HOW TO SAY IT THE WAY IT IS!

07 October /
02 December 2017

Selected works from the a/political collection
Curated by Franko B for Rua Red Gallery



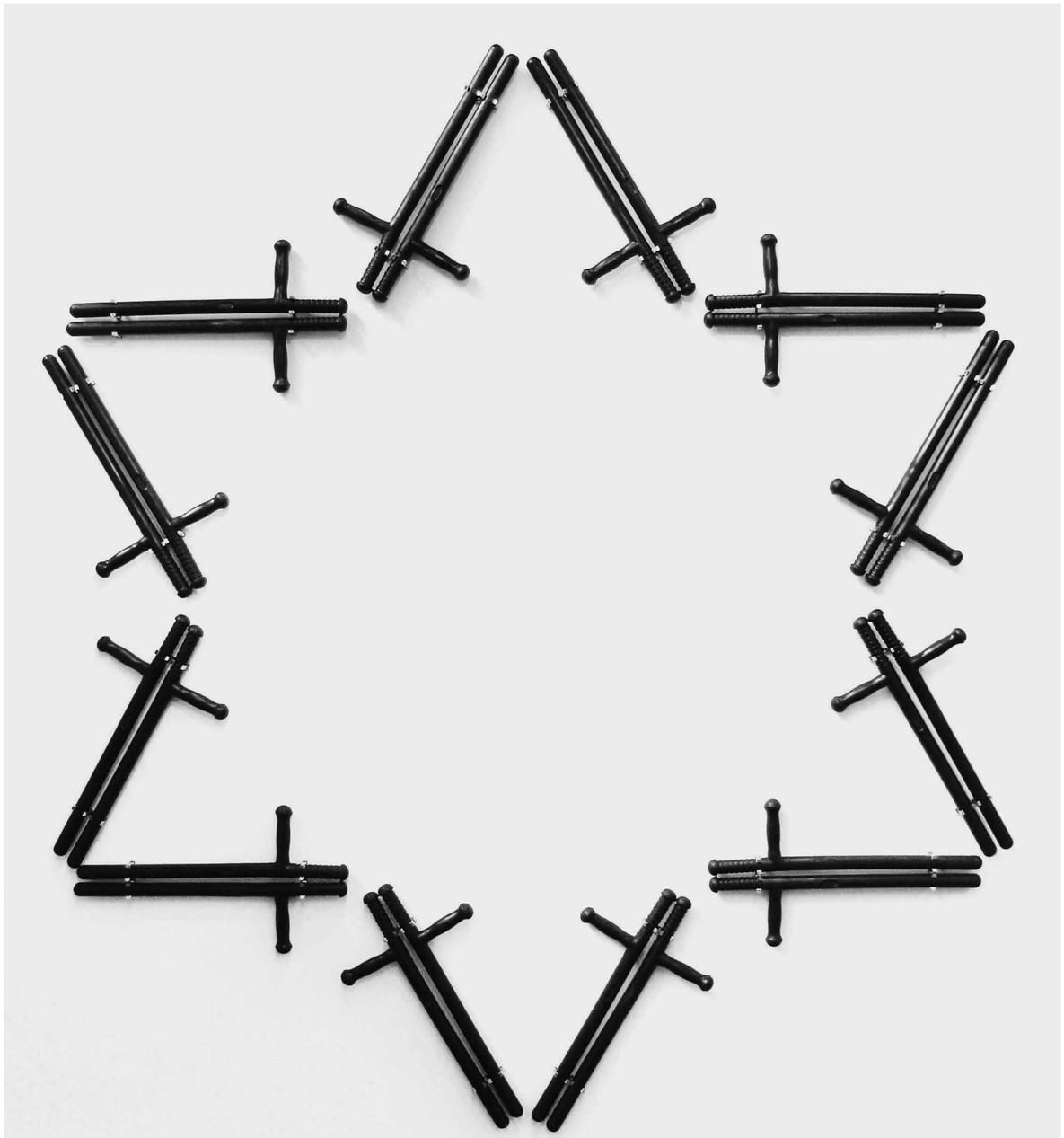
1.

ANDREI MOLODKIN (1966) BORN IN BOUI, NORTH RUSSIA. WHILST STUDYING HE SERVED IN THE SOVIET ARMY, CONVOYING MISSILES THROUGH SIBERIA. IN THE FREEZING TEMPERATURES, MOLODKIN WOULD RUB OIL OVER HIS BODY TO PROVIDE THE WARMTH TO KEEP HIMSELF ALIVE. OIL BECAME HIS SOURCE OF SURVIVAL, YET HE WAS ACUTELY AWARE OF THE CORRUPTION AND EXPLOITATION EMBEDDED IN ITS VERY SUBSTANCE. AS A RESULT, HE CONTINUES TO EXPLORE THE CONNOTATIONS OF OIL IN MYRIAD HIGH-PROFILE SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXTS.

ANDRES SERRANO (1950) BORN IN NEW YORK CITY. SERRANO RECEIVED INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION FOR THE SCANDAL AROUND HIS WORK PISS CHRIST (1987), IGNITING A NATIONAL DEBATE ON THE FREEDOM OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION AND THE PUBLIC FINANCING OF CONTROVERSIAL ARTWORKS. HE WENT ON TO PRODUCE SERIES INCLUDING THE KLAN, THE MORGUE AND SHIT. THROUGHOUT HIS CONFRONTATIONAL AND CHALLENGING WORK, SERRANO UNPICKS THE HYPOCRISIES AND HIGHLIGHTS SIMILARITIES WITHIN RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS.



2.



3.



4.



5, 6.

(PREVIOUS PAGES)
KENDELL GEERS (1968) BORN IN APARTHEID JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA AS JACOBUS HERMANUS PIETERS GEERS. IN 1993 HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO KENDELL GEERS AND HIS DATE OF BIRTH TO MAY 1968 (THE START OF THE CIVIL AND STUDENT REVOLUTION). IN 1988, GEERS WAS ONE OF 143 YOUNG MEN WHO PUBLICLY REFUSED TO SERVE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE FORCE. FACING EITHER A LIFE IN EXILE OR SIX YEARS IMPRISONMENT IN A CIVILIAN JAIL HE IMPOSED SELF-EXILE, MOVING TO NEW YORK IN 1989. ALTHOUGH HIS WORK HAS BEEN ARTIFICIALLY DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS (1988-2000 / 2001-ONWARDS) GEERS HAS CONTINUALLY USED VIOLENT MATERIAL SUCH AS BARBED WIRES, BROKEN GLASS AND THE WORD FUCK TO PERTAIN TO THE BRUTALITY OF HIS SOCIAL STRUGGLES GROWING UP IN APARTHEID SOUTH-AFRICA.

SHIRIN NESHAT (1957) BORN IN QAZVIN, IRAN. FOLLOWING THE 1979 IRANIAN REVOLUTION AND THE NATURE OF HER CONTROVERSIAL ARTWORKS, NESHAT HAS LIVED IN EXILE FOR THE MAJORITY OF HER LIFE. PRIMARILY WORKING IN FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHY HER WORK CONCENTRATES ON THE NOTION OF FEMININITY AND ITS RELATION TO ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AND MILITANCY. NESHAT QUESTIONS THE OPPRESSED ROLE OF THE WOMAN IN CONTEMPORARY IRANIAN SOCIETY, DRAWING ON HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS ISLAMIC ROOTS AND THE FEMALE GAZE.

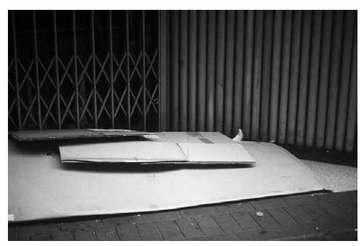
FRANKO B (1960) BORN IN MILAN. HIS PRACTICE SPANS DRAWING, INSTALLATION, PERFORMANCE AND SCULPTURE. A PIONEER OF BODY ART AND A LEADING PERFORMANCE ARTIST AND ACTIVIST, FRANKO B USES HIS BODY AS A TOOL TO EXPLORE THE THEMES OF THE PERSONAL, POLITICAL, POETIC, RESISTANCE, SUFFERING AND THE REMINDER OF OUR OWN MORTALITY AND VULNERABILITY.
FRANKO B LIVES AND WORKS IN LONDON AND IS PROFESSOR OF SCULPTURE AT L'ACCADEMIA ALBERTINA DI BELLE ARTI DI TORINO, ITALY, HE IS ALSO A VISITING LECTURER AT THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART, LONDON. HE HAS PRESENTED WORK INTERNATIONALLY AT: TATE MODERN; ICA (LONDON); SOUTH LONDON GALLERY; ARNOLFINI (BRISTOL); PALAIS DES BEAUX ARTES (BRUSSELS); BEACONSFILED CONTEMPORARY ART (LONDON); BLUECOAT MUSEUM (LIVERPOOL); TATE LIVERPOOL; RUARTS FOUNDATION (MOSCOW); VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM (LONDON); FREUD MUSEUM (LONDON); PAC (MILAN); CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE (COPENHAGEN) AND MANY MORE. HIS WORKS ARE IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE TATE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, SOUTH LONDON GALLERY, THE PERMANENT COLLECTION OF THE CITY OF MILAN AND A/POLITICAL, LONDON.










A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRANKO B AND BECKY HAGHPANAH-SHIRWAN



7.

BS: Let us start with the title - HOW TO SAY IT THE WAY IT IS!

FB: I'm using the work in the a/political collection the way it is - the way the artist expresses it, how we all express our mitigation, our hope, our cynicism, our salvation. Some of the work is crude and punk, and some is more sophisticated, using graphics and media. Andrei Molodkin's oil sculpture 'Fuck You', 2013 is black and white, then you have artists like kennardphillipps, who, although the images are also direct, have different poetics; they're relying on events that have happened in the past and recent / present events, rather than a dry "fuck you!"

BS: Can you say more about the notion of 'history'.

