

Night 2

OFF THE WALL 2016

Artists' Notes





1

Patricio Ballesteros Ledesma
Buenos Aires, Argentina
ZAPPING, 2016

We watch TV, ji ji ji.



2

Mikey Peterson
Chicago, IL
Slip Away, 2014

Memories diverge from the experiences they intend to mirror. They emerge as an alternate reality we create and revise over time. These visions skew, as our minds focus on fragments of the original experiences—sometimes these visions warp the event to the point where they no longer represent the event but create an alternative version, a dream-like new reality that can influence our present selves. Maybe our selves and our lives are built upon this process of useful mis-remembering. In this one-shot video, buildings hide behind a natural impressionistic haze. The imagery is familiar, but it's always at a distance, as movement, light, and sound reinforces its surrealism. What we see is in constant flux, and the same can be said of what we view as Truth and Self.



3

Elena Knox
Sydney, Australia
Reinventing the Wheel, 2014

Reinventing the Wheel is a stop motion animation in which a poem plays out on a gameboard such as those seen on the television program *Wheel of Fortune*. As the contestants guess at phrases, the doll-like hostess who turns their guessed letters becomes a medium for her own message to the host and to viewers at home.



4

Tavarus Blackmonster
Sacramento, CA
The Meaning of it All, 2016

It would be difficult to describe this work because it is based on a feeling and not a narrative. People do not describe their feelings—they tell stories that make people think of the way they feel. In this regard this work is strictly visual; the audio was a jumping off point that influenced the visual expression.



5

Diego Bernaschina**Santiago, Chile***Código de señas (Sign code), 2015*

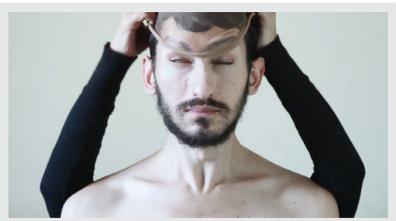
Using a proprietary non-verbal message from the Chilean deaf community, the work collects different scenes drawn from real situations—images of television, cyberspace, and sign language—to create a specific gestural production and visual perception that aims to bring a wider audience to their reality.



6

Adrián Regnier Chávez**Mexico City, Mexico***L., 2016*

L. places the viewer into an infinite fall through an ever-unfolding space tunnel. Its walls are made up of thousands of hexagonal cells, tessellated into a graphene-like matrix. Each cell displays one of the more than 10,000 photographs taken during Apollo's 5th, 8th, 10th, and 11th missions. With upwards of 500 images streaming in flashing streaks towards the viewer, *L.* continuously tightens the coil wrapped around them. It confronts viewers with the formidable scale of human's space race—by which humanity has transcended its natural limitations into the final frontier: outer space. Throughout its development, *L.* serves as a rather precise visual metaphor of a human birth canal; gradually bestowing upon the viewer each of the five human senses, submerged into a formative process that irrevocably links what inner and outer space could ever mean. The hypnotic, vertiginous rushing into nothingness—surrounded by humanity's greatest empress—reveals its ultimate purpose. *L.* was not the birth of any human being, but rather the collision trajectory described by one last nuclear bomb.



7

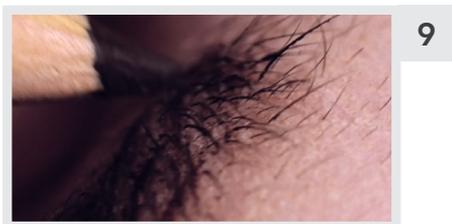
Deyan Clement**Belgrade, Serbia***YOU ARE FREE, BUT..., 2015*

The performative, somewhat masochistic repeated pulling of a sock over the artist's head—making it hard to breathe—parallels the silencing effect of passive-aggressive statements made towards LGBTQ+ persons in real life. *YOU ARE FREE, BUT...* was first shown during Belgrade's Pride Week (2015) in an exhibition exploring stereotypes of the LGBTQ+ community in Serbia.



Purple Moustacho
(Sissy Reyes & Jorge Mansilla)
Sydney, Australia
The Genderator, 2014

In this journey of humor and terror, the artists introduce us to the world of *The Genderator*, a modern age alchemist who believes pink is the new gold and has made it his mission to forever transform random objects of non-defined gender and “feminize” them, aided by the golden bowl of endless pink. The repetition of the alchemist’s process evolves from an intimate ritual of sensual liquid shapes and forms into a scaled revelation of his madness. The elaborate set grows as the frame progresses from abstracted close ups into majestic wide angles that reveal the extent of his work amidst a luscious Australian forest. Green and pink juxtapose each other as the frame reveals its forced perspective with the alchemist at the center of it all; the contrast between the two colors enhances the artificial quality of the pink objects as they soar against the nature of the landscape.



Yao Cong
London, England
Under Blue, 2015

Under Blue explores gender politics through beauty, pleasure, disgust, danger, the erotic and the artificial, imparting an uneasy feeling of voyeuristic power to the viewer. Makeup, as a mode of existence, is a seemingly gentle way to replace struggle with tranquility. The fragmented images underneath the makeup allows the catabolized object to regain focus.



Harriet Mishoulam
and Von Bilka
London, England
Lovesick Teenage Cyclops Pineapple,
2014

A lovesick, teenage, cyclops pineapple.



