PERSPECTIVE

WOMEN RESISTANCE MEMORY AGENCY AND SOME THINGS HIDDEN

Highlights of The Female Perspective programme 2017/2018

CASTRVM PEREGRINI

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SOME THINGS HIDDEN

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CASTRVM
PEREGRINI

THE FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

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Preface

This publication, *The Female Perspective,* contains material that reflects Castrum Peregrini's activities over the past year. There are contributions from almost exclusively female artists, thinkers, writers and scientists. And it is no coincidence that the (female) curator Nina Folkersma chose Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht, our founder, as the programme's focal point, as patron, artist and woman. Gisèle's story continues to be a great source of inspiration for artists, writers and intellectuals today.

Her role and position as a woman in a male group of friends – and how this fact relates to current issues around female identity, sexuality, feminism and gender, has never before been a focus of our Memory Machine programme, which brings together memory and identity.

There has been a recent resurgence of these topics in mainstream debate. Conservative gender roles are currently playing a part in identity politics as conducted by authoritarian leaders of global superpowers; and, closer to home, by Dutch, right-wing populists. In keeping with its history and its founder's mindset, Castrum Peregrini is committed to opposing such tendencies by pursuing an inclusive society in which diversity is the norm.

Castrum Peregrini has a unique place within Amsterdam's art world. At Herengracht 401, a former safe house as well as Gisèle's former home, we exhibit contemporary art in dialogue with its historical context, retaining a connection with Amsterdam. We distinguish ourselves from other cultural institutions by continuously linking our heritage to current issues, both materially and immaterially, and on an artistic and social level.

This *trans*historical approach, in which the past is viewed as a 'living history', and is combined with other historical periods and cultural contexts, is highly topical within art discourse. If this leads to new works in which the past takes on a new contemporary form, one can, as cultural theorist, critic and video artist Mieke Bal suggests, better speak of an *inter*historical approach.

Castrum Peregrini can be seen as a leading example of this perspective, not only by operating from its original location, but also through its in-depth programming and openness to experimentation; and with few of the restrictions that are imposed by more traditional institutional frameworks. A personal approach is still our signature.

Independent curator Nina Folkersma has demonstrated her expert knowledge of today's art world and, thanks to previous collaborations, she is very familiar with our organisation. We invited Nina, with whom we have worked intensively for the past year or more, to curate the programme and publication *The Female Perspective.* We are delighted that Nina has put these issues on the agenda; particularly after a year in which our own cultural memory was given food for thought by the female perspective. We would also like to thank the online art magazine Mister Motley, which conducted research into the meaning of gender in contemporary art in the past year, for its contribution and editorial support to this magazine.

Wishing you a wonderful read and viewing,

Michaël Defuster
Director, Castrum Peregrini

From left to right: Lars Ebert, Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht, Frans Damman, Michaël Defuster.
Photo: Simon Bosch, 2010

For today I am a woman

Nina Folkersma

Curator Nina Folkersma explains why she chose to make the female perspective the focus of Castrum Peregrini's year programme. In contrast to most art institutes, Castrum Peregrini is not an 'exhibition machine' but rather a research institute and meeting place, offering artists a refuge – both literally and figuratively, where they can do their research, exchange ideas with other makers and thinkers, and share their findings with the public. In all of this, personal meetings are very important. Taking the feminist adage 'the personal is political' as its initial concept, *The Female Perspective* offers an intimate, subjective way of looking at the wider historical picture, as well as at the complex topical issues of today.

'Ah, but what is "herself"? I mean, what is a woman?
I assure you, I do not know. I do not believe that you know.'
– Virginia Woolf

What is the female perspective? As the curator of Castrum Peregrini's year programme *The Female Perspective,* I have often been asked this question. I respond by pointing to Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht herself, the artist and founder of Castrum Peregrini. I point to how she saved the lives of a group of young people in hiding, both literally and with reference to their mental wellbeing, by teaching them how to maintain their spiritual freedom through art and friendship. I point to how, despite adversities and struggles, after the war she succeeded in making her house on the Herengracht a community for a circle of writers, thinkers and artists. In short, to how her life has been a source of inspiration for many. And yet her identity and position as a woman in a community of men has never yet been explored as part of the Castrum Peregrini programme. Discussions around female identity, sexuality and gender are extremely relevant today, another reason for my focus. But again there was the question, 'what is then the female perspective, how do you define the "female"?' This is an understandable question but, in my view, one that does not have a clear answer.

There have been several feminist 'waves' in recent decades that dismantled the idea of a female essence. Based on Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 statement that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman,' second wave feminists argued that the 'female' was a social construction rather than a biological given. Again, in the post-modern 1970s and 1980s, feminist theorists like Hélène Cixous, Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray warned against the search for essences. In her book *Ce Sexe Qui N'en Est Pas Un (This Sex Which Is Not One)* from 1977, Irigaray uses the two labia of the female genitals as a metaphor for the non-unequivocal existence of the female being; the woman is polysemous, ambiguous, plural and polyvalent. In the 1980s and 1990s, with gender benders like Grace Jones and Madonna, the whole idea of sex or gender identity was re-scrutinised.

Philosopher Judith Butler is a key figure in the realm of gender theory. In her ever-relevant book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), she explores multiple forms of androgyny, transvestism and transsexuality, and advocates blurring the boundaries between men and women. It is a game of gender ambiguity rather than a search for sexual identity. These feminist theories have been important, and remain important, because they expose prevailing and oppressive gender stereotypes and their associated social expectations.

It may be too early to speak of a third feminist wave, but there is an unmistakable feminist revival today, not only in the theoretical field, but also in practice, in the form of activist protest movements. There is every reason

'The Female Perspective is not so much about the question of what the female perspective is, but rather about what we can learn when we listen to women's stories'

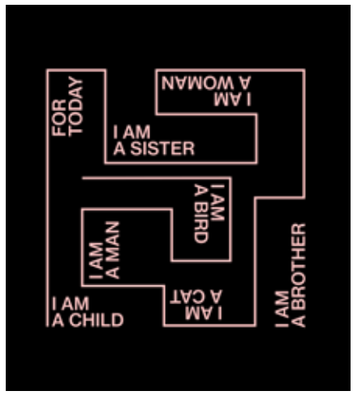
for this. With the advent of autocratic rulers like Putin, Erdoğan and Trump, there comes a return to aggressive machismo and shameless sexism. And closer to home, in the Netherlands, we see the resurfacing of misogyny, discrimination, racism and anti-LGBTQI sentiments. Consider the extreme right politician Thierry Baudet, who claims that women have 'less ambition [than men] and more interest in family things'. The fight against these kinds of reactionary ideas is evidently never done.

Nevertheless, the new feminist revival differs in a number of ways from previous movements. While the first feminist waves were focused mainly on the US and Europe, we are now seeing a global revival of the fight for women's rights. In Africa, the women's movement has made significant gains in recent decades, especially in terms of policy and legislation. The incredible popularity of the TED talk and eponymous essay '*We Should All Be Feminists*' by Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, is testimony to the growing interest in 'global feminism'. Simultaneously we see women of colour playing a prominent role across Europe and especially in the US, and that alongside racism, class and sexual orientation are also burning issues.

One expert on the correlations between sex and race is Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American professor of law and civil rights advocate who coined the term 'intersectionality'. Building on the ideas of black feminists like Angela Y. Davis (*Women, Race & Class,* 1983), Crenshaw argues that different 'axes of identity' such as race, gender, sexuality and class cannot be seen separately. Central to intersectionality is the notion that different forms of oppression influence and affect each other. As such, while black people may experience racism, and women sexism, a combination of racism and sexism against black women is more than simply the sum of the two.

Theories around intersectionality were first introduced in the Netherlands in 2001 by Gloria Wekker and Nancy Jouwe; however, they never caught on. In conjunction with the whitewashing of its slavery past, the self-image of the Netherlands as a tolerant, multicultural society has long discouraged further discourse. But it seems there is a change now. Recently, partly as a result of Gloria Wekker's important book *White Innocence,* there is an increased focus on the less innocent traces of our Dutch past, and our historical colour blindness, also within feminism. More and more people are taking a stand, saying, 'enough!' A good example is the #metoo, the hashtag that, at the time of writing, is providing a platform for millions of women worldwide to speak up about their experiences of sexual harassment. The extent to which the hashtag has spread illustrates the scope of inequality. The story of power and impotence, of he who takes and she who is silenced, of those who profit and those who are exploited, is an age-old story indeed.

An essay by Rebecca Solnit comes to mind in which she writes about the sexual abuse case involving the former IMF director Dominique Strauss-Kahn and Nafissatou Diallo, a Guinean hotel service worker, in New York in 2011. Solnit ends her essay with this striking paragraph: 'His name was privilege, but hers was possibility. His was the same old story, but hers was a new one about the possibility of changing a story that remains unfinished,



Nina Folkersma
Photo: Taco de Neef

Campaign design by Atelier Roosje Klap

that includes all of us, that matters so much, that we will watch but also make and tell in the weeks, months, years, decades to come.'

As a society we have a great deal to thank feminists for, but feminism, the story of freedom and equality for women, as Solnit says, remains unfinished. It remains necessary for women, especially those who are oppressed or ignored, to keep telling their stories, based on their own experiences, thereby contributing to a process of consciousness raising. These stories help expose unequal power relationships and fight against different forms of oppression. This is in line with the mission of Castrum Peregrini, as also expressed in the preface: 'In keeping with its history and founder's mindset, Castrum Peregrini is committed to opposing such tendencies by pursuing an inclusive society in which diversity is the norm.' Gisèle was a free-spirited, emancipated woman who unquestioningly spoke with everyone on equal terms, yet she didn't give much thought to words like 'feminist' or concerns around gender issues. She would rather have just been 'one of the boys,' as her biographer Annet Mooij describes elsewhere in this publication.

This year's programme *The Female Perspective* does not so much concern itself with the question of what the female perspective is, but rather with the question of what we can we learn when we listen to women's stories. What are the different kinds of stories these women, artists, thinkers and writers tell, and what opportunities do they offer to create different self images, as Solnit writes, 'of changing a story that remains unfinished, that includes all of us [...]'? In my view, this is at the heart of art's capacity: to breach the old, dominant narrative, to cast doubt on what is seen as certain, and to teach us to look more openly, and listen to others and 'the other'.

For a few years now, I have worn a badge on my coat with the text 'I don't know'. I've forgotten where I bought it or where I got from, but it means a lot to me. The badge gives me space to think, to be quiet and to postpone having an opinion. One of my favourite writers, Virginia Woolf, often says 'I don't know'. Perhaps that's why I love her writing so much. There is always a desire for space in her work, both physically (*A Room of One's Own,* 1929) and in the imagination *(Orlando, 1928)*; space and freedom to move, wander and investigate. Like her main character Orlando, who lives for four centuries, transforming along the way from one gender to the other, Woolf does not want to take the liberty of defining an identity, but rather of losing one. As a tribute to the nature of our identity – ever-changing, plural and in a state of continuous becoming, we have designed a series of badges for *The Female Perspective,* with a text in nine variants: *For Today I am a Woman/Man/Boy/Girl/Child/Cat/Sister/Brother/Bird* – so that each day we might see the world from a different perspective; and if at a certain moment I don't know anymore, I'll just reach for my old badge again.

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Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*, 1928

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own,* 1929

'Society has a great deal to thank feminists for, but feminism, the story of freedom and equality for women remains unfinished'

Women + Resistance

THE FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

‘Das passt zu Dir’

Annet Mooij

Despite the great interest that Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht has always provoked as an artist and founder of Castrum Peregrini, her female identity has never previously been the subject of discussion. What position did she hold in her, largely male, group of friends? Why was she so intent on becoming part of a society that in effect closed its doors to her? Annet Mooij, author of a biography of Gisèle soon to be published, looks for answers to these questions.

The story is well-known: how during the Second World War, Gisèle sheltered the German poet Wolfgang Frommel and a few others in her small apartment on the Herengracht. The community that emerged can best be compared to a religious brotherhood. On the third floor, far removed from everyday life, a parallel, hidden world was formed. Its residents and visitors devoted themselves, like monks in a monastery, to the work of a deceased master poet, Stefan George and a sacred literary tradition. Texts were their daily bread. They read, recited, dictated, transcribed, learned by heart, translated and wrote poetry.

These spiritual and artistic activities gave meaning and structure to their monotonous days, helping the small community to carry on. Their copious reading anchored them; the act of transcribing demanded concentration and commitment; learning a poem by heart kept the mind and spirit alive; and interpreting difficult texts provided intellectual stimulus to this group of young men that had been selected not only because of the way they looked, but also for their artistic talents and poetic sensibilities. This mode of living, with its intensive productivity and discipline, defied the cycles of sickening tensions and irritations brought about by a hidden existence.

Gisèle’s position as the only woman in Castrum Peregrini’s community of men suited her well, probably because, as a sister to three brothers, she was used to it. A new world was opening up to her – modest, sober and more serious than the one she knew before. Being part of this world was a revelation, and therefore, realising that her access was restricted was all the more painful. This is a part of the story that is much less well known.

There were two kinds of readings in Castrum: reciting poetry, plays and stories, which took place at every gathering, including mealtimes, regardless of who was present. There were also closed meetings, where the inhabitants would read *Der Stern des Bundes,* or other works by the venerated poet Stefan George. You could compare these to a religious Mass – only accessible to insiders. Outsiders had no business there, and women were considered outsiders since, it was felt, they had no rights of access to George's *Dichterstaat* (realm of Spirit). Gisèle, who felt herself to be ‘one of the boys’, went to great lengths to claim a position of exemption for herself. However, Wolfgang Frommel, considered the ‘director of spiritual affairs’, was adamant, and despite displays of tears and rage, he remained so. Admission to the sacred reading evenings of George was and would remain off-limits to her; the same rule applied for special parties where she was also unwelcome.

Gisèle was deeply crushed by this systematic exclusion. The intensity of living together, the intellectual stimulation that came with it, the completely new world view as well as attitude towards life that she had experienced, all that had changed her. It felt to her as if she was transforming from a caterpillar to butterfly. She had

Wolfgang Frommel and Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht
copyright: Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam

discovered her wings, was learning to fly and wanted nothing more than to join her new friends on their highest flights. But what she discovered was that female butterflies were expected to stay at home. This enraged and depressed her. How could it be that she was allowed to finance this community, save her friends’ lives by putting her own in danger, and yet be denied access to its communal rituals? Years later, a story circulated that her helpless fury caused her to throw a loaf of bread out of the window, when there was barely enough to eat.

The Liberation brought an end to the hidden existence in this third-story apartment. Some of the community left quickly, Frommel sought salvation abroad and looked forward to a new home. In the initial post-war years, the future of Castrum hung by a thread. For Gisèle, only one thing was of importance: the Herengracht had to survive, Castrum had to continue and she would belong, cost what it cost. No advice from friends or family could sway her, just as her own understanding that she had always been on the sidelines made no difference. She knew of the reading groups and parties she had not been allowed to attend. She knew there was much she didn’t know, that she had only been allowed to hear certain sections from Frommel’s letters home. The rest had been deemed ‘unsuitable’ for her ears. She suffered terribly from this, but never took any action.

Why? For someone who is not used to being told what to do, this is the question that keeps coming back. Why did she move in a world that was so unwelcoming to her? Why did she so desperately want to be a part of a community that allowed her such limited access? My biography on Gisèle due to be published in 2018 will reflect on these questions in detail.

She got her way in the end. In the early 1950s, Frommel returned to the ‘nest’ and the Castrum community was restored. Looking back, it is incredible how easily the unusual arrangements Gisèle chose to live in after the war were accepted. The 1950s are not readily known for their great freedoms or tolerance of alternative modes of living. There are bound to have been people in her surroundings who held certain opinions about a single woman living among so many men, but they kept them to themselves. The Herengracht household was deemed interesting and fascinating rather than improper. The fact that Gisèle herself always remained a stranger to Dutch society, also in other people’s eyes, will have played a role here, as

‘What was she doing in a world that was so unwelcoming to her as a woman? Why did she so desperately want to be a part of a community that allowed her such limited access?’

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the sacred reading evenings and pa

did her bohemian background. From the upper classes and aristocracy, non-conformity has always been more readily accepted.

But there was certainly fascination for Gisèle’s position within Castrum. As a gift for her dedicated services, the painter Max Beckmann gave her one of his watercolours in 1946, noting, as she remembers it, *‘Das passt zu Dir,’* (‘It suits you’), with her in mind. She subsequently devised a title for the work herself: *Jungfrau mit dem Untier,* (Virgin with the animal). The watercolour depicts a woman at sea on a kind of raft, alongside a sea monster with multiple arms. Whether the creature is keeping her prisoner or protecting her is hard to say.

The mythological inspiration for this work has been referenced as Andromeda before being freed by

Group of people in hiding in Castrum Peregrini after the Liberation

Max Beckmann, *Jungfrau mit dem Untier*, 1946
Collection Castrum Peregrini
c/o Pictoright Amsterdam 2017

Perseus. This seems plausible enough, but regarding Beckmann's *'Das passt zu Dir*,' it does not seem too far-fetched to read this as a comment on Gisèle's own situation as well. What he was referring to here is not absolutely certain, but since Beckmann gave her the painting in the summer of 1946, we can assume he was thinking of the war years – Gisèle as a virgin, beset by the Nazi monster. But nothing stops us taking this further. Even if the artist himself had no idea of the complex ambiguity of Gisèle's position within Castrum, his watercolour portrays it effectively, precisely because of the image's ambiguity. Just as you can question whether the woman on the raft is held captive or is being protected, the question also remains whether Gisèle was a mistress or a prisoner at the Herengracht? This too is hard to say.

And it didn't become much clearer in the post-war decades. On the contrary. As she grew older, and especially as money played a larger role at the Herengracht, there remained even more to be said for both positions. It is this unresolved ambiguity that causes Beckmann's remark, *'Das passt zu Dir,'* to continue to echo long after he gave her the watercolour.

Jacoba van Tongeren

Or: How women disappeared from the history of resistance

Marjan Schwegman

Marjan Schwegman, former director of the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, has carried out extensive research into the role of women in the Dutch Resistance movement. She is especially interested in 'fighting women'. One of them, Jacoba van Tongeren, is the subject of this essay.

In September 1944, Jacoba van Tongeren, the leader of the Groep 2000 that was named after Jacoba's 'resistance' name 2000, met Henk van Randwijk. Henk worked for the newspaper *Vrij Nederland,* which started as a resistance publication during the Second World War. Henk was surprised by this 'young miss' who was apparently involved in resistance matters. He described her as a kind of 'devil artist'. 'This does not involve devil art, it comes naturally,' replied Jacoba. 'One thing leads to the other. It is very logical.'

Henk found this hard to digest. According to him, Jacoba took the resistance too lightly – it was a special undertaking that required great effort and sacrifice from someone like himself, a leader.

The meeting between Henk and Jacoba would be the first in a series of confrontations. Not only did they have strong and clashing personalities, but they also held very different perceptions of what the concepts of resistance and leadership actually meant. These concepts would be decisive for their respective places in the history of the resistance movement. Henk held the spotlight as a major resistance leader, while, until recently, Jacoba remained very much in the shadows.

Loe de Jong, author of the influential book *The Kingdom of the Netherlands during World War II,* the standard reference work on this subject, echoes the voice of Henk van Randwijk. De Jong, reflecting the way most men thought at the time, did not think to include the people who took care of those in hiding, so the women of the resistance are virtually absent from this work.

Moreover, because De Jong focuses on full-time resistance fighters, he creates the impression that an existence as a resistance fighter excludes a life in the regular world. De Jong and many historians after him paid little attention to people with the desire to quietly help those in need, people like Jacoba van Tongeren. In addition, there was no sharp distinction between regular and clandestine activities in her life. Jacoba saw little value in bringing attention to her activities after the war had ended. After all, she must have thought, they were nothing special. So there was a resounding silence around her and Groep 2000.

Jacoba van Tongeren is not the only female resistance fighter whose activities remain underexposed and undervalued. If women do have a place in the history of the resistance, it is usually in a supporting role. The most famous of those roles is as a courier, a rather iconic figure in the resistance. It is paradoxical that since a courier's role was highly regarded, the fact that these women could also play a more leading role in the resistance is often overlooked (Hannie Schaft being a notable exception).

Jacoba van Tongeren, for example, was courier for Henk Dienske, who led the LO, the Dutch national organisation for assisting those in hiding. But she was also his equal as leader of Groep

Jacoba van Tongeren, painting by Max Nauta, 1945
Photo: Rogier Veltman

is in the air. Recently, many publications have appeared about the resistance activities of women, such as the biography of Frieda Belinfante by Toni Bouman. And I expect that the forthcoming biography by Annet Mooij of Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht will also focus more attention on the role of women in the resistance.

Even though neither Frieda Belinfante nor, as far as I know, Gisèle, ever used violence themselves, they were part of networks that became increasingly dependent on its use. How did people who never had the need to use violence deal with the new dilemmas they were faced with? Jacoba van Tongeren's memoirs, called simply *Jacoba van Tongeren,* edited by Paul van Tongeren and Trudy Admiraal and published in 2015, answer these and other questions in a unique manner.

With great humour and straightforward honesty, the religious, liberal reformed Jacoba van Tongeren reflects on her own actions and those of others. She presents the reader with a struggle that shows not only conflicts about male and female leadership, but also the way these conflicts were interwoven with conflicting views about the use of violence. In this way, the book questions prevailing assumptions about the resistance and the role of women in it.

At first sight, Jacoba's portrait of herself as someone who wants to alleviate the need and pain of others fits perfectly with the common image of women that primarily care for others. This image, however, is inconsistent with another one that Jacoba uses to describe herself, namely that of the militant witch, born from a fierce confrontation with her father, Hermannus van Tongeren, Grandmaster of the Order of Freemasons and Retired General Major of the KNIL, the Dutch colonial army. While her mother and sister stayed in Batavia, and her brother went to school in Rotterdam, Hermannus took his five-year-old daughter to the harsh environments surrounding Atjeh for some mysterious

2000. The same goes for Esmée van Eeghen, who was killed by the German *Sicherheitsdienst,* the SD. In the Frisian resistance, Esmée worked on equal footing with Krijn van den Helm, leader of the *Knokploegen* who helped the LO. After the war, co-resistance fighter and historian Pieter Wijbenga reduced her role to that of courier.

But also during the war, spirited, unconventional women like Esmée van Eeghen suffered from the fact that their behaviour was not considered desirable for women at that time. Pieter Wijbenga did not approve of Krijn van den Helm treating Esmée as his equal. Women like the sisters Oversteegen, who operated alongside Hannie Schaft, were also faced with this type of prejudice. Truus Oversteegen recalls how some male resistance fighters treated her and her sister as subordinates who were to carry out what was assigned to them, no matter how dubious those assignments were at times. And Marie Anne Tellegen, alias Dr. Max, who held a leading position in a large network of resistance groups, recollected after the war that women who worked for *Vrij Nederland* were often referred to as 'missies', 'burly women', 'children', or 'typewriter girls'.

All this explains why the leadership of 'burly women' like Jacoba van Tongeren was contested, both during and after the war. It also explains why men like Henk van Randwijk have become the embodiment of leadership in the resistance. However, change

'If women do have a place in the history of the resistance, it is usually in a supporting role'

reason. Here, they lived in a mobile home for eight years in the jungles of Sumatra, where Hermannus built bridges as a military engineer.

He raised Jacoba as a boy. A boy who was instilled with tough military values, but who also had to take care of him as a mother would do. This Indonesian life laid the foundation for her relationship with her father, who was a source of inspiration and support for Jacoba, but also a source of stress. Where God in heaven imposed stringent demands on Jacoba, so did her father on earth.

After the reunification of the Van Tongeren family in the Netherlands, a number of difficult years began for Jacoba. She performed poorly at school, was bullied by her brother and sister, and shunned by her mother. When one day her father also lashes out at her and calls her 'a little witch', Jacoba attacks Hermannus and wounds him till he is bleeding. She then resolves to no longer be defenceless and becomes what her father called her: a witch, but a militant witch who sees everything and is always vigilant. 'Jacoba stayed Jacoba, but became a militant one, who stood her ground', she writes.

