

# WHAT THE TORTOISE MURMURS TO ACHILLES

## On Laziness, Economy of Time, and Productivity

March 18–May 8 2016

Opening: March 17, 6pm

**SAVVY Contemporary**  
Plantagenstraße 31, 13347 Berlin

**Artists:** Salwa Aleryani, Nidaa Badwan, Atef Berredjem, Raphael Cuomo & Maria Iorio (+Videobase), Cevdet Ereke, Abrie Fourie, Katia Kameli, Brandon Labelle, Abraham Onoriode Oghobase, Junebum Park, Gerda Steiner & Jörg Lenziinger

**Curators:** Elena Agudio, Saskia Köbschall, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung

In Lewis Carroll's 1895 *What the Tortoise Said to Achilles*<sup>1</sup>, a fictitious dialogue between the two protagonists of Zeno's Paradox, the slow and clever tortoise presents Achilles with a syllogism that brings him into a logical trap and leads him into an infinite regression.

The exhibition project *What the Tortoise murmurs to Achilles. On Laziness, Economy of Time and Productivity* is a bid to investigate alternative understandings and perceptions of time from a pluricultural and decolonial perspective by digging into the politics of time and of its negotiations in geopolitical power relations. This project cannot afford the luxury to stand as a simple praise of idleness or a superficial claim on the right to be lazy; rather, the exhibition will be a conceptual and physical space for reflections on chronopolitics and on the power mechanisms that frame certain rhetorics of time economy. That is to say, the exhibition will take its cue from the assumed and connotated 'slow' and 'disruptive' rhythm associated with "Southern" attitudes as a position of resistance to the purported industrious nature of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, as Max Weber once titled.<sup>2</sup>

The perverse cult of labour enshrined by the European civilization and glorified by the Enlightenment enterprise is currently showing the nefarious conse-

quences of our ubiquitously consumerist lives. The market sets the pace of our quotidian. It pushes us into over-activity, eroding forms of community and damaging the fabric of everyday life. In our current tremendous condition of non-time in the reign of *24/7 capitalism*, Alexei Penzin, whose work focuses on sleep in the age of capitalism, writes: "Our 24-hours-society with its incessant production, communication and consumption activities makes sleep a problematic, uncertain element of everyday life, just wasted time or inertia in a mobile and pragmatic neoliberal society obsessed with the idea of the full employment of finite human existence."<sup>3</sup>

### Radical Co-presence and the Subversiveness of Non-linear Temporalities

Walter Benjamin quotes reports that during the Paris Commune, in all corners of the city of Paris there were people shooting at the clocks on the towers of the churches, palaces and so on, thereby consciously or half-consciously expressing the need that somehow time has to be arrested; that at least the prevailing, the established time continuum has to be arrested, and that a new time has to begin. (Herbert Marcuse, 1967)<sup>4</sup>

The first condition for post-abysal thinking is radical co-presence. Radical co-presence means that practices and agents on both sides of the line are contemporary in equal terms. Radical co-presence implies equating simultaneity with contemporaneity, which can only be accomplished if the linear conception of time is abandoned.

(Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 2007)<sup>5</sup>

An overwhelming need to once and for all silence the relentless ticking of the clock that structures life and demands nonstop productivity overcame protesters who rushed to the streets to destroy all of Paris' church tower clocks during the time of the radical socialist government that ruled the city in 1871. The clock, as the epitome of the Western notion of time as linear, constant and irreversible, had to be destroyed, as a challenge to the notions of progress, economic productivity, and work ethics that are intimately linked to the idea of linear temporality.

With the conception of a "universal time" during the Renaissance and the invention of the concept of the new world, both space and time were colonized, as Walter Mignolo aptly described.<sup>6</sup> Since then, time has functioned as a system of subordination, relegating places and people to "below" or "before" from the vantage point of the "holders (of the doors) of time."<sup>7</sup> Time became the benchmark for the order of knowledge, creating hierarchies by arranging events and people in a "timeline" and thus also working at the very heart of the colonial enterprise, as conceptions of time created a gap of temporality between the colonizer and the "Other," i.e. a colonial chronology of difference.

It is thus crucial to re-imagine a concept of time that exists beyond the confines of a linear, mono-directional construction of the present, past, and future; to propose a sense of temporality that allows for and accommodates fluidity of and in time. This notion is in line with many non-Western conceptions of time. For example, some of the Maori philosophies of time operate on the basis of "walking backwards into the future while reviewing our past."<sup>8</sup> From a Caribbean perspective, Édouard Glissant describes the constructions of temporality and the "persistence in considering time in terms of natural experience" as a reflection of a "general instinctive response against the ambition of imposing a 'single' historical time."<sup>9</sup>

With regard to the many different African understandings and conceptions of time, John Mbiti argued that contrary to Western teleological temporalities – which are mostly focused on the future under which History could be taken to its logical conclusion – African time instead highlights the importance of the present. It is intimately cyclical, not linear, and is backward-looking instead of forward-looking as Mbiti has shown in his study of the concepts of Sasa and Zamani whereby "Sasa has the sense of immediacy, nearness, and ,now-ness'; and is the period of immediate concern for the people, since that is 'where' or 'when' they exist."<sup>10</sup>

And he follows that

In African thought, the Sasa 'swallows' up what in western or linear concept of time would be considered as the future. Events (which compose time) in the Sasa dimension must be either about to occur, or in the process of realization, or recently experienced.<sup>11</sup>

