

Visitors Guide  
January – May 2017



## Program January – May 2017

### *Para / Fictions*

Laure Prouvost

27 January – 2 April 2017

### Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel

14 April – 9 July 2017

GROUND FLOOR

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### *The Music of Ramón Raquello and his Orchestra*

Eric Baudelaire

27 January – 7 May 2017

SECOND FLOOR

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### *the king, the door, the thief, the window, the stranger, the camera*

Judy Radul

10 February – 7 May 2017

THIRD FLOOR

## Director's Welcome

In a time where no values of one cultural perspective can provide a frame of reference for an adequate understanding of the world we live in anymore, we are in constant search for epistemes that could offer leads to the dynamic societal, cultural and economic contexts we find ourselves in. Volatility is arguably the biggest characteristic of our times; the one aspect that politics, economics, and art have in common. What then is the aesthetics of volatility? What is the ethics of the artist in capturing, mediating and communicating this volatility in her art, music, and film?

Having ceaselessly engaged with histories of violence in images and cinema, Eric Baudelaire's largest monographic exhibition to date also features his latest feature length film *Also Known As Jihadi*, which offers a keen case study on the ethical role of the camera versus witness, the innate links between subject and architecture, and the tipping points for radical turns amidst European youth. Judy Radul on our third floor, on the other hand, believes one of the responsibilities of art is to produce a response where none has been called for, exposing the dynamics between subject and object, and between thought and social relations. For her, it all begins with developing a method not through which to produce an artwork, but a system, which is in itself an artwork.

Through our year's reading group *Sisters in Crime*—a core activity in our curatorial program—our season expands into a critical interrogation of questions related to contemporary, corporate, and state-sponsored infrastructures of justice through the practice of Rana Hamadeh. Expect the teasing out of matters related to legal spectacle, labor theory (of value), Quranic exegesis, and Arabic classical music scales, alongside Fred Moten, the group's honorary member, all leading us to an opera premiering in Fall. Opera? Yes. And, as we always surprise, we are incubating a whole new institution here this year, one that imagines a space for music that exists outside of any media and beyond the stage. Get ready for *Kunsthalle for Music* and its repertoire, as envisioned by composer Ari Benjamin Meyers. Will we sing Sol LeWitt drawings as John Baldessari did throughout the year? We will see this unfolding through 2018.

With all this excitement and incredible material, I hope you will take a moment to explore our program here. In print, online, and of course on-site!

With best wishes for a safe year ahead.

Defne Ayas

# Para/Fictions

GROUND FLOOR

If both art and literature constitute forms of thought, what is generated or lost in slip-pages, translations, and activations between the two? Are their dividing lines arbitrary or highly dissoluble? How do both forms enfold and unfold across the exhibition space? What relates making to writing, viewing to reading?

*Para/Fictions* is a cycle of sustained investigations running on its ground-floor over a two year period, taking as its focus these questions through the practice of nine artists. Previously, the series has included works by Calla Henkel & Max Pitegoff, Mark Geffriaud, Laure Prouvost, Oscar Santillan, and Lucy Skaer. In 2017 we look to Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel, Rayyane Tabet, and Dineo Seshee Bopape.

The *Para/Fictions* series has been provoked by the particular correspondences of literature and visual arts in contemporary culture; a landscape made up of disparate yet relatable topographies of influence branching into fiction as a research methodology, and theoretical discourse around the fictional nature of the contemporary itself.

Laure Prouvost

*the wet wet wanderer*

27 January – 2 April 2017

A new work by Laure Prouvost draws from a passage in her feature-length film *The Wanderer*. The latter is based on fellow artist Rory Macbeth's mistranslation of Kafka from the original German text—with no knowledge of German or a dictionary. Prouvost's installation transforms the ground floor of Witte de With into a strange mutated sub-aqueous bar, laced with squid ink and dotted with vodka fountains. Combining sculpture, video and sound, literature is metamorphosed to space, and film to sculpture. Here language is as slippery as a squid, function as deceitful as fiction.

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Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel

14 April – 9 July 2017

Artists Daniel Dewar and Grégory Gicquel continuously dissect and reconstruct the medium of sculpture through their iconoclastic practice. With great wit and a bold visual language, they create a new work inspired by 19<sup>th</sup> century literature describing modern man coming to terms with industrialization and the loss of the pastoral dream, as to explore the tensions between rural and urban making and production processes.

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UPCOMING

Rayyane Tabet

21 July – 8 October 2017

Dineo Seshee Bopape

20 October – 31 December 2017

# Rotterdam Cultural Histories #10 Naum Gabo

FIRST FLOOR

The untitled sculpture by Russian-American artist Naum Gabo (1890–1977) on the Coolsingel in Rotterdam is his largest constructivist artwork ever placed in a public space. At the time, 'the thing' or 'the stylized flower' as the 26 meter high, 40.000 kg work has come to be known, was a symbol of modernity.

In 2011, the *Bijenkorf* building and the artwork were declared national monuments of the post-war reconstruction period. In recent years, the sculpture has deteriorated and will be restored in 2017, alongside the long expected redevelopment of the Coolsingel. With the reclamation of public space in this nerve-center of the city it is hoped that Gabo's sculpture will reclaim its rightful place as a landmark. In anticipation of this restoration, *Rotterdam Cultural Histories #10* provides a history of the sculpture through preliminary drafts, film footage of the unveiling and documentation of various restorations that have occurred over the years.