This image, which fits well with the image of the devil artist used by Henk van Randwijk, raises the question of what 'militant' meant for Jacoba. What did the 'wild cat Jacoba' (her own words) think about the use of violence? Certainly in light of the military education she received from her father, this is an intriguing question. By virtue of her faith and her sex, she decides to be a fighter who does not use violence herself. She did not want to learn to shoot, but saw that fighting was necessary. When one group member tells her that 'a leader does not avoid the attack, but attacks', she replies: 'with every blow I receive I give one back, but in my own way'. This also characterised the way she led Groep 2000, which did have a strong arm, but this group only had a defensive task, keeping in mind the commandment: Thou shalt not kill.

However, Jacoba does accept coupons obtained through armed robberies, and also identifies dangerous individuals who are liquidated by others. But using this type of violence by the group itself is avoided as much as possible. And when they did have to use it, she made sure she was there to help the wounded and comfort, listen and take care. As Jacoba says to Henk: 'We are Church, not street thugs'.

Jacoba van Tongeren shows that the tragedy of Jacoba's life lies in her firm conviction that she, in terms of the use of violence, could remain pure, true to her conviction. This conviction gets a monstrous blow in March 1945, when the SD raids the office of Groep 2000 on the Stadhouderskade in Amsterdam, on the exact day that, contrary to all the rules, the encryption key to the code system used by the group was in the office; it was hidden but still a high risk. The internal tensions that were already present are now being tested to the fullest extent. Should the strong arm of Groep 2000 come into action and rob the office to secure the encryption key and save thousands of lives? Jacoba wants to wait in order to secure the encryption key in a different, peaceful way.

The highest echelons of the national resistance, which called in Jacoba to account for her decision, was initially in favour of a counter-raid, but is eventually convinced by Jacoba. Henk van Randwijk, who was also in favour, suffered a defeat. But one member of the strong arm of Groep 2000 was also in favour of the raid. Jacoba orders this man to wait. Angry and hurt, he meets another group member who wants to take over Jacoba's leadership. The latter provokes him, calling him a cowardly 'little lap dog'. That does it. Together with some other group members they commit the robbery, and although they all manage to escape, the SS employee Ernst Wehner is shot and killed. Moreover, the encryption key is not secured.

Everybody knows what will happen next: reprisals. That is exactly why Jacoba had wanted to wait. The passages in which she describes how she waits at the first aid post under the Weteringbrug to see what is going to happen, and subsequently witnesses the murder of 30 people in the Weteringplantsoen, are heartbreaking. She feels guilty and responsible and people like Henk van Randwijk further strengthen these feelings. This is obviously all the more striking in light of his own preference for armed action. Jacoba doubts everything, including her own leadership. Nevertheless, it appears that she never neglected her role as a leader. On the contrary, she ensures the key is put into safety and acts as decisively as ever.

But something has broken within her. Even though she manages to deflect the continued attacks on her leadership by Henk van Randwijk, and although Groep 2000 remains independent despite his efforts to take it over, what she calls her 'trust and faithfulness' are damaged. Throughout the rest of her life she continued to struggle with the events that took

place in the Weteringplantsoen, which she experienced as a lasting shame. She keenly identifies that she can forgive the mistakes of other people, as she did with the man who was in contempt of her order, but she herself was not allowed to make mistakes. At the end of her life, she ascertains that she forgot to 'look up from the ruins of her ideals'.

Jacoba's memoirs serve as an agenda for new research on the resistance. For example, what did it mean to other resistance leaders, male or female, that it became increasingly necessary to use violence from the spring and summer of 1944 onwards? As war advanced, the issue of leadership and violence became increasingly important; resistance leaders were told by London to decrease the use of force by only allowing resistance groups that were members of the so-called Domestic Armed Forces to use violence. That did not pass without a few fights. The so-called 'wild groups' did not want to operate within this framework and remained self-determining on how and when they used violence.

Jacoba was also faced with this dilemma and it is most notably expressed in her conflict with Henk and *Vrij Nederland.* Henk disputed her leadership because he did not see how a woman could lead a resistance group that tried to avoid force during a time of increased violence. How did this process materialise in other groups? What is the connection between the increased need of resistance groups to use violence during the last year of the German occupation and the disappearance of women from the history of the resistance?

It is remarkable that the memoirs of a resistance woman, recorded 50 years ago, present the new view that is to answer these kinds of questions.

This is an edited version of a lecture given by Marjan Schwegman at Castrum Peregrini in May 2017.

'Jacoba van Tongeren's memoirs question prevailing assumptions about the resistance and the role played by women'

Letter to 'her'

Pieter Paul Pothoven

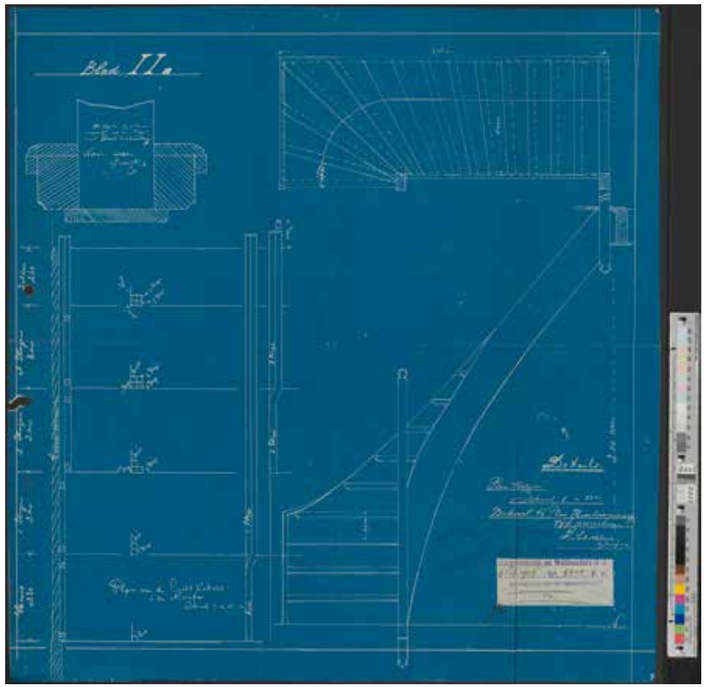
Visual artist Pieter Paul Pothoven was artist-in-residence at Castrum Peregrini from 1st February to 31st March 2017. During his residency he researched three historic resistance networks in Amsterdam in which women played an equal role to men and solidarity was central. As a grandchild of a man active in the resistance of the Second World War, Pieter Paul grew up with a nationalistic, 'masculine' image of resistance. He is angered by the fact that this is still a highly celebrated form of resistance in Dutch films and resistance museums, while other forms are barely visible. In this early stage of his research, Pieter Paul wrote a letter to a woman who was suspected of being closely involved in RaRa (Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action), a Dutch anti-imperialist resistance collective. He read a version of this letter during a public presentation in Castrum Peregrini on 7th May 2017. We reproduce it here.

‘I want to give a representation of resistance in which women and men play an equal role’

Amsterdam, Tuesday 21 March 2017

Dear...,
You asked for further clarification. Here is a more detailed account of why I am contacting you. But before I come to this point, I would like to give a brief introduction. As I wrote in an earlier email, I am working on an artistic research into socialist-inspired resistance from before, during and after the Second World War. I have taken three key resistance collectives. The first is a network of anarchist and anti-imperialist conscientious objectors from the Staatsliedenbuurt neighbourhood in west Amsterdam. These carpenters and their wives were active during the growing social unrest just after the First World War. They opposed the exploitation of workers, and prepared bombs and collected guns in anticipation of the revolution that was in their eyes soon to flare up across the Netherlands, following in the footsteps of Russia.

They were arrested and convicted before they were able to take any action. The second collective, CS6, is a network of cells that was active during the Second World War. This network was a mix of people with leftist and religious ideals, from militant communists to liberal and emancipated spirits, from the well-to-do middle classes to labourers. Members of CS6 were involved in the attack on the Population Register in 1943, the bombing of the Rembrandt Theatre in Amsterdam, and the liquidation of Dutch citizens collaborating with high-ranking German officials. The third collective, the Revolutionary Anti-Racist Action, or RaRa, was active from 1984 to 1993. It has never been clear how large RaRa was; ‘Not relevant,’ is invariably the answer given in interviews. RaRa committed a total of eighteen attacks on, for example, Dutch companies that had interests in the apartheid regime in South Africa, including Shell and MAKRO, and on government agencies that were – and still are – responsible for policy on refugees. Only one member has ever been convicted, in 1989. RaRa, with its almost Dadaist name, is still shrouded in mystery.



On April 14, 1919, the police entered Haarlemmerweg 103 in Amsterdam. They walked up these stairs and entered the apartment of anarchists Willem Hofman and Hendrika Geertruida Lopik. Multiple explosives were prepared here, but the couple was arrested before they could put the bombs to use. Up to today, it is unclear what the intended targets were. (Source: Amsterdam City Archive)

In addition to the obvious ideological similarities, there are also other reasons for specifically choosing these three collectives. In all three, women played a crucial role; they operated from residential houses in Amsterdam; they weren’t afraid to use violence and, although each of the social contexts was radically different, the motivations of these three collectives have one strong similarity: solidarity. Respectively, this is expressed in their resistance against: imperialism, militarisation and the oppression of workers; the German occupation; apartheid, and Dutch immigration policy.

Historiography describes these collectives separately, perceives them as reactionaries of their time, refers to one as resistance and another as violent activism, or terrorism. However, without losing sight of the diverse contexts in which they were active, I am interested in the similarities between these collectives.

The purpose of this project is threefold. Firstly, I want to identify resistance as a continuous phenomenon, taking place outside the commonly used framework of the Second World War. Secondly, I want to approach the resistance from the perspective of the collective – specific names, or who exactly did what, is not relevant in this project. Last but certainly not least, I want to give a representation of resistance in which women and men play an equal role.

Much has been found through archival research: diary entries, Department of Justice and National Security Service reports, architectural plans of houses in which the resistance made its preparations, police reports, (love) letters, articles, newspaper clippings, photographs, interviews, Social Services reports, and the piles continue to grow. I am processing this information into a script, most probably for a short film or an audio story. This has not yet been decided on, as the form must stem from the content, and not the other way round. So while the content has not yet been crystallised and the form is subject to change, the making of the script is certain.

This will be an interview with an anonymous person involved in an imaginary resistance cell and will be interpreted by an actress. What she reveals and remembers in this interview will be an amalgam of information from multiple persons and different times. It is an experiment whereby, through the combination of various biographies within one story, the collective manifests itself in the personal; the apparent ‘I’ in the interview is actually a transhistorical ‘we’. In this way, I want to develop a new historical perspective that could offer answers to questions such as: Could socialist-inspired resistance, which is not afraid to use violence, flare up again in the Netherlands, now that economic inequality is growing, nationalistic sentiments are resurging and intolerance towards ‘the other’ is becoming infectious? What form would this resistance now take and what lessons can it draw from the past?

In order to shed light on the actions of women in equal measure to, or preferably more than, those of men, a lot more information about the women involved will need to be unearthed. Indeed, throughout history there have been numerous ways in which women of the resistance are written into the background. In which museum or film, for example, do we learn about how the women in CS6 performed the same tasks as men – including the use of violence? A community in the 1940s in which men and women operated on an equal footing was unprecedented, if not revolutionary, and yet this can hardly be traced in the historiography of the Netherlands. As historian Marjan Schwegman describes it, after the war women were recklessly ‘written back into the kitchen’.

The image of the socialist, emancipated woman did not match the conservative post-war spirit of reconstruction; the nationalist-oriented male resistance fighter was a better fit. To rehabilitate resistance women, Schwegman wrote *Het stille verzet, vrouwen in illegale organisaties, Nederland, 1940-1945,* (The silent resistance, women in illegal organisations, the Netherlands, 1940-1945), published in 1980, and still a key work on this subject. She interviewed female members of the CS6 who had survived the war. The book contains quotes and references that made me curious to learn more. I asked Schwegman if I could read the interviews in their entirety. She replied that that would have certainly been possible had she not, in good faith, and in a time when making reproductions was less readily available, lent the documents to a student who then disappeared without a trace, taking the interviews with them. A great loss, and not only for Schwegman.

Also within the histories of the collectives active before and after the war, women repeatedly disappear into the background. In 1919, for example, the press called the anarchist Willem Hofman by his first and last name, while his partner was referred to simply as his ‘spouse’ despite the fact that it was her actions, which were anything but passive, that were described in detail in the article. Fortunately, thanks to the social benefits the

‘Could socialist-inspired resistance, which is not afraid to use violence, flare up again in the Netherlands, now that economic inequality is growing, nationalistic sentiments are resurging and intolerance towards ‘the other’ is becoming infectious?’

‘Throughout history there have been numerous ways in which women of the resistance are written into the background’

couple had received, I was able to retrieve her name through the Social Services archive: Hendrika Geertruida Lopik. When I pronounced her name and, in so doing, broke the silence in the Amsterdam City Archives – to the annoyance of others, the vast majority of whom were men of retirement age – I wondered when her name had last been spoken out loud. There were two women among the RaRa arrestees. Both released owing to a lack of evidence. Despite the fact that RaRa, in its own words, was a mixed organisation striving against sexism and openly expressing this in their communiqués, René R., the only person to step forward and be convicted, became the sole face of this collective. Another male story.

Having explained the context of my research, I would like to return to my question for you. In the National Security Service reports on RaRa, I repeatedly found that ‘she’ or ‘her’ came paired with a Tippexed blank on the page. I read the communiqués and the ‘Recht voor Vluchtelingen’ (Rights for Refugees) article in the anti-imperialist magazine *Konfrontatie*, which the National Security Service suggested you had written. You have never spoken to anyone before about your involvement with RaRa. Am I doing myself any good by contacting you? I imagine the chances of you wanting to speak with me are pretty small. Nevertheless, I am attempting to do so as you are one of the very few people who, from experience, can offer a female perspective on the resistance in Amsterdam that wasn’t afraid to use violence. So my question is: may I interview you? If you would like to collaborate, you will most certainly be making an indispensable contribution to this project, and, without wanting to state too strong a case, is it not a shame to allow your perspective to be lost as well? There are already so many stories of women involved in resistance that no one knows of because they have never been recorded, or have disappeared, or been marginalised. If you are reluctant to participate for fear that an interview may compromise you at a later date, I would like to emphasise that ensuring your anonymity is an important motivation in choosing this form and method. Your voice will be an important part of the imaginary resistance collective in my project, but not traceable to you as a person.

I am very curious to hear your thoughts on this. Any critique or questions are of course more than welcome!

Kind regards,

Pieter Paul Pothoven

Red, white and blue laundry

Bianca Stigter

During the *Hongerwinter* (the Dutch famine, or ‘hunger winter’), women regularly made the news because they ambushed bakers’ carts. Police reports often noted their gender with apparent surprise. How on earth could thirty women force a baker’s assistant to hand over fifty loaves? In Bianca Stigter’s book *Atlas van een bezette stad (Atlas of an occupied city)* we read that there were many woman active during the resistance, even though men outnumbered them. The question is, were there really fewer women or did they just practice different forms of resistance? Or was their form of resistance deemed less significant? Here, Bianca Stigter offers us a small anthology of all kinds of brave women.

JACOB OBRECHTSTRAAT 64
Home of the half-Jewish musician Frieda Belinfante. On her own initiative she started falsifying personal documents. She asked friends to 'lose' theirs and then put in a different photograph. Frieda later played a leading role in the CKC, the *Centrale Kunstenaars Commissie* (Central Artists Commission) that provided financial support to artists who had not signed up for the Kultuurkamer, the German organised cultural bureau. Frieda was member number 203 of the resistance group, Groep 2000, and helped initiate the 1943 attack on the Amsterdam City Council buildings, where the Population Register was kept. Frieda went into hiding after the attack, fleeing to Switzerland at the end of the same year.

CORELLISTRAAT 6
Home of the family Boissevain and headquarters of the resistance group CS6, most likely named after this address. CS6 carried out attacks on traitors, such as General Seyffardt, the leader of the *Vrijwilligerslegioen Nederland* (The Dutch Volunteers Legion). On 2nd August 1943, the German security police (Sipo–SD) raided the house and arrested Mies Boissevain and her sons Frans and Jan Karel. The Sipo–SD remained in the house for three days, arresting another seventy-two citizens. On 1st October 1943, after sentences from the German Polizeistandgericht Amsterdam, nineteen members of the CS6 were executed.

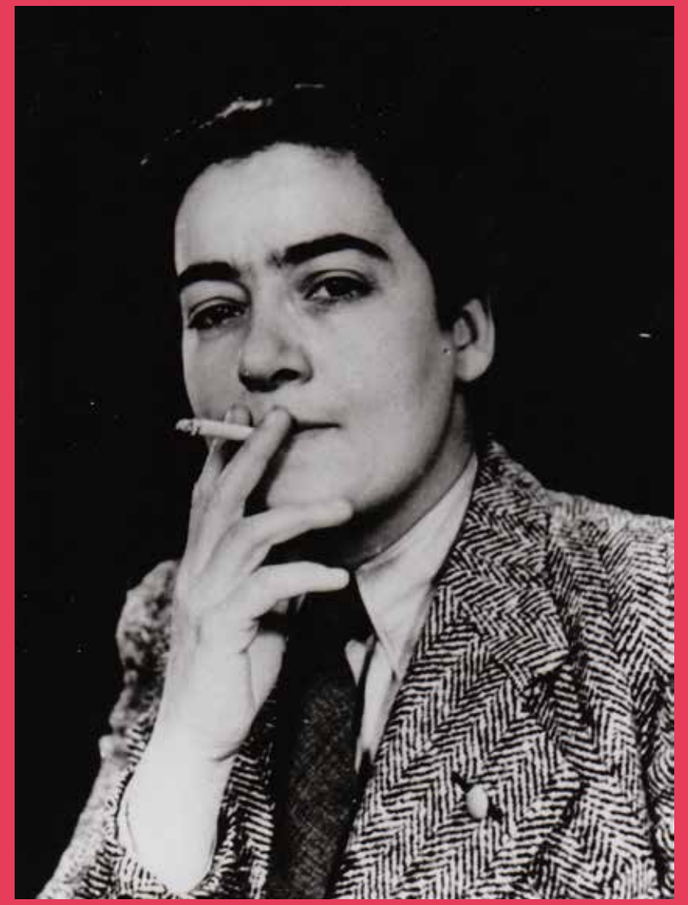
CORNELIS KRUSEMANSTRAAT 79 I
The meeting point for Dutch resistance group CS6 in the home of Adriaan Klijzing and a place where firebombs were assembled. The Sipo–SD raided the property in June 1943 after the address was given away by resistance worker Sape Kuiper. After this, they remained in the house. When Reina Prinsen Geerligs delivered a revolver here on 23rd July 1943 she was arrested. Reina was executed by firing squad in Sachsenhausen on 24th November 1943.

JAN VAN GALENSTRAAT 23
Home of Elisabeth de Groot who was fined fifteen guilders on 31st August 1941, Queen Wilhelmina's birthday, for hanging out her red, white and blue laundry in the same order as the colours of the Dutch flag. Douwe Bakker, chief officer for the Information Agency, part of the Amsterdam police force, wrote in his diary: 'Across a number of neighbourhoods, particularly in West and Zuid-West, patrons of Orange wish to express their affections for Mien Wegloop, but don't dare do this openly.' (Mien Wegloop, or Mien Runaway, was a nickname used by Dutch National Socialists for Queen Wilhelmina, who fled to England at the beginning of the war.) 'There were women who had dyed their trousers red, white and blue and [hung] these, three in a row, out on the terrace. Of course, many comrades cautioned them and then our men headed over. A few dozen of these simpletons have been brought to the SD.'

HERENGRACHT 520
The headquarters of the resistance group Groep 2000. Between the summer of 1944 and January 1945, it was known as the *Centraal Bureau voor Maatschappelijk Werk* (Central Bureau for Social Work). In 2013, the memoirs of the group's leader Jacoba van Tongeren were recovered. All group members had a code, Jacoba's was 2000. There were around eighty group members, including Rudi Bloemgarten, Truus Wijsmuller and Gerrit Jan van der Veen, who together helped over 4,000 people in hiding. Jacoba van Tongeren was also known as 'the voucher queen'; she transported ration cards in a specially crafted corset.

HERENGRACHT 401
Castrum Peregrini, safe house for people in hiding. It was named after a Crusader fortress near Haifa, which was never conquered by the enemy. The third floor of this canal house was inhabited by the artist Gisèle d'Ailly-van Waterschoot van der Gracht. In 1942, she invited the German fugitive and poet Wolfgang Frommel to take refuge in her home. In 1942 and 1943, two of Frommel's pupils also took shelter in the house, the Jewish Germans Buri Wongtschowski and Claus Bock. On the fourth floor, inhabited by Guido and Miep Teunissen, there was also temporary shelter for others seeking refuge. Guido Teunissen made a number of ingenious hiding places in the house, including inside the pianola, which remained undiscovered. With Wolfgang and Gisèle as its central figures, the Herengracht became home to an artistic community of mainly young men who were intensively engaged in visual arts and poetry, particularly the work of German poet Stefan George. Claus Bock's memoirs are titled: *Zolang wij gedichten schrijven kan ons niets gebeuren* (As long as we keep writing poetry, nothing will happen to us).

