

Visitors Guide  
Fall 2015

# Program September 2015–January 2016

## *In Light Of 25 Years*

27 January 2015–14 February 2016

GROUND FLOOR

---

## *Bit Rot*

Douglas Coupland

11 September 2015–3 January 2016

SECOND FLOOR

---

## *Art In The Age Of... Asymmetrical Warfare*

11 September 2015–3 January 2016

THIRD FLOOR

---

## *Character Is Fate*

Willem de Rooij

27 January 2015–3 January 2016

THIRD FLOOR

# Director's Welcome

Witte de With is delighted to “mindscape” with novelist and artist Douglas Coupland this season. Taking its title from the phenomenon in which digital data spontaneously and quickly decomposes, *Bit Rot*—his first major solo exhibition in Europe—reveals Coupland’s take on globalization, terror, the Internet, pop culture, social media, and the resulting accelerated image economy. I invite you to engage with *Bit Rot*, in which memory, loss, fame, destruction, and creation are all subjects for contemplation, and to pick up your paperback copy of Coupland’s collection of new and existing short stories and essays published by Witte de With Publishers at our bookstore downstairs.

On our third floor, Witte de With has been presenting the three-part exhibition series *Art In The Age Of...* as part of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary program throughout the year, investigating future vectors of art production and highlighting the circulation of art and its underlying economies, its spread and infectious expanse, with a specific focus on the role of raw materials, destruction, and computation within art’s creation. Currently on view, *Art In The Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare* marks the final chapter of this program and considers the irregular and often uneven nature of the hybrid battlefield today, while highlighting the role of artists, as they unravel the complex infrastructures of contemporary warfare.

Also on view is *Character Is Fate*, an installation by artist Willem de Rooij commissioned for Witte de With’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, showcasing an astrological birth chart Piet Mondrian had drawn up in 1911. A special display system that relates to the solar calendar allows for the birth chart to be illuminated by the sun each day.

On the occasion of our anniversary, please also remember to visit the ongoing commissions featured in our ground-floor space. This season we have invited Zin Taylor, Camille Henrot, Germaine Kruij, and Raimundas Malašauskas to reflect with us on our institution’s mercurial past. Presented on a large-scale light box, their takes on the sediments of our archive are visible to the city day and night. As we mark this key milestone for Witte de With, we hope you will join us at the center for the rest of the year, and share your own experience online using #WDW25.

With best wishes,  
Defne Ayas

# In Light Of 25 Years

## GROUND FLOOR

With: Özlem Altın, Wineke Gartz, Camille Henrot, Germaine Kruij, Mahony, Raimundas Malašauskas, Zin Taylor, Freek Wambacq, Christopher Williams, and Xu Zhen.

‘The image of art that Witte de With disseminates is a universal and autonomous one. It is dissemination that should not prevent the construction of a framework which can tell us, for example, something about the glamour of art and its capacity for communication, about art from beyond Europe or North America, or about the terror of current events.’

Introductory essay in *The Lectures*, Witte de With Publishers, 1990

On the occasion of its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Witte de With examines its history, dedicating its ground-floor gallery to a series of commissioned presentations by a select group of contemporary artists. Each participant has created an image-based work that analyzes certain sediments of contemporary art history. Presented on a large-scale double-sided light box these anniversary commissions are visible to the city day and night.

Throughout the year, *In Light Of 25 Years* functions as a space for artists and curators to respond to developments in contemporary art, its landscape and possibilities, departing from Witte de With’s past program. Where can or should we go in the next twenty-five years, when questions of autonomy and universalism, or critical reflections on the global dissemination and power of art, are still as urgent today as they were in 1990?

## FALL / WINTER PRESENTATIONS

Zin Taylor  
18 August–20 September 2015

Camille Henrot  
22 September–25 October 2015

Germaine Kruij  
27 October–29 November 2015

Raimundas Malašauskas  
1 December 2015–3 January 2016

# Character Is Fate

## Willem de Rooij

THIRD FLOOR

*Character Is Fate* showcases an astrological birth chart Piet Mondrian had made in 1911. A special display system that relates to the solar calendar allows for the birth chart to be illuminated by the sun, best seen from 2.15pm to 2.30pm each day. While considering the conservational parameters of displaying historical objects, *Character Is Fate* also visualizes Witte de With's physical position in relation to the sun.

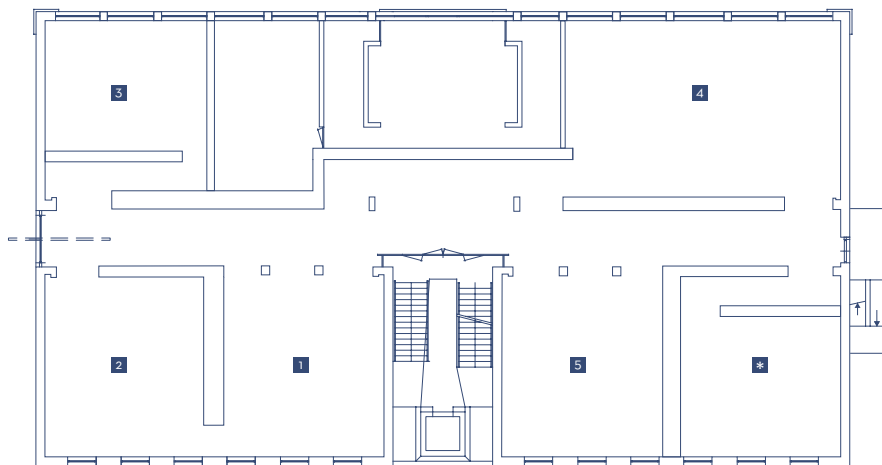
In late 1911 artist Piet Mondrian was about to move to Paris and leave his native country of the Netherlands behind. During this period of artistic and personal transformation he turned to theosophist Adriaan van de Vijssel for an astrological reading. Mondrian was born under the sign of Pisces on 7 March 1872, and according to his horoscope was "very susceptible and [had] psychic tendencies." He was "able to feel things without being able to give an explanation of how this knowledge was obtained, [with] a mind that can express itself diplomatically, calmly, and systematically."

Special thanks goes to the Netherlands Institute for Art History (RKD) in The Hague for their generous loan of Piet Mondrian's original horoscope. The loan also marks a first-time collaboration between the RKD and Witte de With, which will be continued annually.

Accompanying this work is *Character is Fate: Piet Mondrian's Horoscope*, an artist book by Willem de Rooij that takes as its focus the historical and unique documents of Piet Mondrian's horoscopes. In addition to reprints of the original horoscopes and the related readings, the publication also includes texts by Wietse Coppes (editor of the Mondrian Edition Project, RKD, the Netherlands) and Kocku von Stuckrad (professor of religious studies and dean of the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Groningen, the Netherlands).

The book is available in our bookshop and online via [www.wdw.nl](http://www.wdw.nl)

# Exhibition Floor Plan



# Art In The Age Of... Asymmetrical Warfare

THIRD FLOOR

With: Abbas Akhavan, Sven Augustijnen, James Bridle, Broomberg & Chanarin, Crass, Claire Evans, John Gerrard, Terence Gower, Glenn Kaino, Navine G. Khan-Dossos, Trevor Paglen with Jacob Appelbaum, Mohammad Salemy, Susan Schuppli & Tom Tlalim, Nida Sinnokrot, Thomson & Craighead, and José Antonio Vega Macotela.

Just as World War II began with a charge on horseback, and ended with the atomic bomb, the technological escalation of killing machines continues today. *Art In The Age Of... Asymmetrical Warfare*, the third and final iteration of Witte de With's year-long focus on the social implications of applied science as recorded through the vector of art, considers the irregular, and often uneven nature of the hybrid battlefield. As always, war is ever-present, however, its theater has now extended from the so-called real to the virtual. While hard power is still asserted face-to-face and hand-to-hand, remotely controlled weaponry and other means of telecommunicated violence are broadcast and delivered digitally through cyber attacks, and via social media propaganda platforms. Not surprisingly, these new channels have created their own forms of representation in which morale and information have become equal to, or are greater than, traditional military superiority. Instead of simply producing images of war, a new war of images is being fought and sold. As such, *Art In The*

*Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare* asks the question: What role do artists play when they slip into these networks and try to reveal the engines and effects of contemporary conflict?