FB: The collection has history, in terms of 'retrospective' - artists that work with a history, either because they were involved with that history like Gustav Metzger, who left Germany and made work afterwards, or like John Heartfield, who was there making a comment via his work, in the moment. I think this is very significant in terms of what the collection has; there are some very important works by John Heartfield in the AIZ magazines.

In Metzger's 'Historic Photographs, To Crawl Into Anschluss, Vienna, March 1938', the action of going under a blanket to see this atrocity is, in a way, what we do. It's like saying that everything is a white wash. Take the Grenfell Tower as an example; it's going to become a white wash - and for sure it will inspire response and contributions from artists today and in the future. The report the Government isn't going to publish about the foreign financing of extremist terror groups - it's a whitewash. For security reasons, we're not allowed to see it?! With Metzger's work you are actively going under the blanket to see something that is hidden or wiped away. In a way it's very beautiful. It has a lot of weight because he was a witness and a victim of that moment where he lost his family.

BS: The poignancy of that piece is in the unspoken instruction, whereby the viewer has to recreate the physical stance of the victims within the image. You are forced to empathise on a corporal level.

FB: What I like about the piece is that it is not sentimental. None of the work is sentimental in the collection and that is key. Also what I like is that there is no moral statement. It's not about morality - it's about saying it the way it is, rather than saying 'this is bad'. Of course, this doesn't need to be said. Looking at the works together, we are not producing an exhibition of propaganda. Sure, there are works within the collection that are propaganda - one could say that Peter Kennard has been making propaganda for the CND for forty years - but this would be diminutive. I remember seeing his images in the early 1980's when I went to CND marches as a Punk, as an Anarchist, there to cause trouble. But I think with his work and all the artists in this exhibition - it's not just moral, it's not about





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9. 10, 11.

LEON GOLUB (1922 - 2004) BORN IN CHICAGO. AN AMERICAN, POST-WAR, FIGURATIVE PAINTER, GOLUB WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE ANTI-VIETNAM WAR PEACE MOVEMENT. HIS ACTIVISM LED HIM TO CREATE LARGE-SCALE HISTORY PAINTINGS, USING SUBJECT MATTER THAT INCLUDES INTERROGATIONS, TORTURE SCENES AND RIOTS OF THE 1980S AND EARLY 90S. GOLUB BELIEVED ART SHOULD HAVE RELEVANCE AND THROUGH HIS WORK RETURNS TO THEMES OF OPPRESSION, VIOLENCE, POWER OR THE MISUSE OF POWER AND DYSTOPIAN IMAGES OF URBAN LIFE.



12.

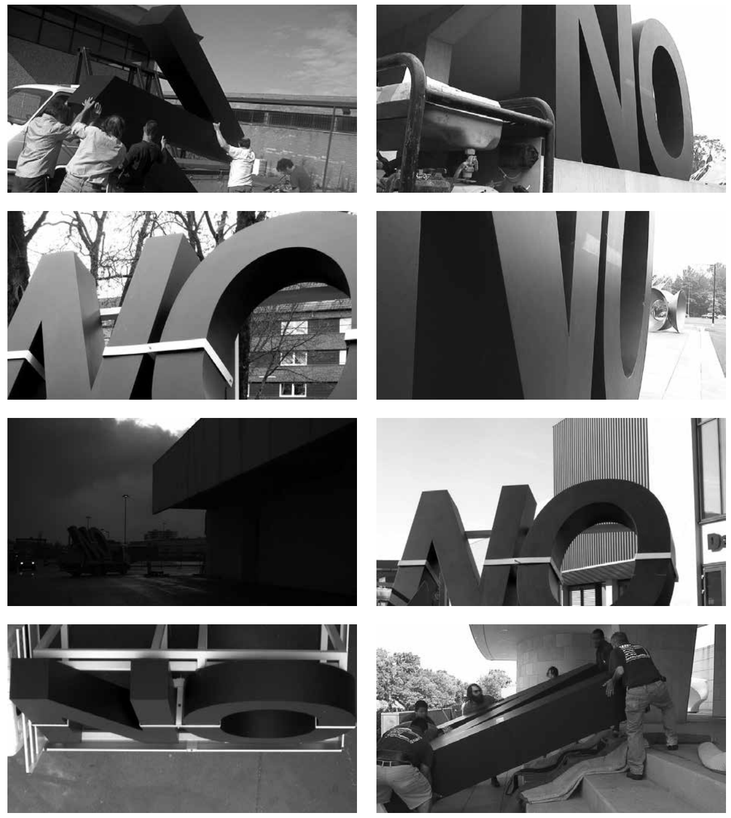
SANTIAGO SIERRA (1966) BORN IN MADRID. INFLUENCED BY THE FORMAL LANGUAGE OF MINIMALISM AND CONCEPTUAL ART MOVEMENTS, SIERRA'S PRACTICE REVEALS THE NETWORKS OF POWER THAT CAUSE EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS, THE INJUSTICE OF LABOUR RELATIONS, THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH PRODUCED BY THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM, THE UNFAIR PARADOX OF WORK AND MONEY, AND PANDEMIC RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN A WORLD SCORED WITH UNIDIRECTIONAL (SOUTH-NORTH) MIGRATORY FLOWS. HIS ACTIONS IN WHICH UNDERPRIVILEGED OR MARGINALISED INDIVIDUALS WERE HIRED TO PERFORM MENIAL OR POINTLESS TASKS IN EXCHANGE FOR MONEY, ARE AMONGST HIS BEST KNOWN WORK.

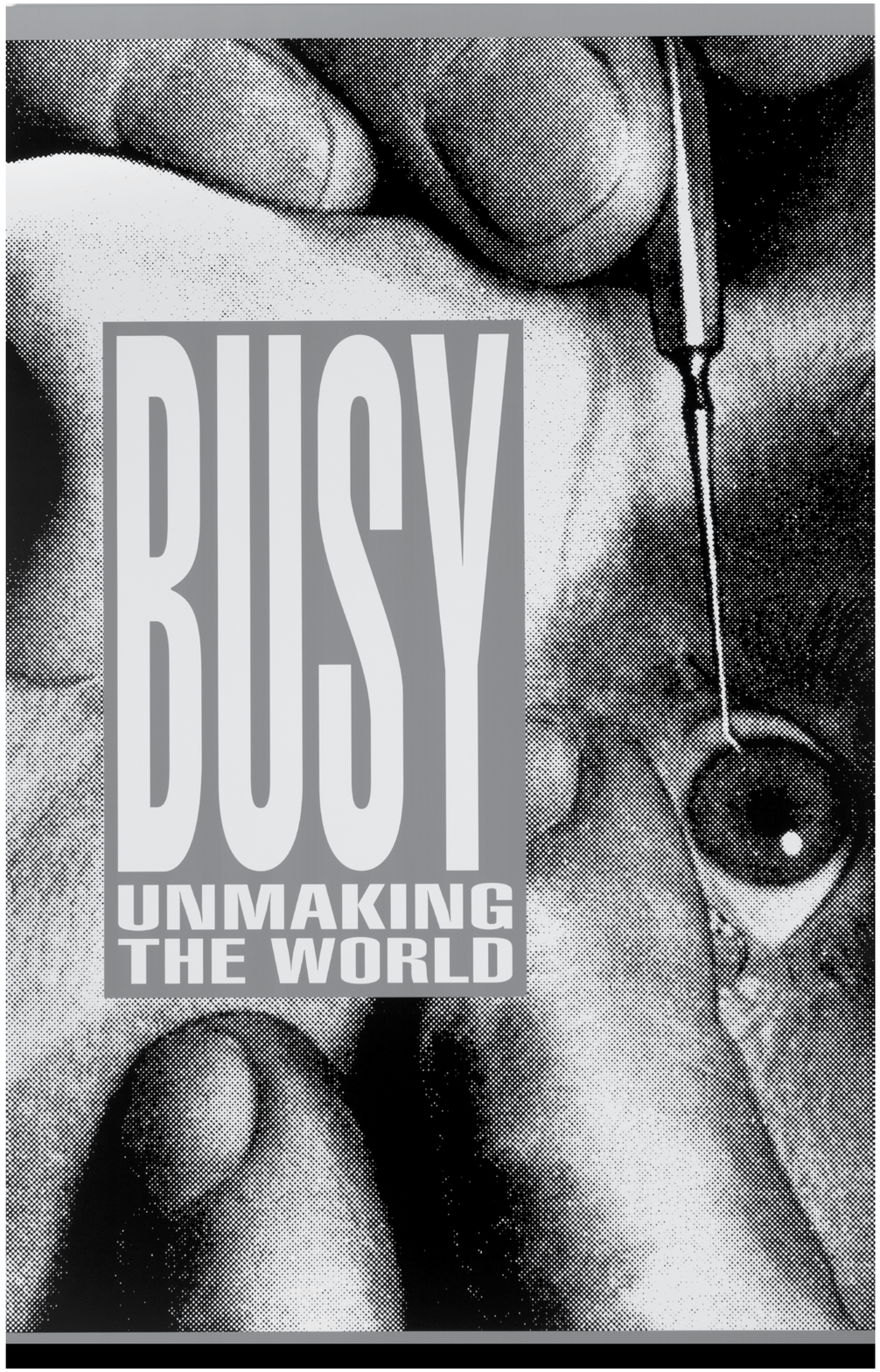
educating, it's not about telling people what to believe, rather its about showing how the artists perceive it to be and the necessity to express it, to show it.

BS: Collectively, it is also about defiance.

FB: And resistance. There is no surrender. To use Santiago Sierra's sculpture 'NO' in the way that Santiago uses it, or the batons in Kendell Geers' 'Signs Taken for Wonders (102)', that make a crown / an ass-hole / the star of David; you could have made it with guns and a lot of other things. It's also important to look at Barbara Kruger. I remember when I first came across her work years ago. I saw her take on strong visual language, not only reminding me of propaganda like Soviet aesthetics, but also in Germany, what Hitler was using. She took something that could be identified as pop, not popular, but certainly populist, the same kind of trick that Trump is now using. It's like what Susan Sontag said, I can't remember the exact quote but it was something like 'the only remedy for not having power is to get it'. This is what I think artists can try and do, defy, but also assume power by using art and language in a way that can infect and affect, like a virus. Language is a virus, it's fluid, and it eats you, whether you like it or not, it stays with you.