Reina Prinsen Geerligs (1922-1943) was a member of CS6 and involved, among other things, in the raid on the Amsterdam Population Register and the attack on agent and collaborator Pieter Kaay in Enschede. This photo was taken by the Sicherheitsdienst just after her arrest on 23 July 1943. Four months later, she was executed in concentration camp Sachsenhausen (Source: NIOD / Beeldbank WO2)



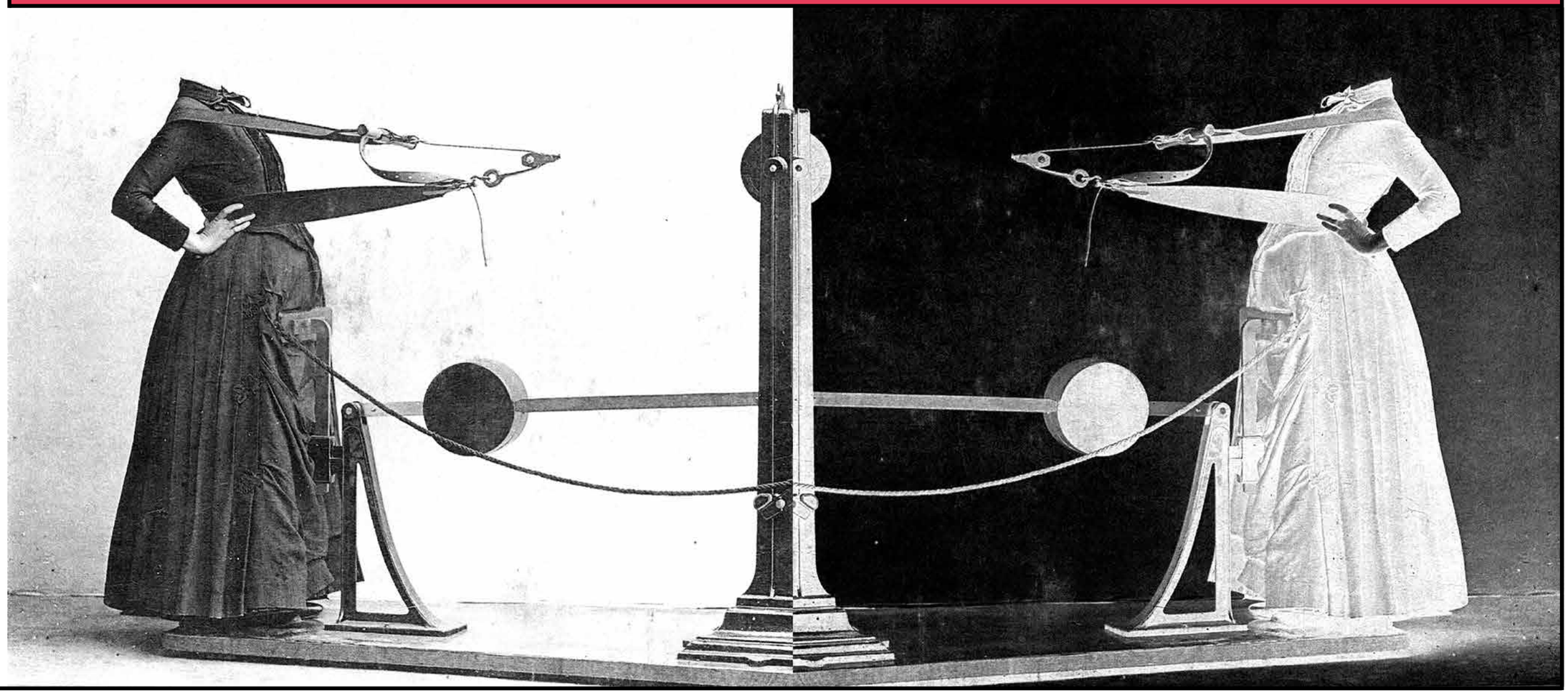
Portrait of Frieda Belinfante (1904-1995), reportedly dressed in men's clothing to disguise herself from Nazi informers. Frieda was a Dutch cellist, conductor, a prominent lesbian and a member of the resistance groups CKC and Groep 2000. Together with Willem Arondeus, Gerrit van der Veen, Willem Sandberg and others, she was involved in preparing the attack on the Amsterdam Population Register in March 1943. In December 1943, Frieda escaped to Switzerland via Belgium and France. After the war, she returned briefly to Amsterdam and then emigrated to the United States. (Copyright: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Toni Boumans)

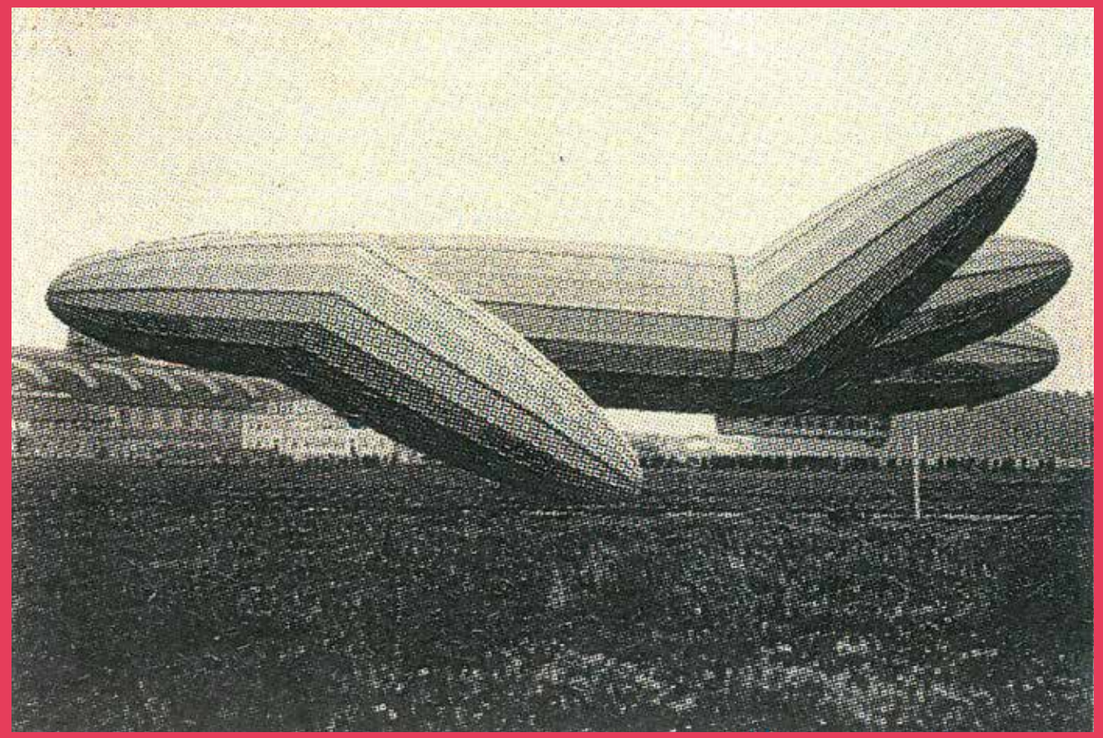
During the Second World War, Mies Boissevain-van Lennep (1896-1965) became involved in the reception of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany and also in bringing Jewish children to safety. Through the Society for Women's Interests and Equal Citizenship (*Vereeniging voor Vrouwenbelangen en Gelijk Staatsburgerschap*) she knew Geertruida Wijsmuller-Meijer, who had been involved in rescuing Jewish children from Germany in 1933. The house where the Boissevain family had moved at the end of 1939 gradually became an important centre of resistance and sabotage activities. (Collection Dutch Resistance Museum, Amsterdam)

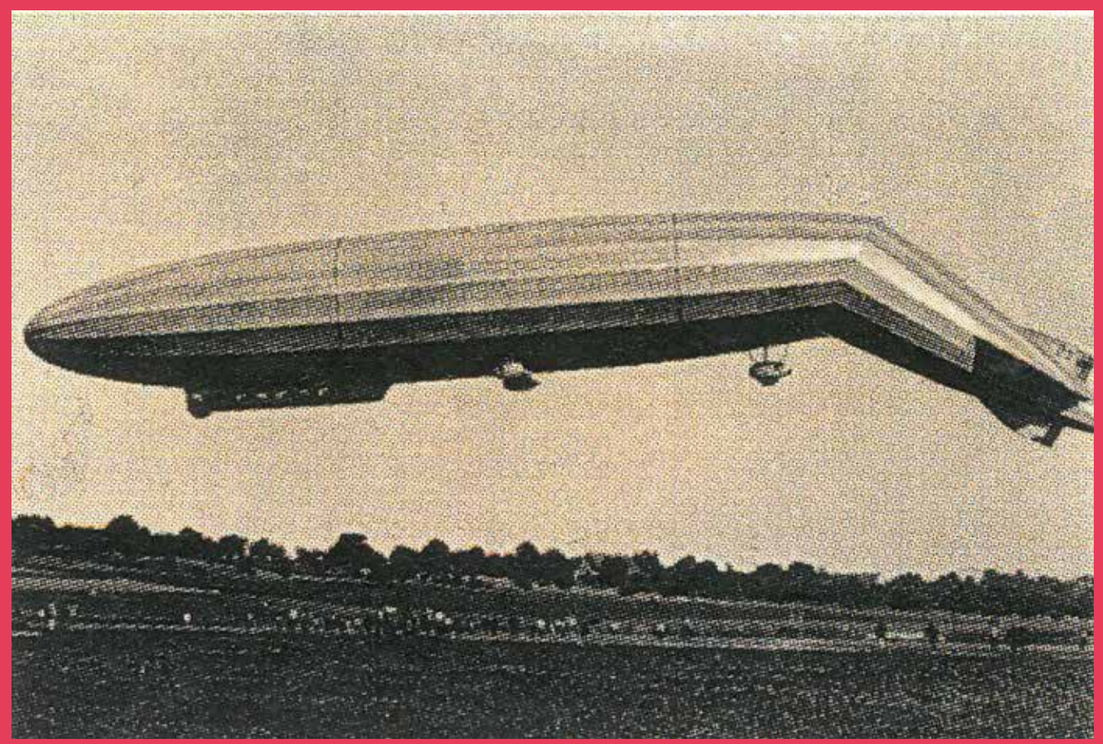
Artist contribution: Ronit Porat

The Israeli artist Ronit Porat (1975, Kfar Gil'adi) studied Photography and Digital Media in Jerusalem and obtained an MA in Fine Arts from the Chelsea School of Art and Design in London. Her work consists of a combination of photographic materials, biographical texts and materials from archives. The work comes out of strong location-based research – the reason she participated in numerous residency programmes in Warsaw, Tel Aviv, Chicago and Amsterdam. In 2017, Ronit Porat was part of the 'Transhistorical Coalition' formed by Castrum Peregrini, Museum van Loon, the Oude Kerk and the Reinwardt Academy; Ronit researched their archives and questioned the way in which they shape history. The archives' different objects, artefacts and documents each tell a new story that runs parallel to the factual and chronological line of history. Ronit: "As an artist my role is to question everything and at the same time to link historical awareness to pressing issues of today's societies. We cannot escape our roots, but we can rethink how we look differently at history."

Ronit Porat
Untitled, 2017
Archival pigment print
(also on p. 28)







Idem p.27

Woman+ Memory

Memory +Woman+

THE FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

The warp and weft of memory

Renée Turner

The Warp and Weft of Memory is an ongoing project by artist Renée Turner, looking at how the clothing and textiles of artist Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht reflect her life and the person she was. Renée aims to weave threads from the past with reflections on the present. Her project encompasses public lectures, an exhibition and an online narrative that combines images from Castrum Peregrini's archive, artefacts from Gisèle's closet in the attic, where she slept, and the artist's own reflections on memory and heritage. We asked Renée to lift a corner of the veil.

In the attic where Gisèle slept, is a closet. Even though I have a slight figure, I find myself turning sideways as I enter the narrow doorway. Michel de Certeau, Jesuit priest and scholar, noted that 'space is a practised place'.[1] Architecture, in this case the closet, choreographs the way I move. It leads, and my body unconsciously follows. Gisèle may have performed the same dance. This is her closet performing a *pas de deux,* but this time with me as its partner.

The smell in the closet is a combination of dust, dry rot and mothballs; heating pipes run through it, making it unbearably warm, and the heat acts like a scent diffuser. I try to smell her, but I can't because I have never known her, I don't know how she smells. We can only smell people we've known.

The closet is packed, there are too many things in it. But that's a value judgement. After all, what constitutes 'too much' especially when you'd lived to be a hundred as Gisèle had? People accumulate stuff – centenarians probably more than the rest of us. But in this case, there are physically too many things for the space that has to accommodate them. There is no space between the clothes on the rack for any movement. To take something out, you have to push your body forcibly against one side to create space for movement. Hanging anything back up again is almost impossible. Clothes are usually put on hangers to prevent wrinkling, but in Gisèle's closet, creases are imprinted through density and compression.

Next to garments on hangers, there are also shelves stacked with accessories and boxes. Summer shoes, wool hats, woven bags and exotic slippers – each box has its own label penned with a black magic marker, which has also created sub-categories on even more labels inside the boxes.

At first, it's the surface of things that catches your eye. Only after this seduction has passed can you see a hint of the structures and systems that lie behind them. Silk, beadwork and woven textiles command my touch. Gloves need to be tried on to sense the size of her hands – they are the same size as my own, although I suspect Gisèle wore her gloves less snugly – there are no signs of stretching in the leather. I open purses in search of something left behind. I think about my own bags in my closet, or at the bottom of drawers, which contain a lonely lipstick, tampon, mint, receipt or used tissue at the bottom. These traces are a sign of my neglect and indecision. Will I ever use the bag again? I never do. Gisèle however has left her purses tidy and clean.

Going through Gisèle's closet, I am reminded of that moment at funerals and family remembrance gatherings when everything is over. Things that have been left behind need to be sorted, ordered or cleared away to make way for the future. Mementos are distributed and keepsakes put on shelves. That which evokes no memory or affection is carted off to the charity shop or tossed in the garbage. But I'm not family, nor am I a friend.

Those decisions are not up to me. I'm not a historian interested in origins or even in unmasking facts, but there is something fascinating about these traces and echoes of her body. As an artist and woman myself, the seduction is one of partial identification (Are you like me? Am I like you?)

My eyes glide across labels. Hovering between naming and narration, her taxonomical reflections jump between German, Dutch, French and English: costumes, *kousen, taschen, chaussettes,* and *moccasins*. Objects appear to speak to her in different languages. Maybe one garment took her back to Austria; another had associations with a Dutch coastal town, and another found herself somewhere on the plains of Oklahoma. I'm not a linguist or neurologist, but if you're a polyglot (which I'm also not) maybe memories occupy different linguistic spaces of the brain. If there is a temporal lobe, why shouldn't there be a linguistic lobe? After all, stories and memories are formed through the marriage of time and words. Passing years and inhabited languages and landscapes shaped Gisèle's neural architecture. Her taxonomies are an encoded map, but for me as an outsider, it is one without a legend.

That said, Gisèle has been generous with information. She wrote on a piece of paper pinned to a pair or trousers: 'These pants are good, but too short'. One set of pantyhose bears the note: 'Pantyhose without feet – good for boots'. There is also a shirt with the label: 'in need of repair – left sleeve'. Her closet is a cross between a diary and to-do list. Clearly things have been left unfinished.

After my voyeuristic exploration, after the drunkenness of looking for quick and easy treasures, after my rush for clues, I suddenly notice circled numbers on the corner of each shelf. I immediately think, where there are numbers, there is an inventory to be found. And there was – a large white envelope in one corner with the words 'Gisèle's Wardrobe Inventories' on the front. The word 'inventories' is plural for a reason; there are many, revised and re-written over decades in different notebooks. She made numerous lists of the clothes she had packed for various journeys. There is also a list from the 1960s, cataloguing her closet in Greece. Her things are part of a system, if not a fragmentary indexical narrative. Even in the most private and seemingly banal spaces, Gisèle was an archivist and taxonomist of her own life.

In a small storage room on the first floor of the house, there are several filing cabinets packed with Gisèle's photographs. These are my cross-reference, a place where her clothes are animated through her body, poses and engagement with other people and locations.

Like her letters, which are carefully filed and labelled, and her closet, which is manically inventoried, these cabinets

are also a manifestation of Gisèle's archival compulsion. There are hundreds of photographs carefully glued to thick grey paper. Some are on their own, and others are clustered into collections, forming triptychs and diptychs, while others are more freestyle in arrangement. Over time, the glue has lost its stickiness, making them fragile; a few have fallen off their paper backing leaving only yellow gestural marks of the remaining glue.

Leafing through the images is a game. I'm hunting for the hidden, looking for clothes, a glimpse of her shirt under a jacket, or a costume at a fancy dress party. And my hunt renders trophies. There are images of Gisèle wearing the same outfit over decades. But there are dresses she owned that are not represented here at all. There are no photographs of her wearing her Dick Holthaus dresses. Maybe she didn't like the formal occasions where she wore them. Or maybe any images that were taken of her attending civic events with her husband Arnold d'Ailly, are dispersed in other archives that are not her own. And there are other significant dresses, most notably her wedding dress, which I cannot find at all in her closet. These only exist in images. They are in the folder labelled 'My Wedding'.

All of her photographs are organised according to categories - place, time, person, subject or event. One folder is titled '*Jeugd* [Youth] Foto's Gisèle in USA', another 'Arnold d'Ailly', and another 'The Goats'. I had been told that Gisèle found the filing stressful, and spent a great deal of time trying to create a perfect system to organise her photographs. Her work was one of many iterations. There were conflicts in categories that could not be fully resolved. For example, Arnold d'Ailly was in one folder, but there was a problem when she discovered a photo of him in Cornwall. Should the photograph be transferred to the Cornwall folder or remain where it was? It was a question of hierarchy. As a result of these confusing crossovers, and the inability of analogue cataloguing systems to accommodate cross-references, some folder titles are scribbled through. These marks are those of doubt, re-writing and the inability of a single word or two to encompass life's ambiguities.

The act of naming distinguishes one thing from another, and simultaneously binds similar things together. This taxonomical dilemma is also my challenge. As images become digitised and uploaded, what are the semantics that should be used for the algorithm to recognise how objects are meaningfully threaded together? In *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences,* Geoffrey Bowker and Susan Leigh write that, 'there is no way of ever getting access to the past except through classification systems of one sort or another – formal or informal, hierarchical or not.'[2] Semantics matter, and Gisèle knew that. Her classifications were a means through which she processed her past and provided pathways for others to make sense of her history. As I sift through her files, her closet inventories and the images with even more notes on the back, I can't help but think she imagined a reader. My role was written before I entered this space, and like an actor, I read her script and imbue it with meaning, inflexion and projection.

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2. Bowker, Geoffrey C.; Star, Susan Leigh. *Sorting Things Out: Classification and its Consequences (Inside Technology)* (p. 41). Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 2008.

'Even in the most private and seemingly banal spaces, Gisèle was an archivist and taxonomist of her own life'

'Gisèle's classifications were a means through which she processed her past and provided pathways for others to make sense of her history'

Some notes on women, labour and textile craft

Christel Vesters

Triggered by two unrelated news items about textiles, writer and curator Christel Vesters embarks on an expedition, looking for a common thread that may connect the two. Her explorations touch upon particular events and ideas in the history of textile production, utopian socialism, the Arts & Crafts Movement and the women's movement, juxtaposing some key moments in those histories with examples from contemporary artist practices.

I.
Some weeks ago, I came across an unusual news item released by Associated Press: Shoppers at the Zara store in Istanbul had found messages written on labels hidden in different items of clothing. One of them read: 'I made this item you are going to buy, but I didn't get paid for it'. The international press picked up on the story and soon the facts behind the desperate cry for help became clear. The notes were put there by Turkish factory workers who hadn't received pay for three months of labour, and after a year of unsuccessful negotiations between their union and the multinational Inditex (Zara), were now asking the international community for solidarity and support.[1]

Earlier this year another story had caught my attention. A purple banner had been found in a charity shop in the north of England with the embroidered text: *Manchester – First in the Fight + Founded by Mrs Pankhurst 1903*. The banner had witnessed many important marches for women's suffrage, most notably the huge rally in Manchester's Heaton Park on 19th July 1908 organised by the Woman's Social and Political Union.

These news items made me think about the connection between women, labour (and the value we place on it), and textile crafts. Later, standing in front of the beautiful tapestries designed by Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht in her salon, admiring the rich colours, patterns and skilful weaving, I wondered why I always connected textile art with housewives and the home, never taking it seriously and certainly never considering it as the political or socially engaged art form that it can be.

Why, I wondered, does this romantic 19th-century image of a woman making high-value textiles with her dexterous fingers, still persist today? And why do we still value crafts-(wo)manship as more precious, more authentic than factory labour? When did making textiles become imbued with social qualities like togetherness, which prompts contemporary artists to embrace textiles as their medium?

The two news stories sent me on an expedition to look for threads that might connect them. I also hoped to rediscover some of the political struggle that is part of the history of women and textiles, but that seems to be shrouded by our current admiration for its aesthetic, tactile and poetic qualities.

II.
The situation of the Turkish textile workers is not uncommon. Our global marketplace has turned low-income countries into factories for multinationals like Zara. 'We made these products with our own hands, earning huge profits for them,'[2] as they put it themselves. This global division into a world market and a world factory is the most recent chapter in the story of textiles. No craft has been subject to such fundamental changes as the textile craft, and in no industry have workers been so vulnerable to exploitation as in textiles.

Traditionally, crafts like spinning, weaving and sewing were domestic crafts, executed to make clothing or other

items for private use. In the Middle Ages this domestic labour took on a more commercial character; farmers who could afford it invested in their own loom and others bought one to be paid off in instalments, enabling them and their families to increase their income. But it was the market and the merchants who ultimately determined how much their craft was worth.

Women and children already made up a significant part of the work force in the proto-industrialisation period, but because they weren't allowed to join the guilds, they remained invisible. Interestingly though, the image of peasant women weaving and spinning at home would become the reference for *fin de siècle* socialist city folk who aspired to the romantic ideal of the 'country life'.

...

III.
In 1787, weavers from Calton, a small community outside Glasgow, became Scotland's first 'working-class martyrs'. The weavers rallied against a 25 percent wage cut; the demonstrations were violent and cost six weavers their lives. In subsequent decades, this story of a prosperous community of weavers falling apart largely due to mechanisation and the re-organisation of production and labour was to be repeated across Scotland, England and the Netherlands.

IV.
Simultaneously, technological innovations ushered in the Industrial Revolution. There was, for example, the 1764 invention of the *Spinning Jenny*, a multi-spindle spinning frame that allowed workers to boost their volume, and the power loom, which speeded up the production process, resulting in a further specialisation and division of labour. By 1800 most of the textile production in Britain was carried out in large, city mills.

The Industrial Revolution might have brought technological innovation and the promise of progress and prosperity, but for many it meant working long hours under dangerous circumstances in dusty factories, exploited and underpaid. This revolution did not just impact the economy, it also instigated a process of social and political change. Workers organised themselves into unions, rallying on the streets and lobbying in parliament and with each new strike came changes. In the UK the 1842 general strike, which drew some half-a-million textile workers, led to some of the country's bigger reforms.[3]

V.
The Calton Weavers' Strike is often seen as the beginning of the Scottish workers' movement. In 1987, 200 years after the Strike, Glaswegian artist Ken Currie painted a series of panels honouring the event. Two elements stand out: a banner with the slogan 'Weave Truth With Trust', which has been the

Top: Suffragettes with banners, Victoria Embankment London, 1915.
Bottom: Lara Schnitger *Suffragette City*
Women's March on Washington D.C., January, 2017.
Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York

Aimée Zito Lema, Warp and Weft, in collaboration with Elisa van Joolen and Casco , Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht.
Workshop and performance, Weverij De Ploeg, 2014

weaving craft's motto now for centuries, and the central figure of a woman. In an interview, the artist stated: '...I wanted to represent a cycle of images that showed the ebb and flow of an emergent mass movement, where the real heroines and heroes were the many unknown working class Scots who fought so selflessly for their rights...'[4] The woman draws attention to the women who were harshly affected by the Industrial Revolution and, having no political representation, remained invisible for a long time.

VI.
The purple, hand-embroidered banner recently acquired by the People's History Museum in Manchester, became an important attribute in the marches organised by the women's movement. Not only did it express the suffragette's political stance, but it also made the women easy to recognise. At the beginning of the 20th century the women's movement gained traction all over Europe and in the United States. Demonstrations attracted hundreds of thousands of suffragettes, some of whom were not afraid of taking militant action.

In Britain the suffragette movement was led by upper class women with socialist ideals and activist attitudes ('deeds, not words'). The suffragettes prided themselves on being an all-women movement, propagating 'solidarity amongst the classes'. Famous leaders like Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst were often seen distributing flyers at textile factories, and working class women marched together with the 'ladies'. But, as a cotton worker who had worked in the mills from the age of seven declared in 1906, 'working women had their own aims'. For them, 'the fight for the vote was inseparable from the fight against the bosses'.[5]

In the Netherlands too, the women's rights movement started in the upper class. Women like Aletta Jacobs, Henriëtte Roland Holst, and Wilhelmina Drucker fought for women's right to vote, but they were also supportive of the workers' struggle for better working conditions, raising funds for the men and their families when they went on strike.[6]

VII.
Banners have been an integral part of political protest through the ages. In March 2016 women took to the streets of cities across the US protesting against the presidency of Donald Trump. These Women's Marches signalled a revival of the 20th-century women's movement, only this time the collective colour is pink. Dutch artist Lara Schnitger also participated in the marches, but her banners were slightly different, they were quilted in stark colours bearing slogans like 'Don't Let the Boys Win', and protesters carried so-called 'Slut Sticks', totems for the free expression of womanhood.

These banners are part of a series of public performances called *Suffragette City*, staged by the artist in various cities around the world. The protests-processions are a tribute to the suffragette movement, but also to contemporary feminist protest groups, like Pussy Riot and FEMEN, and 'playfully integrate political protest, elegant wardrobe with "typically female" practices like quilting to elevate and explore representations of feminism and femininity.'[7]

VIII.
Meanwhile, as textile workers organised themselves into unions and rallied for better wages and working conditions, others tried to achieve a better future in a more peaceful way. One of them was the British textile manufacturer and social reformer Robert Owen (1771–1858).

Aged twenty-eight, Robert Owen, a self-made man from humble origins, bought the New Lanark Mills in Scotland from his father-in-law. The mill employed around 1,300 workers and their families, some 500 of them children aged just five our six.

The Manchester Suffragette banner, 1903
courtesy: People's History Museum, Manchester

'No craft has been subject to such fundamental changes as the textile craft, and in no industry have workers been so vulnerable to exploitation as in textiles'

Influenced by the utilitarian and socialist ideas of that time, Robert Owen believed that better working and living conditions would make better men, and thereby create a better society. He set up a model factory and a model village in which he implemented his socialist-utopian views. He refused to take on any more children, improved workers' housing, built a school and a shop selling goods at a fair price, introducing the model of cooperative distribution. He implemented the eight-hour workday and coined the slogan 'Eight hours labour, eight hours recreation, eight hours rest.'[8] Politicians and clergymen from around the world, even the Tsar of Russia, visited the mill.

IX.
More then a century later, a group of Dutch pioneers founded the *Coöperatieve Productie- en Verbruikersvereniging De Ploeg*, (Cooperative Production and Consumers Association De Ploeg) inspired by socialist ideology and the idea of collective ownership. De Ploeg, *plough* in English, started as an agrarian work-community modelled after the economic principles of the cooperation as introduced by Robert Owen. In 1923, they also opened a weaving workshop organised along the same principles, specialising in household textiles. To accommodate its growing production, the cooperation built a new factory designed by Gerrit Rietveld. The design incorporates the socialist ideals of De Ploeg, creating optimum work conditions with plenty of daylight, green space and clean air. By the end of the 1970s the success of De Ploeg was faltering, and in 1991 an investment group took over the cooperative.