Valences between presentations develop various leitmotifs including subjects such as diplomacy, media, extra-judicial killing, computation and coding, military and guerrilla tactics, and of course, weaponry. In addition to the artworks, several artifacts will join the exhibition including a real-time global cyber attack monitor as well as an animated map of the international arms trade and nuclear detonations.

As the last iteration in the three part series, this exhibition carries forward three artistic positions from the preceding show, *Art In The Age Of...Planetary Computation*. Works by Trevor Paglen and Navine G. Khan-Dossos remain on view, whilst artist John Gerrard presents a new duo of simulations. This slip-page recontextualises the works to explore the interrelation of computation and conflict.

# Works

## STAIRWELL

Mohammad Salemy

[www.google.de/webhp?sourceid=chrome\\_instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=what%20were%20you%20doing%20on%209%2F11%3F](http://www.google.de/webhp?sourceid=chrome_instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=what%20were%20you%20doing%20on%209%2F11%3F), 2015

Two broadcasts of the 9/11 attacks, reconstructed from the archives of CNN and FOX, show how the most infamous asymmetrical attack was able to hijack the already existing infrastructure of 24-hour news media to create the largest ever global media event in real-time; what the artist has termed an example of “televisual hyper-intersubjectivity.” The channels are synchronized but split, to highlight and disrupt the technological production of a synthetic sense of global simultaneity as the whole world supposedly watched at the same time.

## ROOF

Abbas Akhavan

*Study for a Blue Shield, 2011/2015*

An abstract shape is cut out of the gallery wall, outside on the roof a blue and white shield lies facing the sky. Created in The Hague in 1954, the crest of The International Committee of the Blue Shield adorns the doorways of cultural institutions worldwide to prevent their destruction during international conflicts. When America invaded Iraq in 2003, museum staff marked the same shield on the roof of the National Museum of Iraq in order to ostensibly guard against its destruction during aerial bombings.

## ENTRANCE WALL

Claire Evans

*Modern Warfare, 2010*

Matching critical acclaim with overwhelming box office success, 2009's *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*, a first-person shooter video game, courts an equal measure of controversy through its 4<sup>th</sup> mission. During the level, a player assumes the character of a deep cover CIA agent leading a group of gunmen to massacre passengers at a Moscow airport. As the plot develops, this false-flag attack induces a fictive World War III; in real life, far-right terrorist Anders Breivik would go on to cite the game as a form of 'situational training' for the 2011 Norway attacks in his deranged manifesto. Although the main player may personally chose to abstain from attacking civilians during the mission, Evans' *Modern Warfare*, confronts and mutates gameplay so that every television and computer screen is destroyed by a different kind of 'fugitive' player instead.

## Crass

*Thatchergate, 1982*

*Thatchergate* is the colloquial title of a hoax perpetrated by members of the anarcho-punk band Crass during the aftermath of the 1982 Falklands War. Using excerpts from speeches by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, a recording was spliced together which purported to be a telephone conversation between the two leaders. During the course of the tape, Reagan seems to state his intention to use Europe as a battle front to show Soviet leaders the United States' resolve in a nuclear conflict, while Thatcher appears to imply that British navy cruiser HMS Sheffield was deliberately sunk to escalate the war. When the recording, which was leaked to Dutch journalists, surfaced, it was initially considered



by the United States Department of State to have been propaganda produced by the Soviet KGB. In January 2014, official government documents were released to the National Archives revealing the tape had also raised concerns at MI6; the British Secret Intelligence Service.

**Small arms and ammunition trade map documenting the period 1992–2010** by Google as part of Google Ideas INFO (Illicit Networks, Forces in Opposition) Summit with support from the Igarape Institute and data provided by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) small arms database.

**Interactive map of real time cyber attacks** by threat intelligence firm Norse.

## CORRIDOR

Navine G. Khan-Dossos

*My TV Ain't HD, That's Too Real*, 2015

This mural is the result of multiple paintings executed in layers across the course of the previous exhibition, *Art In The Age Of... Planetary Computation*. Each is informed by current global events, scaled to the size of the largest commercial television. Titles of these layers include: *Geolocating The James Foley Execution Video*, *The Evolution of Beliefs and Strategic Behavior*, *Mother Of All Terrorists (Samantha Lewthwaite)*, and *Operation Inherent Resolve*. The language of the paintings is both informational (referencing diagrams, actual algorithmic imaging patterns, parametric modeling, and color calibration tests) and Aniconic (the avoidance of figurative images as practiced in Islamic and other forms of religious art).

## ROOM 1

**Trevor Paglen together with Jacob Appelbaum**  
*Autonomy Cube*, 2014

Several Internet-connected computers are housed within this sculpture to create an open Wi-Fi hotspot called *Autonomy Cube*, but *Autonomy Cube* does not provide a normal Internet connection. The sculpture routes all of its Wi-Fi traffic over Tor, a global network

of thousands of volunteer-run servers, relays, and services designed to help anonymize data. In addition, *Autonomy Cube* is itself a Tor relay that can be used by others around the world to anonymize their Internet use, for private and military purposes.

James Bridle

*Fraunhofer Lines 006 (MH17 Documents A)*,

*Fraunhofer Lines 007 (MH17 Documents B)*,

*Fraunhofer Lines 008 (MH17 Documents C)*, 2015

Here, Bridle employs Fraunhofer lines—a technique that visualizes the colors of the sun's radiation lost before hitting the earth's surface—to signify redactions in documents released by the Dutch government in the wake of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17. Journalists at the time complained that the information was heavily censored, prompting speculation as to how much the government was aware of the risks of flying over conflict-torn Ukraine. As a way to amplify the paradox of these semi-disclosures by the government, Bridle produced a set of prints by scanning the document through facial recognition software—not unlike the kind used by Transportation Security Administration in the United States and other similar border and airport control services—to plot spectrographs dependent on the amount of light that was blocked by the intentionally obscured marks on the reports' pages.

## ROOM 2

John Gerrard

*Exercise (Djibouti)*, 2012 and 2015

*Exercise (Djibouti)* harnesses simulation and motion-capture technologies to create a temporal collage in which disciplined athletic bodies perform a perpetual militarized exercise of strategic capability and intent. On a simulation of the the landscape of Djibouti, an African country that plays host to many US and other military bases, two teams of computer-generated figures meet daily at dawn to initiate a series of cryptic gestural routines—precise, repetitive, faintly antagonistic. The figures in *Exercise (Djibouti)* were generated by engaging a group of elite athletes in training for

the 2012 London Olympics, whose actual movements were converted to data with the latest motion-capture technologies. Neither completely synthetic nor strictly real, the work exists in 'real time' (Djibouti: GMT +3 hours), orbiting over a yearly cycle that incorporates the movements of sun, moon, and stars. In this exhibition, *Exercise (Djibouti)* is flanked by a new version of the work that sets up a drone-like view of the same action so as to create a dual-camera diptych.

José Antonio Vega Macotela  
*Murmurs*, 2011

Waged between the Mexican government, domestic and multinational drug cartels including Chinese, Colombian, Italian, and Venezuelan crime syndicates among others, as well as the United States, the Mexican Drug War is an ongoing low-intensity asymmetrical war that has claimed over 100,000 lives and displaced over 1.6 million persons. *Murmurs* utilizes an anamorphic writing code used in Mexican prisons, which the artist learned from a detained drug trafficker. Macotela inserted a series of advertisements using this code in *El Sol de Mexico*, a national Mexican newspaper, which infamously ran a death count of the conflict on its front page. To read the phrases viewers have to position themselves on their knees with their chests and chins pressed against the wall. Only in this position of prayer, or imminent execution, can one decode each phrase.

