

frieze

CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

NO. 179 | 195 | 2016

GOSHKA MACUGA

Disobedient Curiosity

SOPHIA AL-MARIA

'The present is less than dust.'

CATHERINE OPIE *Artist Project*

TRACEY ROSE *Chaos Queen*

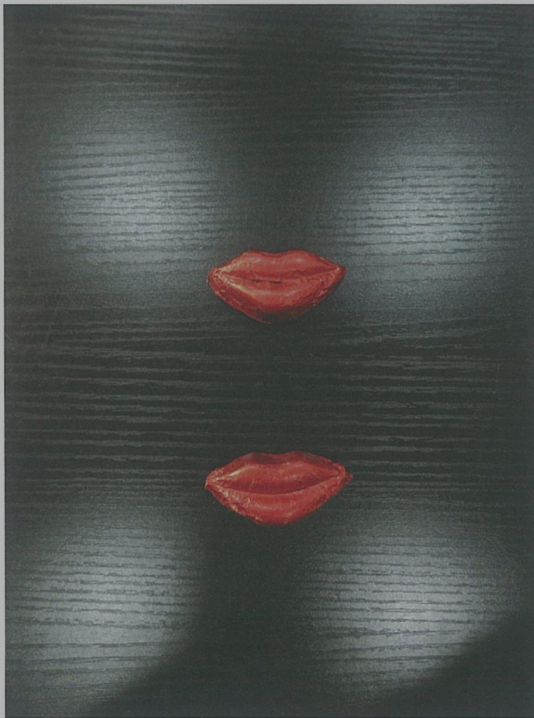
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Race, Sexuality, Photography

Artists & Ceramics



UK £6.95 US \$12 C10





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FRANCE

Daido Moriyama

FONDATION CARTIER, PARIS

Daido Moriyama is a digital *flâneur*, a street photographer who doesn't look through a viewfinder, but through the small screen on his camera. Writing in the exhibition catalogue of 'Daido Tokyo', his current exhibition at the Fondation Cartier, the eminent Japanese artist describes his extreme sensitivity to place: walking in Shinjuku by night, 'I find myself flinching for some reason, even though nothing particular has happened. Shadow-spirits squirm amid the darkness of the back streets, under the lights and neon signs. The sight line of the small camera in my hand picks up the sensitive, insectile reactions of these wraiths, like electrical impulses.'

'Daido Tokyo' translates these instincts into two series of photographs – one in colour ('Tokyo Color', 2008–15) and one in black and white ('Dog and Mesh Tights', 2014–15) – in a fascinating study of the properties of each. Although Moriyama has worked in colour photography since the 1970s, this is his first major exhibition devoted to the medium. After photographing his native Osaka, Moriyama decided to turn his lens on Shinjuku, a red-light district in western Tokyo filled with bars and strip clubs, which he calls 'a formidable den of iniquity'; though he can't admit to loving the place, it has an undeniable hold on him. 'The more chimeric and labyrinthine it is,' he writes, 'the more powerfully its enigmatic magnetism captures me.'

'Tokyo Color' is a series of 86 chromogenic prints in smudgy, saturated tones, presented unframed on large pieces of poster-board, highlighting the impressionistic, anti-technical side of Moriyama's practice. He has an eye for the industrial sublime: the rust stains on the side of a stucco building, silver air-ducts snaking down its facade (making the Centre Pompidou look like a sanitized Playmobil piece by comparison); the baroque, almost abstract, snarl of wires on a telephone pole, of all colours, patterns and sizes. Looking at it, you have to wonder: how does this mess form a system or make possible any kind of communication?

These images of urban decay and disarray are juxtaposed with images of nature – tangled tree branches next to furry yellow fruit; ivy climbing a building above a junkyard of discarded refrigerators, ovens and other large appliances. Some of the images are lurid, even sensationalist: a woman removes her jeans to reveal her thong, a man is seen in dark profile against a red background; the works self-consciously announce themselves as 'photos of Tokyo's seedy underbelly'. Far more difficult to parse is the small bathtub filled with neon purple water, or the giant gold (fake) spider behind a window, looking set to devour the city.

