

Trans— figurations

Curatorial and Artistic Research in an Age of Migrations

Museum of
Contemporary Art
of Barcelona

Friday 20 June –
Thursday 26 June 2014

Opening
Thursday 19 June 2014
7.30–10 pm

Public Programme
Friday 20 June 2014
7–9.30 pm

Free admission

Opening times

Location

Weekdays 11 am to 7.30 pm
Tuesday closed
Saturday 10 am to 9 pm
Sunday 10 am to 3 pm

MACBA Capella
Museum of Contemporary Art
of Barcelona
Plaça dels Àngels 1
Barcelona 08001, Spain

Public Programme:
Friday 20 June 2014

- 7–8 pm Lawrence Abu Hamdan
Talk
- 8.15–8.45 Leo Asemota
Film screening and discussion
- 9–9.30 Quinsy Gario
Performance

How is globalisation, digital media and changing patterns of migration changing our understanding and experience of the contemporary work of art, and how are contemporary artists engaging with curators to think about the condition of the contemporary through their work, its display and collection? How are curators working with new forms of artistic production, particularly less object-based practices of making, that fall outside conventional forms of display, collection and archive?

This 'ephemeral exhibition' brings together international artists and curators who have been working in collaboration as part of the major European MEA research project 'European Museums in an Age of Migrations' to consider these and other questions of artistic and curatorial urgency as museums begin to think about their future and role in the 21st century. The five collaborations are:

- MACBA in Barcelona with curator Bartomeu Mari and artist Lawrence Abu Hamdan
- Bétonsalon in Paris with curator Mélanie Bouteloup and artist Camille Henrot
- Whitechapel Gallery in London with curator Sofia Victorino and artist Kader Attia
- Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam with curators Jelle Bouwhuis / Kerstin Winking and artist Quinsy Gario
- Royal College of Art in London with curator Paul Goodwin and artist Leo Asemota

The exhibition reflects on the challenges and opportunities of curatorial and artistic research in the 21st century and the rise of new forms of practice such as performance, sound, and video which are both expanding the range of artists' interests and challenging conventional ideas of the 'art object' in museums and galleries.

The exhibition also considers how complex the interface is between issues of representation, globalisation, collection, curating, audiences, and technology – issues that have emerged as key themes of the four-year research project led by the Curating Contemporary Art programme at the Royal College of Art in London, directed by Victoria Walsh.

This exhibition has been curated by Bartomeu Mari and Victoria Walsh, with curatorial support from Paul Goodwin, and project co-ordination by Pamela Sepúlveda and Maite Muñoz.



Research pictures from the taxidermy laboratory of the Natural History Museum, Paris, 2014 © Camille Henrot

Camille Henrot / Bétonsalon

The Pale Fox and the Taxidermist: A Foray into Camille Henrot's Research

Camille Henrot is fascinated by the human need to shape a unified and organised world and her recent work focuses on cultures, practices and sciences that have historically tried to create an idealistic and utopian account of human knowledge. Conceived as both an artistic and curatorial work her project is based on the compulsive accumulation of items, images, and narratives that tend to deliver a totalizing view of the history of the universe. *The Pale Fox* is named after an anthropological study of the West African Dogon people published by Marcel Griaule and Germaine Dieterlen in 1965, presents part of the on-going research process and long-term collaboration with Bétonsalon (Centre for Art and

Research) and the Natural History Museum in Paris, putting into question the Western obsession with archives and cultural data preservation.

Camille Henrot (b. 1978) lives and works in New York. Recent solo exhibitions include the New Museum, New York (2014); New Orleans Museum of Art (2013); Slought Foundation, Philadelphia (2013); Kamel Mennour, Paris (2012); and Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris (2010). Group exhibitions include *Companionable Silences*, Nouvelle Vague, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013) and *A Disagreeable Object*, Sculpture Center, New York (2012). Henrot received the Silver Lion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013).