In 2014, as part of her long-term research entitled *Body at Work*, the Argentinian-Dutch artist Aimée Zito Lema organised a children's workshop at the abandoned factory of De Ploeg entitled *Warp and Weft*. The title refers to the cooperative working skills the children were stimulated to use during the workshop. Having only pieces of old textile at their disposal, they were encouraged to work together and to create something new. *Warp and Weft* therefore not only refers to the weaving movement of yarn and thread, but also to the interconnecting skills and relations, creating both a physical and a mental tapestry.'[9]

X
In his acclaimed study *The Craftsman*, Richard Sennett describes the transition from handmade crafts to machine-led production and how it impacted the values placed on craftsmanship. Throughout the book there are echoes of the romantic idea of the craftsman's workshop as a place where work and life are in perfect balance. For Sennett, the craftsman embodies a way of life, a way of being in the world, in which making is thinking, and hand and head are connected. He also believes that 'the craft of making physical things [...] can shape our dealings with others'. Paying tribute to American philosopher John Dewey, Sennett states: 'Good craftsmanship implies socialism,' referring to the instruction Dewey gave to workers that they should assess the quality of their work in terms of shared experiment, collective trial and error.[10]

True art, just as true living, according to fellow socialists John Ruskin and William Morris, should be both useful and beautiful, and in service of the betterment of society. The ideas of the Arts & Crafts Movement were a reaction against the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution; its members believed better working conditions not only improved the quality of life, but would make for a better society. Although the idealisation of craftsmanship and the workshop-home advocated by the movement received its fair share of criticism, their belief in a world of simplicity, beauty and crafts still resonates today.

XI.
In an article on Weverij de Uil, a weaving studio established in Amsterdam in the 1950s, the author states: 'Technique has not completely killed all craftsmanship. Sometimes one would wonder and think the opposite, especially when the journalistic trail leads through a hyper-modern factory. Anyone who has been in a textile mill, seeing hundreds of mechanised looms speeding like insane robots in a mist of dust and an inferno of noise; anyone who knows that even a shuttle can be missed, will breathe easily when visiting the hand weaving studio, where this century-old craft is still capable at inspiring and exciting people.'[11]

Weverij de Uil established a name for itself for its expertise in traditional weaving and colouring techniques, but also for its innovative approach. The fact that the workshop was run by women only added to its allure ad fame. Thanks to a commission from Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht, Joke Haverkorn started a small studio, which later became De Uil, together with Nenne Koch, where everyone sat and worked together at one big loom. Six months later they had finished the 2.45 x 4.50-metre tapestry *Augurium*.

Haverkorn has always stressed the collaborative nature of the work, not just in the dialogue with the artist but also in the collaboration amongst weavers working on the same tapestry. 'None of the weavers can impose their individual ideas onto the others. It is the tapestry that dictates... The weaver surrenders herself to its demands.'

XII.
British anthropologist Tim Ingold once praised '...that peculiarly human ability to weave stories from the past into the texture of present lives.[12]

It is indeed a beautiful ability and freedom we have as writers, artists and people, to pick up threads from different histories, discourses and contexts and explore what new patterns may emerge. As the woman weavers from De Uil followed the will of the tapestry, I too followed the lead taken by the two news items. There is never just one straight line connecting history with the present, nor is it just one line. There are many lines and many layers, just like in a tapestry, which brings together the individual strands of the warp and the weft.

Weverij de Uil, Amsterdam, 1950s
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Sisterhood dialogues

Aimée Zito Lema in conversation with Camila Zito Lema

During the months of October and November 2017, Aimée Zito Lema lived and worked at Castrum Peregrini as part of its artist-in-residence programme. Her initial idea was to research friendship as a form of resistance. Castrum Peregrini is not just any place to do this. Strongly connected to the history of the building and its former owner, Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht, it is not (just) a research centre, a library, a museum, a working space. It is a house, a private space. Someone's house may be the most intimate kind of archive. Aimée wanted to include this idea of intimacy in her research, and decided to approach her questions about friendship through dialogues with friends. The following text is an excerpt of a conversation she had with her sister, philosopher Camila Zito Lema, in October 2017.

Aimée and Camila
Fragment of a picture from family album, Leiden, The Nederlands, 1994.

AIMÉE: I was thinking of what we talked about in relation to the kinds of tasks or routines that the students who were hiding in Gisèle's house developed. What is interesting about this is that it is the opposite of what happened in the concentration camps, where it was about maintaining the biological life only, it was about putting all the mechanisms and technical developments at the service of controlling this biological life. During the war, the two students in Gisèle's house were also prisoners in a way, because they had to be inside the house for years, without any contact with the outside world, as persecuted Jews. But Gisèle and Wolfgang [the German fugitive and poet Wolfgang Frommel ed.] were not only interested in the biological survival of the students, but helped them survive in a psychological and spiritual dimension through the activities of drawing, writing, reading poetry, and the learning processes involved.

This is a gesture of humanity that has to do with empathy, with being able to recognise a human in the other person – which is exactly what the Nazis did not do. Gisèle and Wolfgang's premise was the opposite; it was about empathy, about saying: 'you are a human being and therefore I take care to feed you and make your humanity survive, by making you read, write, think, feel, share, and so on'. And that empathy has to do with friendship.

CAMILA: Exactly. Friendship is often that. It is to recognise the other and from that recognition to establish a relationship, a bond.

AIMÉE: But not necessarily because the other is equal to me. Friendship means recognising the other in the difference?

CAMILA: Well, that is the essence of Derrida's thinking. [Jacques Derrida, French literary critic and philosopher 1930 – 2004 ed.] For Derrida, in order to analyse the meaning of friendship we need to think about the topic of otherness. Derrida believes that the other being is always present and thus 'contaminates' all supposed selfhood of oneself. Selfhood is contaminated from its origins, the other is always inhabiting us, just like we inhabit the others. This is what he refers to as 'the ghost'. The idea of a ghost always supposes the presence of the other, of the different, that element which destroys selfhood.

That ghost, the parasitic component, is not something we have to get rid of, but rather something we have to learn to live with. We need to learn to live with the other, with the others, even with that which is radically different. The other 'calls me', says Derrida, and I have the ethical responsibility to respond to his or her call, which is saying 'Come', by saying 'I am here'. The other is always an 'event' for me, they present themselves under the logic of the unpredictable, it is disruptive, it resists all logic of appropriation, it is a ghost that visits me. The gesture of friendship is precisely connected with this aspect, that is, not asking the other who is presenting themselves to me for an identity mark. I simply respond to their call, there is an openness toward the other; we coexist with the difference, with a back and forth of endless demand. That is the friendship.

AIMÉE: Derrida also distinguishes between friendship and fraternity. The idea that fraternity is the identification with the other because that other is equal to me, culturally, geographically, ethnically etcetera. Instead, friendship, as you pointed out, would recognise the other in the difference.

CAMILA: This idea of fraternity refers to *frater*, brother, which would be

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'*Sororidad*, sisterhood, is friendship among women, considered from an ethical-political dimension. It is a pact between women to achieve a social transformation'

exclusively a male point of view. If we think about the etymology of this word, we could think this term also in opposition to *sororidad*, sisterhood.

AIMÉE: Now that you bring up this term, I am curious to hear about your recent experience at the Encuentro Nacional de Mujeres in Chaco. You mentioned that this term *sororidad* was at stake?

CAMILA: Yes. Well these meetings began in the 1980s as something small and marginal. Led by a very small group of women, it grew in an exponential way in later years, in connection with the growth of the feminist movement throughout Latin America. This year 70,000 women participated. There were more than 60 workshops held over the three days, and a massive demonstration. It is very interesting what is happening in this context with the term *sororidad*. This term became a relevant point of discussion and an important point on the agenda.

AIMÉE: Why the term?

CAMILA: Well, the word *sororidad* exists in English (as 'sisterhood'), in Italian, in French, but not officially in Spanish. The RAE, the Spanish Royal Academy, which is the institution that deals with saying which words are valid and which words are not, which words are recognised as words of the language and which words are not, does not acknowledge it as official Spanish vocabulary. So there is a fight, a dispute, trying to get it accepted as part of the vocabulary. There is an institution called Fundeu that determines which words are beginning to be used in practice, and so are valid terms. But is the RAE that still has to come up with the final decision.

AIMÉE: Problematic, also considering what it means to have been a colonised country.

CAMILA: Sure. It cannot be that for us in Latin America to have valid words, they have to be accepted by Spain. That is a strong sign of colonialism.

AIMÉE: Especially if we think that the use of words, language, is performative.

CAMILA: Of course, well this is now being fought to be recognised by the RAE. But basically the idea of sisterhood is the relationship of support and friendship among women. *Sororidad* is friendship among women, considered from an ethical-political dimension. It is a pact between women to achieve a social transformation, to form a resistance movement, generate changes. To break with this question of atomisation in modern society, with the idea that each one is an isolated individual, a unit in themselves, self-sufficient. To break with the idea that you can achieve what you want through sheer will, and that if things do not work out for you, it's because you do not try hard enough; that kind of bullshit of capitalism and meritocracy. Sisterhood should be about generating alliances. The idea is that from the affection between women it is possible to start seeing other women as your allies, not as your enemies.

AIMÉE: So this is opposed to a stereotyped idea of relationships between women, one that has to do with competition; the other woman is a threat because she is more beautiful, more intelligent, because she steals my boyfriend, because she is a better mother etcetera. And everything based on values that are purely patriarchal, right? The mother woman, the beautiful woman, the woman as an object.

CAMILA: And all these things are internalised, because you build your subjectivity from a historical context. We think we are free but we know that we are conditioned, that freedom is an invention, one that does not grow outside of a cultural, epochal matrix, and your subjectivity is marked by that. The ideas of friendship among women are marked by the idea of 'women' and 'friendship' within patriarchy. So this idea of friendship, as *sororidad*, is about that, to form allied 'non-enemy' women, women with whom you can gather, build, and create new things, things you can grow with, that take you out of the place of subalternity.

AIMÉE: Do you think that when we talk about friendship we have a common understanding of the word?

CAMILA: Well, one thinks so, but in reality it carries a set of values, and those values are cultural, are epochal, and subjective. One tends to believe that there are certain basic agreements to exist in society. I mean it cannot be that every time you make a new friend you say, "OK, what does friendship mean for you?' To find out if there is common ground. Although it would not be a bad idea actually! Every time you make a new friend, ask him or her, "What is our friendship pact? What do we commit ourselves to?"

AIMÉE: Does friendship imply a commitment for you?

CAMILA: Yes it does. Absolutely. For example, we are sisters, but we are also friends. In the first instance, we are sisters, but why then do we recognise ourselves also as friends? What is

interesting would be to do that experiment and ask what is the content of our friendship pact?

AIMÉE: There is another question that interests me and it is the dimension of friendship in relation to ethics or morality. Usually friendship is associated with something positive, but if we think of it as a pact between allies we can also think of situations such as complicity between military genocides, for example?

CAMILA: Yes, indeed. The 'disappeared' are still missing in Argentina due to the pact of silence between the Military Forces and all the accomplices. I mean we were just speaking about the pact of friendship. Well that is a different example of a pact, a pact between the military. A pact for death. That is why after forty years we still do not know where the bodies are. There is one case of a pilot who was interviewed in the 1980s, who said he had decided to talk because for years he could not sleep because of an image that did not leave him. He tells that in one of the flights – you know that in these flights, known as 'flights of death', they put the victims to sleep before throwing them in to the sea, well before pulling one of the bodies out of the airplane this person opened their eyes and looked at him. But this case of the pilot who spoke is almost unique. `The pact of silence' still very much exists.

AIMÉE: If we think of it from that perspective, friendship is a set of relations, not necessarily something positive, as we usually tend to think.

CAMILA: It is a way of relating that can have different effects. It can be a hug in a moment of anguish, or it can be the silence and complicity between a group of genocidal killers. The 'pact of silence' was so strong that until today we do not know where the disappeared are. But do you believe that the person who murdered Rodolfo Walsh [Argentine writer and journalist considered the father of investigative journalism 1927 –1977 ed.] does not know where his body is? Of course he knows. That friendship between genocides has to do with complicity, protection. They take care of each other, they share a secret, within their ethical codes. What happens is that in our eyes these codes are immoral, but well, that is the individual morality from which each one judges, and of course on a shared level the ethics. Which is collective.

AIMÉE: Is a friend the opposite of an enemy?

CAMILA: Well that's a very interesting idea that the German philosopher Carl Schmitt develops, who actually was a Nazi. To him the enemy-friend opposition is a constituent of politics. It's interesting to think that during the last dictatorship in Argentina, the government thought of the subversives as 'the internal enemy', the subversive is not an outsider but an insider, that tries to break, to disrupt, to subvert the current order.

AIMÉE: Yesterday my friend Becket Mingwen sent me a poem he wrote that speaks about this friend-enemy idea. A friend not as the opposite of an enemy... wait, I will look it up.

Enemies are friends turned inside out;
they are not the opposite of friends, just
friends in reverse, as the saying goes.
Like an inside-out man, interior unfolded,
muscles and organs scraping against
the air,
what I keep at arm's length I also carry
in a hollow,
the way an apple carries its worm friends.

[Excerpt]

Conversation continues ...

Camila Zito Lema (Buenos Aires 1988) studied philosophy at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and is currently lecturing at *Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda* and the *Universidad Nacional Pedagogica*, Pilar. Her main fields of interest are political philosophy and intellectual history. She lives and works in Buenos Aires.

Becket Mingwen received his MFA from the University of Southern California in 2014, and was recently a resident at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Recent exhibitions include n <o> <o> n at One Gee in Fog, Geneva; *From Concrete to Liquid to Spoken Words to the World at* Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève. His book on Chris Kraus' 1996 Chance Event is forthcoming from Athénée Press.

Reasonable doubt

Interview with Mieke Bal

Nina Folkersma

Mieke Bal is an acclaimed cultural theorist with a wide variety of interests, ranging from biblical and classical antiquity to 17th-century and contemporary art, feminism and migratory culture. She is also a video artist, and has created a series of 'theoretical fictions' about mental illness and psychoanalysis. Her most recent film, *Reasonable Doubt*, about the lives of philosopher Descartes and the Swedish Queen Kristina, was shown in Castrum Peregrini in March 2017. On the occasion of this exhibition, curator Nina Folkersma interviewed Mieke Bal, focusing particularly on the perspectives of the women in the dialogues that laid the foundation for some of Descartes' ideas.

Nina Folkersma: About ten years ago you took up the challenge to 'audio-visualise thought' as you put it, to show how thinking works by using sound and moving images. What made you decide that film had to be the language by which to express what you wanted to say?

Mieke Bal: It was a way to take a closer, more intense look at contemporary culture. My first films were documentaries about migrants and migration, identity issues, and I noticed how intense the filmic look is. You not only film the material, but then you edit it and each frame comes around several times, you see it again and again. I saw the intensity of that audio-visual engagement and when, at some point, I started to make works of fiction, it became even more challenging to 'audio-visualise' the process of thought. I'm also very interested in the collective aspects of filming, the collaborations that are necessary to make a film - you cannot do it alone. That has made the constant influx of other people's thoughts a wonderful resource from which to create a sense of thinking in society, as a social process.

Why did you choose Descartes as the protagonist of your new film? He seems an unlikely successor to your previous films' theme of madness, as we know him as the classic master of Western rationalism.

What triggered my interest was the idea that the world today is so mad, that we need to look again at rationality. I thought: Let's look at Descartes, not as this enlightenment 'bad guy', not in terms of the denial of the body, of the senses, and all that - but let's see how rationality can be a resource, including the madness that is also part of who people are. In my film, you will see that he himself is stark-raving mad at certain points. This too is Descartes! The film is based on historic sources. I think it's important to realise that you can be mad, have moments of madness, at the same time pursuing a rational logic, while still constantly doubting. Today people don't doubt anymore.

Mieke Bal
Reasonable Doubt (2015)
Video stills
Photo: Przemyslaw Wojciechowski

The other protagonist is Kristina, Queen of Sweden, with whom Descartes had an intellectual friendship through correspondence. The film is a double portrait. Your focus on their relationship seems to be a way of showing that ideas grow out of dialogue; that thinking is not done alone, but together. Can you expand on this idea?

Yes, I think this is important, that nobody thinks alone. Thinking is a social, collaborative process involving the imagination. For example, when Descartes walks through the dunes, doing his thinking, suddenly you see the insides of stones; these insides are his imagination. He sees the stones and then he thinks: What might these stones look like from the inside? So, the imagination comes in. The relationship with Queen Kristina, and also with Princess Elisabeth of Bohemia – another of Descartes' woman-friends-through-correspondence – has made it possible for him to pursue his line of thinking, in dialogue with other people, and to come up with ideas that are quite revolutionary.

You emphasise strongly that the film is not a biography, but a 'theoretical fiction'. Some scenes are historical, based on their own writings and those of others, while other scenes are the result of your imagination. Why did you choose to combine fact and fiction?

There are different reasons. One is that it would be a very tedious film if I only used the facts we know from Descartes' biography. There aren't so many, and much of it is not very interesting. Therefore, I imagined what he could have said. For example, there is a scene in the film where he encounters Spinoza. There is no evidence that Descartes ever met Spinoza, although at one point he went looking for a lens maker in Amsterdam, and Spinoza was a lens maker in Amsterdam, so it is quite plausible they did meet. My question is then: What would have happened? What would they have said to each other if they had met? So, I staged them and part of that is scripted, part of it is improvised. The actors also bring in their own interpretations of the script and this creates a sense of dialogue between these two brilliant philosophers in the 17th century, twenty years apart, who left such strong marks on the Western world. That was worth imagining.

You wrote that 'fictionalising is a way of doing justice to historical ideas relevant for today'. But isn't this a dangerous, slippery path? What is the difference between that and today's 'fake news' or 'alternative facts'?

The difference is that Trump is covering up lies with a sense that 'news is fake anyway so you can just as well make it up'. That is not my pretension, not at all, on the contrary. What I'm doing is inviting you to imagine, together: What would happen if? You know that you are in a fiction, but you also know that through thinking you need the imagination. The importance of the imagination as a contribution to reality and to truth cannot be underestimated. So, on the one hand, I think we should go back to some sort of rationalism, and on the other hand we need to acknowledge the importance of the imagination, without confusing them. Without claiming the truth. I'm not claiming that Descartes did meet Spinoza, I'm just wondering what would happen if. 'What if' has always been my research question in studying art and literature.

At the end of the film, there is a fictionalised scene of a meeting between

'"What if?" has always been my research question in studying art and literature'

Queen Kristina and Elisabeth. In this scene, you suggest that Descartes invented or laid the foundation for psychoanalysis. This is a rather far-reaching claim.

It is outrageous! But it was actually completely confirmed by a book I read when I had already scripted the scene, *Une Liaison Philosophique* by the French psychoanalyst Yaelle Sibony-Malpertu, which studies the correspondence between Elisabeth and Descartes. Descartes liked Elisabeth, he respected her, but she had been traumatised and he was able to help her get through her trauma by telling her, in the language of the day: 'Face the facts, face the truth of your life and move on, work through it'. I argue, together with this French scholar, that Descartes had a psychoanalytic perspective on this woman's trauma. He had the generosity to really want to help her, not only was he able to do that, but he enabled her to reply to him too.

Both Queen Kristina and Descartes declined to marry and they socialised with people of their own gender. Queen Kristina was said to have had several affairs, both with men and women. Because of her capricious and bohemian lifestyle and her 'unladylike' behaviour, she was labelled by many as 'male' for a long time. Today, she is seen as a symbol of intersexuality, transsexuality, and cross-dressing. How do you see this?

It's a great issue and I think it is very important. In both cases there were rumours of homosexuality. In Queen Kristina's case, these were a little more documented than in Descartes's case, but homosexuality was not an identity at the time; it was a practice. I don't want to erase it and I don't want to make a big deal out of it. Homosexuality for me is just as ordinary as heterosexuality. There is a film from 2015 about Queen Kristina that is all about her lesbianism and I find that disturbing. It is making such a fuss out of something that is completely 'normal'. I do present it in the film, this difficult relationship that she has with a woman at court, but I wanted to show that she is having a problem with love, not so much with hetero- or homosexuality, because she was a traumatised woman. The sexual issues are thus integrated in a more general psychological make-up of these people. For Descartes, there isn't any evidence of homosexuality aside from some statements he made and some staff choices. All I did was to collect a few pleasant men around him and then you can make of it what you want. I think it is important not to erase these things, nor to over-highlight them. To make clear that it is part of the normal intercultural mix that we live in, then as much as now.

'I think we should go back to some sort of rationalism and at the same time acknowledge the importance of the imagination, without confusing the two. Without claiming the truth'

Women + Agency

Women + Agency

Agency + Women

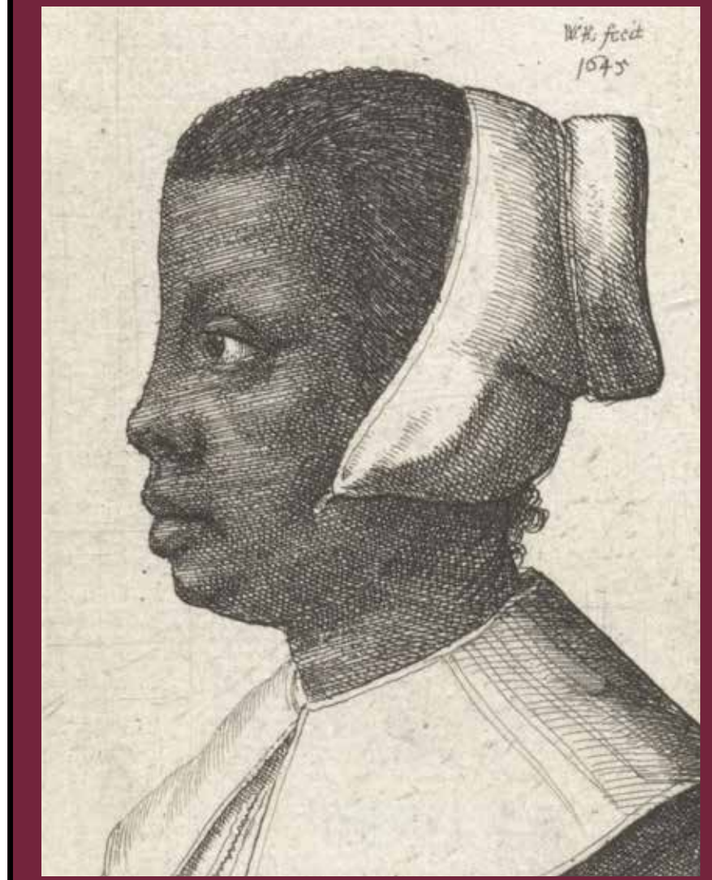
Agency + Women

THE FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

Free speech. Intersectionality in theory and practice

Adeola Enigbokan

In recent years, the term 'intersectionality' has appeared with increasing frequency in feminist debates and different social movements. At the same time, it is regularly accompanied by confusion and there is criticism that the word, which originated in the US, is not applicable in the Netherlands. 'Intersectionality' is often used to underline the fact that issues other than gender play an important role in the inequality debate. But what does the word really mean? Adeola Enigbokan is an artist and urban researcher who grew up in the inherently intersectional United States. She explains why she believes intersectionality to be so important – also, and perhaps particularly, in Europe.



Portait of a young black woman with cap, Wenceslaus Hollar, 1645. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

At twelve years old, wearing my burgundy sweater over a white shirt with a Peter Pan collar and a grey pleated skirt, I looked nothing like the formidable Sojourner Truth. Truth was a woman who, by her mid-fifties, had escaped a life of enslavement to a series of masters and had become a formidable speaker in the fight for the abolition of slavery and for women's suffrage in the United States. And yet there I stood, in front of an assembly of fellow students, teachers, and parents, delivering a popular version of her famous 1851 speech to the Ohio Women's Convention.

"Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles or gives me any best place. And ain't I a *woman*?" My voice rose sharply into the question. I squeaked a little but pressed on.

"Look at my arm." I held out my arm, bent at the elbow with fist closed and biceps visible, in imitation the classic Rosie the Riveter stance.

"I have ploughed and planted and gathered into barns and no man could best me. And ain't I a woman?"