BS: Most of the works within the collection are provocative; a large number of the artists we have worked with or collect have courted controversy at some point. Considering that all of these individual works have such potent messages and histories, how do you allow them to breath when placed side by side?





13.

BARBARA KRUGER (1945) BORN IN NEWARK, NEW JERSEY. DRAWING ON HER BACKGROUND IN GRAPHIC DESIGN, KRUGER ADOPTS THE SAME VISUAL TOOLS AS MASS MEDIA; THE APPROPRIATED IMAGES AND TEXTS ACTING AS BOTH SOCIAL COMMENTARY AND POLITICAL AGITATOR COMMENTING ON RELIGION, SEX, RACIAL AND GENDER STEREOTYPES, CONSUMERISM, CORPORATE GREED, AND POWER. A CONCEPTUALIST AND COLLAGIST, KRUGER HAS DEVELOPED INSTANTLY RECOGNISABLE ARTWORKS THROUGH HER CHARACTERISTIC TYPEFACE FUTURA EXTRA BOLD.



14.

FB: I don't think it's something that I worry too much about because each work is so personal and individual. I like the idea that in this space you have this particular world in which these ideas are shown and spoken. We are creating an experience of the physicality of this work. Instead of the space being full with lots of little work, I want to create one big work. It's like the world, looking into something big and seeing the little things that you notice are happening. It's also a democratic way to show work, next to each other, amalgamating. The works will talk to each other, having a real dialogue, one to one, an orgy! Let's have an orgy! It's not about filling in gaps or spaces. I see one reality. I see one work. I don't see this as a selection of artists.

BS: You will see it as an expression, crossing eras and regions.

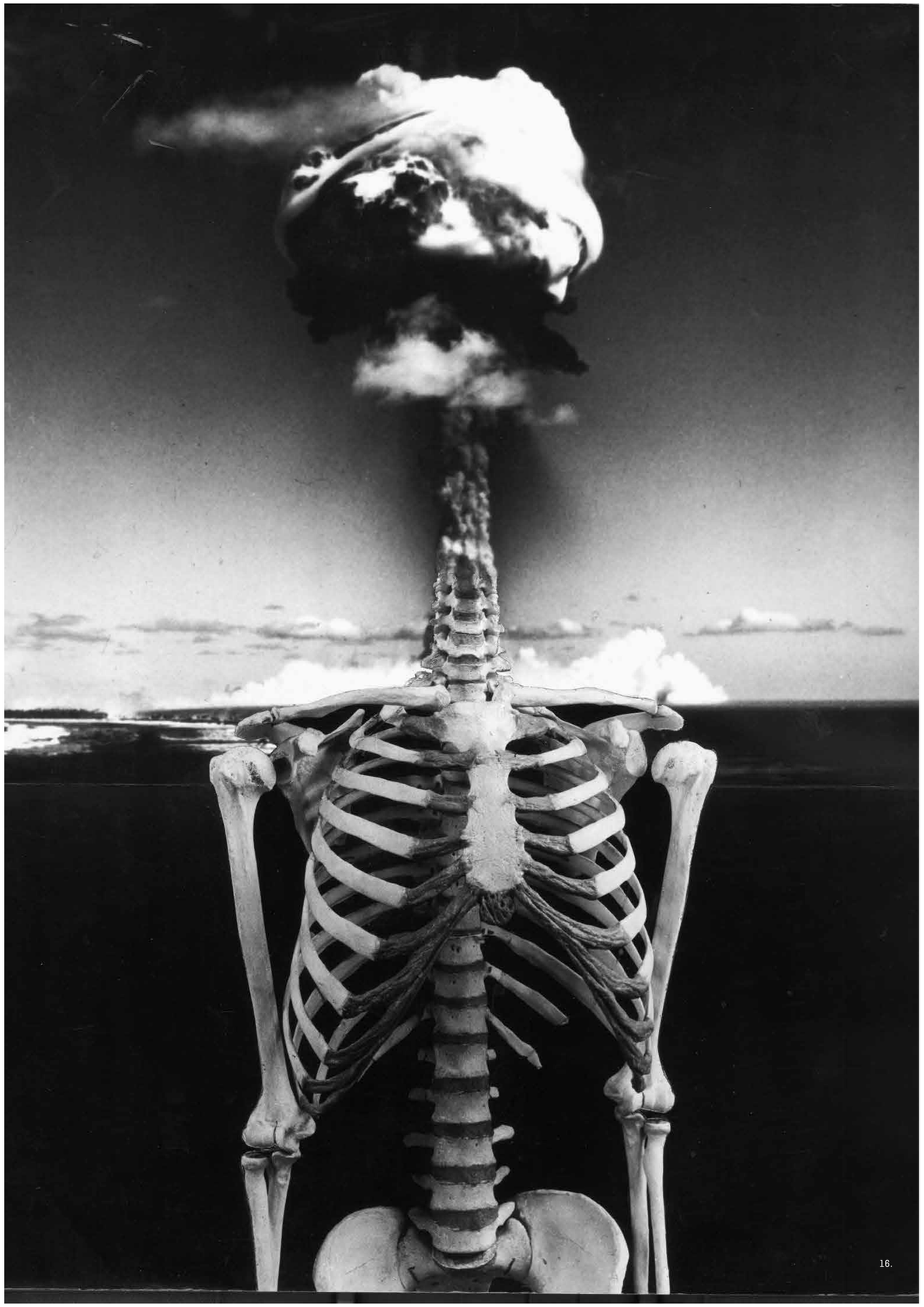
FB: Exactly, and this is why I think Metzger's work screams for attention because it's still relevant and this is what we do, we keep repeating history, we keep making the same decisions. People say they're mistakes, I don't think they're mistakes.

The artists here are all active witnesses. Different artists with different backgrounds, somehow making sure their voices are heard. Their concerns, their opinions and feelings are expressed; what makes them angry, what makes them get out of bed, what makes them not be passive. It's easy to say that this is depressing, but life is depressing. The work is hard. It's not just protest. The point of art is about recording and witnessing and asking questions continuously. There are some amazing works in this collection because the artists have lived the moment; they're not tourists, they're not romantic, they're not sentimental. This matters; it fucking matters; it means something. It's life or death and the moment it is not life or death then it becomes something else, and I mean this in terms of making the work. It is important to invest all your energy and put yourself on the line. Art reflects the times and turbulence of what it means to be alive. It's not just decorative. The artists in the collection and the preoccupation of the collection asks questions and I think that's what art should do.

GUSTAV METZGER (1926 - 2017) BORN IN NUREMBERG, GERMANY TO POLISH-JEWISH PARENTS, ARRIVED IN BRITAIN ON THE KINDERTRANSPORT IN 1939 - MOST OF HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY PERISHED IN THE HOLOCAUST. BY 1958, METZGER WAS BECOMING HEAVILY INVOLVED IN ANTI-CAPITALIST, ANTI-CONSUMERIST MOVEMENTS AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT; IN 1960 HE WAS A FOUNDER MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF 100 AND THIS LED TO A SHORT IMPRISONMENT IN 1961 WITH BERTRAND RUSSELL AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR ENCOURAGING MASS NON-VIOLENT CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. METZGER'S POLITICAL ACTIVISM PROVIDED THE FOUNDATION FOR HIS FIRST ARTIST MANIFESTO IN 1959, TITLED 'AUTO-DESTRUCTIVE ART'. AUTO-DESTRUCTIVE ART — A PUBLIC ART FORM — SOUGHT TO PROVIDE A MIRROR OF A SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SYSTEM THAT METZGER FELT WAS PROGRESSING TOWARDS TOTAL OBLITERATION. AT THE HEART OF HIS PRACTICE, WHICH SPANNED OVER 65 YEARS, ARE A SERIES OF CONSTANTLY OPPOSING YET INTERDEPENDENT FORCES SUCH AS DESTRUCTION AND CREATION.