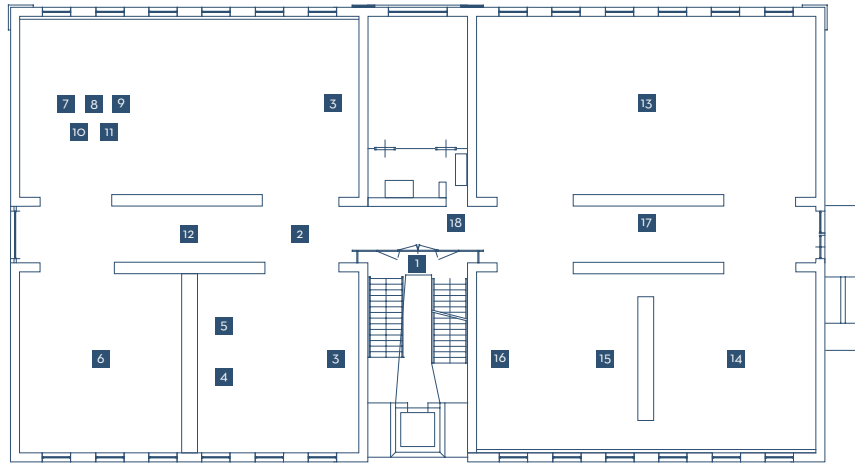
The work was initially commissioned by Van der Wal, director of *Bijenkorf* department store, aided by Nelly van Doesburg, widow of Theo van Doesburg and an expert in abstract modern art. It was placed in front of *Bijenkorf* in 1957, itself an iconic building designed by Marcel Breuer.

This edition is organized in close cooperation with Sculpture International Rotterdam, the international program for art and public space of CBK Rotterdam. The Naum Gabo is included in the international sculpture collection of the city, Sculpture International Rotterdam, but is owned by IEF Capital.

*Rotterdam Cultural Histories* is a collaborative project between TENT and Witte de With that explores our common roots in Rotterdam and articulates meeting points between both of our programs. *Rotterdam Cultural Histories* is conceived by Defne Ayas (Director Witte de With) and Marielle Dölle (former Artistic Director TENT).

# Exhibition Floor Plan

SECOND FLOOR



## *The Music of Ramón Raquello and his Orchestra* Eric Baudelaire

*To find a form that accommodates the mess,  
that is the task of the artist now.*

—Samuel Beckett

This imperative by Samuel Beckett urgently articulates a common thread that runs throughout a decade of Eric Baudelaire's work, namely a drive to find a form to accommodate (in each wonderfully ambiguous sense of the word) the often catastrophic complexities of contemporary reality. Stemming from his studies in political science, and his brief career in research during which he transcribed declassified White House recordings of John F. Kennedy discussing the Cuban Missile Crisis, his later work as an artist proposes images and forms as means to mediate the histories and structural conditions that generate narratives of violence, conflict, and radical militancy. These formal investigations have found their expression predominantly through film, but also print and installation, incorporating diverse modes of address, such as letters and historical chronologies. A methodological range and breadth thus spans this exhibition—the largest monographic presentation of Baudelaire's oeuvre to date.

The exhibition draws its title from a fictional orchestra whose radio performance is continuously disrupted by newflash broadcasts heralding an alien invasion in Orson Welles' rendition of the *War of the Worlds* aired in 1938. Ramón Raquello's music (devoid of Orson Welles' fictional news) is spliced back together and played in the stairwell **1** of Witte de With. The title hints at Baudelaire's interest in juxtaposing fictions that have documentary tendencies with documents that open fictional spaces. His work often creates or exploits tension between stories and histories, the

objective and subjective, text and image, underlining the ways in which political (and in the case of his most recent film, judicial) narratives are constructed.

The show is anchored by two feature length film works. The newly completed *Also Known as Jihadi* (2017) was initiated in the aftermath of the 2015 massacres in Paris, when the artist sidelined another film in the making in order to address events that struck close to home. The second nucleus of the show is the closely related earlier filmic installation, *The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi and 27 Years without Images* (2011), in which Baudelaire explores the Japanese Red Army's three decade long journey between Tokyo and Beirut, and their problematic relationship to armed struggle.

Both works deal with complex trajectories that have captivated Baudelaire as geographic, human and political journeys. The ideological frameworks of these respective itineraries towards political violence are radically different from each other—a sign of how much the political discussion has changed between 1968 and today. Both films chronicle these through a series of landscape shots filmed at the locations traversed by the subjects during their lifetimes: biographies determined not by what the subjects did, but what they saw, tacitly interrogating what landscapes may tell us about the structures of power that have affected the protagonists of the films.

Beyond the question of landscape, the selection of works in the exhibition draws on another recurring leitmotif in Baudelaire's oeuvre, that of the 'return'. Through formal and narrative devices of repetition and re-visitation, history

is read as cyclical. Some works include chronologies that parallel historic and contemporaneous moments. Others loop images and refuse closure such that the artist has described the structure of his films as 'stuttering'. The artist looks to the past, not out of melancholy, but rather as a way of reading the present moment. Indeed the journeys described by the term "anabasis" pertain to returns that contain within them a fundamental transformation. Baudelaire likes to cite French philosopher Alain Badiou in this regard: 'In the trajectory it names, anabasis leaves undecided the parts respectively allotted to disciplined invention and uncertain wandering. In so doing, it constitutes a disjunctive synthesis of will and wandering.' Anabasis is described as an itinerary into the new, which isn't simply a return because it 'invents the path, without knowing whether it is a path home. Anabasis is the free invention of a meandering which *will have been* a return, a return which, prior to the wandering, did not exist as a return.'