'Dog and Mesh Tights' forms the second part of the exhibition. Black and white photographs converted from digital colour, the series is here projected in four floor-to-ceiling panels, with the photographs changing every five seconds or so, from left to right, like pages being turned in a book. As in the colour photographs, Daido plays with surfaces and networks, occasionally capturing the (often deprived) people who live within them. Soda machines, backs of buildings, forgotten Christmas decorations – the city offers the camera a rich landscape of textures. In the background is a lively soundscape; occasionally, it goes quiet and all you can hear is bird-call, a five o'clock song that echoes across the four panels, unifying these different spots in the city. But the constantly shifting series of photographs means you can never dwell on anything for long; Daido's lens momentarily captures parts of the city that are hard to look at but his gaze quickly shifts us on to the next image. It's a cruel mirror of the way we live in cities, seeing more than we want to, forever looking away.

LAUREN ELKIN

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Daido Moriyama
from the series 'Tokyo Color',
2008–15, c-type print,
each: 1.5 × 1.1 m

THE NETHERLANDS

Positions #2

VAN ABBE MUSEUM, EINDHOVEN

The second edition of the Van Abbemuseum's exhibition series 'Positions' presents four significant bodies of work by artists interested in the relationship between art, art history and current political events. Chief curator Annie Fletcher has invited Anna Boghiguian, Chia-Wei Hsu, Nástio Mosquito and Sarah Pierce to present their investigations into techniques of storytelling and forms of testimony. The conversation among them does not emerge from a shared concern; instead, it represents individual instances of upheaval, revolution and trauma from multiple perspectives.

'Positions #2' opens with a dimly lit room featuring *Ruins of the Intelligence Bureau* (2015), one of two films by Taiwanese artist Hsu. The film reassesses the forgotten histories of veterans of the Chinese civil war (1927–50) who fled to a tiny village on the Thai-Burmese border and ended up working for the CIA against the communists. Using the ruins of the former CIA office as a stage, masked Thai puppeteers re-create an ancient myth, narrated by a priest who temporarily worked as a CIA spy. The story serves as an allegory of the men's loss of identity and their recurring entanglement in the intrigues of global politics.

Pierce's *Gag* (2015) recuperates the debris from the museum's previous exhibition to create what looks like an exploded, three-dimensional El Lissitzky design. Evoking deconstruction and reconstruction, and bridging disparate art-historical references, Pierce displays an eclectic sense of history. As its title suggests, the work explores the ability of artists to voice the political – or not – through the use of the tableaux-a-display strategy employed by revolutionary Russian artists like Lissitzky, but also by artist Alice Milligan, whose radical yet overlooked *tableaux vivants* played a significant role in the Irish Revival of the early 20th century. The proximity of aesthetics and history is equally at hand in *Meaning of Greatness* (2006) and *Intelligence of the Measured Hand* (2011), in which Pierce investigates concepts of mastery and originality through the work of Eva Hesse and Joseph Beuys respectively. Pierce's meticulous re-creation of Hesse's *Untitled (Rope Piece)* (1970) hangs from the ceiling, along with archival material from the Kent State University shootings of 1970 and student drawings by Pierce's mother, who worked around the same time as Hesse.

The work enacts a kind of forensic examination of the cultural and political conditions that define and frame an artist's practice.

Four enormous rooms painted in shades of bright yellow and pink are dedicated to the work of Cairo-born Boghiguian – by far the most enthralling position in this exhibition. Poetry permeates Boghiguian's work, which is the fruit of her constant wanderlust. Firmly resisting white-cube conditions, the work demands display formats that reinforce its tactile, earthly nature. Although *The Salt Traders* (2015) recently premiered at the Istanbul Biennial in the form of a large installation, 'Positions' focuses on the extraordinary series of coloured drawings that traces the history of salt in political liaisons, as a vital mineral and even as the source of revolution. A new installation, inspired by a failed bombing attempt in Paris in 1995, acquires added poignancy in light of recent events in the city.

The exhibition's timeliness is rendered even more palpable by two disquieting installations by Angolan musician, performer and artist Nástio Mosquito. *Ser Humano* (Human Being, 2015) is a compilation of found footage showing black bodies pushing at the fences of undisclosed borders, overlaid with a dark, pulsating soundtrack, and political lyrics projected onto the floor. Mosquito attempts to revive the written word, which he feels has become increasingly devoid of meaning. Language, for sure, remains a powerful artistic tool, resurfacing throughout this exhibition as an historical corrective or the repository of lost memories. Despite the absence of an overarching theme, 'Positions' dwells on the shifts and collisions that continually affect us, delivering unorthodox stories as alternative histories.