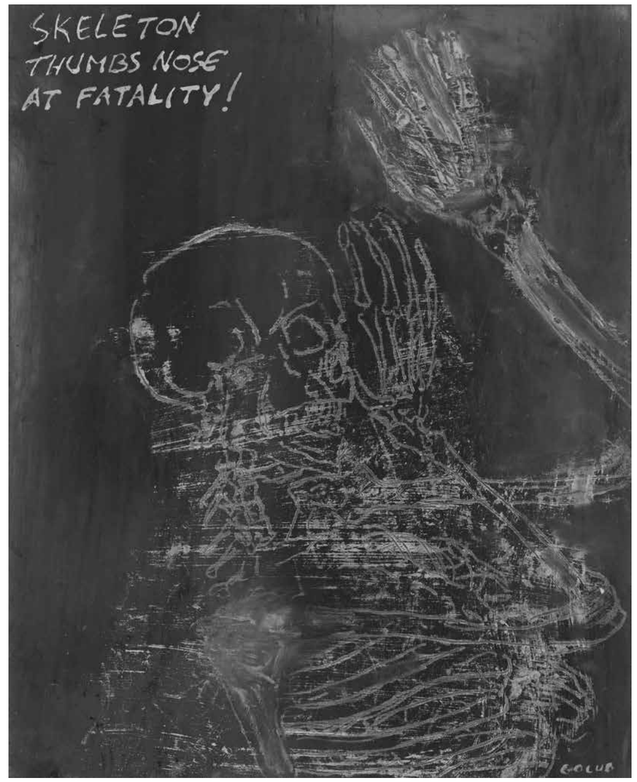
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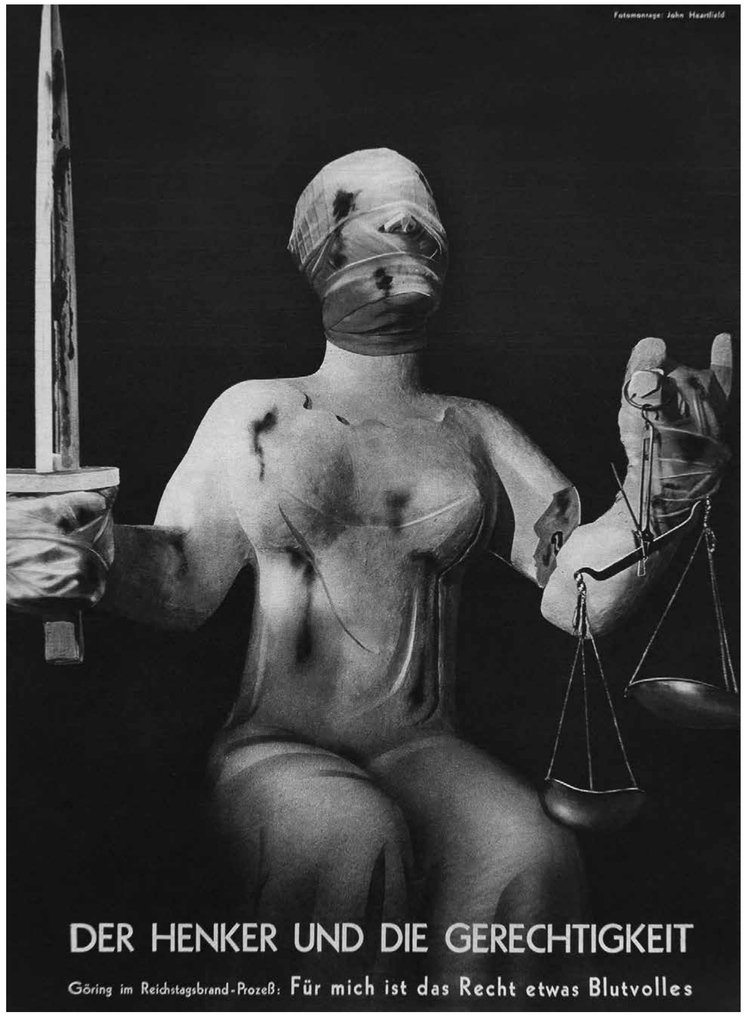
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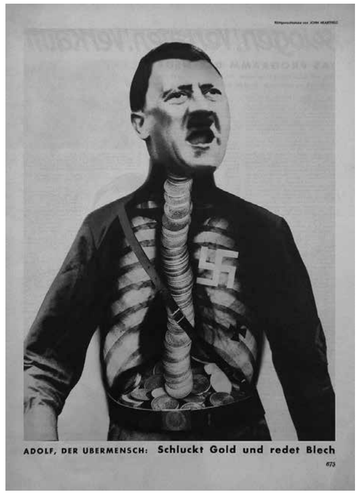
17.



18.



JOHN HEARTFIELD (1891 – 1968) BORN AS HELMUT HERZFELD IN BERLIN-SCHMARGENDORF. HE IS SEEN AS THE FOREFRONT LEADER OF THE DADA MOVEMENT IN BERLIN DURING THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY AND THE PIONEER OF PHOTOMONTAGE, USING ART AS A POLITICAL WEAPON THROUGH HIS AGIT-PROP PHOTOMONTAGES. PUBLISHING HIS PHOTOMONTAGES REGULARLY IN WEEKLY ANTI-FACIST/PRO-COMMUNIST MAGAZINES, HEARTFIELD DIRECTLY SPOKE OUT AGAINST HITLER'S NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND NAZISM DURING THE 1930S, PUTTING HIS LIFE IN DANGER.





BS: This is really what is at the crux of the collection, the idea that art is part of life. a/political exclusively produces art that has been inspired by this very turbulence you speak of. We encourage art that forces you out of your comfort zone - physically and emotionally - otherwise, as you say, it is just decoration. What's interesting to us is how artists challenge the system, redefining the existing condition... we're inspired on a daily basis by perspectives that help us readdress our own ideas on what's going on. With the web of art and politics so entwined; do you think the term 'political art' is even useful?

FB: As a term, I think it's pretentious and outdated, even when it is meant well. There's no separation between my life, art and politics. I don't choose to make political work; I make work, which is political because it engages not by design, but by being in the "public domain / space". The moment that something engages with somebody else there is an encounter and the possibility of conflict. I don't design political work, I don't think I am going to do an anarchist work - I try to make my work like I live my life. With anarchism, there are no rulers, that is what it means, the original word for anarchy in Greek is 'no rules' / 'no rulers' and then there are lots of other adjectives that go along with it, such as chaos, disorder. I always related to the idea that people manage themselves, they share responsibility, even justice, and they don't have police or to be policed by institutions - like religions and the state - the people are the police and I don't mean in a vigilante way. The people are the educators. Anarchism is particular. I try to live my life in a way that feels like I'm not suppressing anyone and I'm not abusing anyone. I try to be as free as possible. I don't think it's a new thing about artists. I think everybody's political, we are political if you like it or not. Every artist, even the most abstract / conceptual artist is political, even the ones who said they are not. It's a position, a

(OPPOSITE PAGE) PETER KENNARD (1949) BORN IN LONDON. SEEKING TO REFLECT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE ANTI-VIETNAM WAR MOVEMENT, HE TURNED FROM PAINTING TO PHOTOMONTAGE TO BETTER ADDRESS HIS POLITICAL VIEWS. HE IS BEST KNOWN FOR THE IMAGES HE CREATED FOR THE CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT (CND). BECAUSE MANY OF THE LEFT-WING ORGANISATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS HE USED TO WORK WITH HAVE DISAPPEARED, KENNARD HAS TURNED TO USING EXHIBITIONS, BOOKS AND THE INTERNET FOR HIS WORK. CREATING POSTERS, PLACARDS AND T-SHIRTS KENNARD USES BLUNT STATISTICS JUXTAPOSED WITH IMAGES TO CRITIQUE THE GLOBALISED WORLD, HIGHLIGHTING ISSUES SUCH AS INEQUALITY AND POLITICAL INJUSTICES.



























Andrei Molodkin
Putin, Lincoln and a dog, 2017


You're gonna be OK.

POSTER PULL-OUT

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RUA RED

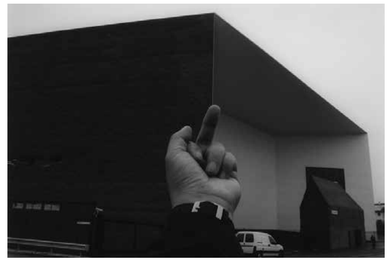




























AI WEIWEI (1957) BORN IN BEIJING. AN OUTSPOKEN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST, WEIWEI WAS ARRESTED BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES IN APRIL 2011 AND HELD IN A SMALL CELL FOR 81 DAYS. UPON HIS RELEASE, HE WAS PROHIBITED FROM TRAVELLING ABROAD, ENGAGING IN PUBLIC SPEECH AND WAS CLOSELY WATCHED BY THE AUTHORITIES. HIS SCULPTURES, PHOTOGRAPHS, FILMS AND PUBLIC ARTWORKS ARE FUELLED BY A STRONG POLITICAL CONVICTION, OFTEN MAKING USE OF HISTORIC CHINESE ART FORMS, CONNECTING TRADITION WITH CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CONCERNS.

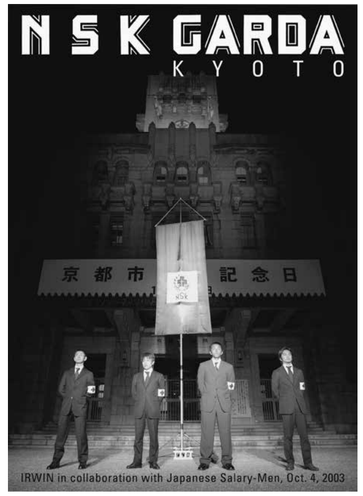








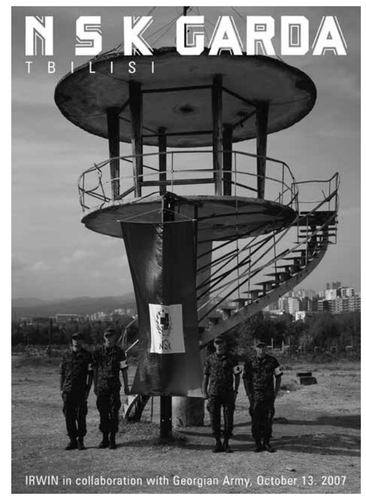












FOUNDED IN 2001 BY PABLO ESPANA AND IVAN LOPEZ, MADRID-BASED COLLECTIVE DEMOCRACIA EXPLORE THE IMAGINARY, SYMBOLIC, SEMANTIC, AND ICONOGRAPHIC FACETS OF POWER, VIOLENCE AND THE STATUS OF THE SPECTATOR THROUGH PROJECTS, PUBLIC ACTION, SYSTEMS AND WORKING PROCESSES SET IN THE CULTURAL, URBAN AND SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY. THEIR WORK COMES IN THE FORMS OF MESSAGES, SIMULATIONS, ARTEFACTS AND CRITICAL MECHANISMS THAT SHUN THE CONCEPT OF ART AS AN OBJECT FOR VISUAL CONTEMPLATION, DOCUMENTATION AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

FOUNDED IN 1983, ARTIST COLLECTIVE IRWIN DEVELOPED THEIR OWN VISUAL LANGUAGE, THROUGH THE APPROPRIATION OF HISTORICAL EUROPEAN AVANT-GARDES, CRITIQUING THE ARTIFICIALITY OF WESTERN ART-HISTORICAL STRUCTURES THAT CONTINUE TO EXCLUDE CONTEMPORARY EASTERN EUROPEAN ART. IRWIN IS ONE COMPONENT OF NSK, A COLLECTIVE FORMED DURING THE DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA, NOTED FOR DEVELOPING AND INTRODUCING THE RETRO-AVANT-GARDE, AN IDIOSYNCRATIC VERSION OF POSTMODERNISM, INTO THE GLOBALISING CULTURAL SPHERE.



personal position, a personal, political position. I always said everything is political and everything is personal and the poetics is wishful thinking. People like to think they're poetic but that is to do with aesthetics and beauty and the visual language that the artist uses that you can say is poetry and, of course, not to everyone has the same idea / concept of what poetry it is, like every thing else in life.