Susan Schuppli & Tom Tlalim  
*Uneasy Listening*, 2014

As American strategies around the 'War on Terror' shifted in 2009 from secret detention camps to targeted assassinations under the Obama administration, Predator and Reaper drones have come to saturate the airspace over the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of north-west Pakistan. Their ubiquitous presence, signalled by low-frequency emissions, has become a permanent feature of the skies along the Afghan border. Although various organizations, most notably the Bureau of

Investigative Journalism based in the United Kingdom, try to maintain comprehensive datasets of reported casualties (fatalities and injuries) from drone strikes in Pakistan, these numbers do not begin to represent the injurious nature of what it means to live under the constant sonic menace of drones, as made evident in this sound installation.

### ROOM 3

Thomson & Craighead  
*A Short Film About War, 2009-10*

Made entirely from information found on the World Wide Web, *A Short Film About War* takes viewers to a variety of war zones globally as seen through the collective eyes of Flickr, and as witnessed by a variety of military and civilian bloggers. As the ostensibly documentary 'film' plays out, a second screen logs the provenance of images, blog fragments, and GPS locations of each element comprising the work. In offering this tautology, the artists attempt to explore and reveal the way in which information changes as it is gathered and mediated and how this distorts meaning—especially for the wealthy minority of the world's users of high-speed broadband networks, who have become used to the treacherously persuasive panoptic view that Google Earth (and the World Wide Web) appears to give us.

### ROOM 4

Sven Augustijnen, "*L'histoire est simple et édifiante.*" *Une sélection d'articles parus dans Paris Match, deuxième partie 1973-1976, troisième partie 1976-2014*, 2015

The latest iterations of the series "*L'histoire est simple et édifiante*" focus on war photography published by *Paris Match* during during 1973-76 and 1976-2014. Noticeably these eras saw the magazine shrink in scale, while the printing shifted from black and white, to color. Assembled as a frieze of images and text, the installation charts the conflicts of the day by tracking the visual appearance of the Belgian made F.A.L. rifle, particularly in post-colonial conflicts. Although the gun was nicknamed the 'right arm of the free world' due to its almost

universal adaption by NATO member states, Augustijnen's work evidences the firearms used on both sides of the Cold War divide. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the rifle consistently appears in conflicts around the world, testifying its long use, and trade across both legal and unlawful pathways.

**Broomberg & Chanarin**

*The Day Nobody Died IV, June 10, 2008*

*The Day Nobody Died IV, June 10* denies traditional modes of war reportage, particularly the images staged carefully by the military through controlled access to sites. Embedded with the British Army in Afghanistan, the artists took only a roll of photographic paper, and left their cameras behind. As fate would have it, they arrived during the deadliest month of the American war in Afghanistan. On the first day a BBC fixer was executed, and nine Afghan soldiers were killed in a suicide attack. Casualties continued until the fifth day when nobody died. In response to these events, the artists unrolled a six-meter section of photographic paper on this day, and exposed it to the sun for twenty seconds.

**ROOM 5**

**Glenn Kaino**

*Now Do I Repay A Period Won (Syria), 2014*

For this work, one of several that each bear the palindromic title *Now Do I Repay A Period Won* (2014), Kaino hurled rocks at rectangular pieces of polished steel arranged in the shape of the windows of the United States Embassy in Damascus, Syria (now closed for normal consular services). The work meditates on the transformation of rubble into projectile and object into weapon, so that every recorded impact of a rock on the polished steel becomes a symbol of improvised resistance.

**Terence Gower**

*Cause and Effect?, 2012-14*

A set of three large leporello sheets document three interrelated timelines: 1) the history of the Foreign Buildings Operations office (FBO)—an obsolete arm of the US State Department

responsible for constructing new overseas embassies—from its inception in 1946 until 1985; 2) a list, spanning the same time period, of US-led military operations (often by the CIA) whose aim was 'regime change' and similar counterinsurgency actions; and 3) a list of attacks on US foreign properties from 1967-85. On a base level, it's easy to read the American armed expeditions as the 'causes' (i.e. the US-backed Iranian coup of 1953), and the assaults on overseas American holdings as retaliation (i.e. the Iranian Hostage Crisis); however, Gower is itching at another narrative as well: originally these embassies were designed by avant-garde architects such as Walter Gropius and Eero Saarinen to express the image of the US as an "open, dynamic and cooperative modern entity", however, these hospitable façades later darkened as nameless architects were pressed with a new design directive; fortifications at all costs.

**Nida Sinnokrot**

*Rubber-Coated Rock, All-Stars 02, 2015*

Recalling rubber-coated bullets, these sardonically named objects belie a tragic imbalance of power, their weight evoked in the formal dialogue between nature found at hand and nature transformed by technology. Made from rubble, stone, discarded balls and lashings collected in Jerusalem, a threshold of possibility emerges as these potential projectiles curiously take on anthropomorphic features in the moment before impact.

# Public Program

## ARTISTS IN CONVERSATION

10 September 2015, 4–6pm

Speakers: Alexandra Bradford (researcher, UK), James Bridle (artist and writer, UK), Douglas Coupland (artist and writer, CA), Femke Herregraven (artist and designer, NL), Navine G. Khan-Dossos (artist, UK), and Mohammad Salemy (curator and critic, CA/IR).

*Artists in Conversation* provides a platform for participants from which to expand upon their practice and research in dialogue with invited speakers. On the eve of the opening of our two new exhibitions, *Art In The Age Of... Asymmetrical Warfare* and *Bit Rot* by Douglas Coupland, invited artists, designers, researchers, and writers will share their thoughts on issues stemming from the inquiries of each. From ISIS's recruitment in Europe to information gathering, the mediation of war to the impact of financial technologies.

---

## ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE

### Talks and Screenings Series

This tripartite series of film nights will engage with artists, academics, and designers who have conducted long-term research in the field of war studies, media theory, and geopolitics. Each participant has been invited to curate a special event that frames and contextualizes their research. Evening screenings will be accompanied by in-depth discussions of the issues raised in the films, including civil liberty, the reach of international law within the battlefield, the impact of covert military activity on human rights, and the effect of war's mediation through photography, film, news channels, and across social media.

## Susan Schuppli

5 November 2015, 6–9pm

What kind of warfare have we pursued since Obama took over directing the 'War on Terror'? Are drone attacks and aerial surveillance legal? Susan Schuppli hosts a filmic interlude into her practice as an artist, researcher and pedagogue in relation to her work *Uneasy Listening* on view at Witte de With as part of *Art In the Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare*. Schuppli will be in conversation with investigative journalist Chris Wood, author of *Sudden Justice: America's Drone Wars*, to explicate and expand upon their research into the legality of the proliferation of the use of drones for covert surveillance and lethal attacks. Their discussion will be punctuated with extracts from the film *Drone* (2014), directed by Tot Hessen Schei, which explores drone warfare, from the recruitment of pilots at gaming conventions, to their impact on the ground, and the civil rights activists campaigning against their use.

## Metahaven

26 November 2015

Witte de With is proud to present the latest work by artist duo Metahaven; *The Sprawl*, an episodic Internet documentary. Both artists will be in conversation to discuss the development of the work.

## Johan Grimontprez

Date TBC

*The Shadow World* is a feature film that explores the global arms industry, a business in which profits are calculated in tens of millions of dollars, while losses are counted in human lives. The film pulls back the curtain from the secretive world of the global arms trade to reveal the corruption and the cover-ups behind

weapons deals. Witte de With hosts a screening of extracts of the film followed by a Q&A with its director, Johan Grimonprez.

