

PRIX DE ROME

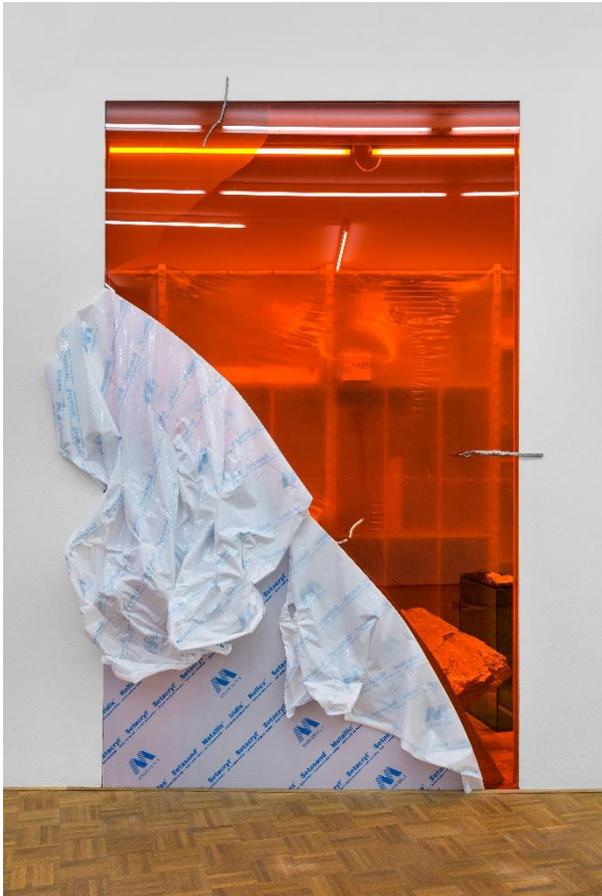
Exhibition Prix de Rome Visual arts 2017

Melanie Bonajo, Rana Hamadeh, Saskia Noor van Imhoff, Katarina Zdjelar

Kunsthal Rotterdam: 2 December 2017 - 25 February 2018
In collaboration with Mondriaan Fund

Saskia Noor van Imhoff

+31.00¹



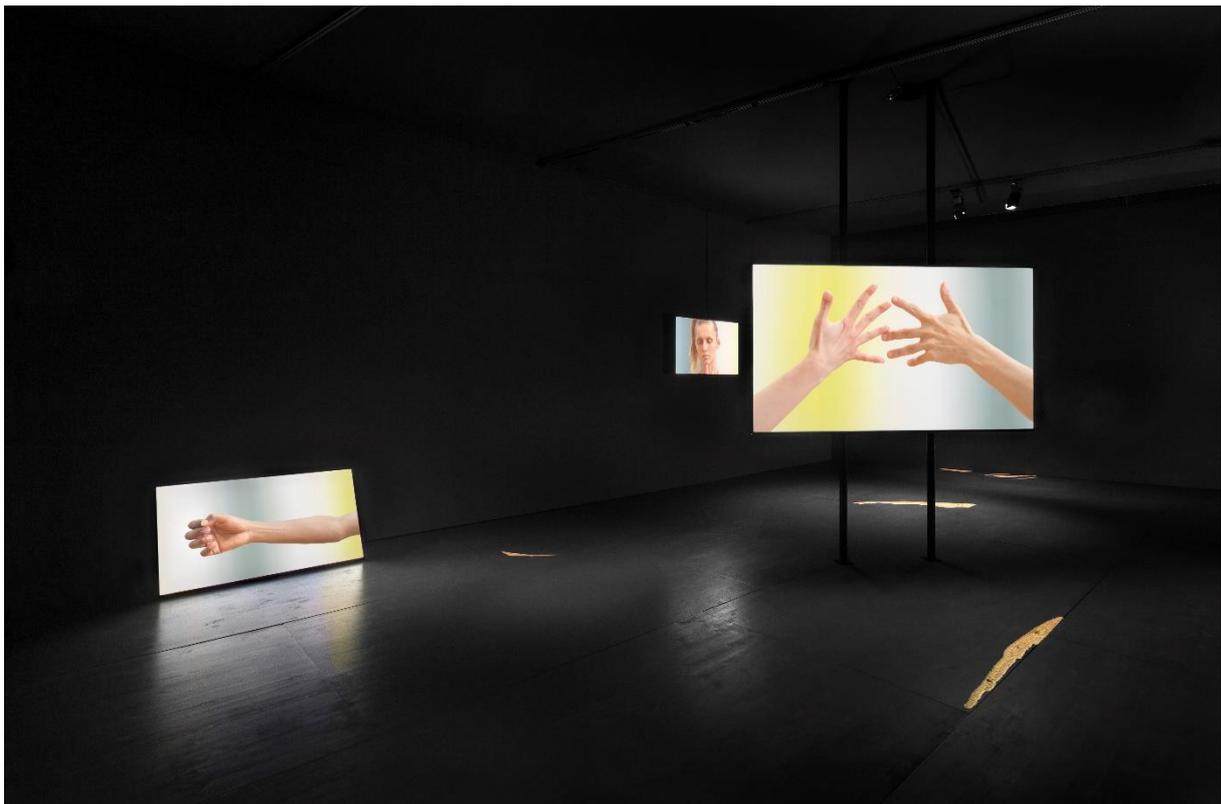
1. Fairly soft, very heavy, semi-hard (3–3.5), ductile, malleable, hackly fracture (can be scratched with a fingernail). Opaque with metallic lustre. Very thin sheets are translucent, letting through weak, greenish light. Dissolves easily, leaving the solution pale-blue