As an artist you're making your work, you're making the things that you care about, and I don't see the schizophrenic moment. If you've been making this work for the past 40 years, it means there must be something going on in your life. It's not just 'what you do' and you certainly don't just decide to make a piece of work that is political. I don't believe in the separation. Also, the key is the concern of the artist, the questions they are asking or want to put in play. '20 children have been drowned, let's make a political piece of work.' No! Unfortunately there are people who do this, so you must trust the integrity and the honesty of the artist, an artist that has issues with something like this happening, which they are going to do something about. I think the problem is, like with anything, there is fashion. It's the idea that people break their heads to try to make people upset, to make a work where people say this is political and this is engaged.

BS: But what happens when the politics are misconstrued and the response to a work was never intended by the artist? We have Andres Serrano's 'Piss Christ' photograph in our collection from 1987, currently on show at Station Museum of Contemporary Art, in Houston Texas and is still causing protests 30 years on.

FB: I didn't choose to include this piece precisely because it would attract the wrong attention for the wrong reasons and would kill the show. People would just talk about that work, giving people an excuse not to really engage. When you have anartist that makes really powerful work included in the exhibition, loaded works such as 'Piss Christ' can cause a distraction. I have been aware of this within my own practice. You have to try not to give an excuse or opportunity for people to dismiss your serious intentions. When Piss Christ is shown, there becomes no progress as the people that try to say Serrano is crazy set the agenda. I think now, for this exhibition, there will probably be people turning up to see Santiago Sierra's NO (Pope), 2011, but I am interested in showing work from the collection that people haven't seen. We can also speak of kennardphillipp's Photo Op, 2007, here. If you have been around art or activism, been at art school, one of the lecturers would have shown you that image, like they would have shown an image of my naked body bleeding under Body Art. The works, unfortunately, become a clichè. If I carried on making the work I was making I would have become a clichè; I'm the guy that bleeds, I'm the fucking guy that bled 20 something years ago, get over it, we all fucking bleed, what are we doing now? We're bleeding. I like the work Piss Christ, but for me it was specific to a moment in society, especially the punk moment, and don't forget we had a lots of Fuck You moments, before punks and with punks, like Derek Jarman's Jubilee (1978), Suzie of Siouxsie and the Banshees on the cross outside of Westminster cathedral. I am interested in showing things that haven't changed, the KKK; to Trump; to the Neo-Liberalists; to the Nazis; to this.



BS: How did you come to start practicing art?

FB: Before I was an artist I was an Anarchist, involved with direct action. Back then I was naïve, I took things at face value. I really thought that if you called yourself an Anarchist you meant it, you believed it, you weren't a misogynist, you weren't homophobic, you weren't a racist. I was the only gay Anarchist out in London that I knew. I knew a lot of closet gays, so called Anarchists, that told me to keep quiet otherwise we'd get in trouble. There was also this weird Marxist idea that sexuality is a bourgeois thing, that the Proletariat don't have the time to be homosexual - it's a luxury for the powerful and rich. This for me was bullshit, this idea that a piece of white trash like me couldn't be a Anarchist and Gay. Fuck You! I got fed up with it and one day someone asked me if I wanted to go to pottery classes and I went to see what it was or what could happen. Around the same time I saw Rothko's work at Tate and it moved me, I realized there was another life. Three years later I was on an Art Foundation course that then lead me to a B.A Hons course in Painting at Chelsea School of Art and the rest is history, as they say.

BS: Looking at the collection and your own practice, it's evident that there are overlapping themes, such as abuse of power, vulnerability and individual struggle. Being so close to ethos of a/political and the works in the collection, can you say **a bit about how you're approaching HOW TO SAY IT THE WAY IT IS! as a curator? On a more practical note, the process of selection is very similar to how you mine the Internet for images as subjects of your work.**

FB: It's food. It's not just research; it gives you depth and knowledge. I have an image, either for a work, this time it's for an exhibition. The process is the same. In a way is like making a piece of work. It's dealing with language, putting together a sentence. It's my vision of

THE F-WORD

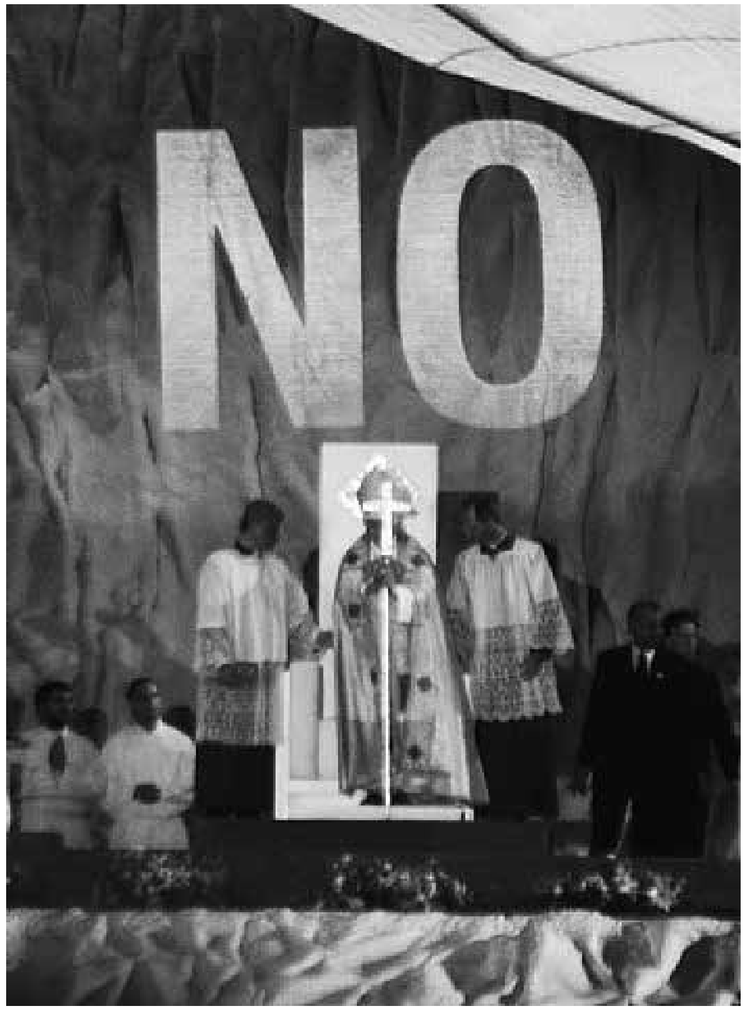
IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATION, “FUCK YOU” IS A CORPORATE PRAYER, BEING A PHANTASM OF CORPORATE MEDITATION, “FUCK YOU” ACTS AS A MAGICAL INCANTATION NECESSARY TO GET CONTRACTS ON SPECIAM TERMS, AS WELL AS THE MOST PROMISING PLACES FOR BUILDING OIL RIGS AND LAYING OIL PIPES. THE OIL COMPANIES USE THIS INCANTATION IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER QUICKLY AND COMPLETELY, AND TO AVOID TERMINOLOGICAL CONFUSION IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF BUSINESS ELITES.

ANDREI MOLODKIN



26.

KENNARDPHILLIPPS IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN PETER KENNARD AND CAT PHILLIPPS WORKING SINCE 2002 TO PRODUCE ART IN RESPONSE TO THE INVASION OF IRAQ. IT HAS EVOLVED TO CONFRONT POWER AND WAR ACROSS THE GLOBE. THE WORK IS MADE FOR THE STREET, THE GALLERY, THE INTERNET, NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES, AND TO LEAD WORKSHOPS THAT DEVELOP PEOPLES’ SKILLS AND HELP THEM EXPRESS THEIR THOUGHTS ON WHAT’S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD THROUGH VISUAL MEANS. THE WORK IS MADE AS A CRITICAL TOOL THAT CONNECTS TO INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENTS FOR SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE.



27.

witnessing. The most important thing is to bring this to the public domain. Lots of people who will see the exhibition and the work won't have been exposed to these artists or within the context in which they think they are seeing it.

As a curator, I see myself as someone in a privileged position that can somehow bring thoughts and vision together. I enjoy it and I think that artists should curate, although not just themselves, as a lot curate so they can get their work in. I'm a visual person and interested in what other people do. Also remember, I know some of these people / artists. They are like comrades. Not because they make similar work, it's not about that, it's because they are artists who I respect and have made very important work for example, Andres Serrano's series The Klan, 1990. I discovered him over 20 years ago via that series at an exhibition and I thought he was really crossing the line. Nowadays, we see a lot of people doing it, with the Internet and videoing things on your iPhones, but back then it was like the film Mississippi Burning, you could go to these places not come back. This was 25 years ago. If you think about it, we're only 50 years forward from the unrest in North American and the civil disobedience. A black artist entering the stronghold of the racist KKK community? Unfortunately, if you think about it, when Trump was elected as President of the USA recently, many black churches, were burned down in the south. The people who voted for him suddenly feel empowered again. It still has relevance today.

Curating a part of someone's archive / collection of "artefacts" and taste has it's challenges, but I understand the nature of the operation. It's someone's choice for their legacy, what they leave behind in this kind of structure. We surround ourselves with things that are meaningful and which we like, and we give value to for many different reasons.

BS: You yourself collect...

FB: I love art, I have a lot of people's / artist work but I would not say I was a just an art collector, I am somebody that lives life. When you live life you accumulate things, many things, because they make you feel, somehow, that you are home with them, or because they remind you what it is to be alive, they may please you in someway and have sentimental value. I like to swap / or buy. Okay, I collect, we all do somehow. You try to surround yourself with things that make sense or things you respect and love. I have a lot of stuff in front of other stuff. Even if I don't see them, I know they are there and somehow part of my life and not just as some accumulative dis-order; it's like having records or CDs or books. I have a lot of pictures standing on the floor and every so often I just look and see what they are. But I don't think I am the same kind of collector as somebody who is doing it to show, I do it for me. It's not a hobby, is my life, art is my life. When you put something in your house and you invite people round, after a while you become immune to it. You don't know what can affect. Guests say to me, "oh look at the table do you eat on it? ", which is filled with used condoms from a sex club many years a go, and I say "Yes? What's wrong with it, they're in acrylic, they're not exposed?" What is shocking to somebody is not to someone else. Shock doesn't come down to taste; it comes down to reality, to what affects people... to the bone. What they have been exposed to and what is 'normality' to them. For me, not having choice, not having opportunity, that is more shocking.