In his essay *Accommodating Time – Confidence and Trust in African Everyday Life* Elisio Macamo denotes accommodating time as a form of everyday resistance and taming everyday life (a very patient form of subversion). He goes on to include Mbiti's distinction "between 'Sasa' – the Kiswahili term for the immediate past, i.e. the time defined by the ancestor spirits which can be remembered by living people – and 'Zamani' – the distant past peopled by those ancestor spirits remembered by no one."<sup>12</sup> Sasa and Zamani are not stages of death. They are the two ontological stages (or dimensions) of history, two aspects of time:

Zamani is not limited to what in English is called the past. (...) Zamani overlaps with Sasa and the two are not separable. Sasa feeds or disappears into Zamani. But before events become incorporated into the Zamani, they have to become realized or actualized within the Sasa dimension. When this has taken place, the events "move" backwards from the Sasa into the Zamani. (...) It is the final storehouse for all phenomena and events, the ocean of time in which everything becomes absorbed into a reality that is neither after nor before.<sup>13</sup>

In his seminal essay *Beyond Abyssal Thinking*, Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues for the abandonment of the linear conception of time in order to achieve "radical co-presence," a condition in which "practices and agents on both sides of the line are contemporary in equal terms."<sup>14</sup> This research and exhibition project brings together diverse artistic positions in order to explore "radical co-presence" of different temporalities and conceptions of time, disrupting the chronopolitics of straight temporality by shedding light on the entanglements of notions of time, ideas of productivity (laziness), and spatio-temporal hierarchies that continue to shape our present.

## The Politics of Laziness

The native's laziness is the conscious sabotage of the colonial machine; on the biological plane it is a remarkable system of auto-protection; and in any case it is a sure brake upon the seizure of the whole country by the occupying power. (...) The duty of the native who has not yet reached maturity in political consciousness and decided to hurl back oppression is literally to make it so that the slightest gesture has to be torn out of him. (Frantz Fanon, 1963)<sup>15</sup>

Laziness, sleepiness, and indolence have often, from a Western perspective, been historically associat-

ed with vicious behaviors and negative habits, and further, with peripheral, suburban, and Mediterranean and Southern attitudes. Since the Neolithic revolution, when farming became the major sustenance for mankind, industriousness and productivity, too, became an obligation for human beings<sup>16</sup>, degenerating in time until the contemporary compulsory routines of our technological culture. Hunter-gatherers, like most predatory animals<sup>17</sup>, are said to be essentially 'lazy,' as their work aims solely at satisfying their basic hunger. In contrast, farming meant working more than was strictly necessary, in order to produce a surplus.

That physical 'laziness' does not mean intellectual indolence can be seen in the fact that the Palaeolithic being still achieved the transition to the Neolithic, as well as crucial inventions in history.

In Roman times the idea of *otium* – of time dedicated to literature, intellectual research and non-practical activities – was considered so essential to the life of the educated *cives romanus*, that business and working time was simply considered a negation of it: the *nec-otium*, the *negotium*. The ancient Roman adage *Festina lente* was an oxymoron that meant "make haste slowly," adopted as a motto by emperors and later by the Medicis.<sup>18</sup> However, in European Medieval society, the emphasis on ethics of social and political participation and on religious precepts clearly disqualified any idea of unproductiveness and indolence. Laziness signaled a lack of interest in the betterment of society, and immediately became a deadly sin, as Thomas Aquinas wrote in the *Summa Theologiae*.<sup>19</sup>

Even today, we are living under the influence of Calvinist morality that leads our imaginations to a constant race with time. The so-called "Protestant" work ethic, which idealizes work as the ultimate aim of life, and the Judeo-Christian idea of linear time and history provide the necessary framework. Time is money — a notion which James Baldwin vehemently stood against when he wrote, in *Song (for Skip)*<sup>20</sup>, that:

Time is not money  
Time  
is  
time  
And the time has come, again,  
To outwit and outlast  
Survive and surmount  
The authors of the blasphemy  
Of our chains

Today free time has become just illusionary, appropriated by economic and social constructs to be sold back as the commodity known as "leisure," as the Situationist International observed already by the 1960s.<sup>21</sup>

The notion of linear temporality – and therefore the notion of progress – functions as a basic characteristic of capitalist logic, with productivity as the main objec-

tive. Waste of time thus becomes "the first and in principle the deadliest of sins" and "loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury, even more sleep than is necessary for health, six to at most eight hours" becomes subject to "absolute moral condemnation."<sup>22</sup> The lazy human body refusing to be "productive," or accused of not being productive, is thus a contested and ideologically charged site of discourse; laziness is coined the 'mother of all vices' and intricately epitomizes the flipside of a world whose utmost virtue is labour and production.

In the wake of the economic "crisis" in Europe, a surge in discussions about collective laziness arose – attributed to people of the Mediterranean – as the cause of collapsing economies, with German and other Northern European media and politicians alike fostering a discourse based on the disparity between Northern and Southern work ethics.