LAURA HERMAN



2

DENMARK

On the Immense and the Numberless

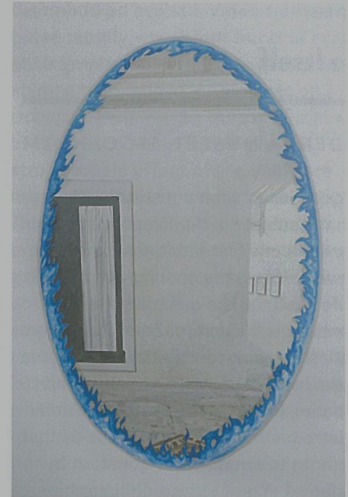
DAVID RISLEY GALLERY,
COPENHAGEN

In his seminal re-evaluation of the 'ideal space' of the modernist gallery, *Inside the White Cube* (1986), Brian O'Doherty examined the extent to which the gallery might render artwork 'isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of itself'. The group exhibition 'On the Immense and the Numberless' at David Risley Gallery in Copenhagen offers up a series of hypothetical escape routes from the gallery confines, through hatches, doors, curtains, mirrors, portals and windows.

According to the refreshingly unpolished press release, written by Risley, which has the tone of a love letter to art, the show revolves around the gallerist's 20-year personal 'obsession' with how 'the space of art' relates to 'this metaphorical place where art exists'. Risley cites the illusionary spaces of early Italian Renaissance paintings as inspiration, but plays his hand carefully to avoid stifling the contemporary works he has selected by hitching them too forcibly to his underlying narrative.

Formal echoes abound but still allow room for the individual works to manoeuvre. Karl Troels Sandegård's *Downward Spiral* (2012), two stacked black buckets containing a swirling vortex of steam, sit evocatively before Jenny Källman's black and white photograph of dripping condensation on a window pane (*Window Cleaner*, 2015). Valérie Collart's *Black Hole* (2015) is a trapezoidal form that is suspended just off the floor. Its shape is echoed in the blank white planes superimposed on the photographs in John Stezaker's series of collages, 'Tabula Rasa' (2009–14). Ugo Rondinone's series of 'Windows' (2015) offer similar illusionary portals to an imaginary outside.

Beyond this visual mirroring, the show creates a series of conversations between various corners, floors and walls of the gallery. Alex da Corte has arranged a sumptuously detailed Persian rug in orange tones on the floor of one room (*A Giant's Good Day in Hell*, 2016). Upon it stand five glasses of what looks to be orange juice (made of resin), one of which is overturned. Da Corte has cut out a rectangular 'hatch' in the rug, which is propped open with a stainless-steel orange squeezer to reveal a 'void' in the floor underneath (represented by a square of black velvet). This motif reappears in Graham Gussin's black painted triangle at the top corner of the wall, a nod to Kazimir Malevich. Nearby hangs Michael



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Simpson's *Unnamed (Confessional)* (2015), a large-scale painting dominated by the dark silhouette of a church confessional partially concealed by a white curtain. The work's title indicates this might be a refuge in which to psychologically bare all, though Simpson has a twinkle in his eye: something about the hyper-sensual black gives the impression that what goes on behind the curtain might entail a revelation that is more than metaphorical.

The virtual portals or escape hatches that the show seems to offer present a series of thresholds or possibilities rather than resolutions. Graham Dolphin's *Door (Self Portrait as a 19 year old)* (2012), a replica of the photo-covered door of his teenage bedroom, hints at access to his past, though denies us any real passage beyond it. Oliver Payne's *Untitled (Portal Paintings)* (2016) – mirrors painted with rings of orange and blue flames in reference to the video game *Portal* – reflect fragments of the gallery space. In one, we see a glimpse of Simpson's confessional; in the other, a rather banal profile of the gallery staircase. These portals, as it turns out, don't get you very far. Ultimately, they function as a nod to Leon Battista Alberti's aspirational vision of painting as a 'window on the world'. Telltale marks of that dream, these works are no less powerful for it.

LIZZIE LLOYD

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Anna Boghiguian
Ani, 2015, installation view

3
Oliver Payne
Untitled (Portal Painting),
2016, acrylic on wall,
dimensions variable