BS: Shock is a technique used to alter people's perceptions on an immediate level. What is of concern to me is the possibility - and reality - of desensitisation. How do you think the audience will react to the exhibition? Rua Red and the surrounding area have an overwhelmingly young and diverse audience, which is very appealing to us.

FB: It's amazing. People are going to be honest. It's an exhibition that for whatever reason, you are going to remember it. There is no hiding place for this kind of showing. The critics will pick on things like, why are the artists selected mostly men? I get this a lot with my work. The interesting thing is that there isn't a single work that I would say is macho and I don't care for critics.

BS: I'm surprised.

FB: Why do you think the NO is macho?

BS: It's using a strong, aggressive aesthetic.

FB: Women have to say NO most of the time.

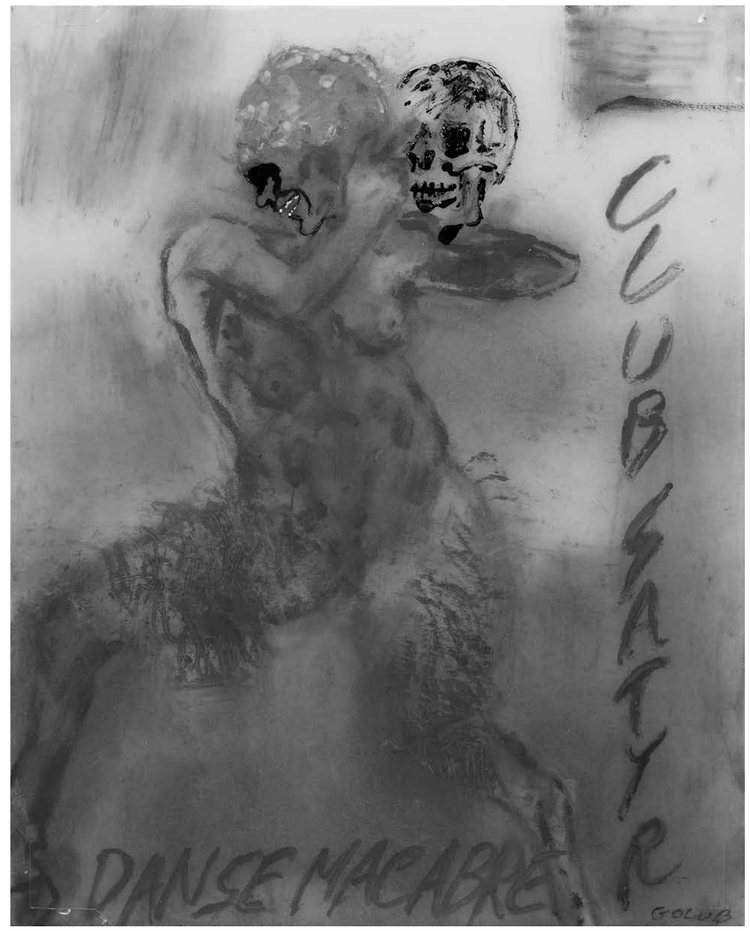
BS: They do, they also say '"fuck you". Can you tell me a little more about why you have decided to barricade off the opening of the exhibition with NO? It's in the style of Santiago Sierra, who is known for closing spaces / denying people entry to spaces - memorably opening Lisson's new Bell Street gallery in London with a closed exhibition space.

FB: Here you get the NO, but you have to walk through it. It's almost like you don't have the distance to realize what the



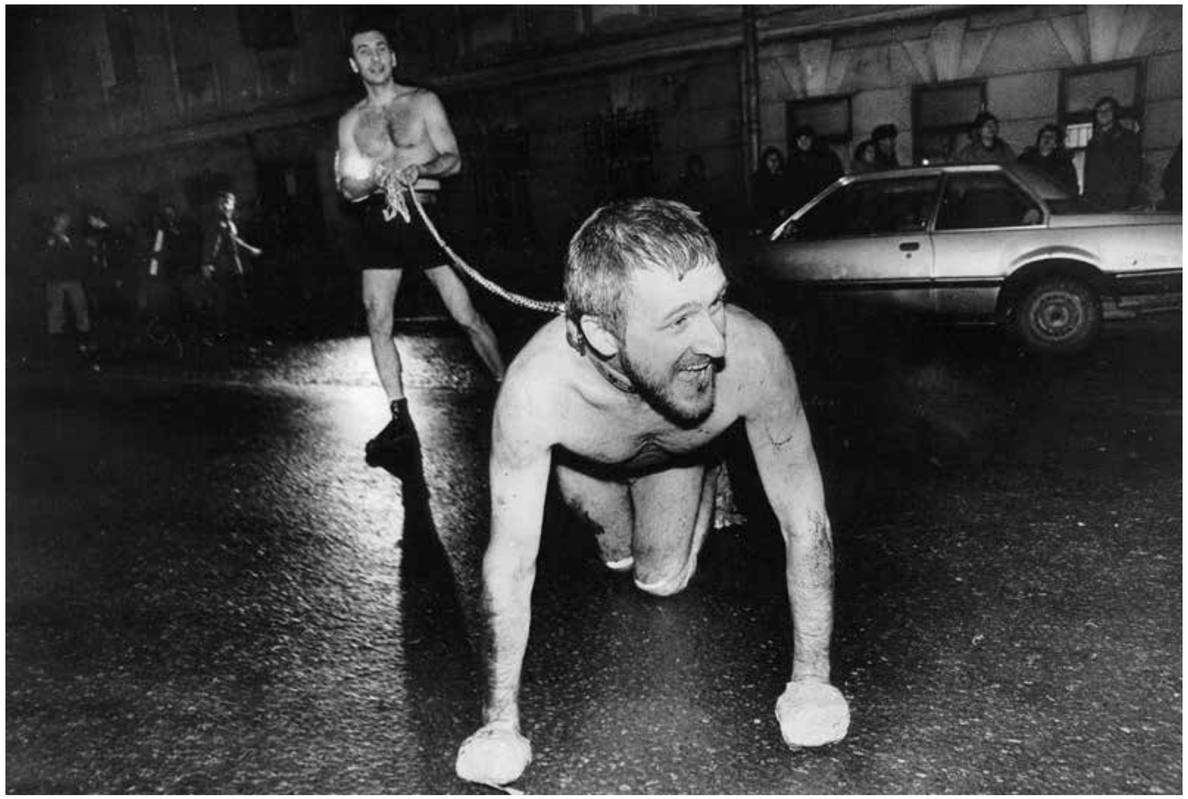


28, 29.



30.

ARSEN SAVADOV (1962) BORN IN KIEV. THROUGH THE MEDIUMS OF PAINT AND PHOTOGRAPHY, SAVADOV EXPLORES SUB-CULTURES, ILLUMINATING THE OFTEN DISTURBING AND UNUSUAL TO CONTEMPORARY POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETY. ONE OF SAVADOV'S MOST NOTORIOUS WORK, 'BOOK OF THE DEAD' FEATURES A SERIES OF CAREFULLY COMPOSED SCENES OF HUMAN CORPSES.



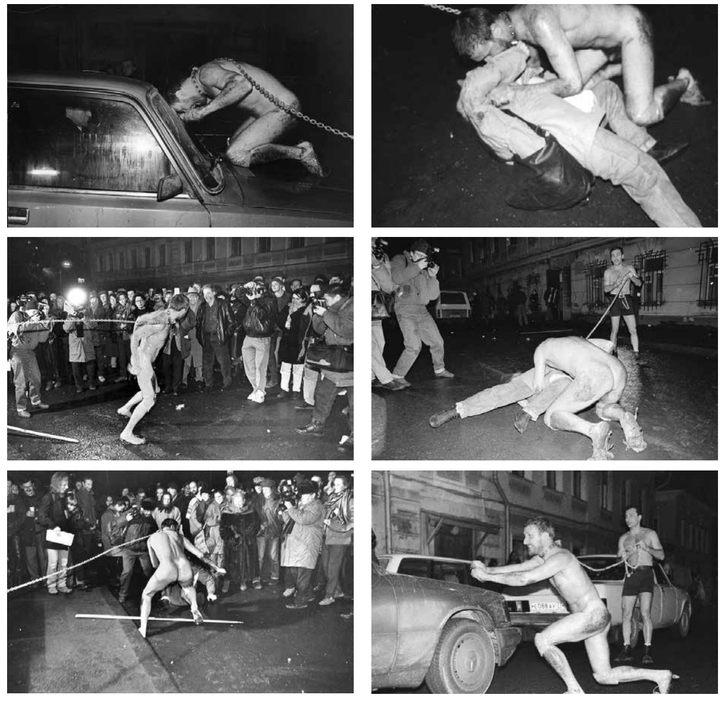
31.

artist is saying although you know it's an O or a NO. Entering the NO is an out of body and an embodied experience. Usually museum objects are untouchable, if they are interactive they become a playground like Carsten Höller, alternative entertainment

for middle class kids during theirs vacations from school. But for me it's more than that. Take Hans Haacke's Germania pavilion at the 1993 Venice Biennale or Santiago Sierra's Spanish pavilion in 2003 as two of many examples. For me the idea is that you somehow have to become part of the show. Suddenly, through what is asked of you, you realize you want to see the show.

BS: And before you enter, you have to assume the vocabulary of the artists.

