

Images so that we may hear; sounds so that we may see. A willingness to refine our understanding of the world, to extract from the unique relationship of sound and image a meaning that transcends our initial perception of the whole. As though the incompleteness brought forth by the absence, censorship or obliteration of one sense contributes to the making of sense. As though the essence of the matter resides in unfulfilled expectations, or in the avowed lacunae of several of the artworks brought together here.

Entends-tu ce que je vois? Do You See What I Hear?

Watch, listen more closely to catalyze a sharper form of consciousness and an enduring acuity that permit an ever-clearer reading of things and of this world, which, for the first time in history, is called upon to face its precariousness through an incessantly mediated reality.

Wojciech Bąkowski, Bianca Baldi, Simon M. Benedict, Mareike Bernien & Kerstin Schroedinger,
Myriam Bleau, Bojan Fajfrić, Miriam Gossing & Lina Sieckmann, Rosalie Jean, Kapwani Kíwanga,
Douglas Moffat, Naveen Padmanabha, Jen Reimer & Max Stein, Sofie Thorsen, Marie Voignier
An exhibition prepared for Dazibao by France Choinière



— SIMON M. BENEDICT

Toronto (Canada)

BLIPS (2017)

Videos — 4 min. 22 sec.

Sound — variable duration

Simon M. Benedict is a Toronto-based artist working with video, sound and performance. His video works repurpose audiovisual material ranging from YouTube videos to feature films to explore our relationship to various forms of fiction and its impact on our perception of reality.

blips is part of a series of video works that consider the possible parallels between space exploration and colonialism. The project uses as its premise material from the “Golden Record,” which was launched into space aboard the Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 spacecrafts in 1977 with hopes that extraterrestrials would one day find it. The records contained images, sound recordings and music meant to provide information about Earth’s diverse cultures and life forms.

Combining footage from American Airlines advertisements from the 1960s and reinterpretations of sounds from the Golden Record, the dreamlike videos that comprise *blips* embody a certain confidence or power, suggesting that the desire to explore space and to make ourselves known to an extraterrestrial “Other” renews and repeats colonial motivations.

SOFIE THORSEN —

Vienna (Austria)

THE ACHROMATIC ISLAND (2009-10)

HD video — 13 min. 33 sec.



Through sculpture, collage, painting, architectural drawing, photography and film, Sofie Thorsen questions the ways in which space and architecture are perceived, focusing on the social, cultural, historical and political implications of such perceptions.

The Achromatic Island observes the landscape of the Danish Island of Fur as seen through the eyes of an achromat. Achromatopsia is a hereditary strain of black-and-white colour blindness caused by a lack of photoreceptors in the eyes, which normally allow for the differentiation between wavelength and intensity, ensuring the perception of colour. Prior to the Island of Fur's opening itself gradually to outsiders in the 1930s, the condition was common among the mere one thousand inhabitants of this small and isolated community. In 2009, Thorsen met with the last of those born on the island with the condition. In a series of interviews, they explain exactly what they are able to see. Several excerpts of their accounts are compiled into the narration of the film, while the accompanying images attempt to reproduce their descriptions. Dizzying, diffuse and lacking depth, *The Achromatic Island* seeks to recreate their world. The ability to do so, however, is curbed by our fundamental inability to fully grasp the perception of others - especially when so radically different from our own. Through documenting the peculiarities of a place and its community, the film offers an acute observation of the limits of art and language.



— ROSALIE JEAN

Montréal (Canada)

TÊTE-À-TÊTE (2017)

Video — 54 min. 45 sec.

The performances and videos of Rosalie Jean investigate alternative forms of communication made possible through heightened availabilities of sensory reception. Placing the body at the centre of her works, she explores the tensions produced and possibilities offered by corporeal limits within the sphere of communication.

Tête-à-tête presents two women sitting face-to-face. In near-perfect symmetry, one becomes the other's reflection. Clad entirely in black, the women are in stark contrast to the white environment that surrounds them. Eyes closed, they perform gentle gestures in the palms of the other's hands. In complete silence, they communicate by means of tactile signing, a form of sign language used by those who are both deaf and blind, in which words are spelled through touch. Their facial expressions – whether they are smiling, nodding, or frowning – indicate their understanding of what the other is trying to say. Patience and empathy are at the core of the work, underscoring the body's interminable ability to communicate with others.

KAPWANI KIWANGA —

Paris (France)

VUMBI (2012)

HD video — 30 min. 19 sec.

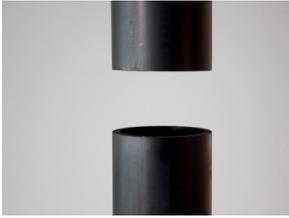


GALLERY SPACE



Kapwani Kiwanga’s performances, sound pieces, installations, and videos use an anthropological approach to explore anti-colonial struggles, afrofuturism, and marginalized discourses.