Two other important leitmotifs appear across the exhibition. The first is correspondence: various letters and emails have surfaced over the years in films and in frames. Baudelaire likes to address his subjects directly, and his work often takes on a collaborative nature as unexpected responses from his subjects become integral to the practice. A recurrent medium in the exhibition is newsprint. Figuratively, news and current events are the fundamental material from which the work is made and to which it responds. Newspapers also become source material in the literal sense of the word in collage and assemblage pieces. Within each space of the Witte de With, a work from the ongoing series *Some Tomorrows*, made from a single edition of *Le Monde* newspaper, shadows other artworks from a corresponding year, acting both as a time stamp and a way to contextualize the concerns of the work within a broader socio-political landscape.

Central to this exhibition is the display of research material fragments, images and texts that have informed Baudelaire's work process over the years. <sup>2</sup> Unfolding in the same exhibition space as wallpaper and inside a large light box, the nature of the material remains exactly the same as that which Baudelaire worked with earlier in his career as a political scientist. What has changed is how he has used these as an artist; the *form* to which Beckett refers in his definition of the artist's task. The necessity of the practice is reflected in Baudelaire's 'source book': an urgent, irresistible need to displace or rethink what is at stake in the question of representation of reality. The forms that Baudelaire experiments with today through uncertain images, letters, protocols and repetition, replace the theoretical frameworks that governed his practice as a social scientist. While he continues to think of his work as research, it is the kind that accepts the idea that restitution may be incomplete, stuttering, sensorial, humorous at times, serious at others, polyphonic, subjective and problematic. But at all times, the work exists in its relationship to the real.

The following exhibition guide is chronologically ordered, echoing the centrality of the chronology to Baudelaire's practice.

## 2005 – ONGOING

### *Some Tomorrows* <sup>19</sup>

The French daily paper *Le Monde* comes out in the afternoon and is dated for the following day. Over the past ten years, Baudelaire has occasionally made collages from the images of a single daily edition of *Le Monde*. Together, the *Some Tomorrows* series adds up to a fragmentary and subjective visual record of events and culture since 2005, when he began to work as an artist. Each piece is made according to a simple protocol: a collage of images is reproduced as a silkscreen print on the inside of a piece of glass mounted in a frame, with, below the surface of the glass, a text composed of all the words found on the pages of *Le Monde* from which the images are extracted.

Placed throughout the exhibition following the temporal logic of the works they are shown with, the *Some Tomorrows* both re-inscribe the chronology of Baudelaire's work and provide a wider context of global events that took place in the year of their making. The pieces also pursue a recurrent interest in Baudelaire's practice, and an important aspect of his filmmaking methodology, which consists in separating and reassembling pictures and words, providing each with a different context for its meaning and interpretation.

## 2007

### *Sugar Water* <sup>18</sup>

A man pastes up a series of posters, one on top of the other, on an advertising billboard in a fictional Parisian metro station. The posters depict various stages of a car exploding, burning, then smoldering from an undetermined cause—accident, car bomb, or riot? Each image effaces the last in the slow motion of the billposter's labor. Commuters pass by, and then appear again to repeat their movement with slight variations, actors drifting and looping through the limbo of 'Porte d'Erewhon' station; an anagram of 'nowhere' taken from Samuel Butler's eponymous satirical utopian novel. Here the traumatic image is encountered as mundane and cyclically reproduced, a power-

ful observation of a post 9/11 world in which image saturation and the mediation of catastrophic events has a deadening effect.

### *Site Displacement / Déplacement de Site* <sup>14</sup>

The city of Clermont-Ferrand in France, home of Michelin tyres, is heavily affected by industrial delocalization. In response to a commission from the city, Baudelaire dwelt on the notion of territory and photographic representation. He shot twenty-two images in the city and hired an Indian photographer, Anay Mann, to create a second set of photographs in India (where Michelin was relocating production) with instructions to make a new set of images "after" those taken in Clermont-Ferrand. *Site Displacement / Déplacement de Site* combines these two sets of pictures in side-by-side projections.

## 2009

### *[sic] and Of Signs and Senses* <sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup>

'Bokashi' is a Japanese process of censoring "obscene" or pornographic materials in books and magazines by blurring, masking, or removing the surface of the printed image with a blade. The delicate action of scratching out the offending image perversely increases its presence, feeding a transgressive eroticism through abstraction. At the heart of the work lies the inherent ambiguity in the notion of obscenity, a concept defined by the Japanese Supreme Court as that 'which unnecessarily excites or stimulates sexual desire.' The heliogravures on paper titled *Of Sign and Senses* reproduce blown up scratched pages of magazines bought in newsstands in Tokyo in 2008. In the 2009 video *[sic]* Baudelaire extends his exploration of the practice beyond the question of (unnecessary) desire to place other abstract issues of representation like time, place, or death under the scalpel's blade.

### *Chanson d'Automne* <sup>4</sup>

An assemblage of articles from *The Wall Street Journal* dated September 2008, rich in doomsday headlines, culminates with the near-meltdown of the world financial system. Within these clippings, an alternative narrative emerges

in the form of verses of poetry, as if decoded within the newsprint and materialized by markings in red grease pencil. Poetry revealed from within the fracture lines of a dysfunctional economic order.