My speech was slow, deliberate. I had practiced it for weeks at home, memorising it and, with my parents' help, deciding on the best moments for dramatic flourishes. I had learned the meaning of the words, simultaneously a rebuke of the ongoing institution of American slavery, and a championing of the rights of women to have a say in their own country's political future. My teacher helped me to understand the uniqueness and audacity of Truth's thought, in an era when abolitionists, both black and white, and mostly white, upper-middle-class suffragists, sometimes struggled to find a common cause, and the links between the different oppressions they were fighting.

When I rehearsed, I tried to wrap a shaky Seattle accent, inflected with the undeniable fullness of Lagos English, around the words. Why had I been picked for this? Could it be that my drama teacher saw in my hybrid life a parallel to the story of Sojourner Truth? I had been born in Seattle, raised in Lagos, was now back in Seattle but treated in my own home town like an immigrant; I had a strange accent – recognisable and yet foreign. Sojourner had been born into slavery in upstate New York, Dutch country, known as Swartekill, in the late 18th century. Under her first master, Colonel Hardenburgh, she learned Dutch, her first language. Her escape from slavery meant fleeing her 'home', learning a new language, becoming master of when, where, how and to whom she would speak, and re-naming herself as a traveller and a truth teller. Throughout her life she retained her distinctive accent, different from those of her white bourgeois peers in the abolition and suffrage movements, and yet, unequivocally American in its having been shaped by a history deeply rooted in enslavement and the wandering determination to be free.

Her origins, gender, and basic humanity would be questioned constantly throughout her long career. One apocryphal tale finds Truth at the podium unbuttoning her bodice to expose her breasts to a man heckling her from the audience, questioning her right to speak in favour of women's suffrage, on the basis of her gender. For this man, Truth's blackness placed her womanhood into question. And there, in Truth's speech, both in her words, often misheard, and her inimitable accent, often misremembered – as well as her willingness to risk ridicule – we might find one story that serves as an origin for a theory of intersectionality.

Intersectionality appears throughout a history of black women speaking

together, publicly and politically, in a variety of accents, from many subject positions, about the structures that shape their everyday lives. As theory and practice, intersectionality is derived simultaneously from intellectual, political, economic and social action. In April 1977, the Combahee River Collective, a group of black women – activists, artists and scholars – started their founding statement with the following words:

'We are a collective of Black feminists who have been meeting together since 1974. During that time we have been involved in the process of defining and clarifying our politics, while at the same time doing political work within our own group and in coalition with other progressive organizations and movements. The most general statement of our politics at the present time would be that we are actively committed to struggling against racial, sexual, heterosexual, and class oppression, and see as our particular task the development of integrated analysis and practice based upon the fact that the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives. As Black women we see Black feminism as the logical political movement to combat the manifold and simultaneous oppressions that all women of color face.'[1]

The Combahee River was the site of one of the most successful military actions of the US Civil War, during which more than 750 slaves were freed. Significantly, the action was planned by Harriet Tubman, the first woman to plan and execute an armed mission in United States history.[2] Tubman herself had escaped slavery, and become leader of the Underground Railroad, a network of allies, black and white, who risked their lives and livelihoods to organise and support all people who wished to free themselves from slavery in the United States. In naming themselves for the Combahee River military action, the collective aimed to honour and place themselves into a long line of women who had valiantly fought multiple oppressions to be free.

Intersectionality is the basic condition of our varied experiences of restriction and repression in modern societies, and is also related to the conditions under which we seek and express our freedom. Intersectional approaches require that, in voice and in deed, we acknowledge the simultaneity of slavery and freedom. It is also important to note the importance of speaking freely to each other of little known histories and personal experiences, in both the stories of Sojourner Truth and the Combahee River Collective. In these stories, intersectionality travels from personal experience to public theory and activist practice through the voices of black women with the courage to speak truthfully and boldly to each other and to, sometimes hostile, audiences.

Exactly 140 years after Sojourner Truth took the stage in Ohio, and almost 20 years after the formation of the Combahee River Collective, Dr. Kimberly Crenshaw, a legal scholar and black feminist, shared the results of her study of systemic everyday violence against women in a paper that would introduce the notion of intersectionality to a new generation of intellectuals and activists.[3] Taking as evidence the varying treatment of women who experience domestic and sexual violence within the legal system, Crenshaw calls attention to the ways in which violence against women cuts differently across lines of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and class. Political and legal framings that do not take into account how women of colour, for example, find themselves on the receiving end of racist and sexist violence, simultaneously, can have the result of silencing and excluding the lived experiences of such women. Crenshaw's work continues the tradition of black women speaking honestly to each other, while opening doors to a wider understanding of how various people might experience interlinked oppression. Intersectionality, seen through Crenshaw's work, questions easy notions of identity politics – i.e. solidarity along gender, *or* race, *or* class *or* sexuality – and calls for us to find solidarity at even deeper levels, in the connections between the various forms of violence we experience and our (unlikely) lines of flight.

Notions of intersectionality emerge naturally out of the experience of lives lived in the Americas, in which ethnic origins are often erased or transgressed, and new categories of (non-) humanity created, in service to some of the harshest forms of modern capitalist colonialism in the world. In the Americas, stories like that of Sojourner Truth, with their specific forms of violence and violations, challenge stable notions of gender, national origin, race, and intelligence, as people like her are forced to re-name and re-invent themselves, along with new languages, in order to become free persons.

'Intersectionality appears throughout a history of black women speaking together from many subject positions about the structures that shape their everyday lives'

'Intersectional approaches require that, in voice and in deed, we acknowledge the simultaneity of slavery and freedom'

Here in Europe, discussions of identity seem somewhat more stable. Peoples of Europe still regularly refer to long national histories, and notions of autochthony to keep separate in their hearts and minds the idea that a Muslim might also authentically and unquestionably be a Dutchman, or a European, for example. In the inherently intersectional United States, the idea that these categories ought to be considered separately is a product of the violent social and political infrastructures developed to keep intertwined experiences and identities separate. These have been challenged almost from the nation's very inception, and the challenges have come as a response to systemic violence, and the demand for rights, and to transcend the category of the non-human.

One might argue then, that anywhere that anyone wishes to transcend fixed categories, especially pertaining to the devaluation of the complexity of human life, intersectional ways of living and thinking might yet be of great use and value.

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Margaretha van Raephorst (1690). Wife of Cornelis Tromp, Jan Mijtens, 1668. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Guess who's coming to dinner too?

A community art project

Patricia Kaersenhout

Artist and cultural activist Patricia Kaersenhout, born in the Netherlands from Surinamese parents, is a rising star in the contemporary Dutch art scene. She has developed an artistic practice that raises questions about the African diaspora's movements and its relation to feminism, sexuality, racism and the history of slavery. With her recent project *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Too?*, she delivers an artistic critique on Judy Chicago's iconic feminist work *The Dinner Party*, which celebrates strong women but under-represents women of colour. The table at the centre of Patricia's project is a tribute to 36 black women and women of colour. We asked her to introduce her project and select three of her 'heroines of resistance'.

In *The Dinner Party* (1979), Judy Chicago represented just one black woman at her table, Sojourner Truth. The other 38 women were white, giving them a place in history and celebrating their sexuality by depicting vulvas on all of the ceramic plates, except for Sojourner Truth's. This denies her sexuality, making her an outsider at the party. Sojourner is the uninvited guest, formed and shaped in the way white women have often preferred to see black women: strong, heroic maybe, but with no sexual desires or vulnerability.

With *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Too?* I question dominant Western points of view on black women and women of colour. But the project also wants to reveal and honour what has been erased by this dominant culture, to restore dignity. By telling the stories of 36 heroines of resistance, I hope to show a younger generation of black women and women of colour that they come from a very old legacy of resistance.

I built an installation consisting of a large triangular dining table, full of symbolism. Each side of the triangular table honours twelve women, a very important number in the humanist Ubuntu philosophy. At Chicago's table, 13 women were honoured on each side, a reference to the last supper of Christ. The wings of my table are divided into the following chapters: *Wing 1: Divine spirits and warrior queens*; *Wing 2: Slavery and colonialism*, and *Wing 3: Colonialism and contemporary revolutionaries*. I have incorporated West African Adrinka symbols in the design of the table runners, which symbolise human qualities. I have also included some living heroines to indicate that black women's struggle and the fight against racism are still relevant today. For example, I have included Ruby Bridges in the table, who featured in Norman Rockwell's famous painting *The Problem We All Live With*. She was six years old when she passed a test enabling her to attend a white school in the predominately racist south of America. When she opened her lunch box, cockroaches had been placed between her sandwiches. She now runs a foundation that fights for equal rights and against racism.

I deliberately chose for the whole project to evolve and be exhibited in one of the Netherlands' poorest neighbourhoods, Kolenkit, in the west of Amsterdam. I collaborated with WOW, a community centre where a diverse group of people work and live, varying from artists and refugees to female victims of domestic violence. With poverty comes isolation. The chance to take part in this project by embroidering the table runners, was a way for women living in this neighbourhood to meet other women with different cultural backgrounds, class and ethnicity. They shared stories and hopefully it created more understanding and respect for each others differences. It was a way of creating a collective experience, a community. I also brought all 36 tablecloths to Dakar, where I had them partially embroidered by local women – Thérèse, Anna, Khady, Marenne, Rose and Katy, to help support them financially. The touch of their hands on the cloth connects them with all the other hands who helped embroidering. Without realising, the women have created a 'communal body', connecting them also with the histories of the women who are honoured at the table. With *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Too?* I hope to create a place where everyone is welcome and feels at home regardless of race, cultural background, gender, age or sex.

Patricia Kaersenhout
Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Too?, 2017
installation view WOW, Amsterdam
photography: Vera Duivenvoorde/Geran Meray/Aatjan Renders/Femke Dix

Queen Nzinga Mbande
African warrior queen

Queen Nzinga Mbande (1583-1663) was a ruthless and powerful 17th-century African ruler of the Ndongo and Matamba kingdoms (modern-day Angola). Nzinga fearlessly and cleverly fought for the freedom and stature of her kingdoms against the Portuguese, who were colonising the area. Unlike many other rulers of that period, Nzinga was able to adapt to these fluctuations in power around her. By her own determination and refusal to give in to the Portuguese without a fight, she transformed her kingdom into a formidable commercial state on equal footing with the Portuguese colonies. To build up her kingdom's material power, Nzinga offered sanctuary to runaway enslaved people and African soldiers. She stirred up rebellion among the people still left in Ndongo, which was ruled by the Portuguese. Nzinga also reached out to the Dutch and invited them to join troops with her. Even their combined forces were not enough to drive the Portuguese out, however, and after retreating to Matamba again, Nzinga started to focus on developing Matamba as a trading power and the gateway to the Central African interior. By the time of Nzinga's death in 1663, aged 81, Matamba was on equal footing with the Portuguese colony. The Portuguese came to respect Queen Nzinga for her shrewdness and intransigence.

Sanité Bélair
Haitian freedom fighter and revolutionary

Sanité Bélair (1781 – 1902) was one of the few female soldiers who fought during the Haitian Revolution. Sanité is formally recognised by the Haitian Government as a National Heroine. In 2004, she was featured on a commemorative banknote, the only woman depicted in the series and the second woman ever to be depicted on a Haitian banknote. Bélair was born a free person of colour, a group that was considered between those who were free whites and enslaved black people, so she was still under the thumb of the ruling class. Bélair became a sergeant and later a lieutenant during the conflict with French troops of the Saint-Dominque expedition. Her exact reason for joining the rebel army has never been explicitly stated, but it is understood that she wanted to help Haiti claim its independence. She married Brigade commander Charles Bélair. Together, she and her husband are responsible for the uprising of almost the entire enslaved population of L'Artibonite, against their enslavers. Sanité was sentenced to death by decapitation, and Charles by firing squad. She refused to die by decapitation and demanded to be executed just like her husband, whom she had just seen being executed by a firing squad. He had calmly asked her to die bravely. Reportedly, she walked to her death with bravery and defiance, refusing to wear a blindfold. She shouted to the Atlantians *'Viv Libète anba esklavaj!'* ('Liberty, no to slavery!'), who of course were forced to watch the scene, in an attempt to dispel the revolution idea. Their deaths however, did not deter the revolutionaries, who continued fighting.

Amina Tyler
Contemporary feminist activist

On 11th March 2013, Amina Tyler (1994) was the first Tunisian woman to post a photograph of herself naked from the waist up on Facebook, with the phrase 'My body is mine and not the source of anybody's honour' in Arabic. The photo was seen as scandalous and evoked strong controversies within Tunisian society. On a popular talk show she explained that it was not for sexual reasons that she appeared topless, but to call out their demands for women's liberation in a patriarchal society. A fatwa was issued, for her to be punished with 100 lashes and to be stoned to death. In May 2013, again she protested against the annual congress of the Salafi party by painting 'FEMEN' on a cemetery wall, referencing the Ukrainian-French radical feminist activist group. She was arrested and taken to jail in Sousse. Tyler's father, the doctor Mounir Sbouï, told the French newspaper *Libération* in an interview that he was proud of his daughter who 'defended her idea' and who also brought him to reconcile with his own values, that one needs to be active. International protests followed for her release from detention. FEMEN staged a protest in front of the Grand Mosque of Paris burning a Tawhid flag. However, upon her release in August 2013, Tyler declared that she was leaving the group in protest, because of the disrespectful action taken by FEMEN towards Muslims. She then moved to Paris, where she completed high school and co-authored her autobiography, *My Body Belongs to Me.*

'Intersectional approaches require that, in voice and in deed, we acknowledge the simultaneity of slavery and freedom'

Top: Sanité Bélair
Left: Queen Nzinga
Right: Amina Tyler

The modest resistance of Wendelien van Oldenborgh

Lieneke Hulshof

It is Thursday evening 29 June 2017. Seated in the former living room of Gisèle on the Herengracht in Amsterdam, interviewer Luuk Heezen and artist Wendelien van Oldenborgh are in conversation. During the recording for the radio programme *Kunst in Lang* for Mister Motley magazine, they reflect on Wendelien's contribution to the Venice Biennale, the ways in which an artist can create change, and her relationship with contemporary feminism.

Wendelien van Oldenborgh,
Après la reprise, la prise, 2009
Analogue slide installation in architectural setting
Courtesy Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam and the artist

After studying at Goldsmiths College in London in the 1980s, van Oldenborgh lived and worked for a period of time in Belgium and Germany. She has been based in Rotterdam since 2004 and has an impressive track record of international exhibitions, including the biennials of São Paulo, Istanbul and, most recently, Venice. Wendelien produces works in which the production process itself coincides with their research and development. Through this distinctive approach she builds up a dialogue between a specific social or historical theme, a particular space, and the medium of expression – film or photography.

This approach can be seen for example in *Après la reprise, la prise* (2009), in which Van Oldenborgh focuses on two ex-workers from the closed-down Levi factories in northern France and Belgium. The two women made a fresh start as actors through their engagement in a theatre piece about the story of their struggle to keep the factory open; they talk with a group of vocational school students, who are about to graduate, about the experiences of their work and about the protest actions they had organised. In the Rietveld Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, Wendelien presented an architectural installation incorporating three works, including her recent films *Prologue: Squat/Anti-Squat* (2016) and *Cinema Olanda Film* (2017).

The installation takes the Rietveld Pavilion as its starting point. The pavilion was designed by Gerrit Rietveld in 1953, when architecture wanted to pave the way for a new national self-image aiming to radiate unity and transparency. *Cinema Olanda,* however, shows the complex social realities of both the 1950s and our current decade. The two films within the exhibition point to other players who were also active at that time, and yet remains relatively unheard of, even within alternative histories (from the squatters' movement, for example, or revolutionary thinkers).

Wendelien's works stem from the question: 'How does wanting to change the world relate to the making of a work?' According to her, the step between making an artwork and changing the world is not as big as it sounds, because she sees the making process itself as a reflection of situations within our society. 'Setting up a film production could be seen as a kind of metaphor for setting up social relations. Certain methods used for a production could also be explored on a larger scale within our society.' A good example of such a production is the work *Sound Track Stage,* from 2006, in which Wendelien investigates to what extent conflict can be productive. By using this principal to make a work, she aims to test whether this proposition can be confirmed. According to Van Oldenborgh, we have to assume that our societies are, by definition, comprised of all kinds of conflicting positions and that it is necessary for us as citizens to find ways of dealing with this. 'If I put this to the test within a work, it may also affect the imagination of our society.'

In *Sound Track Stage,* Wendelien used the museum, a place of presentation, for the production of the film. In Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, she placed two musical styles and scenes – hardcore gabber and hip-hop, each representing contrasting positions within Rotterdam's culture, opposite one another and in front of the camera. In Wendelien's view, the tensions between these two groups reach far beyond their music and also say something about the contrast between the racial differences of black and white, and left and right-wing politics. She puts these worlds across from each other by challenging two icons from these two groups, gabber foreman Paul Elstak and hip-hop DJ Mr Wix, to enter a (musical) dialogue with one another.

'A lot of layers come up in the film about 'left- and right-wing politics', and what they mean. It slowly transpires that these contra-distinctions are in no way unequivocal. What interests me is how the location of a film shoot can productively activate and thereby experience through the occasion of a public 'film shoot'. I don't work with a clear conclusion or outcome in mind. What's most important is that I choose to work with tools not of harmony, but polyphony, whereby a new resonance can come about through the different, independent voices.'

One way she creates this polyphony is by involving large numbers of women across her productions. The film crew for *Cinema Olanda* was largely female and middle-aged women have a central voice in the film. It is telling that Wendelien chose not to ignore these two women in their late 60s as key actors in the film, they are indeed important and unique researchers within the topics she wants to explore. In contemporary art and films and indeed the whole media landscape, women of this age are rarely given a platform because, apparently, their roles have become redundant. 'They have a femininity that is hardly ever used. After you turn fifty you are barely seen in the public sphere,' says Wendelien, who considers it important that this does take place within her work. 'Ultimately, we can conclude that I collaborate with all sorts of different people in my work, although perhaps less with white men. Without particular intention, I always look for strong women in the areas of interest I am addressing. This inclination isn't a fixed lens or a kind of tunnel vision, it just often works out that way.'

Nonetheless, Wendelien would not readily label herself as an artist who is specifically engaged in feminism or gender issues. When she was younger she never wanted to be described as

'The professionalisation of art that has come about through neo-liberalism allows the market to determine the value of your work. I want to maintain my focus within the experiment'

Wendelien van Oldenborgh, *Sound Track Stage*, 2006-08
Production still from live and public film shoot in museum Boijmans Van Beuningen
Photo: Ana Džokić, Stealth.Ultd.
Courtesy Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam and the artist

a feminist. She could not identify with the definitions that were then associated with the term, and still are occasionally. She would sooner associate herself with the broader term 'intersectionality,' in which difference and inequality are analysed by considering socio-economic class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc., as well as gender. 'Nevertheless, over the years I became better able to take on board something of feminism, even if I still didn't know exactly what it meant. This came about as I gradually started to discover that a number of values I work with are also in line with the ideas behind feminism.'

Wendelien is referring here, for example, to her opposition to the idea of professionalisation. In today's politics 'standing on your own two feet' and professionalisation are tantamount to allowing the market to determine the value of an artwork, whereby the artist is then also expected to take on the role of an entrepreneur. 'I do not see the value of this professionalisation. In my opinion it's more important to maintain the focus of our attention and appreciation within the experiment. Rediscovery is always very important for me. The vulnerability of the not-knowing, of the not-perfect. That could be seen as amateurish because you never really know what the outcome will be, but for me, there is a quality to this principle. I'm also by no means 'unprofessional' but I do think today's 'professionalism' often turns on the axis of neo-liberalism. Certain things are expected within the framework of growth, particularly economic growth, and this is rooted in a way of thinking I don't want anything to do with, so I don't want to involve that in my practice in any way. Seen from the feminist notion that, 'the personal is the political,' my attitudes could certainly be aligned with feminism.'

Through her work, Wendelien is therefore constantly attempting to find ways to resist tendencies that clearly emerge from capitalist thinking, now in such a neo-liberal phase. These current trends are founded on the same underlying principles that are destroying the world. She opposes this by taking these 'small acts of resistance', as she puts it herself, into account on a social, personal and professional level, in every decision she makes. The fact that she prefers to associate herself with the amateur rather than the professional can also be seen as such an act.

This 'small act', the modest resistance Wendelien speaks of, shares common ground with feminism. Through performing these 'modest acts' she finds herself to be less distant from the ideas of contemporary feminism than she was before. 'Taking responsibility, also in the search for solutions is a characteristic often attributed to women. This could be seen as a feminist way of thinking and acting.'

This text is based on a live radio conversation between media journalist Luuk Heezen and Wendelien van Oldenborgh in June 2017 in Castrum Peregrini.

'I choose to work with tools not of harmony, but of polyphony, whereby a new resonance can come about through the different, independent voices'

Thinking differently and imagining things differently

An exchange with Katerina Gregos

Nat Muller

In the wake of complex and highly politicised issues such as identity politics, nation building and minority rights, a debate has broken out regarding the ethics and politics around the representation of such topics in contemporary visual art. How can artists and curators avoid the traps and pitfalls involved in any artwork or exhibition dealing with such issues? What are the artistic and curatorial ethics that need to be taken into consideration? Leading up to her talk at Castrum Peregrini in December 2017, Katerina Gregos, an independent curator whose name has long been associated with exhibitions that explore the relationship between art, society and politics, talks to Nat Muller and reflects on the complexities of curating politically contested subject matter in times where progressive ideas are becoming increasingly vulnerable and are in need of shelter.

Katerina Gregos
photo: Ivan Puth

Nat Muller: In February 2018 you are opening The State is not a Work of Art *at the Tallinn Art Hall, an exhibition on the occasion of the centenary of Estonia's independence. For a while now, right-wing nationalist ideology has been rearing its head in Europe and the USA. At the same time disenfranchised populations like the Palestinians and the Kurds still dream of a homeland they can call their own. While the former is more often than not marked by conservative nostalgia, privilege and an exclusionary politics of xenophobia and misogyny, the latter expresses the desire of a dispossessed people for national self-determination. I am sure there are many grey zones in between. This makes your querying of the tensions between nation and nationalism, the dynamics of identity and belonging, very timely, but also complicated. How did you go about framing this sensitive topic from a curatorial perspective and which artistic practices that open up these notions are you particularly excited about?*

Katerina Gregos: The exhibition is about pinpointing the problems with the predominantly polarised debate that governs the whole issue of nation and national identity right now. It looks into the roots and circumstances of different manifestations of national 'desire'. There is nothing inherently wrong with the basic human need for belonging to a specific social formation; what is worrying is when this turns toxic and hostile, as with the extreme right-wing nationalist ideology that you mention. This is entirely different from the desire for statehood or independence which often manifests itself when a particular ethnic group has been suppressed, colonised and so on, and put forward legitimate claims for national sovereignty.

So my curatorial perspective is framed first by the need to contextualise these different viewpoints and to look into the social, political, historical and political roots which shape them. Very often these issues are talked about just on the basis of raw feeling or sentiment, and from a historically amnesiac (or fictitious) perspective, which is very dangerous. A classic example is the refugee crisis where migrants are used as scapegoats for problems in Europe that they are not responsible for. So indeed, as you say, it is important to talk about the grey zones, but also more importantly, the roots behind the phenomena you describe in your question.

Another important issue to look at is the tension between, on the one hand, the desire for national sovereignty and self-determination and on the other, the power exercised by transnational organisations such as the EU. And to remember that while nationalism is a 19th-century concept, the world has changed greatly since then. So we need new ways of thinking about these issues and new ways of understanding this need for humans to identify with specific social or ethnic formations.

In the exhibition I am trying to grapple with all these issues. I also want to explore how artists deal with the intricacies of toxic nationalism and to think about whether it is possible to imagine an inclusive, more civic kind of nationalism, much needed in today's mixed societies. Is it possible to think of a welcoming and open society that can nevertheless conserve its own identity without suppressing others or turning them into second-hand citizens? How can we avoid constantly picturing a society based on fear – fear of the unknown, of the stranger, of the outsider? How can we prove that such a society is not only imaginable, but also possible? How could we get there?