The claim that a group of people, a nation, or even an entire continent is "lazy" is ubiquitous in public discourse and has a long history. The image of the "lazy savage," for instance, served as one of the justifications and rationales of colonization, where the "native" was portrayed as being in need of guidance in order to emerge from a "natural" state of laziness, backwardness, and indifference towards the passage of time into civilization:

Colonialism, as a relation of power based on violence, was meant to cure Africans of their supposed laziness (...). Given the degeneracy and vice from which the colonial viewpoint characterized native life, colonialism found it necessary to rein the abundant sexuality of the negro, to tame his spirit, police his body – and ensure that the productivity of his labour increased.<sup>23</sup>

Paradoxically, even in the heart and the heat of labour in the slave plantations or the 'Arbeitslager,' where labour assumed the dual role of means of production and punishment, the subject was still accused of laziness.

Notwithstanding calls to reduce work have been numerous: Leibniz in the 17th century proposed that the State should support creativity and the invention of various machines to liberate mankind from physical work and to give people the possibility of using their lifetime to be happy (read lazy) and to think. Mathematicians and logicians apparently continued to be fascinated by a certain idea of laziness, if Bertrand Russell wrote the essay *In Praise of Idleness* in 1935, arguing that if everyone worked only four hours per day, unemployment would decrease and human happiness would increase.

Beyond any logical trap, and fabulations of the luxury of laziness from a bourgeois and often intellectual vantage point, or from the point of view of profiteers and descendants of a system that needs people to work even more for them to be lazy, one must consid-

er laziness, fainéantness, or indolence as a strategy, form, and method of resistance. Take, for example, the Sudanese labourers' protest during the British Gezira Scheme, in which the protesters worked lethargically as an act of defiance, a form of protest known as 'slacking.'<sup>24</sup> In contexts of exploitation of human resources and labour force, workers have often chosen sluggishness as a favourite way to protest.

*What the Tortoise murmurs to Achilles. On Laziness, Economy of Time, and Productivity* will negotiate between the various perceptions of laziness, as a "conscious sabotage of the colonial machine," a "system of auto-protection"<sup>25</sup> or ideological refusal of a capitalist work ethics<sup>26</sup> and the demonization<sup>27</sup> of it as the source of all economic and social ills. The project will investigate the politics of laziness and the way it relates to notions of linear time, progress, economic productivity, and work ethics. The project still grants space to consider indolence and inactivity as opportunities to liberate the world from the neurotic rhythms of capitalism.

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- 1 Carroll, Lewis. "What the Tortoise Said to Achilles." In *The Penguin Complete Lewis Carroll*, 1104–1108. Penguin, 1982.
  - 2 Weber argues that Protestant work ethic and Puritan ideas influenced the development of capitalism. See: Max Weber, Peter R. Baehr, Gordon C. Wells. *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism and Other Writings*. Penguin, 2002.
  - 3 Penzin, Alexei. "Rex Exsomnis: Sleep and Subjectivity in Capitalist Modernity." Edited by dOCUMENTA (13). *100 Notizen – 100 Gedanken* (Hatje Cantz), 2012.
  - 4 Marcuse, Herbert. "Liberation from the Affluent Society (1967)." In *The Dialectics of Liberation*, edited by David Cooper, 175–192. Harmondsworth/Baltimore: Penguin, 1968.
  - 5 Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. "Beyond Abyssal Thinking. From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges." *Review*, XXX-1-2007.
  - 6 Mignolo, Walter. "The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 2002: 57–94.
  - 7 Ibid 6.
  - 8 "Perspectives of time, small prophecy, and Maori policy", in *Te Putatara. Commentary and Opinion for the Kumara Vine*, December 30, 2013: <http://www.putatara.net/2013/12/prophecy/>
  - 9 Glissant, Édouard. *Caribbean Discourse: Selected Essays*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1989.
  - 10 Mbiti, John S. *African Religions and Philosophy*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Heinemann, 1990: 21.
  - 11 Ibid 22.
  - 12 Macamo, Elisio. "Accommodating Time: Confidence and Trust in African Everyday Life." 2013.
  - 13 Ibid 9.
  - 14 Ibid 5.
  - 15 Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
  - 16 Rowley-Conwy, Peter. "The Laziness of the Short-Distance Hunter: The Origins of Agriculture in Western Denmark." *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*, 1984: 300-324.
  - 17 Lions, for example, spend at least 20 hours a day sleeping and resting, and another two hours growling and grooming.
  - 18 The Medicis used the symbol of the tortoise and the sail.
  - 19 Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologiae*. 1485.
  - 20 Baldwin, James, "Song (for Skip)" in *Jimmy's Blues: Selected Poems*, M. Joseph, 1983.
  - 21 Situationist International. "Questionnaire, Section 12." *Situationist International #9*. 1964.
  - 22 Weber, Max, Baehr, Peter R., Wells, Gordon C. *The Protestant Ethic and the "Spirit" of Capitalism and Other Writings*. Penguin, 2002.
  - 23 Mbembe, Achille. "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits." In *Refiguring the Archive*, by Carolyn, et al Hamilton. Cape Town: David Philip, 2002.
  - 24 Bernal, Victoria. "Colonial Moral Economy and the Discipline of Development: The Gezira Scheme and "Modern" Sudan." *Cultural Anthropology* 12, no. 4 (1997): 447–479.
  - 25 Ibid 15.
  - 26 Lafargue, Paul. "The Right to be Lazy." Marxists.Org. 1883. <http://www.marxists.org/archive/lafargue/1883/lazy/index.htm> (accessed August 6, 2006).
  - 27 Illich, Ivan. *The Right to Useful Unemployment*. Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd, 2000.