The juxtaposition takes on a politically enigmatic meaning when we are reminded of a prior appearance in the media of these same verses from Paul Verlaine's *Chanson d'Automne* (*Autumn Song*). 'When a sighing begins / in the violins / of the autumn song' was broadcast on the BBC in 1944 as a coded signal to the French resistance that the invasion of Normandy was imminent. And on the eve of D-Day 'My heart is drowned / in the slow sound / languorous and long' triggered acts of sabotage behind enemy lines.

*Chanson d'Automne* treats the drama of the Fall of 2008 with a little poetic humor, while at the same time questioning what forms of resistance, either covert or overt, remain in play at a time when capitalism is in crisis, and triumphant theories about "The End of History" are being replaced by the utter uncertainty of chapters to come.

2010

*Refusons le monde de ceux qui ont [Let us refuse the world of those who]* <sup>17</sup>

A photograph of an unfinished statement scrawled across a wall, a universal oppositional rallying cry—but to what and to whom? The graffiti remains unfinished, and the cause of this interruption in undetermined: a police patrol? A shortage of paint? A lack of ideas?

*Everything is Political (I)* <sup>5</sup>

A stack of thirty-eight books, ranging from autobiography, political history, to self-help literature and romance novels, each containing the words *Unfinished Business* in their title. Some examples of the last lines of each book:

*I can think of no more appropriate words to end this book. Thanks, Terri, for reminding us of what we need most to resolve our unfinished business.*

*A smile touched her lips as she gazed down at him. "Now until forever. I like that." And then she eagerly proceeded to show him just how much.*

*Once they'd handed over the corpse and led the necessary papers he reckoned the least he could do was buy her a drink.*

*I believe, or at least hope, that the 1990s will be a decade of renewed questioning, experimentation and reform in the United States. Although they were fashioned during the years of ascendant Reaganism, The Challenge of Peace and Economic Justice for All provide important resources for that renewal.*

*Knock off the 'Dr. Evans.' Call me David. Okay—David.*

2011 – ONGOING

*Ante Memorial* <sup>12</sup>

In the event of an atomic attack on Great Britain so catastrophic that the government is wiped out, protocol dictates that the nation's nuclear submarine commanders take direction from a pre-existing letter written by the Prime Minister. Given the implied obliteration of the UK it is open to speculation as to what action such a letter would dictate upon reading. *Ante Memorial* thus meditates on an absence, inaccessible letters—which may or may not actually exist—giving rise to an atypical monument: a "reverse" memorial which challenges the very concept of history by revealing the tangled relationships between a non-verified past, a conditioned present and a possible future. Creator of a disembodied, dis-equilibrated, rechanneled monument, the artist also questions himself about the resources and formal shaping of his experiment: instead of marble we have an exchange of correspondence; instead of a historical event, something that has never (or not yet) taken place.

The series has been extended for the exhibition at Witte de With to include a letter from the

office of David Cameron, who resigned in the wake of Brexit, and a new, unanswered letter to his successor, Theresa May.

2011

*The Anabasis of May and Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi and 27 Years without Images* <sup>6</sup>

Through this film and installation the political and personal epic of the Japanese Red Army is recounted as an Anabasis; a journey that is both a wandering towards the unknown and a return towards home. From Tokyo to Beirut amid the post-1968 ideological fever, and from Beirut to Tokyo at the end of the Red Years, the thirty-year trajectory of a radical fringe of the revolutionary left is recounted by two of its protagonists. May Shigenobu, daughter of the founder of the small group, witnessed it all closely. Born in secrecy in Lebanon, she lived a clandestine life until reaching 27. But a second life began with her mother's arrest and her adaptation to a suddenly very public existence. Masao Adachi, the legendary Japanese experimental director, gave up cinema to take up arms with the Japanese Red Army and the Palestinian cause in 1974. For this theorist of the *fukeiron* (a theoretical framework/cinematic approach put forward by Japanese director Masao Adachi to reveal the structures of power inscribed in everyday landscapes) his twenty-seven years of voluntary exile were without images, since those he filmed in Lebanon were destroyed on three separate occasions during the war.

It is therefore words, testimony, memory (and false memory) that structure this film through two intersecting accounts that mix personal stories, political history, revolutionary propaganda and film theory. Thirty years of self-invention are traced in which the recurring theme is the role of images: both public images produced by the media in response to terrorist operations planned for the television era, and personal images that are lost or destroyed amid the chaos of the struggles. As Baudelaire speculates, Adachi was one of the earliest people to propose a 'synthesis between cinema

and guerrilla fighting, to work with the idea that the spectacle is the real battlefield'. Adopting an experimental documentary format, the accounts of May Shigenobu and Masao Adachi overlay new *fukeiron* images, filmed in Super8 in the contemporary landscapes of Tokyo and Beirut.

The film is part of a broader installation, which unfolds as a meditation on the story's complex relationship to images, including:

A 15 min excerpt of Masao Adachi's seminal 1969 film *A.K.A. Serial Killer* (referenced by Baudelaire in both *The Anabasis* and *Also Known as Jihadi*). <sup>7</sup>

A series of black on black silkscreen prints titled *Pictures of Documents*. <sup>8</sup>

A work titled *Fusako Shigenobu Family Album*, featuring pictures of the founder of the Japanese Red Army up until her disappearance underground. <sup>9</sup>

A slide presentation of drawings made by Masao Adachi during his incarceration in Beirut. <sup>10</sup>

A 16 page printed libretto. <sup>11</sup>

2016

*FRAEMWROK FRMAWREOK FAMREWROK...* <sup>3</sup>

Linking back to his background as a political scientist, this wallpaper piece gathers Baudelaire's collection of 413 figures and tables sampled from 109 academic journal articles dealing with the phenomenon of terrorism. Created by sociologists, economists, game theorists, political scientists and psychologists, the graphics attempt, in various manners, to explain, contain, represent or delineate a phenomenon which is ongoing, inherently elusive, endlessly complex and remarkably resistant to rationalization or explanation.