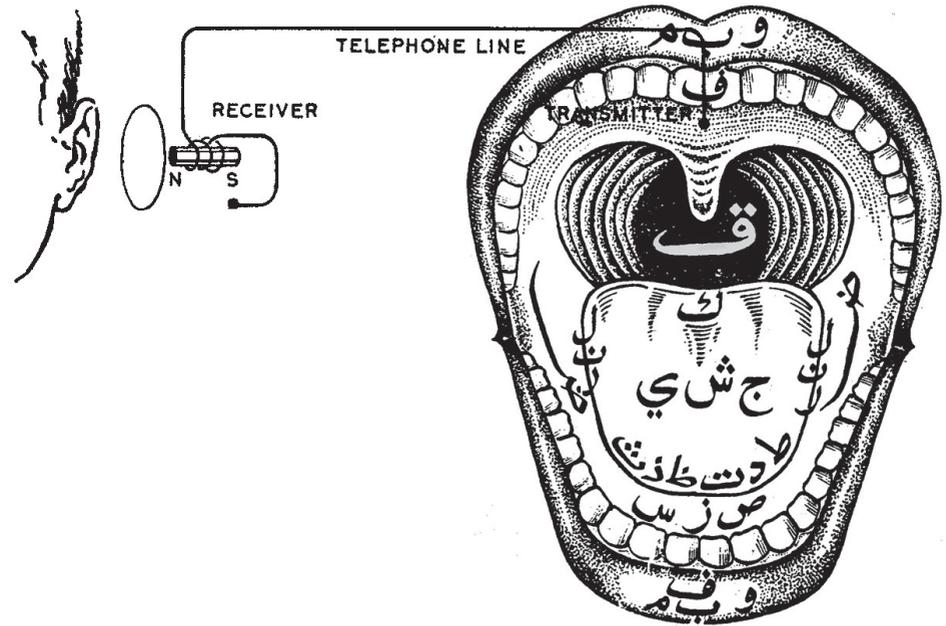


Kader Attia, Lecture-performance, 1 May 2014, Whitechapel Gallery, London. Courtesy Whitechapel Gallery, London.

Kader Attia / Whitechapel Gallery
From Material to Abstract

Kader Attia's lecture *From Material to Abstract* took place at the Whitechapel Gallery in London as part of a public programme for his commission *Continuum of Repair: The Light of Jacob's Ladder* (2013-2014). Attia's work is rooted in history and archival research, exploring hybrid objects and identities in an age of globalisation. The lecture developed with the RCA / MeLa project draws on his research on African music in the context of colonial and post-colonial relations of 'repair' and cultural exchange and appropriation. Attia's public performance highlights his interest in how ideas of 'form' and the history of the object have defined the understanding of what constitutes culture and memory in the post-colonial era, and raises important questions such as, how can history be performed in the here and now?

Kader Attia (b. 1970) lives and works in Berlin. He has exhibited widely since his first solo show in 1996 in Kinshasa-Congo. Recent projects include solo exhibitions at the Beirut Art Centre (2014) and Kunstwerke, Berlin (2013). Attia's work has also been shown at *Documenta 13*, Kassel, Tate Liverpool and Tate Modern; Centre Pompidou and the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. His work also featured at the Biennale of Contemporary African Art in Dakar (2014) and in the 5th Marrakech Biennial (2014).