# ARTISTS

**Salwa Aleryani** (1982, Sanaa) is a visual artist living and working in Yemen. She completed her studies in Amman (Jordan) and Savannah (USA). Her works have been included in group exhibitions in Athr Gallery, Jeddah (2104), Biennale Jogja XII Yogyakarta (2013), RONDO Ateliers, Graz (2012), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012), The Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena (2009) and the National Museum, Sanaa. Currently she is a KfW-Artist in Residence at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin.

**Nidaa Badwan** (1987, Abu Dhabi) is an artist and photographer based in Gaza. In 2009 she completed her studies at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Al-Aqsa University in Gaza. Her work has been exhibited at Red Crescent Theatre, Gaza (2008), AlHoush House of Arab Art and Design (2012), al-Hoash Gallery, East Jerusalem (2014), Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah (2015), Palazzo Graziani, San Marino (2015).

**Atef Berredjem's** (1982, Algiers) graduated from the Algiers Fine Arts Academy in 2007. His artistic practice spans painting, assemblage, sculpture, photography, installation and performance. He has shown solo exhibitions and performances at The Delfina Foundation, London (2011), Institut Français of Annaba (2013) and Institut Français of Oran (2014). Among others, his work was included in the following group exhibitions: *The Invisible scent of History* at CCA Washington (2016), *Le Corps Manquant* at Institut Français of Algiers (2014), *Intervening Space: From the intimate to the world*, at The Mosaic rooms London (2014), *Le Retour* at the Modern Art Museum of Algiers (2011).

**Raphael Cuomo & Maria Iorio (+Videobase)** (1977/1975 in Switzerland), winners of the 10th Furla Art Award, have worked together since studying fine arts in Geneva. From 2006-2007, they were both appointed as researchers in the Fine Art department of Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht. Iorio and Cuomo have shown their work in various exhibitions, projects and festivals including *The Maghreb Connection – Movements of Life Across North Africa* (2006), curated by Ursula Biemann, *Chewing the Scenery*, curated by Andrea Thal, at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011) and Europe. *The Future of History* at Kunsthaus Zürich (2015). Solo exhibitions include ARGOS Center for art and media, Brussels (2102) and Fondazione Querini Stampalia, Venice (2015).

**Cevdet Erek**, (1974, Istanbul) studied architecture at Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts in Istanbul between 1992 and 1999. Erek has done solo exhibitions in Kasseler Kunstverein (2016), Spike Island, Bristol (2014), mor charpentier, Paris (2014), Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2013), Kunsthalle Basel (2012). Group exhibitions in Stedelijk Museum,

Amsterdam (2014), MAXXI, Rome (2014), Istanbul Modern (2014), 5th Marrakech Biennial (2014), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014), MAK, Vienna (2013), 11th Sharjah Biennial (2013), 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art (APT), Brisbane (2012), CCA Wattis, San Francisco (2012), dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel (2012), SALT, Istanbul (2012), New Museum Triennial, New York (2012), 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011), Arter, Istanbul (2011) and Tate Modern, London (2011).

**Abrie Fourie** (1969, Pretoria) is an artist, photographer and curator based in Berlin. Group exhibitions include *Translation/ Seduction/ Displacement* at White Box Gallery, New York (2000); *ENEMIES/ VYANDE*, Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees, Oudtshoorn (2002); *POST*, Tama Art University Museum, Tokyo (2004); *Cosmos Mundo Forever*, Trienal De Luanda (2007); SEE3, Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin (2009); 1910–2010 *From Pierneef to Gugulective: A Fresh Look at a Century of South African Art*, Iziko South African National Gallery, Cape Town (2010); *Positioning Osmotic Impulses*, SAVVY Contemporary, Berlin (2012); *THE SPACE BETWEEN US*, public space of Berlin (2013) & Stuttgart (2014) and *The Day will come when Photography revises*, Triennial of Photography Hamburg (2015). He had solo exhibitions at Camouflage, Brussels (2003); Museum for African Art, New York (2004) and Forum d'art Contemporain, Sierre (2006). Most recent solo exhibitions of OBLIQUE have been shown at Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2012); Johannesburg Art Gallery (2012); Iwalewa Haus, Bayreuth (2012); SMAC Art Gallery, Cape Town (2013); SCAD, Savannah (2013) and SCAD, Atlanta (2014).

**Katia Kameli** (1973, Clermont-Ferrand) is a French-Algerian artist based in Paris. Following her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, in the Master class of Michelangelo Pistoletto, she graduated from the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Bourges in 2000. She received a postgraduate degree in New Media in 2003 from the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Marseille. Her most recent solo-exhibitions include Taymour Grahne Gallery, New York (2014); Transpalette, Bourges (2012); Videochroniques, Marseille (2012). She participated in numerous groups shows that include: *Entry prohibited to foreigners* at the Havre Magasin, Boden (2015); Mare Nostrum, Prospectif Cinéma at the Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015), *Where we're at*, Bozar, Bruxelles (2014); Lubumbashi Biennale (2013); *Pour un Monde Durable*, Gulbekian, Portugal (2013); *Le Pont*, Museum of Marseille (2013); Dak'art, Dakar Biennale (2012); Marrakech Biennale (2012); Bamako Biennale (2011). In 2012, she was awarded a residency at Delfina Fondation in London.