Vumbi is set in rural Tanzania and uses the Swahili word for “dust” as its title. During the dry season, a layer of red dust coats the terrain, turning the landscape monochromatic. In a gesture reminiscent of subtractive painting, Kiwanga dusts the leaves that have been coated, revealing the hidden colours underneath. A green line, sharply contrasting the red landscape, is formed in the foliage. This act of dusting, however, is in vain, as the leaves will inevitably soon be covered once again with red dust.



— DOUGLAS MOFFAT

Montréal (Canada)

VALSALVA MANŒUVRE / CORRIDOR PRESSURE (2018)

Sound installation — 19 min. 19 sec.

Douglas Moffat constructs environments for listening, using field recordings, electroacoustic music, and landscape architecture.

Valsalva Manœuvre / Corridor Pressure is inspired by the experience of sound in extreme environments. The Valsalva Manœuvre is used by scuba divers to regulate pressure as they descend into deep water. To perform the manœuvre, they close their nasal passages and force the pressure out of their ears momentarily, causing the internal sounds of the body to rush in and external sounds to be drowned out. For this work, Moffat has created an installation that draws a similar attention to sound and pressure. The listener approaches a space cut between two long pipes in which speakers have been placed. An acoustic atmosphere is created in the gallery similar to that moment of pressure release within in a diver's helmet, or within an empty corridor. The spectator is invited to listen actively and consider sound's relativity to time and space.

JEN REIMER & MAX STEIN —

Montréal (Canada)

SOUNDING THE CITY (2015-16)

Sound installation — variable durations



Working in collaboration since 2009, Jen Reimer and Max Stein are sound artists and performers based in Montréal). They create immersive experiences using spatial recordings, electroacoustic compositions, online mapping and site-specific performances.

Mounted to the gallery wall, *Sounding the City* (2015-16) resembles a series of electricity boxes; similar to those often found on the side of a building or electrical pole. The viewer is invited to listen to soundscape compositions that are paired with maps to the spaces where the recordings were made. Although situated in the gallery, the work extends beyond the walls and invites the viewer to its place of origin. The installation proposes sound as portraiture.



— BIANCA BALDI

Johannesburg (South Africa)

ZERO LATITUDE (2014)

HD video, silent — 9 min. 23 sec.

In her films, installations, photographs and written texts, Bianca Baldi addresses hidden power structures and narratives of oppression. Evoking the histories of film, studio photography and trompe-l'œil, she positions carefully chosen objects within a discourse of teleology.

Zero Latitude was commissioned and co-produced by the 8th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art with the support of the Goethe-Institut. Baldi deconstructs Europe's romanticization of the colonial project in Africa through the act of unpacking a Louis Vuitton trunk-bed, once belonging to an Italian-born French explorer, Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, who in the 1880s made several trips to the Congo River. Removed from its context and placed in an empty white room, the artifact is handled by white-gloved individuals as if part of an archive or museum. The silence that accompanies its unpacking suggests the untold perspective of the colonized, buried within Eurocentric histories, as well as the complicit role that museums and other institutions have played in this narrative.

Assistant director: Emilien Abibou — Director of photography: Olivier Guerbois — Assistant camera: Davy Bauret — Gaffer: Félix Marmorat — Post-production: Christopher Hummel — Character I: Julien Peltier — Character II: Vincent Berthe — With the support of Goethe-Institut (Johannesburg) — Filmed at the Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac (Paris, France) — Thanks to : Louis Vuitton Malletier (Paris), Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac (Paris), Médiathèque de l'architecture et du patrimoine (Montigny-le-Bretonneux, France), KADIST Art Foundation (Paris)

MYRIAM BLEAU —

Montréal (Canada)

NATURES MORTES (2018)

Video triptych — variable durations



Myriam Bleau is a composer, digital artist and performer based in Montréal. She investigates the physical reactions created by light and sound. By manipulating various conventions and codes, she seeks to disrupt expectations associated with musical performance in the digital age.

Natures mortes is inspired by *autopsy.glass*, a recent performance by the artist that combines household objects, torture devices, and medical equipment. In an attempt to associate the anticipated destruction of fragile objects with musical tension, the performance uses the objects to create dissonant sounds through dangerous manipulations and dramatic lighting. Bleau plays with this tension in *Natures mortes*, at times recalling Nam June Paik's *One for Violin Solo* (1962), in which the artist raises a violin above his head at a painfully slow pace before smashing it against a table. *Natures mortes* is a study in sonification that explores sensations of anticipation and discomfort.



— MARIE VOIGNIER

Paris (France)

TOURISME INTERNATIONAL (2014)

HD video — 47 min. 54 sec.

The short films of Marie Voignier are at once documentary and fiction. Through careful manipulations of sound and image, she accentuates the surreality of reality to highlight how it is both controlled and imagined.

Tourisme international examines how authoritarian regimes define the self-representation of a nation. The film documents guided tours of painters' studios, museums, cinemas, and war memorials in North Korea. One element, however, is missing: the voice of the guides. The film's sound has been completely reworked to exclude it. This silence raises numerous questions as to what the guides are telling the tourists and, by extension, what they are not telling them; what is being censored. The footage is interspersed with title cards revealing Kim Jong Un's concerns regarding the details of the film's production. *Tourisme International* examines the ways in which a state controls its image in the eyes of the world, and how these choreographed images misrepresent reality.