---

### MASTER CLASS

Susan Schuppli and Tom Tlalim

5 November 2015

In conjunction with our exhibition program at Witte de With, we offer master classes that primarily address a public of students while remaining open to general audiences. Each of these workshops draws on the content of the exhibition in order to identify a set of 'skills' that could be developed in dialogue with our guest. For *Art In The Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare*, artists Susan Schuppli and Tom Tlalim will develop a day-long master class based on their research into Sonic Asymmetrical Warfare.

### FESTIVAL KUNST IN HET WITTE DE WITHKWARTIER

11-13 September 2015

#### *Drone Shadows*

by James Bridle

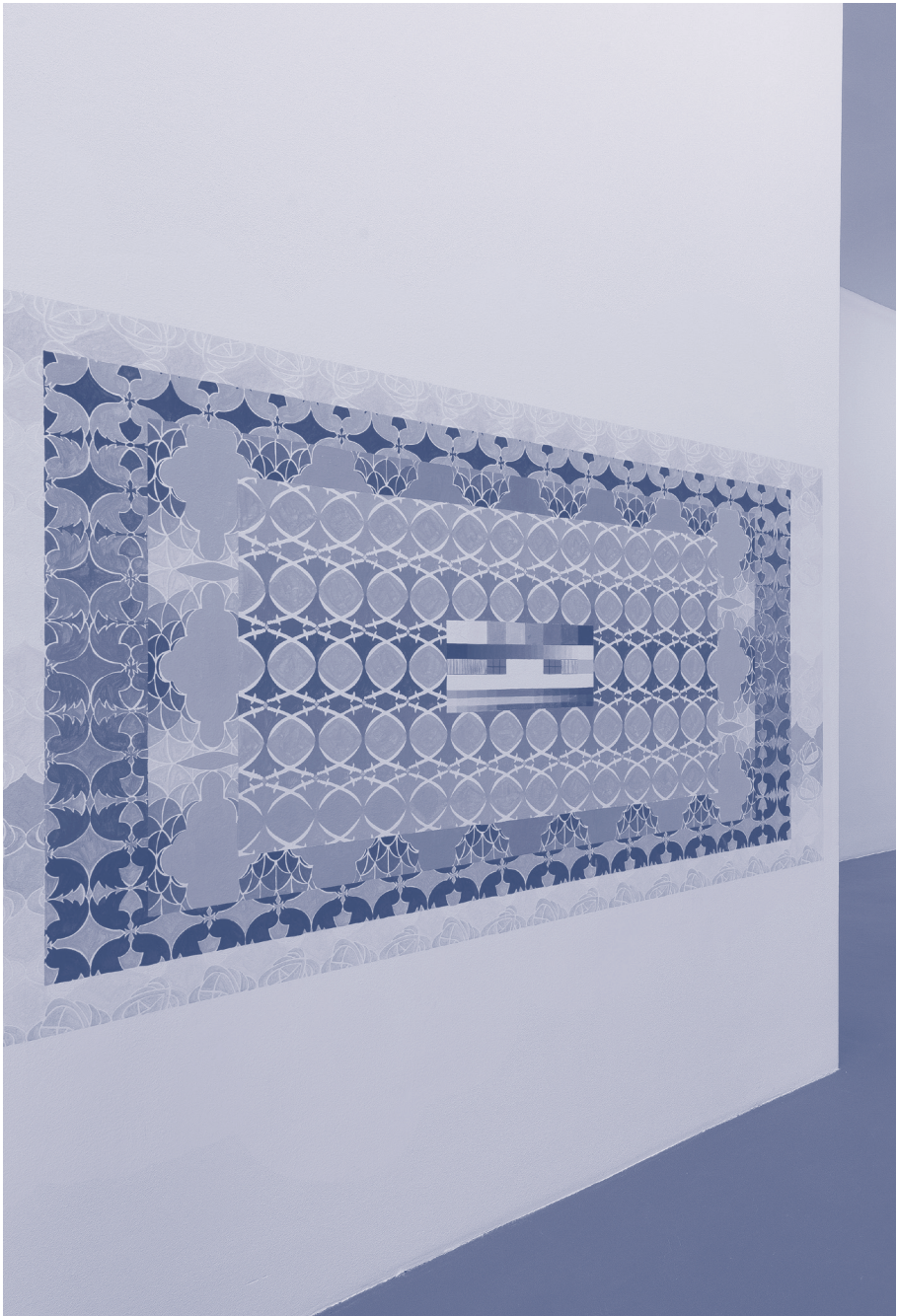
Throughout the Festival and run of *Art In the Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare* a 1:1 outline of a Reaper drone will be present on the street in front of Witte de With. The work is part of artist James Bridle's series *Drone Shadows*, which renders the proliferation of drone technology tangible; the Dutch government has recently made a €300 million purchase of Reaper drones from the US for military surveillance purposes.

#### *Cocktails & Helvetica*

with Douglas Coupland

11 September 2015, 5-8 pm

During this exclusive print and design-workshop created by Douglas Coupland, you will design your own slogan posters and print them on a high-speed large-format Ricoh printer. While sipping a professionally shaken cocktail, you will explore the possibilities of one of the most popular typefaces of the previous century: the Helvetica font. The workshop is inspired by Coupland's series *Slogans for the 21st Century*, in which he shares statements like "I miss my pre-internet brain" and "The future loves you but it doesn't need you". The results will be showcased during the Festival Kunst in het Witte de Withkwartier.



Installation view Navine G. Khan-Dossos, *My TV Ain't HD, That's Too Real*, 2015

# Biographies

## IN LIGHT OF 25 YEARS

**Camille Henrot** (1978, FR) lives and works in New York. Best-known for her videos and animated films combining drawn art, music and reworked cinematic images, Henrot's work blurs the hierarchical categories of art history. Her recent work, adapted into the diverse media of sculpture, drawing, photography and, as always, film, considers the fascination with the "other" and "elsewhere" in terms of both geography and sexuality, casting doubt on the linear and partitioned transcription of Western history, and highlighting its borrowings and grey areas. Her exhibition *The Pale Fox*, shown in 2014 at Chisenhale Gallery (London); Kunsthal Charlottenborg, and Betonsalon-Centre for art and research (Paris), will travel to Westfälischer Kunstverein, Münster in 2015. In 2013 she was awarded the Silver Lion at the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale.

**Germaine Kruij** (1970, NL) is an installation artist based between Amsterdam and Brussels. Her minimal installations and actions interact with social systems including crowds, exhibitions and exhibition spaces. Recent exhibitions include those held at Experimental Media and performing Arts Center (Troy, USA, 2014), 12<sup>th</sup> Swiss Sculpture Exhibition (Switzerland 2014), Gagosian Gallery (Beverly Hills 2014), Holland Festival and Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (The Netherlands, 2014), MIT, List Visual Arts Center (Boston, USA, 2013), Art Basel/Art Unlimited (2012), The Centro Cultural Montehermoso, Vitoria-Gasteiz (Spain, 2012).

**Raimundas Malašauskas** (Vilnius, LT) curates in the world, writes occasionally: [www.rai.lt](http://www.rai.lt) *Paper Exhibition*, a book of Malašauskas' selected writings, was recently published by Sternberg Press: [www.rai.lt](http://www.rai.lt) Iterations or documentation of his projects can be found at: [www.rye.tw](http://www.rye.tw).

**Zin Taylor** (1978, CA) lives and works in Brussels. Taylor uses moments in art and cultural history as the conceptual foundation upon which he composes his ensembles or total-works-of-art. Taylor's elaborate installations, which include video, performance, drawing, sculpture, sound and photography, explore form as a densely layered process. Solo exhibitions include those held at Portikus (Frankfurt, 2015); Kunsthalle Wien (Vienna, 2014); Maison Gregoire (Brussels, 2014); Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge, 2013); Ursula Blickle Stiftung (Kraichtal, 2011); Miguel Abreu Gallery (New York City, 2011). Select group exhibitions include those held at Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Charlottenborg, 2015); Supportico Lopez (Berlin, 2014); Dilston Grove (London, 2014); and the Museum of Contemporary Art (Chicago, 2013).