**Brandon Labelle** (1969, Los Angeles) is an artist, writer and theorist. He completed his PhD at the London Consortium in 2005. He undertook post-doctoral research in Modern Culture and Sound Studies at the University of Copenhagen. He lives in Berlin and is Professor at the Bergen Academy of Art and Design, Norway. His work has been presented, among others, at the South London Gallery (2016), Tel Aviv University Art Gallery (2015), Marrakech Biennial (2014), The Whitney Museum, NY (2012), Sonic Acts, Amsterdam (2010), A/V Festival, Newcastle (2008, 2010), Museums Quartier/Tonspur, Vienna (2009), 7th Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Allegro (2009), Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade (2009), Casa Vecina, Mexico City (2008), Fear of the Known, Cape Town (2008), Netherlands Media Art Institute, Amsterdam (2003, 2007), Ybakatu Gallery, Curitiba, Brazil (2003, 2006, 2009), Singuhr Gallery, Berlin (2004), and ICC, Tokyo (2000). He is the author of *Lexicon of the Mouth: Poetics and Politics of Voice and the Oral Imaginary* (2014), *Diary of an Imaginary Egyptian* (2012), *Acoustic Territories: Sound Culture and Everyday Life* (2010), *Background Noise: Perspectives on Sound Art* (2015; 2006), and others.

**Abraham Onoriode Oghobase** (1979, Lagos) majored in photography at the Yaba College of Technology's School of Art, Design and Printing in Lagos. Understudying painter and photographer Deji Ajose and acclaimed sculptor and photographer Uche James Iroha, Oghobase received further mentorship in the early stages of his career from French-Algerian photographer Bruno Boudjelal. His photography has been exhibited at Gallery of Photography, Dublin (2015); East Wing, Dubai (2015); Lagos Photo Festival (2014); James Harris Gallery, Seattle (2013); Tiwani Contemporary Gallery, London (2012); Medina Gallery, Bamako (2011); Baudoin Lebon Gallery, Paris (2011); KIASMA Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki, Finland (2011); Signs And Lyrics Emporium (S.A.L.E.) Gallery, Venice (2010), 8th Rencontres de Bamako (2009), and others.

**Junebum Park** 1976, Jeju) works in the field of photography and video installation. Park has exhibited and held artist residencies internationally including the BizArt Center, Shanghai (2003), Schinkel Residency, Berlin (2006), Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester (2011), and Art Space, Sydney (2013). He is the recipient of SIA Media Art Award (2012) and the Grant for International Exchange of Art and Culture, Arts Council Korea (2011). He recently held the solo exhibitions *Study of Right Hand*, PaJu (2015); *Plastic Earth* in Seoul (2014) and *The Grand Canal Project of Australia*, Seoul (2013). He also participated in the group video exhibition 'About Town' (Ikon Gallery, Birmingham) in 2014. Park's works are included in private and public collections worldwide such as the Association pour la Promotion des Arts (France), Museum of Old and New Art (Australia), Zabłudowicz Collection (UK), Leeum Samsung Museum of Art

(Korea), Gyeonggi Museum of Art (Korea), Museum of Contemporary Art KIASMA (Helsinki), Queensland Art Gallery (Brisbane, Australia), Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Galicia (Spain) and Microsoft Art Collection (USA).

**Gerda Steiner & Jörg Lenzlinger** (1967 / 1964 in Switzerland) are a Swiss artist duo since 1997. They have presented their work internationally, among others at 50th Venice Biennial (2003); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2004); Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2004); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2006); Kiasma, Helsinki (2006); Shanghai Biennial (2006); Sharjah Biennial (2007); CCB Brasil (2007); Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin (2008); Australian Center for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2008); Moscow Biennial (2009); Sydney Biennial (2014); Kunstmuseum Bern (2015) and Perm Museum of Contemporary Art (2015).

## WORK DESCRIPTIONS

### 1

#### **Brandon Labelle**

Brandon LaBelle, *The Human Strike*, 2016.

Various materials; audio (6:47)

After La Belle's *The Imaginary Republic*, this recent work takes the form of an installation and a newly produced sound piece in the archive and office space of SAVVY Contemporary. The work draws upon expressions and fantasies of utopian life, using these as the basis for what Michael Warner calls "poetic world making." Self-built communities, secret societies, utopian worlds – these give vital expression to the deep-rooted desire for alternative living. Creative Workers United focuses on this creative desire, and aims to foreground the imagination as a central driving force not only for the construction of a different world, but also for exploring modes of self-governance, solidarity, togetherness, and autonomy. At the core of the project is a consideration of the outsider and the stranger, the hobo, and the creative worker as figures of imaginative production, interruption, and resistance, as well as bodies that generate global relations—an itinerate mode of thinking, doing, saying, and relating. Thereby the project is a material archive of the dreams that may inspire us toward a sense for common and uncommon life.

### 2

#### **Abrie Fourie**

Abrie Fourie's work can be seen as a catalogue of memories, an ongoing archive that hints at the

silent tensions between absence and presence, abstraction and reality. Fourie is interested in the relationship between narrative and photography and how images have the potential to unlock memories or anecdotes. As such his work obliquely and subtly interrogates how the power of the image affects our processes of remembering. He photographs things he routinely observes, urban structures and old monuments, passageways and walls, flowers and rivers. Something hovering at the periphery of his consciousness moves to the fore as the image is captured with its mood and multiple meanings.