Saskia Noor van Imhoff (Mission, Canada, 1982) lives and works in Amsterdam. She studied at the Rietveld Academy and was a resident at De Ateliers and Kunstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin. Van Imhoff's installations originate from a research into displaying, systematizing and conserving (art) objects. The context that determines the value and narrative of an object, the architecture of a space and the system-world of a whole are used for her own associative reading of new connections between art and the everyday. Her installations are built up from a diversity of original and found objects, works by herself and others, texts, diagrams, an archive of images found online and the documentation of previous exhibitions. Her specific manner of ordering the objects form a system in itself. The numerical title, given to each one of her exhibitions, refers directly to these systems: the seriality in this wilful arrangement constitutes a continuation, a hesitation, a new start over and over again. In her space-filling installations, Van Imhoff starts from the conditions of the context in which she exhibits her work.

In the installation for the Prix de Rome, #+31.00, Van Imhoff investigates how a space can serve as an artificial vitrine. Objects in a vitrine appear to be frozen, as if they float in a temporary vacuum. In a similar way, we attempt to smoothen and conserve ourselves, a duration that is connected to a personal state. In the installation #+31.00 the question arises if dismantling a hidden system doesn't create at the same time a new construction. How do invisible, immaterial and associative properties of a space define our understanding of our surroundings?

Katarina Zdjelar

Not a Pillar Not a Pile
(Tanz fur Dore Hoyer)



Multichannel audio-video work, 5'50" loop

Katarina Zdjelar (Belgrade/ SFRY, 1979) lives and works in Rotterdam. She studied at Piet Zwart Instituut, Rotterdam, among other academies. In her videos, audio works and other projects, she explores how people perform and reinvent their own identities, using their voice, language and bodily gestures to move within and between cultures and societies. Moving seamlessly between natural and staged actions and personae, Zdjelar's films oscillate between artifice and reality, calling us to witness the ambiguity, struggle and beauty of human experience.

Zdjelar's new work for the Prix de Rome *Not a Pillar not a Pile (Dance for Dore Hoyer)* is inspired by archival documents from an all-women's dance studio founded in 1945 in post-war Dresden by Dore Hoyer, a choreographer and expressionist dancer, whose choreographies took the graphic works of artist Käthe Kollwitz as their departure point. Zdjelar's new film installation departs from this artistic meeting between Kollwitz and Hoyer as a manifestation of shared affinities with (proto) feminist pacifism, solidarity and collective transformation across the barriers of time, class and social difference. Drawing the past into the present, Zdjelar has gathered an international group of dancers and activists to create this filmic work. Their costumes and the film set bear a pattern created by women workers of Pausa textile factory in Germany, whose anti-facist resistance resonates with that of Hoyer and of Kollwitz, whose graphic works are in turn echoed in the wood cut floor panels. In the resulting film installation one body encounters another as a site of resistance and possibility, pointing to the fragile agency of collective action in the present.