## ART IN THE AGE OF... ASYMMETRICAL WARFARE

**Abbas Akhavan** (1977, IR) creates work that ranges from site-specific ephemeral installations to drawing, video, sculpture, and performance. The direction of his research has been deeply influenced by the specificity of the sites where he works: the architectures that house them, the economies that surround them, and the people that frequent them. The domestic sphere, as a forked space between hospitality and hostility, has been an ongoing area of research in Akhavan's practice. Recent works have shifted focus, wandering into spaces just outside the home—the garden, the backyard, and other domesticated landscapes. Akhavan is the recipient of Abraaj Group Art Prize (2014) and Kunstpreis Berlin (2012).

**Sven Augustijnen** (1970, BE) lives and works in Brussels. His films, publications, and installations on political, historical, and social themes constantly challenge the genre of the documentary, reflecting a wider interest in historiography and a predilection for the nature of storytelling. Augustijnen has had solo shows at Kunsthalle Bern, Wiels, Contemporary Art Centre (Brussels), de Appel arts centre (Amsterdam), Malmö Konsthall, Vox, Centre pour l'Image contemporaine (Montreal), and CCS Bard (Annandale-on-Hudson).

**James Bridle** (1987, UK) is a writer, artist, and technologist usually based in London. His work covers the intersection of literature, culture, and the network. He has written for *WIRED*, *ICON*, *Domus*, *Cabinet*, *The Atlantic*, and writes a regular column for the *Observer*. Bridle speaks worldwide at events including SXSW (Austin), dConstruct (Brighton), LIFT (Geneva), Web Directions (Sydney), NEXT (Berlin), and TED (London). In 2011, he coined the term "New Aesthetic," and his ongoing research around this subject has been featured and discussed internationally. His work has been exhibited at in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australia.

**Adam Broomberg** (1970, ZA) & **Oliver Chanarin** (1971, UK) live and work in London. Tackling politics, religion, war, and history, Broomberg & Chanarin open the fault lines associated with such imagery, creating new responses and pathways toward an understanding of the human condition. Trained as photographers, they now work across diverse media, with language and literature playing an increasing role as material for their multi-faceted work. Together they have had numerous solo exhibitions including the Jumex Foundation in Mexico City, Fotomuseum The Hague, and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Their participation in international group shows has included Tate Modern (London), Shanghai Biennale, Museum of Modern Art (New York), the 9<sup>th</sup> Gwanju Biennale, and the KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin).

**Crass** (1977–1984) was a UK-based punk-rock band and collective that—through their multi-disciplinary use of music, tape collages, graphics, spoken word poetry, films and improvisations—promoted anarchism as a political ideology, a way of life and a resistance movement. Crass, both praised and maligned for their provocative output, were held responsible for the infamous hoax "Thatchergate tapes", in which they constructed, through edited recordings, a conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan on the subject of Europe as a target for nuclear weapons.

**Claire Evans** (1984, US) is a writer and artist working in Los Angeles. Her day job is as the singer and coauthor of the conceptual pop group YACHT. A science journalist and science-fiction critic, she is currently "futures editor" of *Motherboard* and editor of its sister science-fiction magazine, *Terraform*. She is a regular contributor to *Grantland*, *VICE*, and *uncube magazine*, and her writing has been extensively anthologized. She regularly participates in panels, conferences, and screenings on the subject of science and culture, including Moogfest, Eyeo Festival, WIRED x Design, the UCLA Center for the Art of Performance, the



Kitchen, the Rubin Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum, and the Center for Science and the Imagination.

**John Gerrard** (1974, IE) is widely regarded as a pioneer of digital media. Deceptively looking like film or video, his works are simulations—virtual worlds—made using real-time computer graphics, a technology developed by the military and now used extensively in the gaming industry. Often exploring geographically isolated locations—be they the agrarian American Great Plains, remote reaches of the Gobi Desert, or sites of military exercises in Djibouti—the works frequently refer to structures of power and networks of energy that have coincided with the expansion of human endeavors in the past century.

**Terence Gower** (1965, CA) studied at Emily Carr College, and spent the early years of his practice in Vancouver, Cologne, and Mexico City and has continued to show widely internationally. He has been based in New York City since 1995 where he has shown at PSI, New Museum, Queens Museum, and many commercial and non-profit art spaces. Internationally he has shown recently at Institut d'Art Contemporain Villurbaine, Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Tensta Konsthall (Spånga), Museo Tamayo (Mexico City), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo (Santiago), National Gallery of Canada (Ottawa), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Castilla (León), and Audain Gallery (Vancouver). He has participated in the Mercosul and Havana Biennials.

**Glenn Kaino** (1972, US) lives and works in California. His work transforms conventional materials and forms through a process that mobilizes the languages, logics, and economies of other creative disciplines as raw elements in artistic production. Trained as a sculptor in Southern California, Kaino has also worked extensively with biologists, robotics specialists, programmers, animators, hackers, cartographers, weavers, Zapatistas, and magicians, forging

new relationships between distinct forms of matter and thought. Kaino's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at institutions such as San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), and the 13<sup>th</sup> International Cairo Biennale, where he represented the United States. In 2004 he was included in the California Biennale and the Whitney Biennial in New York.

**Navine G. Khan-Dossos** (1982, UK) is a visual artist based in London. One of the preoccupations of her practice is the complex relationship between Islam and the West. Khan-Dossos's approach to her research is rooted in a traditionally 'Western' art history education, while her painting is based on a rigorous training in the philosophy and crafts of Islamic art. Her interests include Orientalism in the digital realm, geometry as information and decoration, and Aniconism in contemporary culture.

**Trevor Paglen** (1974, US) is a visual artist who lives and works in New York. Paglen holds a BA from UC Berkeley, an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a PhD in geography from UC Berkeley. His work blurs disciplinary and formal borders to construct unfamiliar ways to see and interpret the world around us. Paglen's visual work has been exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York), Tate Modern (London), Walker Arts Center (Minneapolis), the Andy Warhol Museum (Pittsburgh), the Institute for Contemporary Art (Boston), the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Istanbul Biennial 2009, and in many other solo and group exhibitions. He is the author of five books and numerous articles on subjects such as future warfare, state secrecy, experimental geography, anthropogeomorphology, deep-time, and cave art.

**Jon Thomson** (1969, UK) & **Alison Craighead** (1971, UK) live and work in London and Kingussie in the highlands of Scotland. They make artworks and installations for art spaces, and specific sites that include online contexts. Much

of their recent work looks at networked global communications systems and how they are changing the way we all understand the world around us. Recent exhibitions include Galerie im Taxispalais Innsbruck, National Art Museum of China (Beijing), Haus Lange (Krefeld), Dundee Contemporary Arts, ZKM (Karlsruhe), Carroll/Fletcher (Eastcastle), Brighton Photo-biennial, and Haus der Kunst (Munich). Having both studied at Duncan Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee, Thomson now lectures part-time at The Slade School of Fine Art, University College London, while Craighead is a senior researcher at University of Westminster and lectures in fine art at Goldsmiths University.

**Mohammad Salemy** (IR) is an independent New York-based artist, critic, and curator. He has curated exhibitions at Koerner Gallery at the University of British Columbia, as well as Satellite Gallery, Access Gallery, and Dadabase in Vancouver. He co-curated the *Faces* exhibition at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and in 2014 he organized the *Incredible Machines* conference, both in Vancouver. Salemy holds a masters degree in critical and curatorial studies from the University of British Columbia and is one of the organizers of The New Centre for Research & Practice.