### 3A

#### **Raphael Cuomo & Maria Iorio (+Videobase)**

*Appunti del Passaggio*, 2015.

Single channel video, 40'00 min, stereo sound, language: Italian, English subtitles.

*Appunti del Passaggio* (field notes of the passage) focuses on little-known episodes related to the European migration in the 1960s, which was characterized in Switzerland by immigrant workers being restricted to the sphere of production, by discrimination and raising xenophobia, and by the use of "health risks" as a strategy to control immigration and the legality of border crossings. Following the narration of a young woman, which gradually gives way to a polyphonic narrative, the film revisits different locations mentioned in the accounts told by protagonists who lived out this historical event from a subaltern position: villages in Southern Italy which have been deserted from their inhabitants, the border zone in the Alps, the spaces of the former Grenzsantität in Brig, a modernist building used as an immigrant health inspection centre until the mid-1990s. Retracing these trajectories and passages, *Appunti del Passaggio* explores the counter-memory related to this historical event and connects the past and present border regimes.

### 3B

#### **Video-Base**

*Lottando la Vita*, 1975.

Standard EIAJ, b/w, sound, 99'

*Lottando la vita* is a video shot by the Videobase collective (comprised of Anna Lajo- lo, Guido Lombardi, and Alfredo Leonardi) in West Berlin in 1975. The video sheds a light on the situation of Italian immigrants in West Berlin through the accounts of bricklayers, pizza-makers, and laborers, depicting the exploitation and marginalization these workers experienced on a daily basis, as well as their self-organization and resistance. The video shows incidences and meetings leading up to the opening of the Casa di Cultura Popolare, an informal meeting place offering support to migrants on a host of specific issues – work, schooling, women's rights. The participation of those actually involved in these social struggles and their free, direct articulation of the issues at stake, in their own words, radically

transforms the investigative film format into a new, unconventional form whose unusually long takes allow arguments to be developed and for changes in emotional intensity.

### 4

#### **Salwa Aleryani**

*Erasure Study*, installation, rubber erasers, erased graphite on wall (Al Masdar News, 2012)

Translation of wall text:

"as a preservation  
of a journey of building  
a call in all cities  
to place a stone  
to build  
a desire"

Talking about the future involves prediction. Public hope relies on our enjoyment of that possibility, and at timely moments foundation stone ceremonies are held. Their atmosphere is one of festivity, which often seems violent, given the sharp end of a trowel, but also sentimental, as bodies huddle and cheer. They mark a start of an event and celebrate its completion, where sometimes the latter precedes the first.

### 5

#### **Nidaa Badwan**

*100 Days of Solitude*, Slideshow. 2014–2015.

"Because it's the only way I could create art in my city, isolation has become part of my identity once I found my way into it on November 19, 2013. My exhibit, *100 Days of Solitude*, is the fruit of a personal experience; the moment I started to feel that my simplest rights were snatched away from me in Gaza, the besieged city I live in, I decided to abandon the world to create my own. Isolation gave me the ability to create a new language, every item in my room could tell a different story; the ladder, the clothes, and even the bed! I could change their colors, omit or add new items. I waited relentlessly every single day to catch the perfect moment so that I could depict new photos using the sunlight, photos that can be felt rather than seen.

All an artist needs is enough space to come create real art. This, in particular, was the reason why I hardly left my 3x3 meter room for more than a year. I created a new "city", a refuge I sought when I felt alienated in my own city."

### 6

#### **Junebum Park**

*Puzzle 3–02* (x4, x8), 2008.

Single Channel, DV, 01'50", NTSC, SOUND, COLOR.

*Sleeping*, 2010.

Single Channel, HD, 12'00", NTSC, SILENT, COLOR, 2010.

Junebum Park engages in a visual discussion on the restraints of routine, confines of a set societal



structure and the expected submission into roles within these realms. By photographing and rearranging commodities and people, Park evokes these pressures, manipulating the hand himself. The fast-forwarded and controlled worlds created in Park's works display the unsettling and automative realities of daily life.

The work *Puzzle 3-02 (x4, x8)*, is part of a series of videos produced by Park, in which each 'puzzle' conforms to a set of rules stated by the artist. Park then documents at a bird's eye view where all the intricacies of human interaction and exchanges become apparent. The fast-forwarded play speed of the work heightens this sense of corporal communication. The structured nature of the work, emphasised by the grid-form of the puzzle suggests the artist's consideration of the society of his home country, South Korea.

7

### **Gerda Steiner & Jörg Lenzlinger**

*Aus dem Urmeer zwischen Afrika und Europa*, 2013. Ca. 53 objects, different materials, variable dimensions. Courtesy Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur.

Gerda Steiner & Jörg Lenzlinger created „Das Urmeer zwischen Afrika und Europa“ in the framework of their exhibition on the Swiss National Park in the Bündner Alps. This area once belonged to Africa before the continents shifted and formed the Alps. The system in natural history museums tends to group all that is considered next of kin in its attempt to categorize objects into species and genera „Das Urmeer zwischen Afrika und Europa“ seems to follow these aesthetics, until it turns out to be quite the opposite: here, extremely different substances meet, spaces of time overlap and relativize each other, geographical spaces dance wildly and natural objects meet everyday objects or even grow out of them. The order does not follow established scientific classifications, yet it releases interconnections between conceptual spaces.