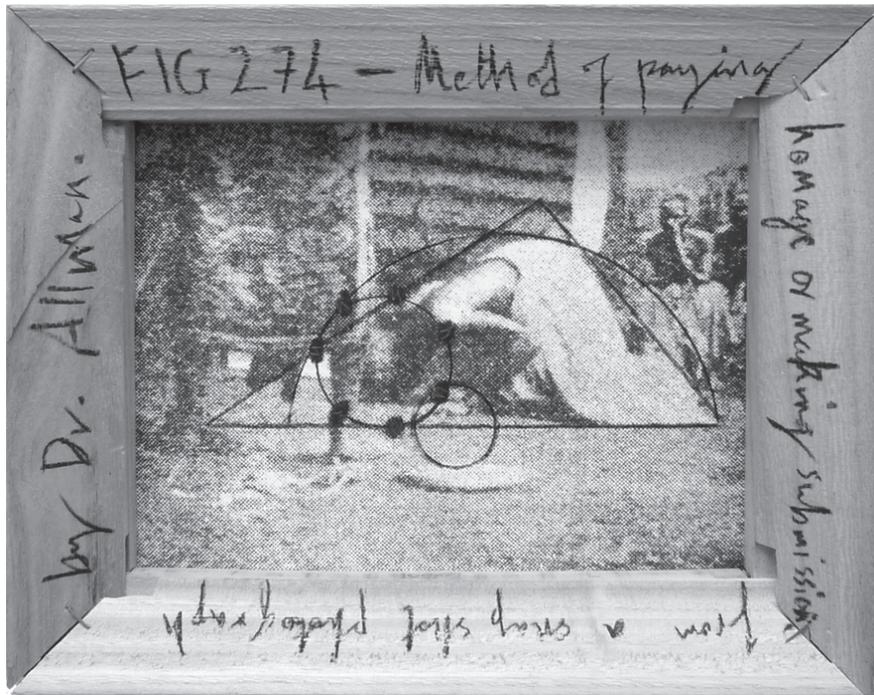


Lawrence Abu Hamdan 2014

Lawrence Abu Hamdan / Royal College of Art
Contra-Diction: speech against itself

Contra-Diction: speech against itself is an installation in-progress looking at the minor speech acts of the Druze religious community spread across Syria, Lebanon, Israel / Palestine and Jordan. Across the region the Druze name is synonymous with secrecy and they are stereotyped for their cross-border liminality as well as the changeability of their political positions. Following stories emerging from Syria that 18 Druze villages suddenly converted to Wahabi Islam this project looks at the ways in which the doctrine of the religious Druze minority has a specific interest in the voice and in speech through an ethico-religious practice called *Taqiyya*. By looking at the Druze theology and philosophy through the secret life of phonemes, this work attempts to show how minority-thinking can allow us to re-read fundamental issues in regards to silence, free speech and the territoriality of language.

Lawrence Abu Hamdan's (b.1985 Amman) work often deals with the relationship between listening and borders, human rights, testimony, truth and law, through the production of audio-visual installations, graphic design, sculpture, photography, workshops and performance. His solo exhibitions include *The Freedom Of Speech Itself* (2012) at Showroom, Group exhibitions include Tate Modern, London; M HKA Antwerp, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; the Beirut Art Center, and The 2012 Taipei Biennial.



Leo Asemota, *Geometry of Obeisance*, Charcoal on archival pigment print in artists' frame

Leo Asemota / Royal College of Art
Eo ipso

London based Nigerian artist Leo Asemota has been working on *The Ens Project* since Spring 2005. The multipartite artwork continues to be evolved in response to three key elements: the Igue ceremony of the Head practiced by the Edo people of Benin City, Nigeria; the Victorian age of invention, exploration and conquest (part of which was the 1897 sacking of Benin City by the British and the theft and dispersal to Western museums of the famous 'Benin Bronzes'); and Walter Benjamin's seminal treatise on art in the technological age. Central to the (Project's) artist's ideas are a range of materials such as coal, orhue (kaolin chalk), palm oil, iron and brass/bronze that relate and mediate complex histories and geographies of trade, conquest and technological transformation.

The works in this exhibition are part an expansive body of work of Asemota's discoveries and experiences in the course of *The Ens Project*. The photographs, documents and video in this installation convey ideas and the conceptual framework for the staging of *Eo ipso* the live art work Asemota considers to be the last component in *The Ens Project*.

www.theensproject.net



Quinsy Gario, *A Village Called Gario*, 2014 © Quinsy Gario

Quinsy Gario / Stedelijk Museum
Zwarte Piet is Racisme

Zwarte Piet is Racisme (Black Pete is Racism) and *A Village Called Gario* are two performance projects by Quinsy Gario. For both projects, Gario took specific locations as points of departure. The *Zwarte Piet is Racisme* problematises the figure of Zwarte Piet (Black Pete) that returns to the Netherlands every year in November, during the Saint Nicholas feast. Aspects of this performance project are shown in photographs, while for *A Village Called Gario* which will actually be staged at MACBA the artist takes a village called Gario in the Central Republic of Africa as the starting point for an imaginary trip. During this trip he traces possible ways of how his family ended up in the Caribbean with that last name. While touching upon the ways in which those places now negate their colonial and postcolonial heritage.

Quinsy Gario was born in Curaçao and raised in St. Maarten and the Netherlands.

Under the pseudonym T. Martinus, Gario he has self-published two poetry collections. He won the Hollandse Nieuwe 12 Theatermakers Prize 2011 and in 2012 he started his own radio show called ROET IN HET ETEN (Spanner in the works). His video work produced under the banner of NON EMPLOYEES has been shown on MTV Netherlands, and he is a member of the pan-African artist collective State of L3. Group exhibitions include Galleri Image (Denmark); Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Antwerpen (Belgium) and SMART Project Space and Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (Netherlands). He has performed in MC Theater (Amsterdam, Netherlands), Contact Theater (Manchester, United Kingdom) and Ballhaus Naunynstraße (Berlin, Germany).

MeLa – European Museums in an Age of Migrations

MELA is a four-year interdisciplinary research project funded in 2011 by the European Commission under the Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities Programme (Seventh Framework Programme), which is focused on questions of how the practice of artists, museums and curators, and the relationship between them is being transformed by an age characterised by intensive migration flows; fluid circulation of information, cultures and ideas, and by the political, economic and cultural process of creation and consolidation of the European Union.