2017

*Also Known as Jihadi* <sup>13</sup>

A 99 minute film that tracks the itinerary of Abdel Aziz Mekki (all names have been changed to protect identities), a young man

from the outskirts of Paris, who flew to Egypt in 2012 without telling his family. Abdel Aziz eventually made his way to Syria, joined the ranks of the Al Nusra Front, a precursor of the Islamic State, and facilitated the crossing of the Syrian border for several of his hometown friends. The film is not the portrait of a man, for he remains (almost entirely) off camera. It is a fragmentary look at a trajectory, one that is *also known as* Jihadi.

The film attempts to trace his route to Syria and back in two manners. The first is by implementing the so-called 'landscape theory' (originating in the 1969 film *A.K.A. Serial Killer* by Masao Adachi, one of the characters of *The Anabasis...*), turning the camera not at the subject but at the landscapes he traversed in his lifetime. The second is by looking at the judicial landscape through which the State tracked his movements leading up to his arrest. In the background arises a multitude of issues about how a film can relate to a singular story, symptomatic of many such stories of a generation of young French men and women who feel at home neither here nor elsewhere, and whose sense of alienation or search for identity sometimes results in taking the road to Aleppo and Daesh.

In the immediate aftermath of the November 13<sup>th</sup> attacks in Paris, Baudelaire searched for an adequate form to affirm the position of trying (not) to understand. Or, in the words of philosopher Pierre Zaoui, to make a film that "aims to understand and not to understand at the same time—to understand up to the point that one no longer understands—and also to show, refusing to understand or explain, so that with a dreadful feeling of confusion we are surprised to find ourselves understanding, discovering a subtle sympathy, telling ourselves that maybe monstrosity is our shared condition."

Screening Times: 11:30am, 1:30pm and 3:30pm  
On Fridays, Witte de With closes at 9pm.  
The final screening starts 6:30pm.

## PUBLIC PROGRAM

*Fukeiron, or the Politics and Poetics of Landscape*  
Conference

Saturday 28 January 2017, 11am – 1pm  
Location: Kino, Gouvernestraat 129, Rotterdam  
Speakers: Eric Baudelaire (Artist),  
Claire Atherton (Editor), Nicole Brenez  
(Film Theorist and Curator)

Rather than filming the subject of his film—a recently arrested 19 year old serial killer—Masao Adachi turned the camera 180 degrees, and instead, decided to film the landscapes seen by the subject over the course of his life. The resulting film, *A.K.A. Serial Killer* (1969) introduced the so-called landscape theory, fukeiron in Japanese. This gesture raises many questions: what can a camera, filming a landscape, reveal about the social and political structures of a given place at a given time? And what does this context tell us about the kind of alienation that can lead to violence? Based on their own work and experiences as filmmaker, film editor and film theorist, the speakers will explore the politics and poetics of landscape in cinema, while showing excerpts of films that relate in one way or another to this concept of fukeiron, including films by Chantal Akerman, and Eric Baudelaire's work-in-progress *Also Known As Jihadi*, which were edited by Claire Atherton.

Organized in collaboration with International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).

*Assembly*  
Conference  
Friday 21 April 2017  
Location: Witte de With  
Curated with Grégory Castéra  
(Curatorial Fellow 2017, Council)

*The Form of a City as a Political Outcome*  
Conference

Saturday 22 April 2017  
Location: Witte de With  
Curated with Xavier Wrona (Architect)  
Post-war reconstruction was a pivotal moment for both Paris and Rotterdam. However opposed in their forms, both postwar urbanities share something of Paris's outskirts, portrayed in Eric Baudelaire's *Also Known As Jihadi*. The creation of these new urban forms could count as the main character in Baudelaire's film. In Jean Luc Godard's *2 or 3 things I know of her*, wasn't "her" both the city and the films' protagonist actress Marina Vlady? This session will use Georges Bataille's critical view of architecture (published in 1929) and Pier Paolo Pasolini's short visual essay *The Form of a City* (1974) as a frame through which these two post-war urban forms can be reexamined and explored for what their political consequences might be.

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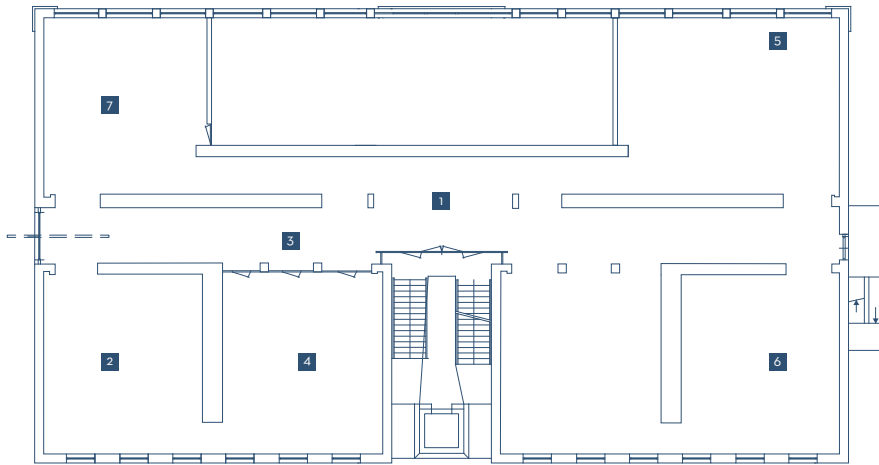
## PUBLICATION

An artist book accompanies the exhibition that gathers together a rich seam of materials and research documents derived from the 'source-book' display of research documents that inform Baudelaire's practice.