FB: You have to ask, "Do I want this?" You become an accomplice. We mentioned that Santiago Sierra did this at Lisson Gallery London, in this case outside one of the top commercial galleries in the world, to an invited private view audience, which comprised of many art critics, journalists, collectors and art students hoping to get some free booze and a meal in the form of some chichi finger foods. There, he fucked people off, especially the critics - to my knowledge it's the first time an artist in a commercial art context really said "Fuck You!" or "NO", even if it was to a selected audience by default. With this exhibition, people make the choice to enter. Once they're inside, it will hopefully talk to people that don't have the pretense to understand or be masters of language. It's for people who would just enjoy it, in black and white. "I liked it", "it made me cry", "I couldn't give a shit" or 'it makes me hungry". But I cannot imagine anyone not having an image out of the show that's not going to be memorable for whatever reason.



OLEG KULIK (1961) BORN IN KIEV. BEGINNING HIS CAREER AS AN UNORTHODOX CURATOR, HE CAUSED CONTROVERSY THROUGH HIS ZOOMORPHIC PERFORMANCES WHEREBY HE TOOK ON THE ROLE OF A DOG, REVEALING HIS DISCONTENT AT THE HORRORS OF HUMAN CORRUPTION AND THE UNEASY CHARACTERISATION OF THE EAST BY THE WEST IN THE POST-COMMUNIST ERA.



32.

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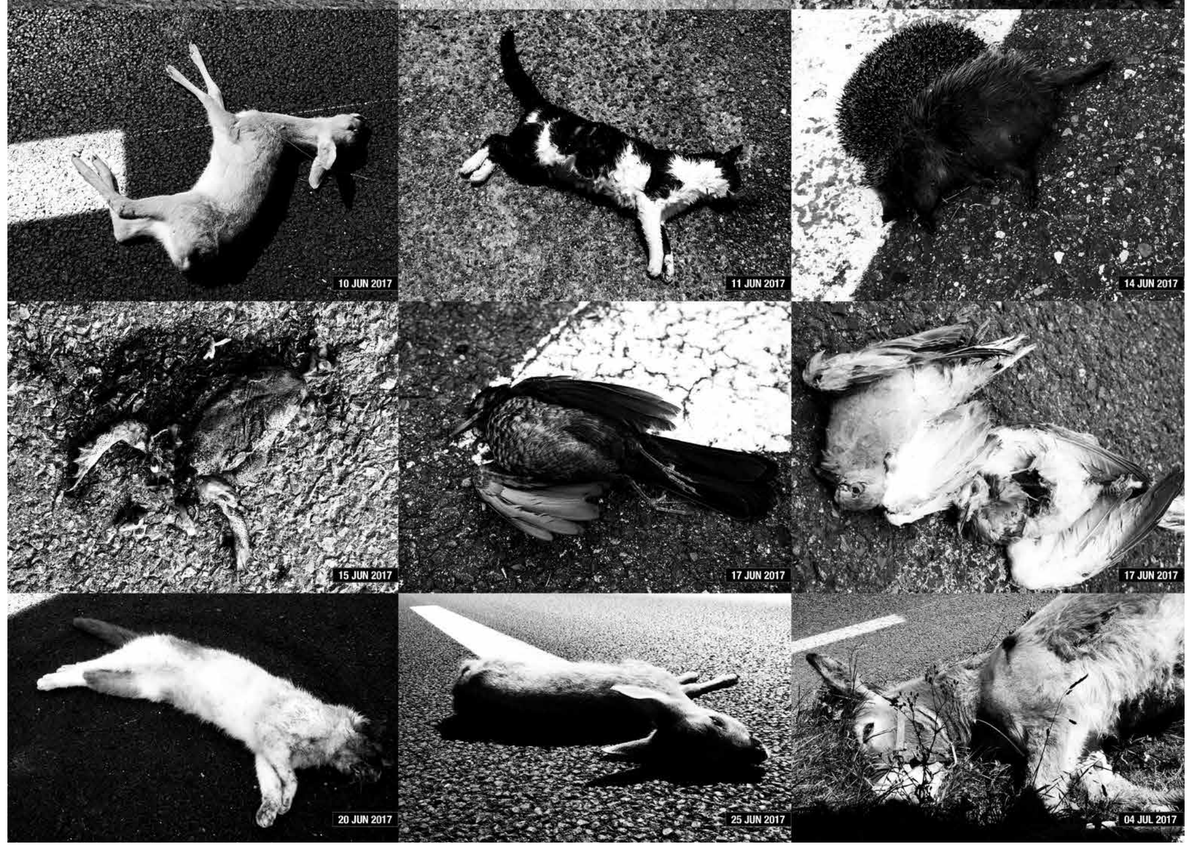
PETR DAVYDTCHENKO (1986) BORN IN ARZAMAS-16, A CLOSED MILITARY TOWN RUSSIA. GROWING UP IN ST. PETERSBURG, HE EXPERIENCED THE HOSTILITY OF FAR RIGHT GROUPS BEFORE MOVING TO EUROPE. NOW SITUATED OUTSIDE OF THIS REPRESSED SUB-COMMUNITY, DAVYDTCHENKO REINTERPRETS FIXED SOCIAL CODES THROUGH EXPLORING CULTURAL SEMIOTICS. CURRENTLY OPTING OUT OF SOCIETY, DAVYDTCHENKO CRITIQUES THE NOTION OF PROGRESS, LIVING OFF ANIMALS KILLED ON THE ROAD BY MANMADE MACHINES.



WITHOUT SPENDING 1 EURO OVER A FULL YEAR IN THE INDUSTRIAL TOWN OF MAUGBOURGUET, THE STREETS HAVE BECOME THE SOURCE OF SURVIVAL. LIVING OFF NATURAL PRODUCE THAT HAS BEEN REJECTED BY SOCIETY, THE DOCUMENTATION BEARS WITNESS TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF A WORKING MEMBER OF SOCIETY INTO A SELF-SUSTAINING SCAVENGER, DETACHED FROM THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM.
ANIMALS FRESHLY KILLED BY AUTOMOBILES ARE COLLECTED NEAR THE ROAD BEFORE SUNRISE AND TAKEN BACK FOR CONSUMPTION. GPS PINS OF ROAD-KILL HAVE BEEN RECORDED. DIALOGUES BETWEEN NEIGHBORS HAVE BEEN DOCUMENTED, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY CONCERNED OVER THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THEIR PETS. NOW SITUATED OUTSIDE OF WHAT HE DESCRIBES AS THE REPRESSED SUB-COMMUNITY...







POLITICAL-EROTICAL-MYSTICAL-MANIFESTO

Kendell Geers

Be aware, There Be Dragons/
Respect the demons, trust the angels, be aware of the in between/
Pray, prey, seed, sing, punk, pain, good, evil, shit, piss, dick, cunt, love, hate, need, lust and fuck are all four letter words for good reason/
Take Time, Give Space/
Art is made out of the debris in the head-on collision of reality and the imagination/
Every artist should write their manifesto at least once in each lifetime/
Every manifesto is valid only for the time of writing and thereafter begins to expire/
My body and all its scars, wrinkles, odours, liquids, desires and process cannot be ugly/
If you don t know your real name, you cannot give birth to your true self !/
Life does not have a backup or a guarantee and is lived forwards in real time only/
Believe in what you create and create only what you believe in/
Language, violence, sexuality, politics, history, contradiction, subjectivity, expressionism, excess, love, faith and natural magick/
Radicalise subjectivity and revolutionise objectivity/
The sole task of the artist should be to spiritualise matter and materialise spirit/
Re-Lease your Mind, Occupy your body, Feed in to your Spirit/
Create with your heart, listen with your eyes and feel without thinking/
Cleanse the doors of your perception to open your heart unto the darkness with your eyes focussed on the blinding light of contradiction/
Embrace opposition without reconciliation/
Update faith with contradiction/
Forge Dissent upon the anvils of desire/
Only violence produces change/
Loose ends start fires/
Knowing when to stop is half the problem/
Surrender to the extreme/
Risk everything without fear, transgress without limits, crisscrossing every border/
The body never lies, spirit never dies/

[redacted]

Celebrate sex blindly/
Let go to take control/
Read the signs with respect to the laws of chance/
Transgression is the code if you respect the secret/
Seek out your true nature beyond the safety of habit and convention/
Discomfort is the canary inside the goldmine of consumptiona/
Sexuality is key, fear the lock/
Fuck, its true !/
Unnatural Laws should be broken, Natural Laws respected/
Living art cannot be made without lived experiences/
Transmute the lead of experience into the golden art/
Without Magick, there is no Art/
Every artist should start as an alchemist and every alchemist as an artist/

[redacted]

Knowledge cannot be taught and starts within/
Information is not knowledge, knowing is not intelligence/
Art fairs are foul money laundering machines/
Locate the talisman in capitalism/
Use counter-culture to counter the culture of the counter/
Art galleries are aesthetic stock exchanges/
Relational ethics are the cornerstone of aesthetics/
The work of art is the totem pole around which the system dances and not the other way round/
The price of art is a worthless indication of the artist s socio-political use value, nothing more/
Contaminate art fairs with the virus of vision and charge of faith/
The art market is a habit forming drug that will inevitably crash and burn/
Curators and collectors are an occupation hazard to be kept a broken arm s length away/
Withdraw work from the market periodically/
Everything is not for sale/
In the art market nobody wants to hear your scream/
All art is political, conceptual, mystical and erotic/
Never trust a frustrated artist/
Creation is a political-erotical-mystical art that resists convention and protests assimilation/
Cinema has made our imaginations lazy and television is its tombstone/
I believe in an art of the imagination that can change the world, one perception at a time/
Truth exists only within the imagination/
Thought is already a second hand experience Prioritise the primary/
Truth is only one point of view/
Truth is not always beautiful or positive/
Nothing is more important to the work of art than the work of art/
Art about art is not about art/
A bad idea cannot be improved upon with assistants or good techniques/

[redacted]

[redacted]

Help the world by scratching where it does not itch/
Shake the tree of life until the monkeys fall out/
Slick art inevitable slips/
Reduce work to essential basics/
Simplicity is the only sophistication/
Simplify the simple with simplicity/
Excess and ecstasy cleanse the spirit from the quotidian grind/