'I want to explore how artists deal with the intricacies of toxic nationalism, and try to imagine an inclusive, more civic kind of nationalism, which is what is necessary in today's mixed societies'

Regarding artists and works that open up these notions I should mention Daniela Ortiz. Her book *The ABC of Racist Europe* (2016) takes the form of a children's ABC textbook to illustrate – with images and text – issues that are closely connected with the current migration crisis and the related nationalistic attitude that has resurfaced in Europe in the wake of it. Simple and innocent-sounding words like 'airplane', 'border','document', 'Mediterranean' and 'tourist', are brought together in a new and unexpected context. Her collage of children's book illustrations, comic strips, photographs, maps, drawings, advertisements, together with the explanatory texts underneath, reveal an anxious, closed, nationalistic and even spasmodic racist Europe that has chosen to forget its colonial history and is in search of scapegoats for its own internal problems.

Europe is struggling with growing polarisation and populist politics. It feels that those working in the cultural field are always put on the defensive: too leftist, too progressive, too elitist, too much a waste of tax money, but also too privileged, too white. On the one hand public money is dwindling, on the other when it is available art is often expected to 'do' something quantifiable. You work predominantly with international artists who are socially and politically engaged. Has it become more difficult to reach across divides conceptually but also in terms of audiences?

It is always a challenge to reach beyond the known and to avoid preaching to the converted. And today, with museums and institutions increasingly bowing to the pressure of the market, it is perhaps becoming more difficult. That is why I still believe in the importance of structures like biennials and other initiatives, which still operate with a bit more freedom, as does independent curatorial practice. And that is why, beyond developing artistic and curatorial content, I attach equal importance to education, mediation and sharing knowledge production in all the exhibitions I curate. This also concerns the distribution of resources to do so. When this happens – and I have seen it happen – there are results, and you can reach out to people and broaden the audience base. In a sense, if you do not invest in art education – which is equally as important as supporting artistic production – art will always be seen as being a privileged field for the white middle classes.

In addition, we ourselves - as cultural workers - often use opaque language or tend to speak only to each other in our field (classic navel-gazing) and so it is no wonder that people sometimes feel alienated or have the impression that art is elitist. It is therefore important to communicate intelligently but also clearly. And it is also true that people in the cultural field are on the defensive and that perhaps we should change our strategy in this respect.

On the other hand, while I indeed have been interested in the social potential and critique of art since I started making exhibitions I do not believe that art is something that is quantifiable or can be measured. This is a neo-liberal idea and is also impossible because every person experiences art in a different way. I have never made exhibitions with the purpose of reaching quantifiable results, which mostly refer to numbers; the number of visitors, the amount of money that an exhibition could raise, or the amount of reviews in the important news media, though I am interested in reaching diverse audiences. In the same way, we should also get rid of the fallacy that art is obliged to reach everybody. Art is not for everybody in much the same way that sport is not for everybody. This does not mean we should stop trying to spread the benefits of art which is always a boon for society.

What about forging much-needed coalitions between the art world and other communities, and on which and whose terms? Cultural appropriation – who can speak about who, and how – is a very hot topic. The controversies around Dana Schutz' painting Open Casket *(2016) in the last Whitney Biennial and the removal of Sam Durant's installation* Scaffold *(2012) earlier this year at the sculpture garden of the Walker Art Center in Minnesota come to mind. Admittedly, in the US there are different sensitivities and dynamics around race than in Europe, but in Belgium and the Netherlands there is a deep and painful colonial wound to reckon with too. There is a lot of unacknowledged pain and injustice that needs to be acknowledged and uncomfortable conversations to be posed, not only in the art world, but in society at large. At the same time I cannot but feel very uncomfortable around calls for artwork to be destroyed or censored. What is your take on this?*

It is indeed necessary to conduct the often painful discussion about the mistakes we make now or have made in the past. But it is equally necessary to keep lines of communication open. Censoring exhibitions, advocating the removal or destruction of artworks, preventing people from free speech are all equally wrong and dangerous. They are also I am afraid part of ignorance on the one hand, and political correctness on the other (more extreme in the US than in Europe, though sadly we in Europe are beginning to embrace yet another problematic American trait).

Censorship and self-censorship are not constructive reactions to feelings of indignation, humiliation or degradation – they stifle the debate. I feel very uncomfortable about the fact that some groups are dominating the discussion by monopolising grief and suffering (whether genuinely felt or used as an argument or excuse). It is not a good idea to try to adjust a mistake or misbehaviour by answering it with an equally problematic or inappropriate behaviour. We have to approach these problems with an open mind and a fresh outlook. Removing artworks and demolishing monuments only contributes to historical amnesia. It would be better and more constructive to provide new readings and awareness of the conditions under which such monuments or artworks were erected, thus preserving a necessary critical debate.

At the same time, I am not sure what the best way would be to conduct such a discussion. Simply pleading guilty is an easy way out, as is just negating the problem. In any case I don't like the way the discussion is conducted now, where one party seems to be the prosecutor and the other the defendant and a lot of moralising in addition.

You have been appointed chief curator for the first edition of the Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (RIBOCA). Titled Everything was Forever, Until it was No More *your proposal explores how rapid change (technological and otherwise) and the increasing acceleration of our lives and work influences our existence and our outlook on the world around us. How are the geo-politics of the Baltic and Nordic region particularly interesting in regard to accelerated transformations? And how would you say concerns have shifted compared to debates on technology and globalisation in the late 1990s and early 2000s?*

The Baltic region has become one of the primary loci of political, social and economic restructuring, identity renegotiation and global reintegration and is thus very fertile ground to look into around the notion of rapid or systemic change. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in what has been called a 'new regional geography', which merits further consideration, especially now given the new geo-politics, and the role of Russia in the region, but also NATO and the US. The Baltics are therefore a paradigm for looking into transitions in many aspects – historical, political and social as well as economic and technological. For example: two decades after Estonia became independent, it became a world leader in technology. Estonian engineers developed the code behind Skype, Hotmail and Kazaa (an early file-sharing network); in 2007 it became the first country to allow online voting in a general election. Estonia has among the world's fastest broadband speeds and holds the record for start-ups per person. It has now branded itself 'e-Estonia'.

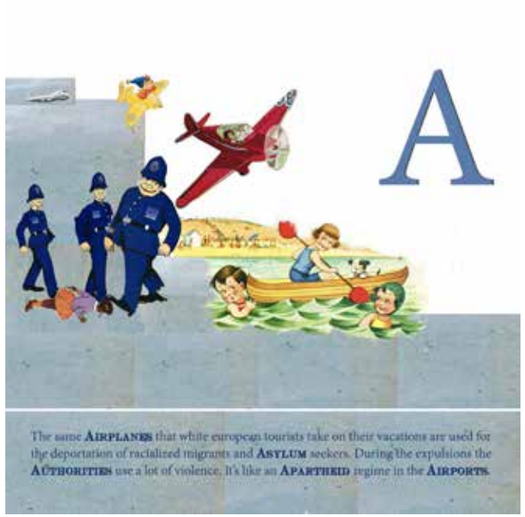
Latvia, on the other hand, is the EU country with the highest share of women among scientific staff, exceeding the average indicator in the EU (33%) and has the highest percentage of women with a doctorate in the world (60%). But the exhibition is not only about technological change but also about the phenomenon of change more generally – socially, politically, economically, existentially – and how this kind of change is anticipated, experienced, grasped, assimilated and dealt with at this time of momentous transitions and the acceleration of practically everything. Regarding debates on technology and globalisation in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I think the techno-optimism and 'end-of-history' euphoria of that time now have ceded their place to a more sober discourse regarding the fact that, like everything, these phenomena can have both positive and negative, alarming consequences.

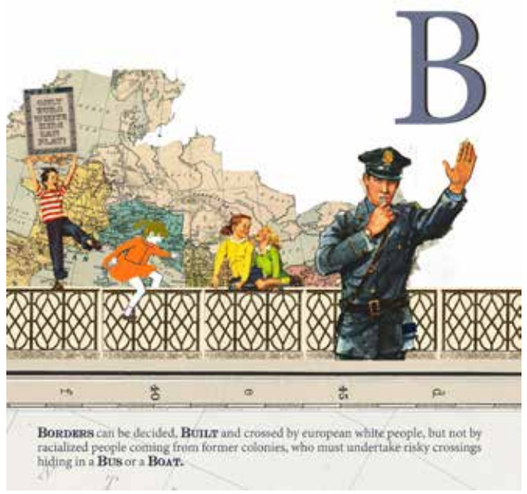
Your projects draw on the disquiet of our times, political and social polarisation, inequity and oppression. And yet so many of the artists you work with, no matter how grave their subject matter, insist on resilience, an imaginary, meaning, sometimes even hope, in the face of adversity. Is optimism, no matter how dark the clouds gathering on the horizon, something you script consciously in your projects?

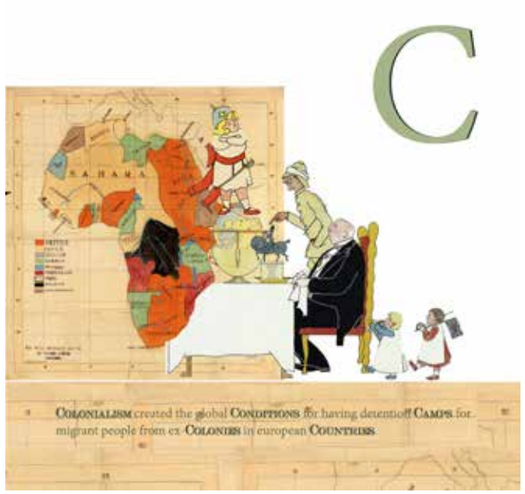
Just painting a bleak picture will help no one and is counter-productive. People are already afraid of the socio-political, geopolitical, cultural, environmental and economic developments, which all seem to point to an abyss. Without imagining possible solutions to get us out of the swamp, we are in danger of becoming indifferent and cynical. Art can offer alternatives, however naive or utopic they might seem, and unleash the social imaginary in positive directions. It is all about the power that art has to turn our heads into another direction, to engender us to both *think* differently and *imagine* things differently.c

'Censorship and self-censorship are not constructive reactions to feelings of indignation, humiliation or degradation – they stifle the debate'

'Without imagining possible solutions to get us out of the swamp, we are in danger of becoming indifferent and cynical. Art can offer alternatives... and unleash the social imaginary in positive directions'







Daniela Ortiz
The ABC of Racist Europe, 2016
A children's book about racism, white supremacy and colonialism in contemporary Europe

The Female Perspective is a one-off magazine. The magazine is published on the occasion of the year programme 2017/2018 *The Female Perspective,* curated by Nina Folkersma as part of the cultural activities programme *Memory Machine* by Castrum Peregrini. The magazine is edited in collaboration with *Mister Motley.*

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The Female Perspective year programme consisted of:
– Solo exhibition by Mieke Bal, *Reasonable Doubt* (18 March - 13 April 2017)
– Artist Weekend: Women + Resistance, with Aya Dürst Britt, Andrea Geyer, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Annet Mooij, Ronit Porat, Pieter Paul Pothoven, Marjan Schwegman, Bianca Stigter (5-7 May 2017)
– Radio interview: Wendelien van Oldenborgh, in collaboration with *Mister Motley/Kunst is Lang* (29 June 2017)
– Public Talk by Katerina Gregos, *Freedom of art versus political correctness. On the complexities of curating politically contested subject matter* (8 December 2017)
– Artist Weekend: Women + Craft + Poetry, with Renée Turner, Christel Vesters, Aimée Zito Lema and others (15-17 December 2017)
– Group exhibition *Some Things Hidden*, co-curated by Charlott Markus, at Castrum Peregrini (18-26 November 2017) and Framer Framed (18 January - 11 March 2018)

The Female Perspective is financially supported by the AFK (Amsterdam Funds for the Arts) and the Mondriaan Fund. The Mondriaan Fund also generously supported the research project of Renée Turner and the residencies of Pieter Paul Pothoven and Ronit Porat.

Castrum Peregrini, 'the fortress of the pilgrim', is the nom de guerre of a World War II canal house in the centre of Amsterdam. Driven by her beliefs in art and friendship, artist Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht (1912-2013) helped young intellectuals and artists survive the war by offering them refuge in her house. Many parts of this canal house remain unchanged, making its history palpable. The human values of the House of Gisèle have grown and deepened in post-war years. Against this background, Castrum Peregrini has developed into a lively centre which organises debates, publications and exhibitions.

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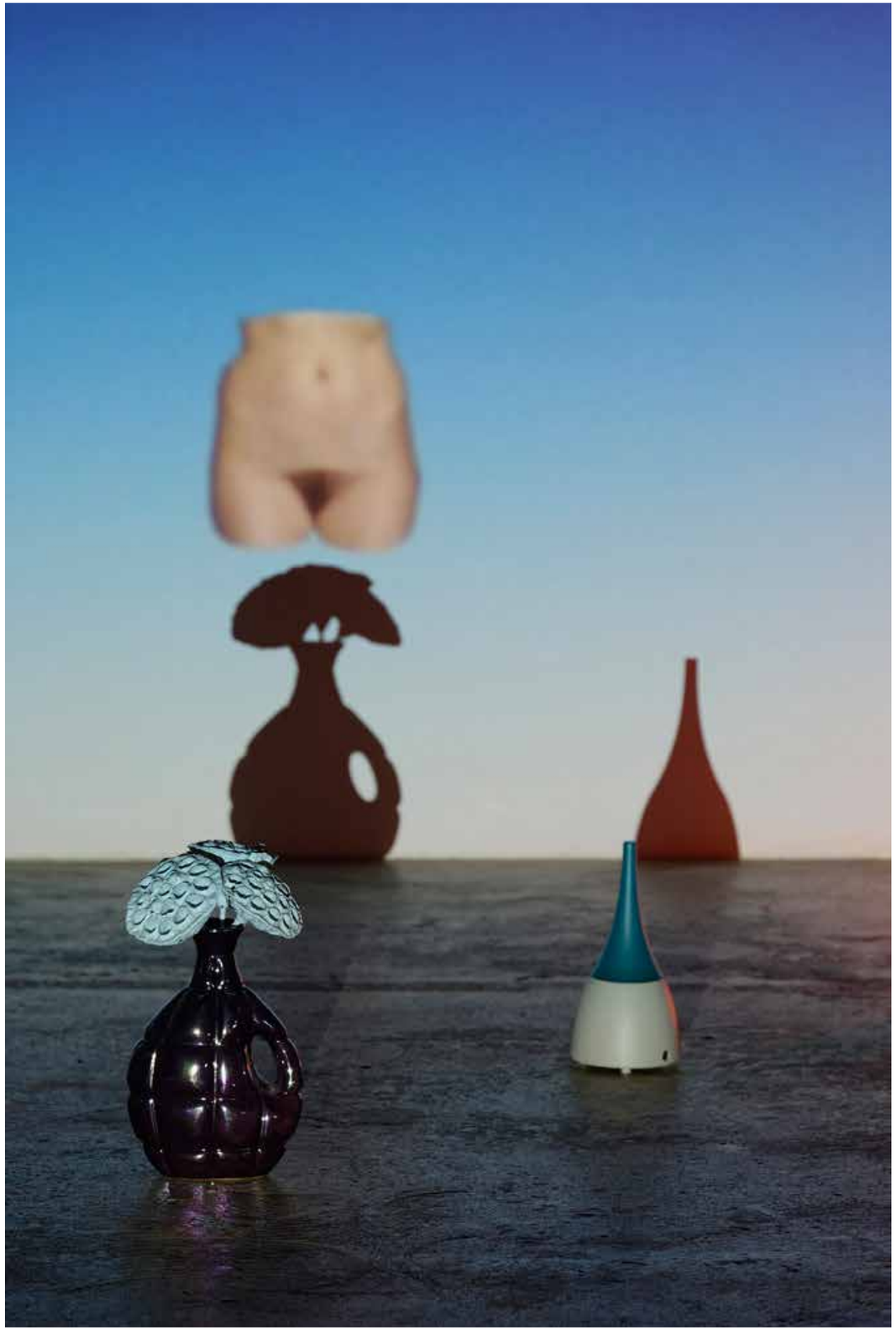
Shana Moulton
The Undiscovered Drawer, 2013
Video (9 min)
Courtesy Galerie Crèvecoeur, Paris
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)



Alexis Blake, *Anthology of Anger,* 2017-ongoing
Performers: Alexis Blake, Mami Izumi and Marika Meoli
Performance in Castrum Peregrini, 26 November 2017
Photo: Sjoerd Derine
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Women in the living room of a Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis
(c) Bertien van Manen, 1980.
Collectie IAV-Atria
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Lynn Hershman Leeson
Caged Woman, 1965 (detail)
Wax cast, gold thread, wood, sensors, tape recorder, sound
Private Collection, The Netherlands; Courtesy the artist and Paul van Esch & Partners Art Advisory, Amsterdam
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Artist weekend: Women + Resistance, Castrum Peregrini, 6 May 2017.
From left to right: Bianca Stigter, Pieter Paul Pothoven,
Marjan Schwegman, Nina Folkersma.

Hélène Amouzou
Selfportrait (2011-2014)
Image courtesy of the artist
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Cauleen Smith
Remote Viewing (2011)
Video still
Courtesy the Artists and Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Femmy Otten
Untitled (Gisèle), 2017
Pencil, oil and gold leaf on canvas
Courtesy: Fons Welters Gallery
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Zhana Ivanova
There, there, 2017
Script, performative gesture, ongoing
Installation view Castrum Peregrini
Photo: Charlott Markus
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Marijn Ottenhof
111 sqm, 2017
Performer: Monica Mays
Photo: Willemieke Kars
(part of *Some Things Hidden*)

Mieke Bal, *Reasonable Doubt*,
Installation views, Castrum Peregrini, 18 March-13 April 2017
Photos: Frans Damman

THE FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

SOME THINGS HIDDEN

Note to reader

This magazine is published in association with the year programme 2017/2018 *The Female Perspective*, at Castrum Peregrini, a former safe house and cultural institution that links art and history to current social issues. The magazine has two chapters; the first is a reflection on the programme's activities, with contributions from the participating artists, curators and writers; the second is a guide to the exhibition *Some Things Hidden*.

SOME THINGS HIDDEN

Like this magazine, the exhibition *Some Things Hidden* also has two chapters. The first is an exhibition that was held at Castrum Peregrini from 18th to 26th November 2017 where, at the invitation of artist Charlott Markus and curator Nina Folkersma, seven artists presented new or existing works, created or selected specially for this former World War II hiding place:

Alexis Blake
Sara Blokland
Zhana Ivanova
Charlott Markus
Shana Moulton
Femmy Otten
Marijn Ottenhof

The second chapter of *Some Things Hidden* can be seen at Framer Framed from 18th January to 11th March 2018. In addition to the works by the above artists, this part will also includes works by:

Hélène Amouzou
Lynn Hershman Leeson
Bertien van Manen
Cauleen Smith
Batia Suter

Some Things Hidden is an exhibition about hiding; it is both about hiding in times of war and crisis, and about the (in)ability to hide things from others and yourself. The starting point is a personal story of artist-curator Charlott Markus about her great aunt, a Jewish woman who 'hid' in the open, fully visible during World War II in Berlin, and about her grandfather, who often concealed his true emotions behind a male façade of success. The exhibition explores how artists experience, interpret and visualise this theme today, and invites visitors to reflect upon certain questions. What does 'hiding' mean today, for example? What threats are there to hide from? What do we hide from ourselves? And what are the possibilities of hiding in our current, highly digitised world? According to the English poet David Whyte, 'hiding' is necessary to protect ourselves from misunderstandings, oppression and control by others: 'Hiding is a way of staying alive'.

This two-part exhibition consists of artworks by an all-female cast of emerging or internationally renowned artists from different generations. At Castrum Peregrini, we put the emphasis on new performances and in-situ works, displayed in the studio of artist Gisèle van Waterschoot van der Gracht, Castrum Peregrini's founder. In Framer Framed, the exhibition is augmented by spatial works, video installations and photography. Here, the 'hidden' is placed in another social context: what are the stories that receive little attention and are thus 'hidden' in society? What parts of our history are not told? Together, the exhibitions offer a range of female perspectives and reflections on the phenomenon of 'hiding'.

In this magazine you will find texts about of the twelve participating artists and their works, based on interviews by Lietje Bauwens, a philosopher and journalist from Brussels.

We are extremely happy and grateful that we can also stage the exhibition *Some Things Hidden* at Framer Framed. We would like to thank directors Cas Bool and Josien Pieterse and their entire team for their substantive feedback and hospitality. Our thanks also go to Lieneke Hulshof, chief-editor of the online art magazine *Mister Motley* for her editorial support and for introducing us to Lietje Bauwens. And a very special thanks to Atelier Roosje Klap for the beautiful design of this publication.

On behalf of Castrum Peregrini,
Nina Folkersma and Charlott Markus

The politics of the visible

Josien Pieterse

Josien Pieterse is co-founder and director, together with Cas Bool, of Framer Framed, a platform for contemporary art, visual culture and critical theory located at the Tolhuistuin in Amsterdam. As a long-term partner of Castrum Peregrini, Framer Framed hosts the second chapter of the exhibition *Some Things Hidden*. The topic of this exhibition is very relevant to Josien Pieterse, who has a background as oral historian and researcher at Atria, Knowledge Institute for Emancipation and Women's History. In this article, she sheds light on her personal perspective on (in)visibility and concealment.

Visibility is not self-evident, visibility is created. So it is important to focus our attention on the invisible, asking ourselves: Who creates this situation of absence, and for whom? Who is it that is invisible, and are they still invisible if they are also defined as such? Or do they sometimes choose to remain invisible and, if so, why?

It is just as important to question the 'visible'; which people, and what images and customs are visible and thereby perceived as 'normal'? What colonial, sexist or capitalist assumptions and interests might underlie these assumptions?

Framer Framed explores ways of working that allow a different reality to be introduced, whereby ownership of a situation or history is central, with a critical eye for any dominant power relations. Not only does the existing (visual) language for this need to be deconstructed, but a new language must be created from the bottom up, through personal stories.

Ten years ago, together with Grietje Keller and Saskia Wieringa, I started a video archive for oral history at Atria, Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History. It is now an extensive archive, with a network of diverse interviewers. In recent years, I have interviewed key feminist figures such as Joan Ferrier and Anja Meulenbelt, women of the women's aid movement in the Netherlands, women from the Communist Party of the Netherlands (CPN), pioneers of the Dutch women's refuge organisation *Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis*, feminists within the Church, and female victims of abuse or sexual assault within the Church.

After ten years of experience interviewing these women, it has become apparent that institutional frameworks are often insufficiently equipped to establish a comprehensive record of the intersectional and complex nature of a personal story – not only do theoretical frameworks reproduce dominant ideas and assumption, but so does technology.

An example of the restrictive influence of institutional frameworks emerged in my interviews with participants in social movements. Interviewees indicated that they continually had to contend with dominant images or prejudices about the movement. These inhibit both the specific position of the individual and the realisation of new analyses. Also, they don't do justice to the diversity of interpretations and experiences, which are also continually changing. As a result, participants often feel differently about their involvement after a few years.

All this calls for the development of a new (visual) language, taking complexities and personal experiences as its starting point. Important here is that the individual story is not questioned. The way a story is told, how the narrator describes her choices and dilemmas, is important in getting a better picture of the possibilities of the person within certain frameworks and thereby create space for alternative realities.

The search for this new visual language, with personal experiences as the building blocks for alternative realities, in combination with the questioning of dominant power relations, plays a crucial role in the vision and practice of Framer Framed. The invisible must be made visible, and the visible questioned.

These perspectives on (in)visibility and concealment formed the basis for the conversations between Framer Framed and curators Nina Folkersma and Charlott Markus. *Some Things Hidden* at Framer Framed examines the impacts of a lack of space for visibility, through either coercion or repression. This can sometimes lead to a conscious effort to remain invisible. This can be seen, for example, in the work of Hélène Amouzou from Togo, currently living in Brussels. Her work is in the collection of Amsterdam's Tropenmuseum, although I became acquainted with it through the curator Christine Eyene. In search of the right location to make a first 'real' self-portrait, Amouzou finds herself on the top floor of her apartment building in Molenbeek, Brussels. She composes self-portraits between the belongings of other people and attempts to demonstrate her individuality as stateless person. She manages to escape from this image by capturing her shadow. In this case, invisibility coincides with the wish to show oneself.

Another example is the photographic series by Bertien van Manen. During the recording of interviews about the history of *Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis* refuges, I came across Van Manen's work in the Atria archive. The photographs expose an unknown world: the daily life of women who had to go into hiding as a result of domestic violence. The portraits show strong individuals who have been persistently forced to withdraw themselves from visibility to the outside world, and are now taking the step to show themselves.