Co-published with Tabakelera - International Centre for Contemporary Culture, San Sebastian.

# Exhibition Floor Plan

THIRD FLOOR



- 1 page turning machine and magazine
- 2 the king
- 3 the door
- 4 the thief
- 5 the window
- 6 the stranger
- 7 the camera

## *the king, the door, the thief, the window, the stranger, the camera* Judy Radul

Upon entering the exhibition, you are invited—and at times manipulated—to relate in different ways to the forms and techniques at work in the spaces. As a king, you won't touch or move anything around you: things move on their own, for your pleasure alone. No door remains closed to the sovereign. As a thief, you are an unwelcome guest that raids the rooms, hoping to remain unseen. You snuck in through an open window. Transparency comes at a price. As a stranger, you are caught on camera and made visible, your strangeness on full display for all others to see.

Media technologies such as CCTV, screens and automated motion have become the culturally and politically charged frames and filters by which our sense of reality is built. Judy Radul sets out to explore the poetic and social agency of doors, windows, entrances, and exits by means of her multi-camera, live-feed 'present system'—the backbone of the exhibition. Cameras become agents that steer the visitor's behavior; architecture is performed through multiple points of view. Portals and vistas are brought to the fore as reality-producing media. Radul transforms the exhibition spaces into a dynamic set for live image production.

*In my art work, particularly recent work with moving cameras, I have made use of a lens geometry, which I think of as the architecture of the lens—a space not delineated by walls, but demarcated by the continuous, shifting potential of the lens view. However, unlike a theatrical stage frame machine, animated (pan tilt zoom) lens space is not fixed, but moving and virtual. The space doesn't surround the subject as much as it traverses it.*

—Judy Radul, *Video Chamber*, 2011

In the exhibition spaces, the forces of media technologies are channeled into an experiential assemblage where they both materialize and dematerialize. The foldable connectors and dividers deployed by the artist—book pages, shutters, blinds and screens—exert agency on a social and ideological level: a door, for example, constitutes the reality of inside and outside, of access and exclusion.

### PAGE TURNING MACHINE AND MAGAZINE 1

What if a space could unfold like a book? Imagine an unhinged space, opening up and closing in on itself, revealing and concealing. In this magazine, designed to be looked at by a camera, Radul collates found imagery, photographs made in Rotterdam, and source texts including her own writing. The arrangement of images is such that the causal dynamics between recto-verso and the cinematic shot/counter-shot are brought to the fore. The automated page turner is like a bad actor laboring over a gesture we ourselves could make without giving it any thought. By handing over this gesture to an apparatus, the constituent parts of the movement are broken up. Reading and leafing are denaturalized, mechanized and outsourced.

*The play of recto and verso enabled by objects such as book pages that can be turned creates an ambivalent threshold zone between the imaginary of the image and the real of the reader/observer. The medial conditions for the birth of a hallucination have been met—a hallucination that is at its very core a medial operation.*

—Bernhard Siegert, *Figures of self-reference. A media genealogy of the trompe-l'oeil in seventeenth-century Dutch still life in Cultural Techniques. Grids, Filters, Doors and Other Articulations of the Real*, 2015



## THE KING <sup>2</sup>

*Kings don't touch doors.*

*They don't know this happiness: to push, gently or roughly before you one of these great familiar panels, to turn around towards it to put it back in place—to hold a door in your arms. The happiness of seizing one of these tall barriers to a room by the porcelain knob of its belly; this quick hand-to-hand, during which your step slows down for a moment, your eyes open up and your whole body adapts to its new apartment.*

*With a friendly hand he holds on a bit longer, before firmly pushing it back and shuts himself in—agreeably assured by the click of the powerful and well-oiled latch.*

—Francis Ponge, *The Pleasures of the Door*, 1942

His Majesty The King Willem-Alexander Claus George Ferdinand, Prince of Orange-Nassau, ascended the throne of The Netherlands on 30 April 2013.

## THE DOOR <sup>3</sup>

*The door represents in a decisive manner how separating and connecting are only two sides of precisely the same act. The human being who first erected a hut revealed the specifically human capacity over against nature, insofar as he or she cut a portion out of the continuity and infinity of space and arranged this into a particular unity in accordance with a single meaning.*

—Georg Simmel, *Bridge and Door*, 1908

*I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*

—John 10:9-16, New King James Version

*As the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century embraces the virtues of transparency and flow, the physical reality of the door becomes embarrassing, suspicious, while the original, divisive impetus of the door grows stronger than ever. An awkward compromise emerges in the dematerialized*

*door: no longer a hefty barrier politely opened upon the production of credentials, but a stretched zone of passive aggressive, relentless checking mediated through layers of insidious devices. A proposed “tunnel of technology” could rationalize the obstacle course that is the contemporary airport, which has inherited the old city gate’s function of policing passage into and out of the urban center. With its Checkpoint of the Future, the International Air Transport Association proposes to solve the resulting clutter by creating a new global digital infrastructure that identifies safe citizens in advance and allows travelers, using the key of their biometric data, to pass unimpeded through security, as if there were no door at all...*