Melanie Bonajo
Progress vs Sunsets



HD-Video
"00"48"24
Installation with Theo Demans

Melanie Bonajo (Heerlen, 1978) lives and works in Amsterdam. She studied at the Rietveld Academy and was a resident at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam and the ISCP in New York. Her work consists of films, performances related to how technological advances and commodity based pleasures increase feelings of alienation and removing a sense of belonging in an individual.

Can we send "funny" animal videos into space for aliens to discover the Earth's ecosystem?

This and other questions are the ones that Bonajo investigates for the second part of her trilogy, *Progress vs. Sunsets* (2017), a trilogy examining extinction or endangerment of vulnerable groups through techno-capital development, but also extinction in an abstract sense, extinction of feelings and thought forms. It seems our culture is tone deaf to the non-human world. How does animal representation online influence the prolonging of a species life in the "wild" or in captivity? Paying attention to the animal online tells us something about our own species future, about who is protected on this planet and who is not.

The lives of non-human animals and their online representation is closely interwoven and that is why the symbol of the animal has drastically changed over the past couple of years. The film "Progress vs Sunsets" illustrates how our relationship to nature has changed through the popularization of amateur-nature photography and film on the Internet. This is shown through the eyes and voice of children, the next generation, who seem to pinpoint and address easily the complicated issues around animal rights, bio-politics, dwindling resources, ecology, anthropomorphism in which Nature, as the ultimate other is seen as a utilitarian object outside of ourselves and the implications these ethics have on human desires, emotions, emotiveness and sentimentality towards "the others".

On another level the film addresses how adults often prejudice and accompany systematic discrimination against young people, applying an adult model of thinking and being on a young child caused by a fear to the child's view of self that trades on rejecting and excluding child-subjectivity, or magical non-dualistic way of thinking, which has always been excluded of Western thinking. This view holds that compassion depends on emotions, and that emotions lead to attachments. These emotions and attachments are traditionally perceived as irrational leading to vulnerability and consequent suffering within a state of acknowledging interrelatedness. This film points out the opposite. Affective connections, including empathy and compassion, have a rational and practical component and which if devaluated justify oppression and distorts our relationship to each other, with the earth and other animals and consequently our own survival as a species.

Rana Hamadeh

The Ten Murders of Josephine
[The Tongue Twister]



Movement from the Opera, The Ten Murders of Josephine, Act III.
8-Channel Sound installation with Disklavier & Telephone

Rana Hamadeh (Beirut/Lebanon, 1983) lives and works in Rotterdam. She received her MFA from the Dutch Art Institute/ArtEZ in Enschede. She develops longstanding discursive projects like her ongoing project *Alien Encounters* which has since 2011 been operating as an incubator for a growing series of works that examine corporate and state-sponsored forms of violence and their enabling legal apparatuses.

Also her largescale opera project, *The Ten Murders of Josephine* is part of this series. The first part of the opera can be regarded as a living, constantly changing sound-play and is on show at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam. Inherited from the genre of legal spectacle, and from Hamadeh's earlier work on the relations of justice and theatre, *The Ten Murders of Josephine* explores the constitutive conditions of 'validity' within legal discourse. It asks, among other questions, 'How can one testify, in the present, to what has been erased by colonial, racial and patriarchal violence?'. And can testimony itself operate outside the violent logics of erasure that constitute legal language? In response to these questions, Hamadeh's opera can be understood as a cacophonous monument to absent speech; to all that is unmarked and unmarkable; unspoken and unspeakable. Her work at the Prix de Rome exhibition points towards an 'erased archive of erasure'; a violence that is never attended to. Hamadeh asks, what would it require to constitute oneself, or to emerge as a testimonial subject, not only outside the bounds of the court of law, but even further, in place of the legal subject? The work in this exhibition is an act from the opera, which will be performed as a whole on 14 and 15 December at Schouwburg Rotterdam.

For more information and press images: prixderome.nl/en/press

Photography installation views: Daniel Nicolas