8

### **Cevdet Ereğ**

*Rulers and Rhythm Studies*, 2007 – 2011.

Left to Right: ruler now – end / ruler rhythm / circular week ruler / ruler biennial / ruler near: long and short / ruler 100 years / ruler 1 (Cairo, Antwerp, Istanbul)

Cevdet Ereğ's work is characterised by a marked use of rhythm and site specificity and his use of references to architecture and linear time with instinctive impulses thereby leveling the gap between two supposedly opposing spheres. The work *Rulers and Rhythm Studies* creates simple interface(s), which are based on a very familiar everyday life tool- the ruler- which may challenge the viewer to question existing and create new temporal relations. Instead of showing timelines, the piece rather proposes an

aid to construct them and engage with other types of time organizations or rhythms, such as the natural or political or the musical.

9

### **Atef Berredjem's**

*Continuum*, 2014.

Videoinstallation, video 24 min each, sound, color

*Continuum* is a double screen video installation encapsulated in two pedestals by Atef Berredjem. Filmed from above from two slightly different angles, *Continuum* (2014) shows a street corner in Algiers with mostly cars moving from one screen to another as they pass by. The piece was originally shown with an accompanying quote by Larbi Ben M'kidi (1923/1957) handwritten on the wall, which states, 'Throw the revolution into the street and it will be born aloft by the people.' Despite this lofty statement, and the street-origins of many revolutions—both recent and in the past—the videos show us that in fact, the status quo continues. Atef Berredjem explores the various aspects that take societies in their perpetual change and evolution, focusing on his own society and on its social and cultural progression towards modernism. Berredjem is interested in the intermediate phases, stages of transitions in the development process of phenomena, practices, and social habits.

10

### **Abraham Onoriode Oghobase**

*Lost in Transit*, 28 photographs, 2008.

With "Lost in Transit" the artist investigates the challenging process of finding one's place in an alien environment—in this case, the city of Berlin. A quest for the purpose of existence has led Oghobase to a unique form of art, as he explores issues relating to human emotions such as loneliness, hope, anxiety, enthusiasm, and fear, using himself as material for his recent body of work.

11

### **Katia Kameli**

*Chill Out Suit(e)*, 2002.

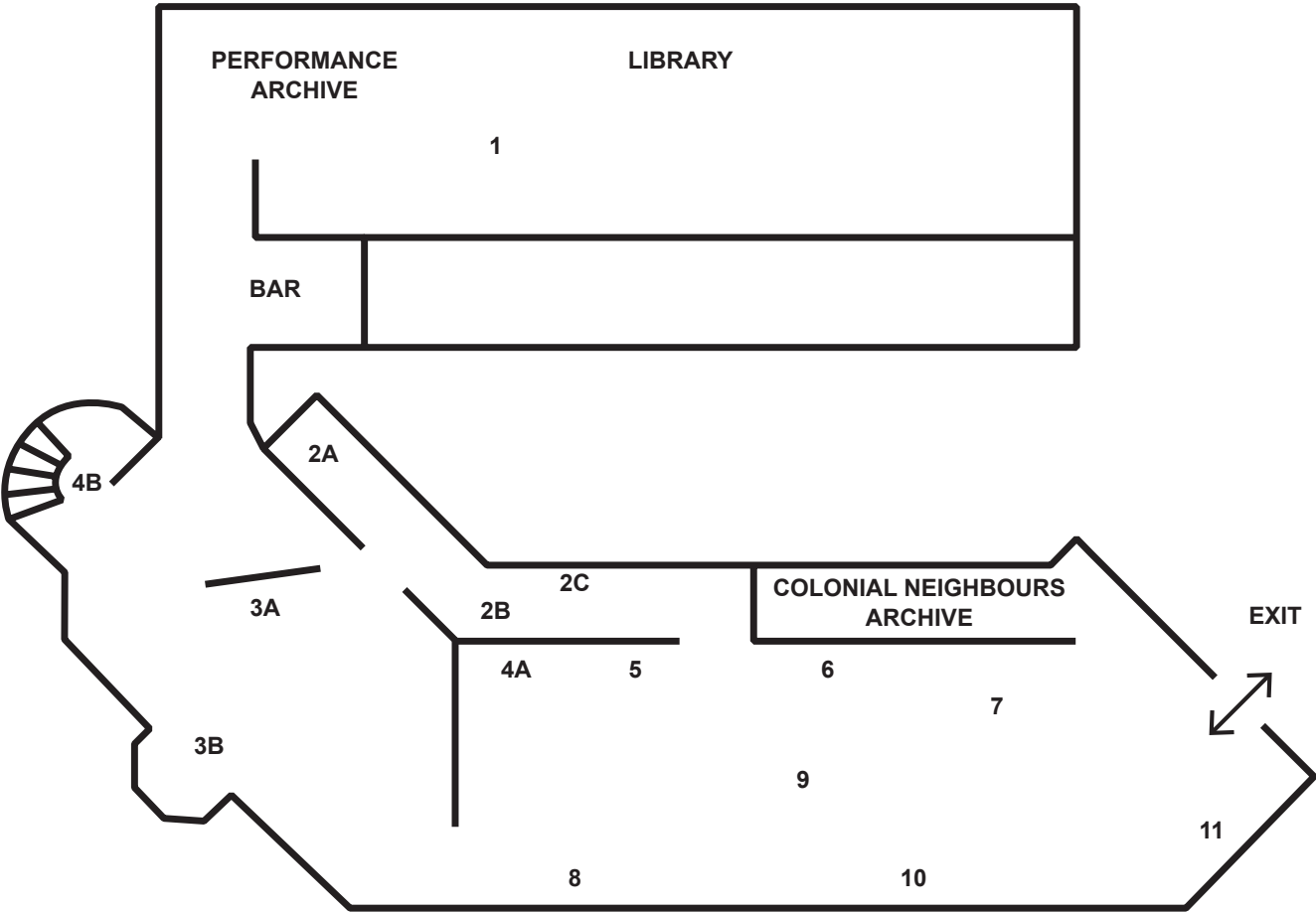
Video, 10min, Dv 1/5 ex.