Framer Framed is delighted with the opportunity to collaborate with our long-term partner Castrum Peregrini. The two organisations have worked together since 2013, starting with the exhibition *Speaking from the Heart*, curated by Shaheen Merali. The exhibition *Some Things Hidden* is a joint project at the initiative of artist Charlott Markus and Castrum Peregrini. It has given us the opportunity to explore the distinctive characters of our institutions, and just as importantly to establish our common interests. These shared interests form the basis for the public programme that will be presented from 18th January to 11th March, 2018.

'The invisible must be made visible, and the visible questioned'

Hiding

David Whyte

The following excerpt is taken from David Whyte's 2015 book *Consolations: the Solace, Nourishment and Underlying Meaning of Everyday Words*. David is a British poet who is quoted as saying that all of his poetry and philosophy is based on 'the conversational nature of reality'.

'What is real is almost always to begin with, hidden'

'Hiding leaves life to itself, to become more of itself'

Hiding is a way of staying alive. Hiding is a way of holding ourselves until we are ready to come into the light. Even hiding the truth from ourselves can be a way to come to what we need in our own necessary time.

Hiding is one of the brilliant and virtuoso practices of almost every part of the natural world: the protective quiet of an icy northern landscape, the held bud of a future summer rose, the snow bound internal pulse of the hibernating bear.

Hiding is underestimated. We are hidden by life in our mother's womb until we grow and ready ourselves for our first appearance in the lighted world; to appear too early in that world is to find ourselves with the immediate necessity for outside intensive care.

Hiding done properly is the internal faithful promise for a proper future emergence, as embryos, as children or even as emerging adults in retreat from the names that have caught us and imprisoned us, often in ways where we have been too easily seen and too easily named.

We live in a time of the dissected soul, the immediate disclosure; our thoughts, imaginings and longings exposed to the light too much, too early and too often, our best qualities squeezed too soon into a world already awash with too easily articulated ideas that oppress our sense of self and our sense of others.

What is real is almost always to begin with, hidden, and does not want to be understood by the part of our mind that mistakenly thinks it knows what is happening. What is precious inside us does not care to be known by the mind in ways that diminish its presence.

Hiding is an act of freedom from the misunderstanding of others, especially in the enclosing world of oppressive secret government and private entities, attempting to name us, to anticipate us, to leave us with no place to hide and grow in ways unmanaged by a creeping necessity for absolute naming, absolute tracking and absolute control.

Hiding is a bid for independence, from others, from mistaken ideas we have about our selves, from an oppressive and mistaken wish to keep us completely safe, completely ministered to, and therefore completely managed.

Hiding is creative, necessary and beautifully subversive of outside interference and control. Hiding leaves life to itself, to become more of itself. Hiding is the radical independence necessary for our emergence into the light of a proper human future.

Hélène Amouzou

Hélène Amouzou (Togo, 1969) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium, where she completed her studies at the Academy of Drawing and Visual Arts of Molenbeek-St-Jean in 2014. Hélène uses photography to create ephemeral and ghostly self-portraits. She captures herself or her belongings, often her clothes, in an empty room with peeling floral wallpaper. In many of the images she includes a suitcase as a symbol of her state of flux and transit. The photographs were taken over several years when she was seeking asylum in Belgium and waiting for her official residence visa. Hélène's self-portraits have been exhibited in Belgium and France; she also presented her work at the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam. Her book, *Entre le papier peint et le mur,* is published by Husson Editeur, Belgium.

Hélène Amouzou
Selfportraits (2011-2014)
Images courtesy of the artist

In her photographic self-portraits, the body of Togolese artist Hélène Amouzou, whether it is naked or clothed, seems to dissolve into its surroundings. This process leaves but little trace of her in the portrait. A comparison with Francesca Woodman seems obvious, but when Hélène signed up for her first photography course, living as a single mother and asylum seeker in Molenbeek, Brussels, she knew nothing of other photographers and had never even held a camera. She signed up for the course as a way to distract her from her loneliness.

Her first assignment was a self-portrait, but Hélène avoided it. Having invested all her energy into remaining as anonymous as possible amongst the 'regular' people around her, exposing her inner devastation to the world was the last thing she wanted. She decided not to photograph herself but to photograph others, and to allow the 'self' to emerge from whoever, or whatever, she photographed.

In the years that followed, she became bolder about following her heart, and, and as her artistic choices became a reflection of herself, the camera slowly turned on its own axis and Hélène herself started to appear within the frame of her own lens. In search of a suitable location for her first 'true' self-portrait, Hélène discovered an attic on the top floor of her house in Molenbeek, filled with belongings, but apparently without an owner. Suitcases were strewn around what looked like an abandoned railway station. As though she was ready to show herself to those who had not acknowledged, trusted or seen her over the years, she photographed herself in the suitcases, against walls and on chairs, demonstrating her innocent individuality. Without rights, astonishingly little remains of an 'existence,' a stateless person often feels like only half a human being.

Capturing her own shadow enabled her to work her way out of this. Through her use of movement and multiple exposures, Hélène never appears in focus and is never fully in the picture. Her own image becomes increasingly faint as she attempts to capture a true portrait of herself. What seems like a contradiction was actually the most logical option – a blurred emptiness was the only way she could depict how her environment perceived her at that time.

She was advised to share her work with the outside world – a second phase of exposure. But looking at yourself is very different from showing this image to an audience. However, from the moment she did, her images were no longer about her alone, but about anyone who has ever had to exchange their home for insecurity.

Alexis Blake

Alexis Blake
Anthology of Anger, 2017-ongoing
Performers: Alexis Blake, Mami Izumi and Marika Meoli
Choreography developed in collaboration with Mami Izumi and Marika Meoli
Soundscape developed in collaboration with Caitlin Blake
Photos: Sjoerd Derine

Alexis Blake (US, 1981) has a multidisciplinary practice that brings together visual art and performance through various methods of translation such as choreography, sculpture, video, text and script. She explores the language of movement, creates spaces to expose and elude systems of representation and mechanisms of subjectivisation. In doing so she aims to reformulate the relationship between the object and the subject. Alexis received an MA in Fine Art from the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam in 2007. From 2014 to 2015 she was artist in residence at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht, and in 2016 at the Delfina Foundation in London. Her work has been presented at the British Museum in London, Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum, Extra City in Antwerp and the XXI Triennale di Milano in Italy.

Alexis Blake's projects often begin with extensive research. She might, for example, look at how the depiction of a woman, or an 'ideal' body, is imbued with meaning. Alexis usually starts with a broad research question that slowly crystallises into expression through different media, such as performance, video, film or sculpture, or a combination of these.

In *Some Things Hidden* Alexis exhibits the initial phases of her current project *Anthology of Anger,* which would normally be hidden from public view. In this project, Alexis explores how our body functions as an archive, storing our emotions. She also examines how culture and history both influence the ways we express, and suppress, our anger and empathy, using both our bodies and our voices.

Gender, race, class, nationality and religion, and their intersections, all play an important role in the way we express our emotions. For example, in many countries it is considered inappropriate for a woman to express her anger, and its expression is often linked to terms such as 'hysteria' or 'witchcraft'. Alexis is particularly interested in these socially unacceptable or prescribed expressions through use of our bodies and voices.

In times of post-truth and language impoverishment, Alexis observes a tendency for reactionary behaviour in response to the feeling of anger, often without questioning the origin of this anger or how it is expressed. Anger can be an indispensable force behind change, and therefore resistance, but to apply this in a truly effective way, Alexis believes it is necessary to critically examine and realign our emotions based on rational deliberation. What role does empathy have in this?

According to Alexis, the word 'empathy' is bandied around a lot in left-wing politics. But what does it actually mean to put yourself in someone else's shoes? To lay your own convictions to one side? How do empathy and anger relate to each other in terms of their physical expression? Is it possible to have empathy for someone you are angry with? Or someone who is verbally aggressive towards you?

Research shows that, alongside our appearance and character traits, we also inherit the traumas and emotions of our ancestors, carrying their anger, grief and memories within us. By releasing these emotions and (re) examining them, we can begin to trace their origins. How does the scientific aspect of this heritage, the DNA, relate to the cultural and historical context in which these emotions are formed and embodied?

Rather than analysing these questions rationally, Alexis explores them using the body and voice in a number of public rehearsals, together with the audience. What do our (intuitive) movements say about the knowledge we store in our bodies? How do we postulate using our limbs? During *Some Things Hidden* Alexis presents a series of studies for a performance in which the relationship between 'prescribed' anger and empathy and their intuitive expression is collectively examined. By embodying these emotions and expressing them physically, as opposed to verbally, she attempts to free the more sensory and intuitive aspects of our behaviour.

Sara Blokland

Sara Blokland
Reproduction of Family Part 4: Mother's History, a Library of Language, 2014
Video still Courtesy Lmak Gallery New York
Installation view Castrum Peregrini
Photo: Charlott Markus

Sara Blokland (the Netherlands, 1969) is a visual artist, independent researcher and curator of photography. She lives and works in Amsterdam and studied at the Rietveld Academy (BA in photography). She graduated from the Sandberg Institute (MFA photography and video) in the Netherlands and received an MA in Film and Photographic Studies from the Leiden University. As a visual artist, curator and researcher she works predominately with photography and film. Documenting, archiving and reinterpreting these media forms is an important basis for her curatorship and visual work. Her work reflects on the complicated role of this medium in relation to (post-colonial) cultural heritages and she lays ties with broader issues such as migration, colonial legacy and cultural detachment. Her works have been exhibited in various places, such as the Kumho Museum (Seoul, Korea), Gallery Lmak Projects (New York), the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, MMKA (Arnhem) and Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, the Netherlands.

In what way can objects represent a personal history? What larger narrative lies behind these intimate experiences? And, perhaps most importantly, can we ever convey an emotion or a memory in a way that we are really understood and in a way that really shows our true selves?

For the film *Mother's History, a Library of Language* (2014)[1], Sara interviewed her mother Rosa Wins Blokland about her Jewish identity, idealism and memories of her post-war childhood. In the film, this story has been interwoven with quotes from her great-grandfather Gerrit Mannoury (1867-1956), a mathematician, philosopher and communist, who devoted his entire life to breaking barriers within our communication. How do we understand the other when the other speaks?

In the film we see Mannoury's theoretical model for a universally imaginable image described in a way that everyone can visualise. In a similar way, the viewer of *Mother's History, a Library of Language* bares witness to Rosa's traumatic testimony, which cannot be conveyed in its entirety.

Communication always involves organising, dividing, structuring and naming the world around us. In preparation for her new work, *Patterns* (2017)[2], Sara recorded the final phase of her father's life as well as her son playing with patterns; she also gave her son a Polaroid camera so he could capture his own reality in photography. In this new work, Sara intertwines three different visual storylines of her father and son; she makes frequent use of her own family stories in her work, but always couples this with manifold ethical dilemmas about privacy. Does she have permission to use her mother's story in this way? Does she want a picture of her son to appear on internet? And if not, why might it be acceptable in a museum? How much can be made public?

The photo series *Patterns* resembles the sharing of a photo album, while of course an album can be snatched from your hands at any moment. From this controlled temporality, a rhythmic composition of different stories arises – the rhythm of pattern, each story emerging from the way in which it is organised and lived.

[1] on view in Castrum Peregrini
[2] on view in Framer Framed

Lynn Hershman Leeson

With a practice spanning more than 50 years, American artist Lynn Hershman Leeson (US, 1941) is considered one of today's most influential media artists. She has made pioneering contributions to photography, video, film, performance, installation and interactive media as well as net-based media art. Her practice combines art with social commentary and focuses on the changing relationship between the body and technology. Lynn is perhaps best known for her fictitious persona Roberta Breitmore, who she brought to life through performances and photographs between 1974 and 1978. Her alter ego consisted not only of a physical self-transformation through make-up, clothing and wigs, but was a fully-fledged personality existing over an extended period of time. Hershman Leeson is also a renowned filmmaker, notably of the groundbreaking documentary! *Women Art Revolution* (2011), about the feminist art movement in the United States. This film was screened in Castrum Peregrini during the Artists Weekend *Women and Resistance* on May 5, 2017.

Lynn Hershman Leeson
Roberta's Construction Chart, 1975
Chromogenic color print

Lynn Hershman Leeson
Caged Woman, 1965 (detail)
Wax cast, gold thread, wood, sensors, tape recorder, sound

both works Private Collection, the Netherlands; Courtesy the artist and Paul van Esch & Partners Art Advisory, Amsterdam

As one of the first pioneering media artists – and one of the most influential – Lynn Hershman Leeson has always been ahead of her time. For over half a century her work has reflected on themes such as genetic manipulation, surveillance and virtual reality. Using technology and science as part of the work, she has not only created an overview of 21st-century digital language but also played an active part in shaping it.

Breathing Machine (1965) and *Caged Woman* (1965) are two of her earliest works. Showing her solidarity with the Civil Rights Movement, the wax masks of Lynn's own face, with embedded wax cast as partially black, are brought to life through sound recordings of her breathing. In 1966, Berkeley University Art Museum refused to exhibit the work because of this audio element; in their opinion sound did not belong in a museum.

To explore other options for exhibition of her work, Lynn rented a hotel room where she could display these breathing masks in an 'alienating space', open to the public. As she filled the room with more and more artefacts of a presumed identity, a scenography of a life that did not yet exist emerged. It was from here that what is perhaps Lynn's most famous work originated. In 1973, the artist left the hotel to begin a second, experimental life, parallel to her own yet entirely different, as the fictional character who lived in real time, Roberta Breitmore.

Roberta's Construction Chart is a detailed representation of the transformation Lynn underwent on a daily basis over the following years. Make-up on, make-up off – the mask shows the traces of the continuous changes to her appearance and form. In addition to these external changes, Roberta developed her own personality, with duties, rights and features that were in line with the cultural standards of her time. She obtained a driver's license, signed up for a credit card, went to the psychiatrist and took part in a Weight Watchers programme.

Like any living person, Roberta got to know other people, and although Lynn made sure these never met her more than three times, Roberta's relationships with them resulted in mutual influence; a situation that Lynn did not leave unexplored as an artist. She regularly allowed herself to lose control of her own narrative. By doing so, the dynamic role-playing exposed the inherently reciprocal relationships, not just between media and society, but between fiction and reality too. Just before Roberta was 'exorcised' in 1978, she was given a role in the then upcoming 3D virtual world, *Second Life*, becoming one of the first people to be granted an eternal digital life.

Lynn's work blurs the traditional boundaries between female and male, natural and technological, fiction and reality. It shows the constructed nature of the 'self', as expressed through masks, co-identities and other forms of existence – people or things that help the singular 'I' escape its own limitations. By seeing the human body as programmable software, through Lynn's perspective, we are forced to continually redefine what it means to be human, *in and of this moment*.

Zhana Ivanova

Zhana Ivanova
There, there, 2017
Script, performative gesture, ongoing
Graphic design: Céline Wouters
Installation view Castrum Peregrini
Photos: Charlott Markus (top) and Sjoerd Derine (bottom)

Zhana Ivanova (Bulgaria, 1977) lives and works in Amsterdam. She studied Russian language and literature at Queen Mary University College in London. In 2009 she graduated from DasArts in Amsterdam and in 2013 she completed a residency at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam. Her practice involves rearranging and reconfiguring daily patterns and structures to which we have grown accustomed. She often uses performance in order to artificially induce situations in which social, gender and power relations fluctuate. Recent presentations of her works include Fondation Ricard, Paris (2017), Playground Festival, Leuven (2017), Kunsthalle Basel (2016), Mendes Wood DM, Sao Paulo (2016), Ellen De Bruijne Projects, Amsterdam (2016), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015). Her *Ongoing Retrospective* - a cumulative exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel, is periodically presented in chapters since 2015.

Zhana Ivanova creates performances that reveal underlying codes, rules and constructs in our daily experience. In doing so she makes a proposition for a hidden pattern behind this predictability. The focus is on how we relate to one another – power structures, social and gender relations are often examined. The performances also examine relationships between people. Both directly and indirectly the spectators become participants and the reading of a script is transformed into its performance.

Zhana is interested in questioning our experience of time – how past impacts future, and how the present may be reinterpreted in the future. For *Some Things Hidden* she has written two scripts; the first is tangible, printed on a sheet of paper and left in the performance space. This text predicts future actions, often acts or gestures that we don't think too much about. The other script is invisible; it is in the head of the performer who carries out simple, everyday actions, like pouring a glass of water or just walking around the space. The two scripts make for a curious encounter between different time perspectives; the printed script and the predicted actions meet one another in the present – in the moment of reading and watching.

With her work, Zhana opens doors to new experiences. What is really taking place? Which scenes does the script direct? And can these two scenarios actually be separated from one another? The boundaries between prediction and compulsion, description and prescription, are paper-thin. As Google 'casually' informs you about which mattress is best for your back, and Facebook provides you with an 'overview' of the news and dating sites calculate your best match, who holds power over who? Zhana confronts us with how decisions made in the past, present and future relate to each other and form our perspective, thereby determining the meaning that is given to any moment. The script is like an algorithm – if this, then that – but there are always variables that the writer, actors and spectators have no control over. It is in this inherent unpredictability, which is always present, that Zhana discovers the 'poetry of what may be overlooked'. Through separate, detailed instructions, for both performers and spectators, describing each staged action and the direction of their gaze, Zhana raises our sense of attention and alertness. As a result, even if they were both to miss a cue, the focus remains acutely on what, at first glance, may seem to be a banal detail.

Bertien van Manen

Bertien van Manen,
Woman in Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis, 1980.

Bertien van Manen (the Netherlands, 1942) lives and works in Amsterdam, producing intimate portraits of the people she photographs, immersing herself in their lives in order to reveal the poetry of the everyday. Since 1990 she has taken extended trips within Europe as well as to China and the former Soviet Union, capturing commonplace scenes of people in their homes or enjoying recreational activities. Bertien draws us into the private lives of her subjects to reveal a poignant meditation on human existence. Her most recent monograph, *Beyond Maps and Atlases*, was published by MACK in 2016. She has released seven previous monographs including *A hundred summers, a hundred winters* (1994); *East Wind West Wind* (2004); *Give Me Your Image* (2005); and *Let's sit down before we go* (2011); as well as a book *I will be Wolf* (2017). Bertien's work has been exhibited internationally at museums such as the Metropolitan Museum of New York, New York's Museum of Modern Art, Fotomuseum Winterthur in Switzerland, Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum, the Photographer's Gallery in London and the Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo.

Bertien van Manen started out as a fashion photographer in 1977, but soon succumbed to a desire to document the real and raw reality of life. She has since become one of the Netherlands' most well-known photographers and exhibits worldwide. Her photographs portray, for example, a desolate Russia or an over-pressured China – countries and cultures we may not know but she still manages to make them instantly recognisable. Bertien gets very close to her subjects, gaining access to their private realms – places that usually remain hidden to the outside world. For her project *Give Me Your Image*, which began in 2002, she travelled through Europe, asking people to show her their most treasured photographs.

Full of respect and patience for her subjects, Bertien often returns to the same place fifteen times, staying with the people she photographs, building up friendships that often last long after she has taken their portrait. Between 1980 and 1982, Bertien spent a lot of time in a *Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis* (a 'stay-away-from-my-body house'), a refuge for women and children who have been the victims of (domestic) violence. There she met women who were living a life in limbo, waiting for a house, a job, or custody of their children.

The first *Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis* was set up in 1974, in a concealed location. Its feminist founders wanted to raise awareness of domestic violence and crimes that occurred behind closed doors, showing that the private sphere is not, by definition, safe. They also wanted to show that the public sphere can only be emancipated once family power relations are in balance. These houses were run by women, for women, and had soon been opened in over 20 cities in the Netherlands.

Bertien always spends a lot of time with her subjects. In her *Blijf-van-mijn-lijfhuis* portraits, this passage of time is palpable within a single frame. She also uses a small analogue camera so her subjects are more easily able to forget the camera's presence. In addition, because of the analogue technique, she only sees the results later, allowing her to let go of some control.

Bertien's most intimate portraits, as she says herself, are not simply portraits of others, but rather, in some inexplicable way, seem to simultaneously record her own, partially unconscious, memories too.

Charlott Markus

Charlott Markus
Shadow sculptures (Markus&I), 2017
UV ink print, wood, paint, silver thread
Installation view Castrum Peregrini

Charlott Markus (Sweden 1974) currently lives and works in Amsterdam. After studying fine art photography in Denmark, she graduated from the photography department of Amsterdam's Gerrit Rietveld Academy in 2007. Charlott constructs still lifes and arrangements that end up predominantly as photographic series and site-specific spatial works. Her works can be described as 'extended still lifes', in which she not only explores space, colour and form, but also investigates underlying relations and structures. She weaves together personal narratives and their links to objects and materials, often using textiles as a carrier of meanings, memories and sensibilities. Her work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in spaces such as Amsterdam's P////AKT and FOAM Photography Museum, Kunstvereniging Diepenheim, LM Projects in Los Angeles and Moscow's Multimedia Art Museum. Next to being a visual artist, Charlott Markus also organises events and curates exhibitions.

'I curate exhibitions as part of my artistic practice,' says Charlott Markus. "An essential part of both my artistic practice and my research is creating a dialogue between my own work and that of others." While the biographical has a subtle presence in all of Charlott's photographic and spatial works, her research project *Markus&I* brings this to the fore by taking her family history as the subject.

As a young girl, Charlott was fascinated by the many stories her grandfather told about his German, Jewish aunts. One of them worked in the Jewish hospital during the Second World War and remained part of public life in Berlin – hidden, but in public view, so to speak. How did her aunts survive the dangers they must have been exposed to? How did their stories survive, and to what extent do these stories live on through Charlott's artistic practice?

We are continuously creating narratives. Not only about ourselves, but also about others; describing our histories, but also theirs, as well as creating narratives about the world around us. Without knowing the protagonists from her grandfather's stories in person, Charlott clearly had their life stories ingrained in her mind; they formed an imaginative linear history from which she took solace, and which influenced the way she looked at herself, both as a maker and as a person.

However, once you critically examine these 'filled in' reconstructions, the characters in these stories suddenly become real people, with vulnerabilities, faults and weaknesses. The events appear to have been much more complex than the scenes Charlott had fabricated as a youngster.

Questions lead to more questions, and then to doubt. What really happened? How accurate are our memories, and do they change over the years? And what is merely a subjective reading of a situation? Hidden beneath layers of time, the truth becomes increasingly uncertain once it is viewed from multiple perspectives, and yet time and again everyone reaches for the story that best suits their worldview at any particular moment. So how can we hold on to a narrative without ignoring its complexities?

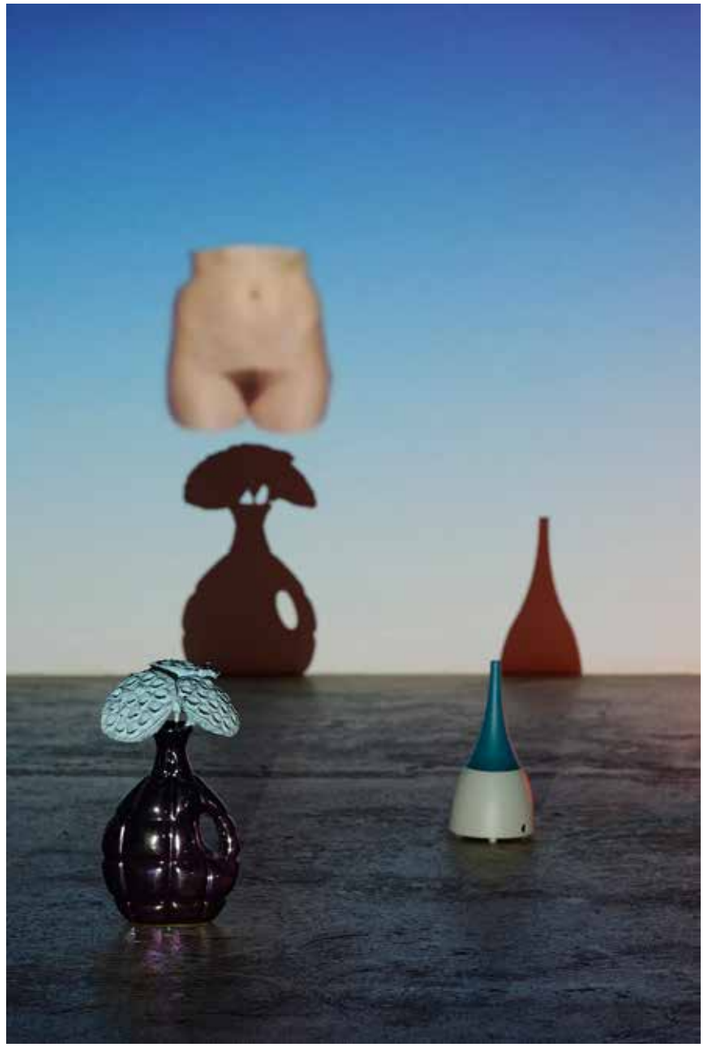
During her research, Charlott put together an archive of stories, found photographs and self-made images, as well as collected objects. She recognised the impossibility of combining the layered quality of this collection within a single work, and saw that the subject needed to be approached from more than one viewpoint. She decided to share her thoughts with other artists and invite them to continue working along this theme. The initial outcome, the four-hour exhibition *Some Things Perishable*, held in Nest, The Hague, became a dialogue between different interpretations, which, by their transitory nature, also brought about new beginnings.