**Susan Schuppli** (1967, CA) is an artist and freelance writer based in London. Her research practice examines media artifacts that emerge from sites of contemporary conflict and state violence to ask questions about the ways in which media are enabling or limiting the possibility of transformative politics. Creative projects have been exhibited throughout Canada, the United States, Europe, and Asia. Recent and forthcoming exhibitions include Casino Luxembourg, Extra City Antwerp, Stroom Centre for Visual Arts (The Hague), Shanghai Biennale, Kunsthal Charlottenborg (Copenhagen), and Bildmuseet Sweden. Schuppli has published widely. She is currently senior lecturer and deputy director of the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths

(London) where she received her doctorate in 2009.

**Nida Sinnokrot** (1971, US) is a filmmaker and an installation artist, who lives and works in Berlin. His work is very reflective of his hybrid identity and personal experience. Of Palestinian origin, Sinnokrot grew up in Algeria and moved to the United States as a teenager. His films, installations, and sculptures increasingly explore the traumas generated by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Sinnokrot's work has been included in various international exhibitions, including *Bozar* in Brussels, *Old City Jerusalem (Jerusalem Show)*, *Artists Space* in New York (*When Artists Say We*), and the *Kunsthalle Exnergasse* in Vienna. In 2009 Sinnokrot also participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> Sharjah Biennale.

**Tom Tlalim** (1975, IL/NL) is an artist, musician, and writer based in London and The Hague. His work examines political power exchanges through the media of sound and new technologies. His artwork includes installations, performances, film, and text and sound art. Recent exhibitions include the *90 years Bauhaus Jubilee* in Weimar, the 11<sup>th</sup> Venice Architecture Biennale, Theatre National de Chaillot (Paris), Stroom Centre for Visual Arts (The Hague), International Film Festival Rotterdam (Tiger Award), Sonica Ljubljana, Transmediale (Berlin, Prix Ars Electronica), DEAF (Rotterdam), and the Virtual Museum Zuidas. His collaborations with Susan Schuppli were recently exhibited at Casino Luxemburg and HKW Berlin. Tlalim is currently completing his PhD at Goldsmiths University of London.

**José Antonio Vega Macotela** (1980, MX) lives and works in Mexico City and Amsterdam. Macotela's work is multidisciplinary, site-specific, and often engages particular communities such as prison inmates, soldiers, miners, etc. It explores notions of labor, value, and exchange, specifically with regard to currency as a system through which social relations are

established and negotiated. Macotela studied at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam (2011), and has participated in group and solo shows internationally, including the Triennale de Puerto Rico (2012), Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (2011), Galeria Fernando Santos (Porto, 2011), 29 Bienal de San Paulo (2010), Museo de Arte Carrillo Gil (Mexico City, 2010), among others.

### *CHARACTER IS FATE*

**Willem de Rooij** (1969, NL) lives and works in Berlin. His work incorporates film, sculpture, and installation, and often includes the work of other artists and artefacts, forming temporary groupings which create new layers of meaning. He studied art history at the University of Amsterdam and fine art at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. De Rooij received the Bâloise Art Prize in 2000, a Robert Fulton Fellowship at Harvard University in 2004 and a DAAD stipend in 2006-07. He represented the Netherlands at the Venice Biennale in 2005 and is professor of fine arts at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main since 2006. Important solo shows include: ICA, London, UK (2002); Kunsthalle Zürich, CH (2004); K 21, Düsseldorf, DE (2007); Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, IT (2008); Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, DE (2010); Kunstverein München, DE (2012); and The Jewish Museum, New York, US (2014).

# Colophon

## *In Light Of 25 Years*

27 January 2015–14 February 2016

Team Defne Ayas, Paul van Gennip,  
Samuel Saelemakers

## *Art In The Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare*

11 September 2015–3 January 2016

Team Defne Ayas (Concept),  
Adam Kleinman & Natasha Hoare (Curators)  
Lenders Jan Mot, Brussels; Kavi Gupta Gallery,  
Chicago; Lisson Gallery, London; NOME,  
Berlin; LABOR, Mexico City, Thomas Dane  
Gallery, London  
Special thanks Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago

## *Bit Rot*

Douglas Coupland

11 September 2015–3 January 2016

Team Defne Ayas, Samuel Saelemakers  
(Curators)

Special thanks Bruce Giovande,  
Google Cultural Institute, Andrew Jenkins,  
Jess Latimer, David Weir

## *Character Is Fate*

Willem de Rooij

27 January 2015–3 January 2016

Upon the invitation of Witte de With  
Director Defne Ayas

Lender Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische  
Documentatie (RKD), The Hague

## Exhibition Guide

Editors & Writers Defne Ayas, Natasha Hoare,  
Adam Kleinman, Samuel Saelemakers

English copy-editors Rosa de Graaf,  
Natasha Hoare, Marnie Slater

Dutch copy-editors Yoeri Meessen,  
Samuel Saelemakers, Adelheid Smit

Translation (English-Dutch) Judith Mulder,  
Samuel Saelemakers, Adelheid Smit

Design APFEL, Kristin Metho

Printer Raddraaier

# Funders

Bit Rot is supported by



The work *The Living Internet* is a Douglas Coupland initiative supported by the Google Cultural Institute. The exhibition marks the start of *Futurocity*, which is part of *Rotterdam celebrates the city!* and is kindly supported by the city of Rotterdam and The Art of Impact.



The work of Glenn Kaino in *Art In The Age Of...Asymmetrical Warfare* is kindly supported by Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago.

The public program of *Art In The Age Of... Asymmetrical Warfare* is kindly supported by vfonds.



Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art is supported by



Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

# Witte de With Staff

Director & Curator **Defne Ayas**

Deputy Director **Paul van Gennip**

Business Coordinator **Sarah van der Tholen**

Associate Curators **Natasha Hoare,**

**Samuel Saelemakers**

Associate Director, Education & Public Affairs

**Yoeri Meessen**

Publications & Website Associate

**Maria-Louiza Ouranou**

PR, Marketing & Communication Associate

**Adelheid Smit**

MarCom Officer/Director's Office **Angélique Kool**

Office Manager **Gerda Brust**

Events & Office Assistant **Emmelie Mijs**

Production Assistant **Wendy Bos**

Education Assistant **Docus van der Made**

Office & Library Assistant/Receptionist **Erik Visser**

Receptionist **Erwin Nederhoff**

Senior Technical Supervisor **Line Kramer**

Interns **Rosa de Graaf** (Curatorial), **Judith Mulder**

**& Carmen van den Bor** (PR & Communication)

External

Chief Editors WdW Review **Defne Ayas,**

**Adam Kleinman**

Managing Editor WdW Review **Orit Gat**

Installation Team **Ties ten Bosch, Jonathan den**

**Breejen, Carlo van Driel, Chris van Mulligen,**

**Hans Tutert, Ruben van der Velde**

Reception Desk **Francine van Bloklund,**

**Ella Broek, Remty Elenga, Marguerite de Geus,**

**Rabin Huissen, Annelotte Vos, Gino van Weenen**

Art Mediators **Lisa Diederik, Hannah Kalverda,**

**Revelino Heskes, Germa Roos, Bram Verhoef,**

**Gino van Weenen, Lesley Wynands**

Administration **Frank van Balen, Suzan van Heck**

Witte de With Board

**Kees Weeda** (President), **Nicoline van Harskamp,**

**Patrick van Mil** (Treasurer), **Jeroen Princen, Karel**

**Schampers, Nathalie de Vries, Katarina Zdjelar,**

**Chris de Jong** (Business Advice)

to happen now, there would be millions of clips and photos taken and circulated across the globe, but because it was 2001, there are surprisingly few images and very little film footage. With *The Poet* and other works like it, Coupland wanted to frame 9/11 in a way that could only be experienced now, and would have made little sense to people in New York in 2001. To this end, he figured out that round dots, at a certain scale, confuse for example an iPhone's square pixels. The two shapes fight each other and, in the process, convert an indecipherable image into a photograph, which can only be perceived by looking through the camera of your smartphone. The images Coupland used are entirely artificial. The backdrop is built in a 3D program and the falling human figures are clip art people sourced online.