—Rem Koolhaas, *Elements of Architecture* - 14. *International Architecture Exhibition, la Biennale di Venezia*, 2014

## THE THIEF <sup>4</sup>

*And what happens during a burglary? Having broken the lock, as soon as I push the door it thrusts back within me a heap of darkness, or, to be more exact, a very thick vapor which my body is summoned to enter. I enter. For a half hour I shall be operating, if I am alone, in a world which is the reverse of the customary world.*

—Jean Genet, *The Thief's Journal*, 1949

The elements in this room together evoke a chain of reference, including Jean Genet’s *The Thief’s Journal*, an account of his life as a thief and social pariah; his short critical essay *What remains of a Rembrandt torn into four equal pieces and flushed down the toilet*; the theft of seven masterpieces from the Kunsthal Rotterdam in 2012—remains of which were later found in the back yard of the mother of one of the thieves who had burnt several paintings in an attempt to protect her son from prosecution—; Derrida’s experimental book *Glac* in which the philosopher considers Hegel’s metaphysics and Jean Genet’s writing, adopting also the latter’s double columned structure used in the original *What remains of a Rembrandt*; and Jean Genet in *Tangier* by Mohamed Choukri, a novelist, kindred spirit and friend of Genet’s.

Before the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in 1440, books were created entirely by hand in a time-consuming, laborious process. Books were hence extremely rare and valuable. To prevent them from theft, Medieval libraries often kept their precious volumes chained up, allowing for the books to be consulted only on site. This feature of *stabilitas loci* (alluding to the Benedictine ideal of staying in one location your entire life) turns the chain into a signifier of the locus of knowledge. Contemporary knowledge systems emphasize the maximum dissemination of knowledge, potentially leading to the devaluation of information. With the chained up books, their status as being valuable is heightened while their action radius is severely limited.

## THE WINDOW <sup>5</sup>

*The window indicates, first of all, the rather general classification of social reality in a public male-oriented space and a private female-oriented space. The special character of the window as a borderline has not only to do with its fragility in contrast to the solidness of the walls, but also with its relationship to the other opening in the façade: the door. Finally, the most dominant temporal classification of day and night is signaled by an uncovering or a covering of the window.*

*The shunning of the window by upper-class women and the gradual process of restraining maids from cleaning the public side of the window are vital elements in the completion of female domestication. The nineteenth-century reinvention of the exterior shutter blinds or “modern” wooden roller blinds, paralleled by the use of a mass of draperies on the inside, confirmed the solidification of the window as the borderline between private and public space. The solidification seemed to justify the appearance of male window cleaners.*

—Irene Cieraad, *Dutch Windows. Female Virtue and Female Vice*, 2006

*The problem in architecture is first and foremost one of doors and windows. There are three windows. There is the French window (door) which serves to effect an architecture, a place where man lives, be this a city or an apartment. There is the window which renders itself autonomous, the window as a place of light or looking. The third window is the television screen... So when I speak of a window, I mean this third window. I am speaking also of another constructed space, that of telecommunications and the new technologies.*

*Another point concerns cutting out: you only have an image if there is cutting, for nothing is ever seen in its entirety. Everything is always perceived through a frame, and it’s certain this frame existed from the moment the first eye opened upon the visible field. This process continued with the framing of paintings, the frame of the photograph, and the frame created by the television camera eye.*

—Paul Virilio, *Speed-Space*, interview with Chris Dercon in *VIRILIO LIVE: Selected Interviews*, 2001

## THE STRANGER <sup>6</sup>

*If wandering is the liberation from every given point in space, and thus the conceptional opposite to fixation at such a point, the sociological form of the “stranger” presents the unity, as it were, of these two characteristics. This phenomenon too, however, reveals that spatial relations are only the condition, on the one hand, and the symbol, on the other, of human relations. Elements which increase distance and repel, in the relations of and with the stranger, produce a pattern of coordination and consistent interaction.*

—Georg Simmel, *The Stranger*, 1908

Diergaarde Blijdorp, the Rotterdam zoo, houses a group of zebras native to the savannah of north-east South Africa.

*Strangely, the stranger lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity, the space that wrecks our abode, the time in which understanding and affinity founder.*

—Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 1991

## THE CAMERA 7

The 'present system' is Radul's unique multi-camera system. Responding to the surroundings, she records a choreography of camera motion which determines the live panning, tilting, zooming and tracking motions of the cameras set up throughout the space. While walking through the spaces, you see other visitors (and occasionally yourself) in the montages playing on multiple screens. The 'present system' puts image-pressure on the time and space of the exhibition, and estranges the visitor, creating a short-circuiting of looking-at and being-looked-at, which are the core dynamics of the theatre. As the camera cannot but look at anything placed within its line of sight, what is at stake here is not so much the visual itself, but the perception and recording of the visual as it unfolds on-screen. Through this intricate system, Judy Radul explores the ethics and aesthetics of live camera motion and image feeds, the characteristics of recorded time and action, and the different ways of framing objects and happenings through a lens. In doing so, she allows multiple modes of perception and representation to simultaneously manifest themselves.