This project was created in collaboration with composer Joe Cutler .

After a visit at Ermenegildo Zegna's clothing factory, the artists inserted an "autonomous zone," a soundproof break room for the employee, inside of a highly noisy environment. "Chill out suit(e)" was conceived as a physical space and a projection room. The Noszferatu ensemble was invited to perform in that installation. This project is about the repetition of gestures, the conditions of work and the relation between the human being and the machine. Played several times in Italy, this performance is now presented as a video.



# FLOORPLAN



# FLOORPLAN

- 1** BRANDON LABELLE, *The Human Strike*, 2016.  
Various materials; audio (6:47).
- 2A** ABRIE FOURIE, *Beli, Cres, Croatia*, 2014  
60cm x 90cm. C-Type Hand Print  
*Below the M2 Francois Oberholzer Freeway, Johannesburg, South Africa*, 2012  
35cm x 35cm  
Hand printed black & white photograph on Baryta paper
- 2B** ABRIE FOURIE,  
*What about the story the writer would have written on the day after he died?\**  
Wall drawing: chalk stenciled text on the wall. \*Ivan Vladislavić, 'The Last Walk': this text appears in Abrie Fourie, *Oblique* (Revolver/Rhodeworks, Berlin, 2011)
- Oblique Shelve #2:*  
*On Route to Freedom Park, 2nd street, Pretoria, Gauteng, South Africa*, 2013.  
*Ecke, ehemaliges Gefängnis Berlin-Neukölln, Germany*, 2012.  
*Corridor, Steinbächle, Ilshofen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany*, 2010.  
*Ivan's temporary garden, Devon Place, North Avenue, Killarney, Johannesburg, South Africa*, 2012.  
*Corner Wall, Am Tierpark, Berlin, Germany*, 2012.  
*Sporthalle, Herrenhaus Lübbenow, Brandenburg, Germany*, 2010.  
*Sandsteinbruch Ecke, Steinbächle, Ilshofen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany*, 2010.  
*Panoramic view, Sommerbad Pankow, Wolfshagener Strasse 91, 13187 Berlin-Pankow Berlin, Germany*, 2012.  
*Foyer, Vattenval-Heizkraftwerk Klingenberg, 42 Köpenicker Chaussee, Berlin, Germany*, 2013.  
*Aall, am Tierpark, Berlin, Germany*, 2012.  
Hand printed black & white photograph on Baryta paper, Edition # 2 of 7, 2010–2013.
- 2C** ABRIE FOURIE, *Living room, Penthouse, Karl-Liebnecht-Straße, Berlin, Germany*, 2009  
80cm x 80cm  
Hand printed black & white photograph on Baryta paper
- 3A** MARIA IORIO & RAPHAËL CUOMO, *Appunti del Passaggio*, Single channel video, 40'00 min, stereo sound, language: Italian, English subtitles. 2015.
- 3B** VIDEO-BASE, *Lottando la Vita*, 1975, 1/2", standard EIAJ, b/w, sound, 99'.
- 4A** SALWA ALERYANI, *Erasure Study*, 2015.  
Rubber erasers, 14 x 10 cm
- 4B** SALWA ALERYANI, *Erasure Study*, 2015.  
Erased graphite on wall (Al Masdar News, 2012)
- 5** NIDAA BADWAN, *100 Days of Solitude*, Slideshow. 2014–2015.
- 6** JUNE BUM PARK,  
*Puzzle 3-02 (x4, x8)*, 2008.  
Single Channel, DV, 01'50", NTSC, SOUND, COLOR. *Sleeping*, 2010.  
Single Channel, HD, 12'00", NTSC, SILENT, COLOR, 2010.
- 7** GERDA STEINER / JÖRG LENZLINGER, *Aus dem Urmeer zwischen Afrika und Europa*, 2013.  
Ca. 53 objects, different materials, variable dimensions. Courtesy Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur.
- 8** CEVDET EREK, *Rulers and Rhythm Studies*, 2007–2011.  
Left to Right:  
*ruler now – end / ruler rhythm / circular week ruler / rulerbiennial / ruler near: long and short / ruler 100 years / ruler 1 (Cairo, Antwerp, Istanbul)*
- 9** ATEF BERREDJEM, *Continuum*, 2014.  
Videoinstallation, video 24 min each, sound, color.
- 10** ABRAHAM ONORIO DE OGHOBASE, *Lost in Transit*, 2008. 28 photographs.
- 11** KATIA KAMELI, *Chill Out Suit(e)*, 2002.  
Video, 10min, Dv 1/5 ex.

# OPENING HOURS

Wednesday–Sunday  
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