

Resuscitations

Video works by Agnieszka Polska, Sally O'Reilly, Roee Rosen, Olav Westphalen, and Gernot Wieland jointly curated by Lívía Páldi and MoMCo founder Olav Westphalen

The first temporary exhibition of MoMCo presents a selection of video works that reverberate, in different ways, with the museum's dedication to highlighting, researching and mediating the hidden, comedic aspects of modern and contemporary art.

Without claiming to be comprehensive, MoMCo proposes a framework for the analysis of the traditional canon from the perspective of the comedic. It expands its project with a selection of contemporary moving image works that readjust accepted legacies and evolutionary historical narratives, each in its own way and from within its specific cultural, political and discursive context.

Playfully and deadpan, the selected works break down modernist agreements on the protocols and systems of referencing and classifying art. The films engage with inherent questions of artistic production, spectatorship, materiality, value, and constructs of verbal and visual power. They work through hybridised narratives, appropriating and subverting references to modernity, in order to explore the conditions under which art can challenge stereotypes and the inadequacies and paradoxes of prevailing hierarchies, in order to articulate new propositions.

Works in the exhibition *Resuscitations*

Agnieszka Polska: *My Favourite Things*, 2010
Video, 5'35"

Courtesy the artist and ŻAK I BRANICKA, Berlin

My Favourite Things is concerned with the fundamentals of art – perception and interpretation – and how the misinterpretation of art can produce skewed analysis. To illustrate this phenomenon, Polska skilfully manipulates the documentary form to produce playful, unique animations. A subject floating in slow motion is a common visual element present in the work of the artist. In this film, the artist's favourite things are presented as a collection of

props. Interpretation, even if 'flawed', provides a chance to propagate analysis.¹

Sally O'Reilly: *All the Knowledge in Age Concern*, 2016
Video, 10'30"
Commissioned by Blackrock + Matt's Gallery
Courtesy the artist

All the Knowledge in Age Concern was made using all the non-fiction books in a single charity shop in Gloucestershire, UK. Such is the state of information available to the public – once it has made its way out of corporate laboratories, university research programmes and other specialist environments, it is, by necessity, simplified and generalised. And yet the video's narrator – a neologism who wishes to enter the language it is studying – learns from these books not watered-down wisdom, but the contradictions and blind alleys that constitute modernity, that make it so difficult to 'know' anything at all.

Roe Rosen, *The Buried Alive Group Videos: Animation Chant for a Hybrid*, 2008
Video 4'00"
Courtesy the artist and Galleria Riccardo Crespi, Milan

Komar-Myshkin was the pseudonym of the fictive Russian poet Efim Poplavsky (1978-2011), who emigrated to Tel Aviv in the early 2000s. There, he founded the *Buried Alive Group*, a collective of ex-Soviet artists, writers and filmmakers who disavowed the culture around them and sought a zombie-like artistic existence. Their collective production consisted of a manifesto and videos made throughout the 2000s. In this video, several members congregate late at night, forming a circle around an assemblage of objects arranged by Komar-Myshkin in such a way as to suggest a human form. The cluster of items assembled as the creature's face has another, smaller face at its centre: a Russian chocolate bar bearing the blue-eyed baby mascot *Alyonka*. The Buried Alive members chant and convulse

¹ Marta Lisok. 'Agnieszka Polska, Trzy Filmy Z Narracja.' dwutygodnik.com/arttykul/1524-agnieszka-polska-trzy-filmy-z-narracja.html

collectively in a shamanistic ritual meant to awaken this Israeli-Russian Golem.²

Olav Westphalen, *The Tunnels*, video animation, 2015

Video animation 8'00"

Produced for the 2016 Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, 2015

Courtesy the artist

A maze of shafts and caves, made up of three elements endlessly recombined: rock, dirt and beams (...) Inhabitants: same stuff as architecture. Distinctions blurred between animate and inanimate (...) an array of concrete abstractions, a modular alphabet. Any event can be spelled out. Here, a children's party, a crime scene can look like modernist sculpture (...) think the semi-abstract, wooden toys at Waldorf schools! (...) Grasp the simultaneous abstractions of financial markets, digital spaces and Neo-Formalist art (...) Tom Sawyer's cave (Ariadne's thread), Alice's Wonderland, Gravity's Rainbow, the Vietcong maze, Minecraft (...) images of tunnels in Gaza (...) A hole in the ground leads to 'Sketchland,' the peculiar realm in Charles Dickens' eponymous satire where humans obey the laws of drawing and body-parts can be erased without them dying (...) Tunnel visions: the information spheres we inhabit. We don't search the web, but revisit the accreted bias of previous searches (...) an endlessly expanding, yet rapidly narrowing world (...) A 'gap of detectability' is caused by the legal limits to pixel-sizes in satellite-images (50x50cm). It turns a human figure seen from above into a single, grey pixel, indistinguishable from surrounding pixels representing architecture, machinery and landscape.³

Gernot Wieland: *Portrait of Karl Marx as a Young God*, 2009

Video, 0'59"

Courtesy the artist

In his works, Wieland links personal narratives, historic reports, scientific facts, fictional and real elements with tragic and comic events generating a sense of the uncanny, mostly in an ironic or absurd way. His fleeting video *Portrait of Karl Marx as a Young*

² Description based on Rosa Chabanova, annotations to *Vladimir's Night*. Roee Rosen, *Maxim Komar-Myshkin Vladimir's Night*, Sternberg Press, 2014. p.130.

³ Notes on *The Tunnels* by Olav Westphalen

God (2009) presents a narrated account with Germanic accent of what can be classified as Marxist while scanning through a succession of naïve drawings, charts and collaged paper models. 'It is a documentary work on desire,' says Wieland: 'desire for utopia, for Marxism, for a different society. And what makes it feel documentary to me is its absurdity.'⁴

⁴ Lars-Erik Hjertström Lappalainen, 'Portrait of Karl Marx as a Young God'. Interview with Gernot Wieland, tsnoK, 2010. tsnok.se/en/2010/miscellaneous/karl-marx-as-a-young-god/21/