The exhibition *Some Things Hidden* can be seen as a sequel to *Some Things Perishable*. For this new exhibition, and in collaboration with co-curator Nina Folkersma, Charlott invited different artists to develop a shared experience through new or existing works. Now however, instead of focusing on what perishes, the works shed light on that which is hidden. Are we ever, actually, seen in our entirety?

Charlott is interested in the philosophical questions around 'hiding', as well as the real-life situations in which people are unable to show themselves; or, contrarily, where they have no privacy. How much can we afford to give away? What histories are kept hidden and which structures do we continue to hide? Who controls what we reveal?

In a confrontation between the various works, her own family history, and the historical traces of Castrum Peregrini, Charlott explores where the hidden ends and the visible begins. Like her artworks, where the back is often just as important as the front, stories have both an outward-facing part, and a more hidden element; Charlott examines the correlation between the two together with the other artists. As a result, those things that are hidden become visible. The question now arises of whether we see them because they exist, or if they now exist because we see them.

Shana Moulton



Shana Moulton
The Undiscovered Drawer, 2013
Video still (9 min)
Courtesy Galerie Crèvecoeur, Paris

Shana Moulton
My Life as an INFJ, 2015
1-channel video projection (color, sound), divers materials (2.53 min)
Courtesy Galerie Crèvecoeur, Paris

Shana Moulton (US, 1976) currently lives and works in New York and California. Born in Oakhurst, California, Shana attended the University of California, Berkeley and received a Master of Fine Arts from Carnegie Mellon University. She also studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine, and at De Ateliers in Amsterdam. Shana is a media artist who explores contemporary anxieties. She concentrates on producing loosely autobiographical videos and performances that feature her agoraphobic, hypochondriac alter ego, Cynthia, a character the artist developed during graduate school. Shana has presented her work among others at the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, the Palais de Tokyo in Paris and at Amsterdam's Galerie Fons Welters.

'I have zero distance from her', says Shana Moulton, when asked about how she relates to her digitally manipulated, video alter ego, Cynthia. This alter ego is both an extension of Shana as an artist and a product of contemporary cultural, social and political forces and events. Here, the separation between reality and fiction is questioned. Just as in her video works, where different objects, media, people and ideas come together, Shana shows how indistinguishable these concepts are in today's world.

Cynthia's character is explored in Shana's 2016 video work *My life as an INFJ*[1] (INFJ stands for Introversion, Intuition, Feeling and Judging, one of the personality types described by the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator). The work depicts Cynthia attempting to escape her loneliness and discomforts (it pours down with rain in the video). Almost in a trance, Shana's projected alter ego dances into a kind of tub or tomb, surrounded by pots with mummified organs.

Cynthia's uncertainty and neuroses, important themes in Shana's work, are the result of the ever-present social pressure to be 'normal'. Behind closed doors, Cynthia uses household items in unusual ways, which offers her temporary escape. But who really owns the power, humans or 'their' belongings?

In the video work *The Undiscovered Drawer* (2013)[2] it is the objects that determine the story, directing both the viewer and Cynthia into an unforeseen plot. Cynthia is unable to leave the house, and in her search for the key, opens drawer after drawer, gaining access to new and hidden spaces, with new products and thus new promises.

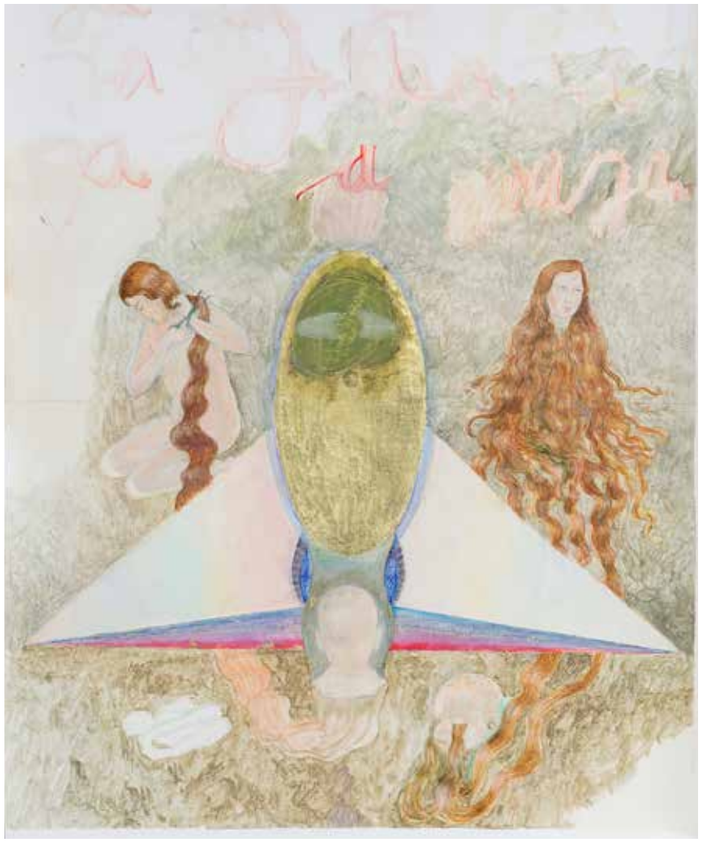
Shana is fascinated by this striving for continual improvement. Her work often contains the aesthetics of commercial manufacturability: special make-up goggles to apply mascara more easily; a face massage device for relaxation; new products to bring increased happiness; and sex toys for greater pleasure.

Since childhood, Shana has had a weakness for commercials and the hopeful feeling they incite in the viewer: 'you can improve your situation, change your identity, live your dream'. But it is too simplistic to interpret her work as mere parody. Dressing up and surrounding herself with beautiful objects genuinely makes Cynthia happy. In this way, Shana's work is both a critical expression of the pressure, mainly on women, to always look presentable, and a plea for the re-appropriation of this pleasure.

Finding a balance between her criticism and sincerity is particularly important to Shana. While her earlier work might be somewhat ironic, today she is aiming to balance humour with some sort of tragic sincerity. Combined, these qualities can have a power that one cannot obtain without the other.

[1] on view in Framer Framed
[2] on view in Castrum Peregrini

Femmy Otten



Femmy Otten
Waterhole, 2017
Bruyere, gold, lapis lazuli pigment, epoxy

Femmy Otten
And I Began to Forget Where I Came From #2, 2016 Oil pencil, oil and gold leaf on canvas

Femmy Otten
Untitled (Gisèle), 2017 Oil pencil, oil and gold leaf on canvas

all works:
Courtesy Fons Welters Gallery
Installation view Castrum Peregrini
Photo: Charlott Markus

Femmy Otten (the Netherlands, 1981) is a visual artist who draws, paints, sculpts and creates installations and performances. These disciplines may be mentioned separately here, but in Femmy's work they are very much connected. In her search for beauty, she creates elegant, archetypal figures, with features that are reminiscent of Etruscan princesses and Greek or Roman Gods, but which are contemporary at the same time. Her sculptures, wall reliefs and painted frescos not only fuse various temporalities, but also common beliefs about love, gender and life. Mythical creatures that are neither man, woman, human or animal, inhabit her work. Femmy Otten studied at the HISK in Ghent and at Amsterdam's Rijksakademie. She has exhibited at Maes & Matthys in Antwerp, De Ketelfactory in Schiedam, The Hague's Stroom, and Amsterdam's Galerie Fons Welters. Femmy has a forthcoming solo exhibition at Schunck in Heerlen. In 2016, her monograph *Slow Down Love* was published by Nai 010 publishers.

In each of her works, Femmy Otten tries to capture some form of completeness, but is repeatedly met with the impossibility of her endeavour. Her paintings and sculptures are an ode to the naivety of a venture inherently doomed to fail. In her search for beauty, through wood, plaster, canvas and paper, Femmy locks herself in her studio, unhurried by the outside world. There, she produces elegant images of nudes and mythological creatures. These artworks may appear 'beautiful' at first sight, but darkness looms within.

Femmy travelled through Tibet after she graduated and met people who had never even seen the sea, yet to them it was both a place where 'everything meets' and 'everything ends.' This was when her fascination with the infinity and elusiveness of surface, and the depth and colour of water, began. It is tempting to label Femmy's work as romantic, but that would be missing the point. For her, the power of nature is found not so much in its wild, overpowering and transcendent experiences, but in its humility.

This notion is palpable in her series *Waterholes*. She paints hollowed-out root wood, or 'briarwood', which grows in the spherical thickening between a plant's root and stem, lapis lazuli blue. The sphere fits perfectly between the hands of someone who holds it, and its blue interior glitters entrancingly, suggesting the open nature or even the 'kindness' of the sea, although it remains impossible to see through its surface. In this way, Femmy confronts us with our incapacity as humans to ever fully comprehend something in its entirety. At the same time she creates a sincere relationship with that thing which will always remain a mystery.

After visiting Castrum Peregrini, where she was captivated by the circles in Gisèle's paintings, a recurring element in her own work, Femmy decided to create a new painting for the exhibition *Some Things Hidden*. In the same way that the blue draws the eye into the briarwood, she created paintings that appear to emit light. Using the same technique as the Flemish Primitives, she applies multiple, transparent layers of paint onto a smooth, white canvas, resulting in an artwork where the eyes of the subject seem to have absorbed every previously received gaze – as though looking (back) at the viewer through all time.

For Femmy, beauty is an energy through which to reveal something else, even something dark. Akin to light and heat, she uses beauty to draw the viewer closer, towards a twisting, jarring, uncomfortable place. This seduction is a recurring element in her work. In her desire to show everything, Femmy leaves her naked, erotic figures undressed, but even then she discovers that a bare core is never reached. Behind every layer that is peeled away, a new one always emerges.

Marijn Ottenhof

Visual Artist Marijn Ottenhof (the Netherlands, 1985) studied at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague and is now based in London where she is currently enrolled in an MA in performance at the Royal College of Art. Marijn investigates social and political systems and our need as humans for rules and logic. Communication between people, groups of people or between people and products often forms the basis of the performance elements in her installations. In staged situations, language and sculptural elements are used to draw audiences into performing moments. Placed out of context, language becomes a surface beneath which other narratives are hidden. By using role play she disrupts existing structures to reinvent ways of relating to each other. Her installations have been featured in group exhibitions in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, Nest in The Hague, Rotterdam's Showroom Mama and in 2017 she was artist-in-residence at Beautiful Distress in New York.

Marijn Ottenhof
111 sqm, 2017
Performer: Monica Mays
Photo: Willemieke Kars

What happens when your private space suddenly becomes public? As more and more people post their homes and interiors on sites such as Airbnb, Pinterest and The Selby, Marijn Ottenhof questions to what extent we can still feel safe in a world where everything is on display.

Tourists are increasingly opting for a real, lived-in abode over the anonymity of a hotel. Where does this fascination for personal environments come from? Is home not the place where you can take off your mask and be anyone or even no one? So, why pimp up your own safe harbour, capture it and publish it for the world to see? In the exhibition *Some Things Hidden*, itself held in artist Gisèle's aesthetically pleasing and inspiring studio, Marijn questions the ambivalence of exhibiting a private space. How can a personal history be captured in marketing terms – or images?

As in her previous works, Marijn puts existing texts into new contexts, demonstrating that our language is never completely authentic but rather a collage of what we have read or heard before. In a mixture of Airbnb terms ('carrycot optional, please ask'), Pinterest jargon ('authentic French doors') and the language of service-oriented female robots like Siri and Alexa, visitors are approached by a performer who looks suspiciously like a young Gisèle herself.

The dialogue that occurs between the performer and the audience feels painfully personal at times; at others it can appear banal. By swiftly switching from a sad story to the glossy surface of a table-top, unattractive emotions can be avoided or hidden behind measured, visible and favourable descriptions of your apartment and/or your life. It is a game of attraction and rejection, revealing something only to retract it again. In line with the way we appear to have become curators within our own homes, the performer determines the distance she establishes between herself and her interlocutor. Or is this notion of control an illusion, and do we, perhaps without even realising, expose more than we would like to, or should?

Cauleen Smith

Cauleen Smith (US, 1967) is an interdisciplinary artist whose work reflects upon the everyday possibilities of the imagination. Operating in multiple materials and arenas, Cauleen roots her work firmly within the discourse of mid-20th century experimental film. Drawing from structuralism, third world cinema and science fiction, she makes things that deploy the tactics of these disciplines while offering a phenomenological experience for spectators and participants. Cauleen was born in Riverside, California and grew up in Sacramento. She earned a BA in Creative Arts from San Francisco State University and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Theater Film and Television. Cauleen's films, objects, and installations have been featured in group exhibitions in, amongst others, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Houston Contemporary Art Museum, Yerba Buena Center for Art, D21 Leipzig and Decad, Berlin. She has had solo shows for her films, drawings, and installations at the Center for Contemporary Art and Culture, Portland, Oregon, the Contemporary Arts Center, UC Irvine, the Art Institute of Chicago, The Kitchen, MCA Chicago, Threewalls, Chicago. She has won several awards including the Rockefeller Media Arts Award, was a Whitney Biennial 2017 participant and currently has a solo show at The Art Institute of Chicago.

Cauleen Smith
Remote Viewing (2011)
Video still
Courtesy the Artists and Corbett vs. Dempsey, Chicago

Cauleen Smith embraces the reflective and speculative possibilities of cinema. By giving the images we identify with an 'emancipatory' interpretation, she believes that film can shift our prevailing attitudes and habits and increase our capacity for empathy. In line with the ideas of Afrofuturism, Cauleen believes that filmmakers can not only give a voice to the suppressed, but also a stage on which to shine. For Cauleen, Afrofuturism offers a way of creating metaphors that can explore both the traumas and history of the hidden African diaspora, as well as generate new hopeful narratives for a future of equality.

The relationship between trauma and the future plays a major role in Cauleen's video *Remote Viewing* (2011). The idea for this work arose when she heard the story on the radio of a man who, as a young boy, had witnessed how white people were so intent on erasing all traces of the black community that they dug an enormous hole in the ground to bury an entire school. How, she thought, can you want to destroy, hide, undo something so much? Where does anger of this magnitude come from?

Her video projection shows a static image of a small school building against a luminous green background; a tractor then pushes the school into a pit dug by Cauleen herself. The fim is aesthetically pleasing – the onlookers, a woman and young boy, are well-groomed, the sky is blue, you can hear the school bell ringing; the viewer is not confronted with victims, but rather with icons.

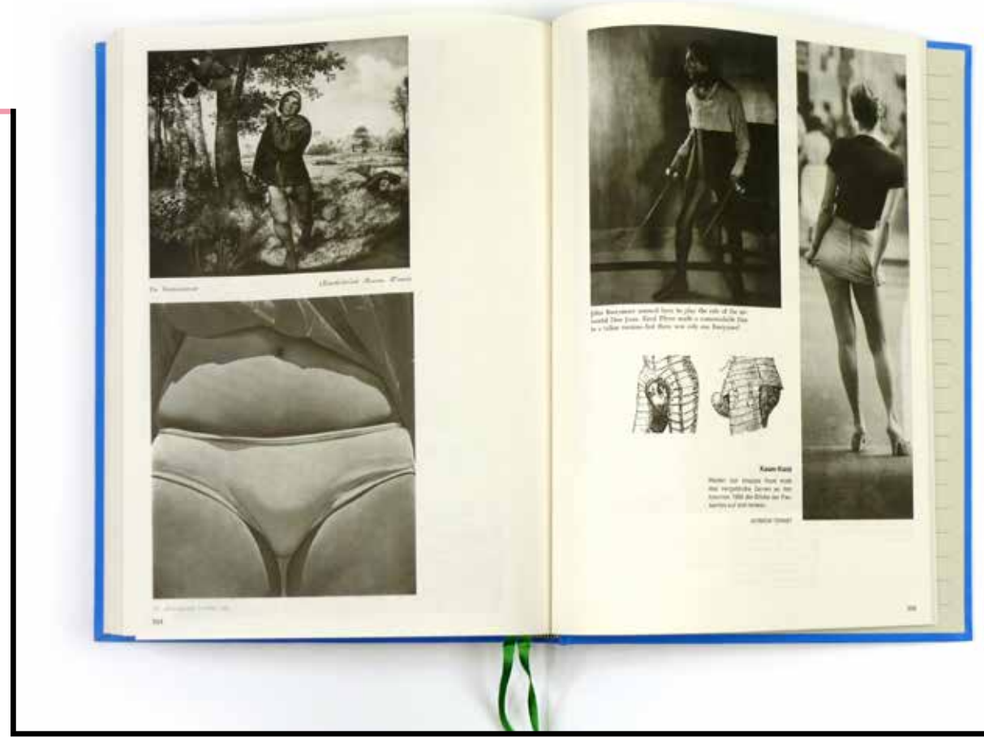
Remote Viewing focuses not just on racism, but also on the fragile relationship between people and nature, and the land as an archive of social trauma. Cauleen says she had nightmares about the huge hole she had to dig for the film. 'It felt much more ominously deep than I could have imagined. I had nightmares about finding broken children and dead animals in the hole I'd dug. This is not the relationship to the Earth I want to have.'

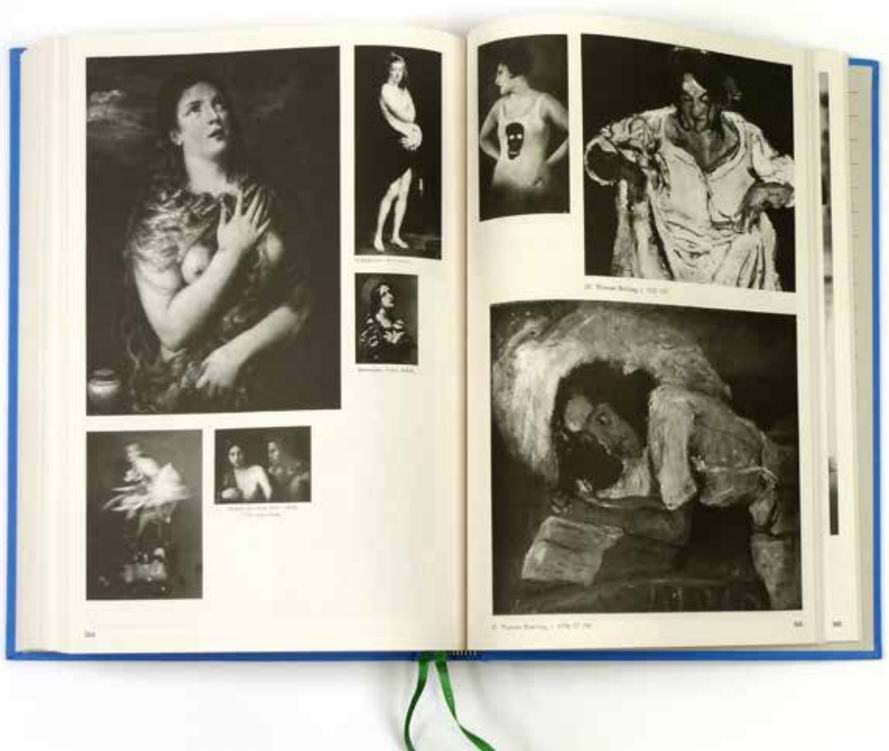
Our destructive and dysfunctional relationship with the planet is an important force behind Cauleen's artistic practice. As a descendant of captive Africans who were shipped to North America – a continent inhabited by people that had witnessed obscene genocide – she is acutely aware of her own relationship with land and country.

Cauleen is also aware of the space a filmmaker occupies, of how cameras and crew can influence people, from local residents to participants in the work. And this is exactly where Cauleen finds the progressive power of cinema. By actually giving places, actors and other social structures their own voice, film images can transcend the 'what is' or 'what was' and, through the process of filming, begin to reflect a 'what can be.'

Batia Suter

Amsterdam-based artist Batia Suter (Switzerland, 1967) studied at the art academies of Zurich, Switzerland and Arnhem in the Netherlands. She was also trained at Arnhem's Werkplaats Typografie. Batia produces monumental prints of digitally manipulated images for specific locations, and photo-animations, image sequences and collages, often using found pictures. In 2007 she published the first part of her voluminous book *Parallel Encyclopedia* (Roma Publication 100) containing compositions of reproductions taken from old books she has collected over the years. Her second book *Surface Series* (Roma Publication 160), published in 2011, is an evocative montage of found images exploring the diverse resonances of geological landscapes and visual surfaces. Her work intuitively situates old pictures in new contexts to provoke surprising reactions and significative possibilities. Batia's work has been exhibited in various locations, such as the Fotomuseum in Rotterdam, Düsseldorf's Kunstraum and the Graham Foundation Chicago.





Batia Suter
Parallel Encyclopedia #2, 2016
Hardcover book, 592 pages, 21 x 28 cm
Published by Roma Publications

Batia Suter creates intuitive visual connections in her work; one image organically leads to another. In this way she creates new narratives from existing images, sometimes in the form of a book, sometimes as an artwork. Batia is fascinated by primordial themes. Why are people intrigued by the same images? Where does this universal attraction come from?

For the volumes *Parallel Encyclopedia* (2007) and *Parallel Encyclopedia #2* (2016) Batia collected existing drawings, photographs, paintings, portraits, snapshots, maps and other visual material, which she then combined and arranged so they were in dialogue, as it were, with each another. Beyond linguistic explanation, she allows meaning to arise from the images themselves, by allowing them to 'talk' to each other in different constellations. This prompts certain questions: How do the imagination and memories, both of Batia and the viewer, interrelate with images? When and how is the brain triggered? And through what? What kind of stories emerge from this?

Reptiles and snakes have been something Batia has had in mind as a theme for some time; the emergence of *Some Things Hidden* has given this a sudden urgency. In her artworks the eye is drawn to the pronounced patterns of the snakeskin, they can even be intimidating, while in fact, their purpose is to camouflage. In order to hide, nature uses striking colours, shapes and designs – somewhat of a contradiction.

Suter examines this paradoxical relationship between presence and absence in the way she presents the photographs of the snakes merging into their environment. Instead of turning over pages, the viewer looks at the photographs from a single viewpoint, creating an almost aggressive visual experience. It's rather like zooming in on what would be a 'thematic chapter' in her publication. The clustered images disappear, so to speak, into one another in their diversity, yet together they have an even greater impact.

Again, questions are triggered: How do her photographs relate to their surrounding images? To what extent do they exist by the grace of Batia's selections, either before or after? Does showing less actually deliver more in some cases? And to what degree is the visual identity of the snake dependent on its environment?

Batia's work consists of the composition of images and the creation of new relationships, through which both the whole and the parts redefine themselves. To bring about the exacting visual dialogue she creates, not only is sequence indispensable, but also context and location. Where her printed storylines come together during the design process, the final narrative in exhibition form only emerges once the images are in exactly the right relationship, both to each other and to the rest of their environment.

Some Things Hidden
Castrum Peregrini
18 - 26 November 2017

Framer Framed
18 January - 11 March 2018

Curators
Charlott Markus (concept)
Nina Folkersma (co-curator)

Artists
Hélène Amouzou, Alexis Blake, Sara Blokland, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Zhana Ivanova, Bertien van Manen, Charlott Markus, Shana Moulton, Femmy Otten, Marijn Ottenhof, Cauleen Smith, Batia Suter

Texts about the artists
Lietje Bauwens

David Whyte's text *Hiding* is printed with permission from Many Rivers Press, www.davidwhyte.com.

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Bas Merkies

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