Denis Darzacq, *Hyper No.03*, 2007-09

Peter Garfield, from the *Mobile Homes* series, 1995-99

Brian Howell, *Asian Cougar*, 2002

Bob Mizer, *Unknown (Jumping)*, 1973

David del Pilar Potes, *Demand & Supply 1*, 2009

Anonymous bank security camera still, Montreal, 1970

## PUBLICATION

*Bit Rot* by Douglas Coupland combines new and existing fictional short stories and essays, and creates a parallel narrative to the eponymous exhibition: pieces in the exhibition become materializations of words, and some of the words in this book are a dematerialization of objects in the show. *Bit Rot* addresses subjects such as the death of the middle class, the rise of the Internet and its impact on our lives, and in short, evinces a shedding of twentieth-century notions of what the future is and could be.

*Bit Rot* is available at Witte de With's bookstore as well as online via [wdw.nl](http://wdw.nl)

---

## BIOGRAPHY

Douglas Coupland (1965) is a Canadian novelist, visual artist, and designer. He has published fourteen novels, a collection of short stories, seven nonfiction books, and a number of dramatic works and screenplays for film and television. Coupland's novels and visual work synthesize high and low culture, Web technology, religion, and changes in human existence caused by modern technologies. With incisiveness and humor, Coupland's work questions contemporary issues and suggests new ways of seeing the world. In 1991 he published his first novel, *Generation X*, which eventually became an international bestseller. Defining a generation with his debut, Coupland has ever since been capturing the *Zeitgeist* like no other.

the light that comes at the end of the tunnel. Overt content became less important, and the act of cognitive disassociation from the everyday world was palpable. The Museet's works depicted, in their way, anti-hoarding a surrendering of life's material trappings. It was a liberating show that gave viewers peace. It let you know that maybe you should let go of many things in your life before your life is nearly over, when suddenly your stuff isn't all as important as it was cracked up to be. (Guaranteed, if you ask anyone over fifty which would they rather have, more time or more money they'll almost always say more time.)

Excerpt from *Stuffed*

William Betts, *I-70 and McRae, El Paso, Texas*, November 12, 2006, 10:09am, 2008, 2009

Douglas Coupland, *Brackets*, 2015

Douglas Coupland, 1984, 2007

Douglas Coupland, *Silver Boogeyman*, 2013

Douglas Coupland, *Global Thermonuclear War*, 2005

Douglas Coupland, *Drone Attack*, 2013

Douglas Coupland, *Pi to 500 Digits*, 2012

3.141592653589793238462643383279502884197169399

375105820974944592307816406286208998628034825

3421170679821480865132823066470938446095505822

317253594081284811174502841027019385211055596446

2294895493038196442881097566593344612847564823

3786783165271201909145648566923460348610454326

6482133936072602491412737245870060631558817488

1520920962829254091715364367892590360011330530

548820466521384146951941511609433057270365759591

9530921861173819326117931051185480744623799627495

6735188575272489122793818301194912

Douglas Coupland, *Skate Marilyn*, 2008

Angus Ferguson, *I'm OK*, 2011

David Kopp, *Doink*, 2006

Nestor Kruger, *Atoms Falling Like Rain*, 2009

Ivan Putora, *Sharpness Indicator*, 1996

Kevin Romaniuk, *Some Woolly Buzz*, 2014

Derek Root, *Mr. French*, 1995

Gordon Smith, *Untitled*, 2008

David John Weir, *Sonic Cube*, 2014

Anonymous photograph of what is believed to be the

audience during a *Grateful Dead* concert

## ROOM 7

'One could try to glean political data through consumer threads, but your choice of butter or margarine probably wouldn't be of much help in determining your politics. But wait. Actually, it would be very helpful. What you

bought and where you bought it could reveal astonishing levels of facts about who you are.'

Excerpt from *Wonkr*

'Do you buy dented cans of food? Do you buy the vegetables and fruits with bird pecks in them? Do you buy misfit produce that doesn't look like clip art? And what's your policy on expired dairy products? Would you feel awkward buying art from a dealer whose space didn't at least aspire to some dimension of New York neutrality? Have you ever bought a designer garment you thought was real but which turned out to be fake? Do you collect art? Do you make art? Do you feel like a nimble outsider free to pass judgment on everything? If you are, does it depress you not to actually be in the game itself? Are you a minimalist? Do you take pride in a reductive life?'

Excerpt from *Shiny*

Douglas Coupland, *Grocery Posters*, 2014

## ROOM 8

'Lieutenant, it says here that book sales are higher than ever, as the humans are using a technique called 'Amazon-dot-com' to purchase them.'

'That is a deceiving statistic, sir. Amazon increases the need of humans to own books but not necessarily to read them. They leave them scattered around their homes as what they call "intellectual trophies."'

Excerpt from *Beef Rock*

Luke Butler, *Spock III*, 2012

Douglas Coupland, *50 Books I Have Read More*

*Than Once*, 2015

This sculpture shows the covers of fifty books which play an important role in Coupland's life. As the title indicates, these books have all been read by the artist more than once, their importance being illustrated by the respective length of each beam. The colors of the beams mimic the actual color of the pages of each individual book.

Douglas Coupland, *Is it Art? Yes and No*, 2015

Douglas Coupland, *The Poet*, 2015

People in the streets of New York on September 11, 2001, looked more or less like they do today. The main difference however is the omnipresence of smart-phones. If an event the scale and impact of 9/11 were

### ROOM 3

'In the last days of World War Two the Japanese emperor told the Japanese to sacrifice themselves, to die like smashed jewels. And so I say to you, Sandra, die like a smashed jewel. Destroy so that we can rebuild. We can become a furnace within a furnace.'

Excerpt from *The Short, Brutal Life of the Channel Three News Team*

Douglas Coupland, *Rising Sun*, 2011

### ROOM 4

'Today I wondered, "If the Internet had an IQ, what would it be?" And so I made a guess: 4,270—a four-digit IQ. Yes, I know the Internet is just a tool and not a sentient being. But one can dream.'

Excerpt from *IQ*

'It's said that Goethe was the last human being who knew everything about the world it was possible to learn at that time. In this sense Goethe was like a proto-Internet, but now he lives on in a 2.0 version called the Cloud. We're all Goethe now. I may miss my pre-Internet brain, but I'm rapidly forgetting it, too.'

Excerpt from *Future Blips*

Douglas Coupland, *Deep Face*, 2015

Douglas Coupland, *The Living Internet*, 2015

*The Living Internet* is part Calder, part do-it-yourself, part Henry Moore, part Star Wars. Rather than data visualization, the work is a physical mockup in 3D of what the Internet and online searches actually look like. The work stems from Coupland's residency at the Google Cultural Institute in Paris last summer.

Douglas Coupland, *Slogans for the Twenty-First Century*, 2011-ongoing

### ROOM 5

'I want all of your generation to come join me and band together to smash all the shop windows of every boutique in the country, to set fire to every catwalk, to shoot rockets into Beverly Hills. It will be beautiful—like modern art—and people will finally stop believing in the false future promised by celebrity.'

Excerpt from *The Short, Brutal Life of the Channel Three News Team*

'Oh my god, it was them—Mrs. McCarthy and Mrs. Brown, those housewives who died of botulism back in 1963. I did a bunch of paintings about them. This was really cool. "Wow. Uh, hi. It's so cool to, um, meet you."

Mrs. McCarthy removed a copy of *Newsweek* from her purse. It was dated April 1, 1963, so I kind of knew what was coming next.

"You'll remember this issue, surely, Mr. Warhol."

She flipped through the pages to near the end, page seventy-six, the magazine's medical section. There, right in the center of the page, were two postage-stamp-size photos of the two women underneath a can of tuna seized by the FDA. Mrs. McCarthy said, "Quite flattering, don't you think?"

