

xits

Fleeting Ex

Ryan Gander

Rebecca Horn

Laure Prouvost

Lindsay Seers

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08-10-18

Marwan T. Assaf is a collector and art researcher based in Beirut. He received an MA in Contemporary Art from the Sotheby's Institute of Art in London in 2006. Assaf is a local and international patron of the arts and a member of multiple museum committees. In 2015, he created a private space to display selected works from his collection, producing a number of exhibitions, including *After Absence* (2016), an off-site outdoor show titled *Full Moon Garden* (2017), and *Manichean Passages* (2018).



Curated by: Marwan T. Assaf

Participating artists: Ryan Gander, Rebecca Horn, Laure Prouvost, and Lindsay Seers

Lighting: Joe Nacouzi

Exhibition graphics: Mind the gap

Preferred wine partner: Château Marsyas

Booklet design: Mind the gap

Printing: Byblos Printing

Fleeting Exits is a group exhibition that brings together works that draw on notions of escape, gender, and liberation. Spanning from theatrical installation to robotic sculptures, these works transform into a microcosm of poetic utterances.

The exhibition starts with Lindsay Seers' *Entangled*² (*Theatre II*) (2013), a film projected onto a pair of oversized eyeballs in an enclosed theatrical space draped in red upholstery. In this space, the intriguing female voice of a male impersonator narrates stories in a vaudeville-style setting. The sense of being stuck in limbo is accentuated as the accounts move seamlessly from the subject of heterochromia, the condition of having two different colored eyes, and onto the notion of escape through sea travel. The work suggests a struggle between liberation and despondency.

A more direct proposition of escape is offered by Turner Prize winner Laure Prouvost with *Metal Woman, Welcome Deep Travel Ink. NYC* (2018), in which a humanoid robotic sculpture addresses the viewer with an uncanny, tranquil female voice. Here, the artist offers the possibility of escape through a "Deep Travel" agency. Images of red-orange sunset beaches appear on the sculpture's screen-head against the sound of splashing waves. But the voice reminds the viewer that those are not the usual images used by holiday-makers to provide fantasies of a happy elsewhere: "I know I am repeating myself, I am just looping but life is all about repetitions."

In this Sisyphean narrative, Rebecca Horn's kinetic sculpture *Mr. and Mrs. Brown* (1990) also seems to hint at the irony of repetition: a pair of metal legs is on an endless, pointless walk while being tethered to a wall. Two metal rods with shoe trees, in lieu of legs and feet, tramp in place in a jerky movement with a mechanical whirring sound. The concept originates from a film directed by Rebecca Horn, *Buster's Bedroom* (1990). Horn has referred to her machines as "melancholic actors performing in solitude." This sculpture has now fallen into an uncanny zone, where it becomes a hybrid between a prosthetic pair of legs and a manifestation of phantom limbs, which gesture in a choppy and unnatural movement.

Ryan Gander's sculpture *Forces Outside of You (Because you cede your life decisions and consequences to forces outside of you)* (2017) consists of a flight of stairs leading to a large door, which suggests a grand entry into somewhere else. The staircase is tantalizingly lit yet metaphorically dark; it combines both a promise and a threat. This could be a portal to a house with no memories, or maybe just another fleeting exit.

Marwan T. Assaf
Curator

Ryan Gander

b. 1976, Chester, UK – Lives and works in London, UK

Forces outside of you (Because you cede your life decisions and consequences to forces outside of you), 2017

Acrylic, LED panels; 255 × 85 × 119 cm

Ryan Gander's complex and unfettered conceptual practice is stimulated by queries, investigations, or what-ifs, rather than strict rules or limits. Gander is a cultural magpie in the widest sense, polymathically taking popular notions apart only to rebuild them in new ways.

Forces outside of you was recently exhibited at the 21st Biennale of Sydney, 2018, as part of a larger installation that alluded to a scene from the artist's childhood; the glowing doorway with three winding steps emits a glow that is the color of daylight. The work provokes the human desire for knowledge, while purposely thwarting entry into this imagined and remembered world.

Ryan Gander's work spans installation, sculpture, and photography to performative lectures, publications, inventions, and interventions. Gander examines the conditions of art production and the cognitive process of the perception of art. His body of work forms a labyrinth of inter-related narratives often based on real incidents or characters or existing artworks. Absence plays a central role in Gander's work and lends the works an enigmatic aura. It invites the viewer to re-establish a story's hidden character or object's possible function, and by that, illuminates the process of making meaning of a work of art.

Gander's work has been exhibited at The National Museum of Art, Osaka, (2017), Lisson Gallery, New York (2016), Scrapmetal, Toronto (2016), Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2015), ACCA, Melbourne (2015), The National Art Trust, London (2014), Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2014), and Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012).



Photo: Jack Hems

Ryan Gander
Forces outside of you (Because you cede your life decisions and consequences to forces outside of you), 2017

© Ryan Gander; Courtesy Lisson Gallery.
Marwan T. Assaf collection

Rebecca Horn

b. 1944, Michelstadt, Germany – Lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Mr. and Mrs. Brown, 1990

Wooden shoe trees, brass, and steel box with electric motor; approximately 125 cm high

Rebecca Horn's work is bound together by a consistency in logic; each new work appears to develop stringently from the preceding one. Elements may be readdressed, yet appear in totally different contexts. *Mr. and Mrs. Brown* was conceived from the shoe-trees first used as a prop in the artist's 35mm film *Buster's Bedroom* (1990).

