handed to me on a silver platter by Zygmunt himself was what prompted me to buy this art. I just had to have that thigh.



## Human Interest

Johanna Halasz

“It’s Monday again” —thought Terek as he stepped out of the elevator on the sixth floor of the new Whitney Museum in New York, Manhattan. It was 10:15 in the morning, already the 4th of September, but summer was still raging outside. He was feeling extremely tired, coming directly from the downtown Big Deal Casino where he finished his night shift as a security guard only two hours ago. Shivers ran through his body as it tried to adapt to the temperature of the strongly air-conditioned building. He could never get used to it. Terek didn’t have much motivation for the upcoming day, however, strongly decided not to agonize on it. He yawned, adjusted his dark grey uniform and when rushing through the gallery’s corridor he nodded to the wax lady in blue floral dress sitting on a chair with the company of her poodle. The hyperrealistic sculpture of Duane Hanson was his favorite piece of the current exhibition *Human interest —Portraits from the Whitney’s collection*, he possessed about 50 photographs of it on his smartphone.

Terek headed directly to the back room, located right next to the terrace, where he was supposed to start his shift in 15 minutes. When he arrived there, a lady had just lit the wicks sticking out of the neck of the huge Urs Fischer wax-candle sculpture —named *Standing Julian*— depicting Julian Schnabel, american painter and filmmaker. He greeted the woman politely and sat down on the couch in front of the sculpture to tie his shoes. One minute later, Will, another museum attendant appeared in the room.

**Will:** Good Morning, How you doing?  
**Terek:** All good. And yourself?

Will pointed at the Fischer sculpture with his fingers.

**Will:** Well, Julian has completely lost his head.

They smiled as both were looking at the enormous wax figure. The oversized candle had already burnt down to the shoulder line. Different sized remains of the head were scattered on the gallery floor next to the figure's painter's boots. The larger-than-life representation of Schnabel was slightly bent to his right, holding his hands in the pocket of his indigo blue coat. He was dressed in dye-stained painter's garbs and stared at his reflection in a huge mirror, or more correctly speaking, had been staring at his reflection till his eyes melted off. The vast window behind him gave a wonderful view to the Meatpacking district with its multifarious rooftops and wood water tanks.

**Terek:** It took him three months.

**Will:** I guess he got dizzy of the Manhattan life.

**Terek:** Or [sick?] of constantly looking at himself.

**Will:** I definitely like that he never looks the same.  
Ohh, I forgot to ask, how are your papers going?

**Terek:** I don't know, man. It's possible that I won't be here as long as Julian.

When the first visitors appeared in the gallery the two men stopped talking. They took their stand and quickly prepared themselves mentally for the day.



# Voices

## **Michelle Huynh Chu**

When you're American but culturally conflicted with a large dose of francophone gestures, you marinate in oxymorons, paradoxes and contradictions. The unapologetic American asserts and makes claims. The French, lovesick and brimming of *l'air and d'esprit*, denies and regresses, considering always, 'the other.' You're sure, non?

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## **Pete Driessen**

Pete Driessen is a Minneapolis, Minnesota based multipractice visual artist, painter, curator and educator who creates abstract and sociopolitical paintings, mixed media ship fleets, found object installations, conceptual art statements, interdisciplinary public art, and performative participatory projects. He currently directs and curates a hybridic and experimental garage-based gallery known as TuckUnder Projects that specializes in emerging and midcareer artists focusing on conceptual visual arts practice, curatorial projects, and institutional critique. As a transdisciplinary writer and liminal artist, Driessen does not subscribe to a singular style, boundary laced medium, nor linear socio-geographical voice.

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## **Vivi Touloumidi**

Greeks and Germans are supplementary elements. Greeks have the ingredients and the recipe, but Germans have the patience, the structure and the perseverance to execute it. Greeks think with their hearts and Germans love with their heads. A hybrid could maybe be a solution.

## **Kenesha Julius**

To write like a West Indian is to write with color. Color has vibrancy, emotions and life. Life is the energy around us—the trees, the ocean, the animals. It is like a spirit, a vibe. Vibe is the rhythm within us, like music and sound—the flow of a West Indian, a West Indian like me. To be an art writer, I write with the elements of color, life, vibe and flow and the perfect combination produces a piece that connects and communicates art to the people.

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## **Kadiatou Diallo**

Things work like Swiss clockwork, perfectly accurately. It works because the Swiss have mastered the subtle mechanisms that maintain rightness, conformity, and it works for you if you comply. Carrot instead of stick. Neutrality is the ultimate virtue. You can stare but you cannot stir. There is no such thing as neutral, you say? Better not shout that from the Swiss mountaintops.

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## **Maria Martens**

El Salvador/The Netherlands —At first glance, these two appear to be opposites. Nonetheless, I find that they are both similarly, brutally, straightforward. The Dutch with their honesty, and Salvadorans with their humor: Dutch people will not hesitate to let you know what they think; Salvadorans will say it as a joke.



### **Kirsty White**

Voices are familial. In mine I hear my Mum's clipped English tones, and my brother's dry, blokey, Australian. I've moved countries often, and I hear my voice change from place to place. Sometimes, not often, the five years I spent in Scotland creeps in. I can say two words in a Scottish accent. Spoon and food.

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### **Lea Hamilton**

In Canada, or more specifically in Ottawa, to be involved in the visual arts community is to be caught between the rock of history and the hard place of contemporary creative innovation. Sometimes you can speak eloquently on both sides, and sometimes you can be shouting in defence of one or the other. But, if one conversation gets too out of hand, you can always be very Canadian and apologize, and earnestly begin again.

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### **Alexandra Shestakova**

Saying that you are from Russia, Moscow might seem hard. Your voice would be connected with the contexts that appear on recent political magazine covers and newsfeeds. However it's the place where dystopian, and sometimes frightening, modernity seems to be the most visible.

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### **Andrea Souza**

Brazilians are loud, scandalous, musical. I can always hear a group of Brazilians before I actually see them. Our attitude towards life is sometimes like bossa nova (gentle), like samba (cheerful), but sometimes it recalls a sad melody, reflecting that saudade (a melancholic longing) we have of our country of the future that never came.

### **Christine Burger**

A closed off island in the middle of Europe, a cultural stronghold; Switzerland likes to stay on its own. Yet, some of its inhabitants like to wander off and discover the world. When they carry their stories, adventures and insights back into their Heimat, they will be met with cautious curiosity.

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### **Freya Dooley**

Inside-of  
Inside-of  
Outside-of

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### **Gelly Grindaki**

Grumpy and arrogant the Greeks, in the cushion of their ancient glory, are waiting for someone to recognize their pain and value with a kind of laziness, maybe due to their climate. This eternal sun and its warmth that make reality seem like a reflexion of itself —as the mirage of the wet asphalt when hot. Lazy but constantly excited, cranky but so self-confident.

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### **Helen Gramotnev**

“Russians are not known for their subtleties. They are direct. Australians are, on the other hand, quite subtle. In her writing, Helen aims for balance of the two, if it is at all possible to achieve. The balance that happens when two cultures grow into each other.”

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### **Johanna Halasz**

Hungarians have a thing for sloppy melancholia, as if they were constantly carrying an enormous tarnished letter weight on their backs. First I tried to escape it by moving to other countries. Finally I bowed to the Hungarian Blues and I am carrying the package with a (half-) humble smile.





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**N O**  
**D E**