11

Stephanie Mercedes
Brooklyn, NY
1,000 Yellow Dahlias, 2016

1,000 Yellow Dahlias is a re-performance of a protest towards the presidential hopeful Donald Trump, in which the artist attempts to deliver a bouquet of ironic yellow dahlias—the national flower of Mexico—to the Republican candidate, but ultimately fails due to restrictive outside forces.



12

Heath Schultz
Austin, TX
*Typologies of Whiteness:
White men Cover Robert Johnson's
'Hellhound on my Trail'*, 2015

Typologies... is comprised of videos taken from YouTube of white men singing Robert Johnson's classic Delta Blues song "Hellhound on my Trail," juxtaposed with excerpts from various Black critical theorists calling into question the structural positioning of whiteness. Hellhounds can be understood as a reference to slave-owners sending bloodhounds to track the scent of escaped enslaved persons. Thus the re-performing of the song by white men is dubious at best, but also illustrates a common trend of appropriating and thus occluding black pain and expression. The excerpted texts act to destabilize the comfort of the men singing—to put the videos on trial, so to speak, in order to call into question the structural position the white male singers occupy in relation to Johnson's original expressions.



13

Alysse Stepanian
Los Angeles, CA
*#MemoryoftheUniverse | "Syria Planum:
For Water for Oil"*, 2016

As more humans and other animals are displaced due to climate change and drought, petro-political wars will be overshadowed by urgent needs such as access to fresh water. Historically, the bodies and reproductive organs of women and cows have been subjugated in patriarchal societies. The protagonist, half-human, half-cow, wanders the desolate Martian landscape and bears witness to destructive human behavior. As the world looks away from crimes that are unmet with restitution, their aftermaths resonate in the dark recesses of our minds; metaphorically, they continue to live in the memory of the universe, eternally recurring, until we find ways to change our consciousness and current state of affairs.



Jamaal Hasef Tolbert
Los Angeles, CA
Circles, 2016

Tolbert investigates the African Diaspora and trans-Atlantic memory and their effects on American social structure. *Circles* depicts outside elements in nature; an abstract observation.



Sthef Folgar
Montevideo, Uruguay
Natural Paradox, 2016

Natural Paradox explores the combined spaces between the artificial and the natural, the constructed territories where nature has become both functional and generic. From this union between the domesticated and the wild emerges a new territory of resonance, designed to resolve our political and cultural needs. What remains and what is transformed? Through focusing on the sensory experience I attempt to enter into this feeling of vertigo that separates what is seen from what exists, the unknown from the known. The eerie nocturnal silence allows a brief insight into the uncanny and limitless dimension of nature, although the incessant lights are a constant reminder of the formidable presence of the city.



Andrew Ellis Johnson
Pittsburgh, PA
Massacre of the Innocents, 2015

Massacre of the Innocents is an elegy to Tamir Rice, a boy killed by Cleveland police in 2014. Though the police dispatch was told that Tamir was “probably a juvenile” with a “probably fake” gun, police shot him within two seconds upon arriving and failed to administer first aid. There was no conviction for this summary execution. Toy objects (teething rings, Tinker Toys, marbles, police cars and remote controls) and sounds rotate around the bull’s eye of target practice sheets, representing different developmental stages of childhood. Toys designed to teach the alphabet breathe the letter “H” and spell out “N.R.A.” while others play mechanized ditties and the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” using the music from “John Brown’s Body.” The target practice sheets are seen from behind, so one can imagine being in the crosshairs and crossfire. Bullets are aimed at us, rather than at some other innocent. Authority is capricious, exerted with bias, and too often with fatal results.



17

Michael R Hyman
Washington, DC
Somewhere I Read, 2016

A Black Lives Matter digital frieze in video format depicting the African American experience in the United States, with a voice over from Dr. Martin Luther King's historic last speech. The video montage is a direct question as well as a statement to white America taken from a James Baldwin passage: would America have been America without its Negroes?



18

Michael Williams
Los Angeles, CA
Stay Woke, 2015

Exploring territory and narratives beyond given socio-cultural expectations is where I feel most fluent, with a key theme being humanising the marginalised. I want to present a broader, deeper representation of black male identity. There's a narrative written for how we are portrayed or sometimes even what we imagine ourselves to be—I wanted to counter that picture. *Stay Woke* is an exploded moment; in a series of visually surreal monologues, a man learns to listen to the lines of instinct, experience, choice, and bravery that go into any decision. We encounter these characters as facets of his subconscious moving him from thought to action, calling him (and our audience) back to the world and on to something higher. It's my own evolution of the past few years. The idea of being 'woke' has been around a while and the film's title post-Ferguson started to feel more political, but I kept it as I feel being woke to the grim realities of life is only part of our potential as complex individuals. The film is a mark of love, an affirmation, and a call towards a higher consciousness.

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Stephanie Mercedes (Brooklyn, NY)

Harriet Mishoulam and Von Bilka (Chicago, IL)

Mikey Peterson (Chicago, IL)

Adrián Regnier Chávez (Mexico City, Mexico)

Heath Schultz (Austin, TX)

Alyse Stepanian (Los Angeles, CA)

Jamaal Hasef Tolbert (Los Angeles, CA)

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