Since the early 1970s, Rebecca Horn has been creating an oeuvre which constitutes an ever-growing flow of performances, films, sculptures, spatial installations, drawings, and photographs. The essence of their imagery comes out of the tremendous precision of the physical and technical functionality she uses to stage her works each time within a particular space.

In her early performances, which feature body-extensions, she explores the equilibrium between body and space. In later works, the human body is replaced with kinetic sculptures which take on their own life, as seen in *Mr. and Mrs. Brown*. Her recent works define and cut through spaces with reflections of mirrors, light, and music.

The objects used and specially made for her installations together build the elements for kinetic sculptures that are liberated from their defined materiality and continuously transposed into ever-changing metaphors touching on mythical, historical, literary, and spiritual imagery.

Rebecca Horn is a German visual artist, who is best known for her installation art, film directing, and her body modifications such as *Einhorn* (Unicorn), a body-suit with a very large horn projecting vertically from the headpiece. She directed the films *Der Eintänzer* (1978), *La ferdinanda: Sonate für eine Medici-Villa* (1982), and *Buster's Bedroom* (1990).



Photo: Marco Pinarelli

Rebecca Horn
Mr. and Mrs. Brown, 1990
Marwan T. Assaf collection

Laure Prouvost

b. 1978, Lille, France – Lives and works between London, UK and Antwerp, Belgium

Metal Woman, Welcome, Deep Travel Ink. NYC, 2018

HD video, metal sculpture, painted wood dust, and resin; 234 × 81.5 × 35.5 cm

Language – in its broadest sense – permeates the video, sound, installation, and performance work of multimedia artist Laure Prouvost. Known for her immersive and mixed-media installations that combine film and installation in humorous and idiosyncratic ways, Prouvost's work addresses miscommunication and things getting lost in translation.

Metal Woman, Welcome, Deep Travel Ink. NYC is part of a series of works comprising sculptural composites and video. It was first shown within the subterranean travel agency franchise Deep Travel Ink, purported to belong to the artist's uncle. The work is a standing anthropomorphic figure whose arms, legs, torso, and neck are made of single bars of rebar which host flesh-colored breasts and thighs and a video screen for a head.

The soundtrack (sounds of water lapping and crashing waves), alluring woman's voice, and visuals animating the screen actively engage the viewer on a personal and emotional level. Close-up clips of the artist's own hand waving and pointing, and of her arms gesturing, render the opportunity for the viewer to engage with the Metal Woman even more immediate and plausible. The figure's video head addresses the viewer with written expressions such as "We are so pleased you came here." This is accompanied by the artist's own voice whispering the text and enticing the viewer to connect with the exploratory concept of "Deep Travel."

Laure Prouvost received her BFA from Central Saint Martins, London in 2002, and studied towards her MFA at Goldsmiths' College, London. She also took part in the LUX Associate Programme. Recent solo exhibitions include *the wet wet wanderer*, as part of *Para|Fiction*, Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2017); *softer and rounder so as to shine through your smooth marble*, SALT Galata, Istanbul, Turkey (2017); and *And she will say: hi her, ailleurs, to higher grounds...*, Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland (2016). Prouvost won the MaxMara Art Prize for Women in 2011 and was the recipient of the Turner Prize in 2013. She will represent France at the Venice Biennale in 2019.



Photo: George Durrell

Laure Prouvost
Metal Woman, Welcome, Deep Travel Ink. NYC, 2018
© Laure Prouvost; Courtesy Lisson Gallery.
Marwan T. Assaf collection

Lindsay Seers

b. 1966, Republic of Mauritius – Lives and works in Isle of Sheppey, UK

Entangled² (Theatre II), 2013

Installation: Polystyrene spheres, HD projection, curtain, carpet, sound

In *Entangled² (Theatre II)*, Lindsay Seers returns to androgynous themes present in her earlier work *It has to be this way* (2009). The Renaissance “theatre of the world” motif of this previous work is bastardized by Seers into vaudeville. For Seers, this theatrical genre (vaudeville) presents a series of segments in which the artifice of the staging is absurdly evident and failure is omnipresent.

Entangled² presents the Victorian music hall legends Hetty King and Vesta Tilly (both male impersonators), performed by contemporary actors. Both Tilly and King performed at the Paragon Theatre in Mile End Road, London, now the Genesis Cinema. Biography plays a key role in Seers’ work, but is rarely used in an ordinary or straight sense. Stories and lives are used as a more complex narrative vehicle in which coincidence, chance, and chaos seem far more at play than any singular

notion of freewill or determinism. *Entangled²* mirrors Seers’ ongoing investigation towards the synthesizing of classic dichotomies between self/other, male/female, truth/lies.

Lindsay Seers is a British artist. Her works are in a number of collections including the Tate collection, the Arts Council collection, the Artangel collection, and the collection of MONA, Tasmania. She has won several prestigious grants and awards, including the Sharjah Art Foundation Production Award, UAE and the Jeu de Paume production award for the Toulouse Festival, France, among others. She has shown her large-scale works internationally at a number of museums and art centers, including SMK (National Gallery of Denmark); Venice Biennale 2015; Hayward Gallery, UK; MONA, Tasmania; and more. Seers is represented by Matt’s Gallery, London.



Photo: Peter White

Lindsay Seers

Entangled² (Theatre II), 2013

Installation view at Matt’s Gallery, London

Image courtesy the artist and Matt’s Gallery, London

Marwan T. Assaf collection