MIRIAM GOSSING & LINA SIECKMANN —

Cologne (Germany)

OCEAN HILL DRIVE (2016)

16mm transfered to HD video — 20 min. 34 sec.



SCREENING ROOM



Miriam Gossing and Lina Sieckmann collaborate on experimental films, videos and photography, often focusing on urban or private architecture as a source of fear, anxiety and alienation. Through an elaborate process of research and storytelling, they use a documentary approach in highly staged environments to create images that are both poetic and surreal.

Ocean Hill Drive takes place in a coastal town in Massachusetts (USA). The town is home to a phenomenon known as a “shadow flicker”, which occurs when rotating wind turbines create flickering shadows over homes, fields, building and roads. This incessant pulsating light creates an inescapable uneasiness amongst the members of the community. Reminiscent of structuralist cinema, the flicker is not unlike that which occurs naturally between frames on film. Featuring the voices of several unseen local residents interviewed for the film, *Ocean Hill Drive*, much like a mystery movie, uncovers the daily life of a community under the sway of a strange mechanism and its unsettling psychological effects.



— WOJCIECH BĄKOWSKI

Warsaw (Poland)

CONSTRUCTION OF THE DAY (2013)

Animated film — 9 min. 02 sec.

Wojciech Bąkowski is a pluridisciplinary artist who lives and works in Warsaw. His films explore the reality of daily life in ways that are poetic, blunt and unsparing. His practice ranges from animated films to sound installations and from poetry to music.

Construction of the Day begins behind the barrel of a gun, placing the viewer in the protagonist's point-of-view as he narrates the emotional landscape of a dream. What he tells us sharply contrasts the manner in which it is told. The monotony of the voice juxtaposes the dark and brutal images, which, though minimal, are anything but banal. Animated in Bąkowski's signature style – monochromatic and morose, digital yet lo-fi – the film approaches violence, death, creativity, and love as no more remarkable than any other aspect of life.

MAREIKE BERNIEN & KERSTIN SCHROEDINGER —

Berlin (Germany)

RAINBOW'S GRAVITY (2014)

HD video — 32 min. 39 sec.



SCREENING ROOM



The media arts practice of Mareike Bernien and Kerstin Schroedinger adopts an approach that is both historiographical and archaeological. Their works treat the medium of film as a product of time, culture and ideology, and often probe the means of its production to construct or reconstruct images as objects of study.

Rainbow's Gravity is a cinematic study of the Agfacolor-Neu film stock made in Nazi Germany. Created in response to US-American Technicolor and used for both Nazi propaganda and German feature films, the film stock continued to circulate after World War II. *Rainbow's Gravity* takes place in and around the now-defunct Agfacolor factory. Over the course of the film, the actors narrate a script that is at once poetic and didactic while manipulating coloured gels as a reference to the physical composition of the film stock. Interrogating memory, history, and the archive, the film examines how certain revisionist accounts of history have shaped a shared “chromatic” memory by sometimes prioritizing artistic representation over accuracy. Steven Spielberg’s film *Schindler’s List* (1993), for example, uses black-and-white film to remember the Holocaust despite the arrival of colour film to the era.



— BOJAN FAJFRIĆ

Amsterdam (Netherlands)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS (2016-17)

HD video — 18 min. 04 sec.

In his films, Bojan Fajfrić explores particular historic and familial narratives. He uses re-enactments to examine the ways in which the past folds into the present, often placing himself at the centre of his work to create a more personal connection with the presented histories.

Unfinished Business is a film about the evolution of an artist's career as remembered in his last moments. The storyline blurs past and present, dream and reality. The artist's studio is at the heart of the protagonist's performance, serving as the container of his memories and traumas: he is seen collecting his children's drawings and dancing with his wife. The sound gains a particular importance as the beating of a drum synchronizes with the events unfolding on the screen. Part fiction, part personal history, the film stars Fajfrić's father in the role of the artist. In recreating fragments of his protagonist's life, Fajfrić simultaneously explores the possibilities of his own future.

NAVEEN PADMANABHA —

Bangalore (India)

GLASS (2012)

35mm film — 22 min. 47 sec.



Drawing from the form of experimental cinema, the work of Naveen Padmanabha deals with questions relating to modes of communication, entropy, time and space. The many characters in his films engage in self-reflection as they navigate the everyday. At the heart of their inner dialogues are their perceptions of the world, be it physical or metaphysical.

Glass is the story of an amateur lens maker who we encounter as he grinds glass into a mirror for a telescope. Shot on 35mm, the experimental short film is at once lyrical and insightful. As the protagonist performs the repetitive act of grinding, shaping and polishing the glass, his mind wanders, exploring different ways of seeing and understanding the world around him. Naveen Padmanabha proposes the lens as a means of looking beyond the physical world, using the materiality of glass to reflect the narrator's thoughts, memories and philosophical reflections. The dreams of the lens maker fold into his daily routine as the sound of his voice alternates with the grating noise of the glass he shapes.

éditions

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images

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