[redacted]

Risk everything with excess/
History is written by the winner/
Free Time/
Art Unfolds, Unpack its history/
Habit is a mind killer and comfort its alibi/
Ethical artists should be amoral/
History is not evolutionary/
Dance around the revolution/
Recycle revolutions periodically/
Write, Rite, Riot, Rot !/
If you don t know your history you are doomed to plagiarise it/
Spell Mistakes/
Theory must never outstrip performance/
Common sense for common people/
Speak with a sharp tongue in the cheek of expectations/
Love is above the law, under will/
Make art, like love/
Humility and sincerity inspire integrity/
Destruction should be in equal balance with creation/
Use repetition as a mantra until meaning is transformed into Dark Matter/
Trance Form/
Less found objects and more profound art with more objections/
Meaning is a fluid that should never be contained/
Art should be transformative or not at all/
The work of art is not created but conjured into existence/
The work of art can never be reduced to the sum of its parts/
Cynicism is a stupid surrender/
Cynicism and parody destroy true creation/
Find the courage to step outside from the crowd and grow tall in the Shit/
Embrace kings and queens with the same passion and whores and fools./
If it can be explained, it should not be created. If it can be said, it need not be made/
Create with silence and from emptiness/
Fashions Dictate, then destroy dissent/
One-Liners and novelty expire when fashions fade The artist should be socially responsive but never socially responsible/
Look down, look up, dive in, upside down, inside out/
Past, present, future and all here, now, nowhere/
Time is energy/

[redacted]

Reality is just another illusion, to bite/
Break open the head and surrender to your animal, vegetable and mineral minds/
Language is a divine curse/
Breath with spirit/
Baptise your self with fire/
Let Nature be your mentor and chance your guide/
Inner gods we trust/
Embrace human error with divine relish/
Every fear is an invitation, Every mistake an opportunity/
Uncomfortable solutions work/
Send holy cows to the rodeo and the bullshit to the matador/
Kill your Idols, with pleasure/
Everything is connected and interconnected/
God lives in the details and the Devil in design/
Surrender to the bigger picture/
Speak the unspoken, pronounce the unmentionable, invoke the indescribable/
Every city is local/
Love Yours elf/
Be auty I snot en ough/
Punk snot dead/
Burn once, read and destroy/
The plague is me/

[redacted]

EVENTS



THE IMAGE OF VIOLENCE /
THE VIOLENCE OF THE IMAGE
Talk by Francesca Alfano Miglietti followed by a roundtable discussion with artists from the a/political collection, including Franko B, Democracia, Kendell Geers, IRWIN, kennardphillips and Andrei Molodkin. Francesca Alfano Miglietti is a theoretician, curator and art critic. She is Professor of Contemporary Art at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Brera. The focus of her research is the contamination between life and art, and identity as a transformational element.
7 October 2pm - 4.30pm

THE LANGUAGE OF CATASTROPHE
Workshop with artist Petr Davydtchenko
24 October 10am - 5pm for ages 12 - 17

THE PERSONAL, THE POLITICAL AND THE POETIC; HOW TO SURVIVE YOUR FAMILY, THE CHURCH AND THE STATE AND MAKE THE WORK THAT MATTERS TO YOU
Workshop with artist and curator Franko B
15, 16 and 17 November 9am - 6pm daily

There will be a series of film screenings chosen by Franko B. For more information please check the website. This includes a special preview of Because of Love, a film about Franko B by Nathaniel Walters.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Andrei Molodkin, Fuck You, 2011
2. Andres Serrano, Great Titan of the Invisible Empire, (from Klansman series) 1990
3. Kendell Geers, Signs Taken For Wonders (102), 2005
4. Shirin Neshat, Guardians of Revolution, (from Women of Allah series) 1994
5. Franko B, Still Life, 1999/2015
6. Franko B, Sleeping Beauty, 2016
7. Andres Serrano, Virginian Dragoon. 44 Magnum, X, (from Objects of Desire series) 1992
8. John Heartfield AIZ, 1930-8
9. Leon Golub, You Son of a Bitch, 2003
10. Leon Golub, Up Yours, 2002
11. Leon Golub, Heraldic Predator II, 2002
12. Santiago Sierra, NO, 2009
13. Barbara Kruger, Untitled (Busy), 2015
14. Gustav Metzger, To Crawl Into - Anschluss, Vienna, March 1938, (from Historic Photographs series) 1996/2015
15. Gustav Metzger, Vienna, Austria, Hitler Jugend boys forcing Jews to clean a street, 1938
16. Peter Kennard, Warhead 3, 1985
17. Leon Golub, Here's To You Pal, 2002
18. Leon Golub, Skeleton Thumbs Nose at Fatality!, 2004
19. John Heartfield AIZ, 1930-8
20. Peter Kennard, Guildford Four, 1991
21. Ai Weiwei, Study of Perspective, 1995-2011
22. Democracia, We Protect You From Yourselves, 2013
23. IRWIN, NSK Garda, 1998-2007
24. Andrei Molodkin, Liberty (Hand), 2011
25. Santiago Sierra, 250c, Line Tattooed on Six Paid People, 1999
26. kennardphillipps, Photo Op, 2005
27. Santiago Sierra, NO (Pope), 2011
28. Arsen Savadov, Untitled 18 (from Donbass Chocolat series) 1997
29. Arsen Savadov, Untitled 19 (from Donbass Chocolat series) 1997
30. Leon Golub, Danse Macarbre, 2004
31. Oleg Kulik, Mad Dog, or Last Taboo Guarded by Alone Cerberus, 1994
32. Leon Golub, Baying at the Cosmos / Dog Gone, 2002
33. Petr Davydtchenko, Go and Stop Progress, 2017
34. Franko B, Untitled, (from Love in Times of Pain series) 2009

HOW TO SAY IT THE WAY IT IS!

An exhibition produced by a/political

Curated by
Franko B

Editor
Becky Haghpanah-Shirwan

Graphic design
Anthony Martin

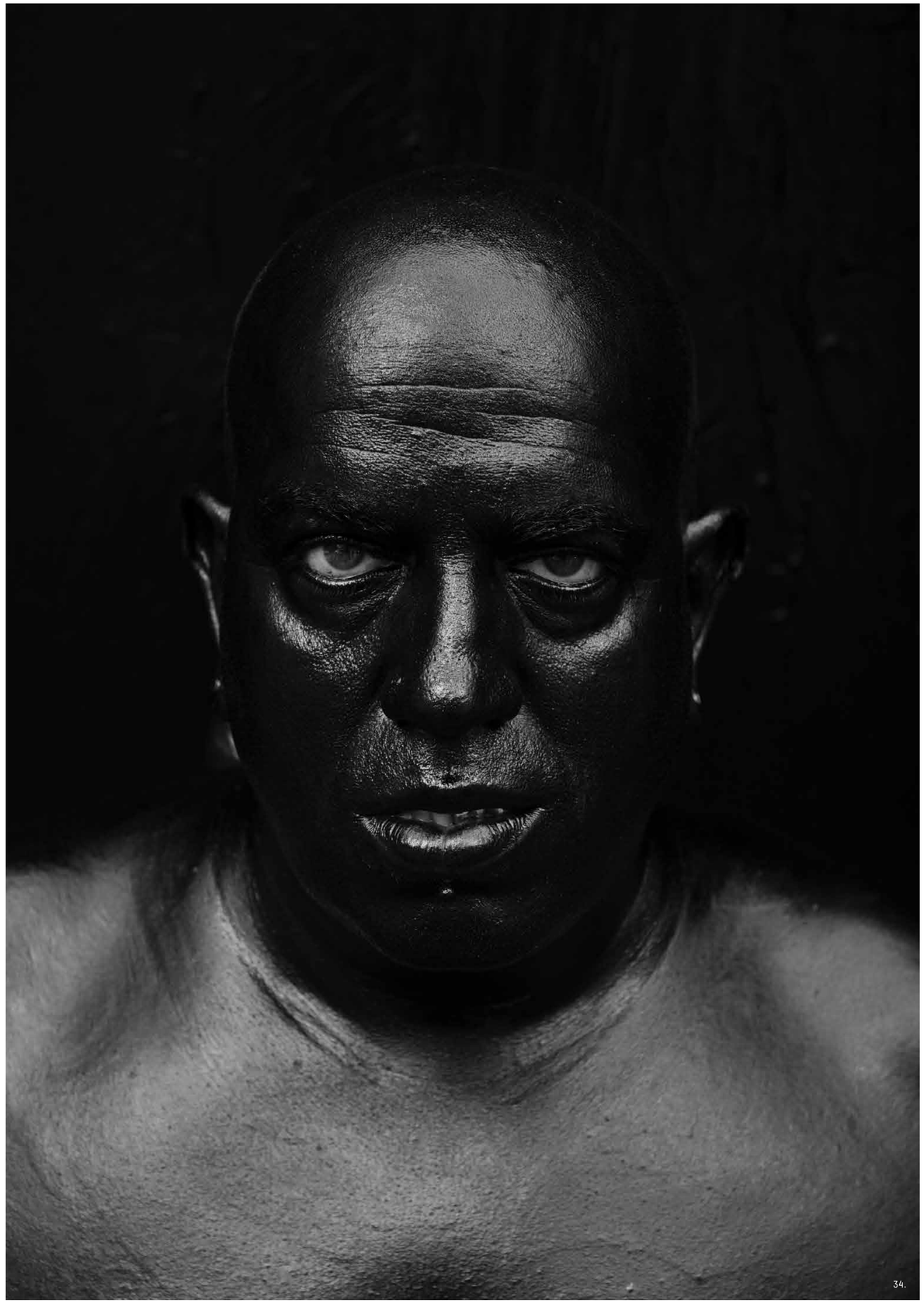
Special Thanks to
Andrei and Veronika Tretyakov, Maoliosa Boyle, Andrei Molodkin, Joyce Dunne, Philip Howe, George Chetwode

a/political

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34.

Franko B

Petr Davydtchenko

Democracia

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kennardphillipps

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