*In pondering the superimposition of built space and lens space it may be worth remarking that built space, although it may partition an environment, is fundamentally part of a contiguity, one room leads to the next, the door opens to a street and the street to a field. The lens delimits space in a different way, finding its terminus in the videographic frame which selects from contiguous space and therefore continuously refers to an "out of frame" just beyond the cone of vision of the camera. The desire to be seen by a video camera is a desire to appear at a distance from oneself. Video couples the desire to be seen with the desire to see from the point of view of the camera, in the absence of any "encompassing" space that brings myself and my audience together.*

—Judy Radul, *Video Chamber*, 2011



Judy Radul, *the king, the door, the thief, the window, the stranger, the camera* (Rotterdam skyline as seen from Witte de With), 2016

# Biographies

**Eric Baudelaire** (1973, FR/US) is a visual artist and filmmaker. His films *Letters to Max* (2014), *The Ugly One* (2013), *The Anabasis of May* and *Fusako Shigenobu, Masao Adachi, and 27 Years Without Images* (2011) were shown at the FIDMarseille, Locarno, Toronto, New York and Rotterdam film festivals. His research-based practice also unfolds as installations incorporating photography, printmaking, performance, publications and screenings. Recent solo exhibitions were held at the Fridericianum in Kassel, Berkeley Art Museum, Kadist Art Foundation in San Francisco, Bétonsalon in Paris, the Bergen Kunsthall, the Beirut Art Center, Gasworks in London, La Synagogue de Delme in France and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. He has participated in Sharjah Biennial 12, Seoul Mediacity Biennial, the Yokohama Triennial, the Taipei Biennial, Berlin Documentary Forum 2, La Triennale in Paris and the Baltic Triennial. His films and installations are in the collections of the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, the MACBA in Barcelona, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, M+ in Hong Kong, the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

The artists **Daniel Dewar** (1976, UK) and **Grégory Gicquel** (1975, FR) first collaborated as students and have been working together ever since. Their iconoclastic work violates the pre-established codes of sculpture and features a continuous physical reengagement with materials and processes through a hyperawareness surrounding the craftsmanship and tradition of the medium, which expands its reach in the process. The display of erudition and joyful anarchy is nicely offset by the many ways in which the often used references glance back at the past, casting an ironic shadow on the present tense in passing. Recent

solo exhibitions include *Digitalis*, KIOSK, Ghent (2016); *Stoneware Murals*, Etablissement d'En Face, Brussels (2015); *La jeune sculpture*, Musée Rodin, Paris (2014); *Jus d'orange*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013) and *Crêpe Suzette*, Spike Island, Bristol (2012). Recent group exhibitions include *Invitation au voyage*, CENTRALE for Contemporary Art, Brussels (2015); *Labour and Wait*, Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California (2014); *Conjuring for Beginners*, Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2012); and *Making is Thinking*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2011). In 2012 they won the Prix Marcel Duchamp.

**Laure Prouvost** (1978, FR) is an artist working between Antwerp and London. In 2011 she received the Max Mara Prize for Women, after which Prouvost was the first French artist to win the prestigious Turner Prize for contemporary artists living in Great-Britain. Upcoming solo exhibitions include a year-long commission at Haus der Kunst, Munich; in addition to a major touring exhibition which will travel through MMK Frankfurt, Frankfurt; Kunstmuseum Luzern; and Le Consortium, Dijon. Additional solo exhibitions include Hangar Bicocca, Milan; Farenheit, Los Angeles; Centre for Contemporary Art Laznia, Gdańsk and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), Troy.

**Judy Radul's** (1962, CA) interdisciplinary practice revolves around the question of how we as social beings understand our relation to the material world through the visual. Her conceptualist and absurdist sensibility treats the white cube as a staging ground in which her work stands at the intersection of language, objects and bodies in space. The spatialized

experience recreates "live" experiences which acutely express the discomfort with people and objects in the original space, and confronts the tension between the lived experience and the representation of it. Her work explores these contradictions, working across media and technologies as well as critical texts. Recent solo exhibitions include *Judy Radul: Closeup, The Breakdown*, Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston (2015); *This is Television*, Daadgalerie, Berlin (2013); *World Rehearsal Court*, Henie Onstad Art Centre, Høvikodden (2011). Recent group exhibitions include *Home Work*, Open Forum, Berlin (2015); *People Things Enter Exit*, Catriona Jeffries, Vancouver (2011); *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, MuHKA, Antwerp (2009). She recently took part in the 8<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale (2014) and the Nicaragua Biennale X (2016). In 2017 she takes part in Contour Biennale 8, Mechelen.

## Colophon

*The Music of Ramón Raquello and his Orchestra*

Eric Baudelaire

27 January – 7 May 2017

Curators Defne Ayas, Natasha Hoare  
Lenders Galerie Greta Meert, Brussels;  
Galeria Juana de Aizpuru, Madrid;  
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Conferences curated with Grégory Castéra  
(Curatorial Fellow 2017, Council),  
Xavier Wrona (Architect)

*the king, the door, the thief, the window,  
the stranger, the camera*

Judy Radul

10 February – 7 May 2017

Curator Samuel Saelemakers

Special thanks to Seecum Cheung, Jeff Mann,  
Alex Turgeon

*Para|Fictions*

29 January 2016 – 9 April 2017

Team Defne Ayas, Natasha Hoare,  
Samuel Saelemakers

*Rotterdam Cultural Histories #10*

*Naum Gabo*

Conceived by Defne Ayas, Mariette Dölle  
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Visitors Guide

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*Para / Fictions*

Laure Prouvost

27 January – 2 April 2017

Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel

14 April – 9 July 2017

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*The Music of Ramón Raquello  
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*the king, the door, the thief, the window,  
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