"Uh, yeah. You look great." Mrs. Brown added, "I liked that photo. It was spontaneous and I was using my real smile, not my fake camera smile."

"Smiling for a camera is so abstract," I said.'

Excerpt from *Mrs. McCarthy and Mrs. Brown*

Douglas Coupland, *Wig As Might Have Been Worn By Andy Warhol Between The Years 1967 and 1987*, 2008

Douglas Coupland, *Eternal Life*, 2007

Adrien Gouet, *No title*, 2012

Jenny Holzer, *In a dream you saw a way to survive and you were full of joy*, 1994

Charles Lutz, *Tuna Fish Disaster*, 2007

Plaster death mask of *David Bowie*, purchased on eBay

### ROOM 6

'In December of 2013 I saw a magnificent show at Stockholm's Moderna Museet, *Turner, Monet, Twombly: Later Paintings*. It featured works done in the final decade of the lives of John Turner (1873-1938), Claude Monet (1840-1926), and Cy Twombly (1928-2011.) The show focused on these artists' [and this is from the museum's website] "later work, examining not only the art historical links and affinities between them, but also the common characteristics of and motivations underlying their late style.'

'The paintings in the show were remarkable in and of themselves, yet what they collectively foregrounded was a sense of whiteness, a sense of glowing—an undeniable sense of



# Works

Each room in the exhibition is framed by excerpts from short stories and essays written by Douglas Coupland and published in *Bit Rot*.

## ROOM 1

'Please call me Don. On August 5, 1968, I was on an unarmed film reconnaissance mission of rivers in the Bong Son region, and I was killed when my Huey Cobra's pilot got shot by a sniper from I don't know where. The rear blade snagged the remains of a napalm tree, and the tail boom severed. It took maybe seven seconds in all. The last thing I saw was an orange explosion approaching my face, like lava flying down a Hawaiian slope.'

Excerpt from *Vietnam*

Douglas Coupland, *Vietnam Swamp Soldier*, 2000

A few days before September 11, 2001, the first ever exhibition of Coupland's 3D work opened at a gallery near the World Trade Center. After the attacks, the gallery remained locked off for months and the artworks, including this sculpture of a soldier, were covered in a thick layer of dust.

Douglas Coupland, *Warflowers*, 2006

Peter Goin, *Hanford*, 1991

James Rosenquist, *F-111 (South, West, North, East)*, 1973

Anonymous images purchased online from an American press photo company deaccessioning all of their physical archives, 1970s.

Anonymous photograph of the airplane collision on the runway of the Tenerife airport, 1997.

Objects collected by artist Robert Rauschenberg in a scrapyard at Fort Myers, Florida, to be used in the making of assemblages, 2000s

## ROOM 2

'Just stop and listen. Today, October 27, a man in Ottawa, Canada, killed five people in a high school and then shot himself. You haven't heard about it yet. Also today, Rex Stout, an American detective novel writer, died. Tomorrow, Georges Carpentier, a French boxer, will die. On the twenty-ninth, President

Ford will announce that he will veto any legislation calling for a federal bailout of New York City. The cover of the *New York Daily News* the next day will read: 'Ford to City: Drop Dead.' That same day Juan Carlos I of Spain will become acting head of state after dictator Francisco Franco concedes he is too ill to govern. Also, a Yugoslavian airliner will crash while attempting to land in Prague and all seventy-two people on board will die.'

Excerpt from 361

Richard Bernstein, *Reserved*, 1986, © *Interview Magazine*

Candy Ass (Cary Leibowitz), *Misery Pennants*, 1990

Art Club 2000, *Bleedout (Cooper Union)*, c. 1998

Douglas Coupland, *The Future*, 2008

Douglas Coupland, *Exit Evil*, 2010

Douglas Coupland, *CMYK Colour Registration Heads*, 2015

Douglas Coupland, *Columbine Cafeteria*, 2003

*Columbine Cafeteria* is a carefully staged photograph of a set mimicking a typical high school cafeteria, now a crime scene. In his novel *Hey Nostradamus!* (2003), Coupland tells the story of the survivors of a fictional high school shooting. By focusing on the survivors and how their lives continue after the shooting, Coupland wished to counter the excessive attention which was given to the killers in real-life cases of school shootings, the most well-known being the 1999 Columbine High School massacre.

G.R.A.M., *Hohes Haus (Kiew)*, 2011

Robert Indiana, *Eat/Die*, 1990

Charles Lutz, *Mask (3 Holes)*, 2012

Charlie White, *Tate-La Bianca*, 2006

In August 1969, actress Sharon Tate, eight-and-a-half months pregnant, and five other people were murdered. Tate begged for the life of her unborn child but was told by one of the female assailants, "Look bitch, I don't care about you. I don't care if you are having a baby. You are going to die and I don't feel a thing about it." The next day supermarket executive Leno LaBianca and his wife were killed in a similar fashion. After five months, cult leader Charles Manson and his so-called Family were put on trial for murder. The staged photograph by Charlie White shown here, portrays female followers of Manson, who he had sent out like the Furies of Greek mythology to take down those whom he saw as his enemies.

# Bit Rot Douglas Coupland SECOND FLOOR

In this guide, each room is framed by excerpts from the accompanying publication *Bit Rot*, bringing to the fore the strong connection between his visual and written work.

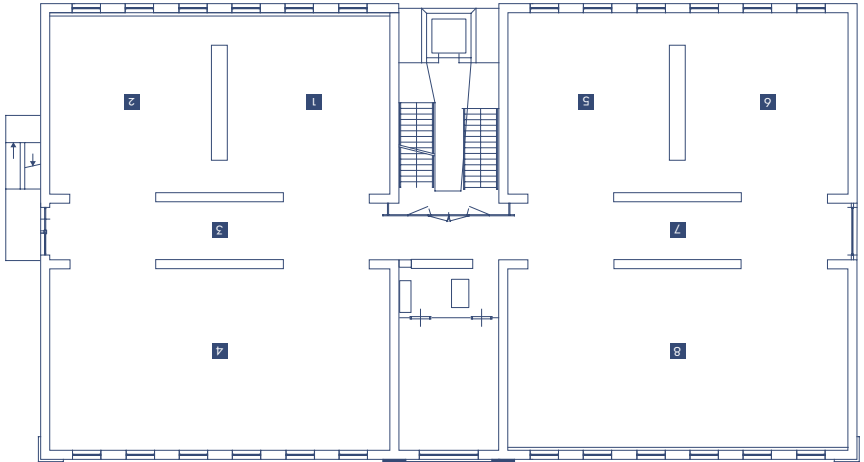
'My books have always, to some extent, contained ideas for installations and works [...] Pieces in the exhibition become materializations of words, and some of the words in this book are a dematerialization of objects in the exhibition.'

Douglas Coupland, introduction to *Bit Rot*, 2015

Bit Rot presents Douglas Coupland's 'mind-escape', combining his own work with loans from his personal collection, as well as a new work stemming from his recent residency at the Google Cultural Institute. An eponymous paperback collection of new and existing short stories and essays written and compiled by the artist accompanies the exhibition. Taking its title from the phenomenon in which digital data spontaneously and quickly decomposes, *Bit Rot* creates an associative and visually playful constellation in which memory, loss, fame, violence, destruction, and creation are subjects for contemplation. Throughout the exhibition, Coupland shares his thoughts on globalization, terror, the Internet, pop culture, social media, and the resulting accelerated image economy.

For many years Coupland has been intuitively collecting artworks, images, and objects, creating a collection perhaps only fully legible to himself. Each of the exhibited strands of work began as impulsive purchases but ultimately led to forms of clarity in regard to deeply rooted needs and wants. Now, for the first time, Coupland exhibits these collected works alongside his own.

# Exhibition Floor Plan



DOUGLAS  
COUPLAND

ROT  
TIB