

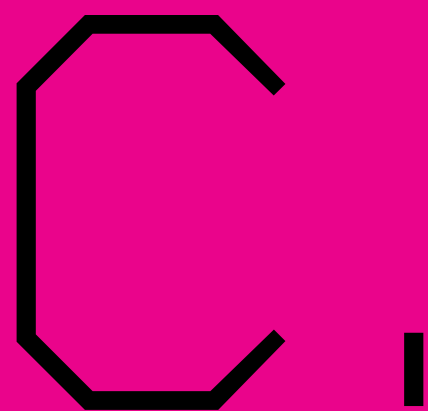
Contemporary Identities

International Art Magazine



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EDITORS' NOTE

We are delighted to celebrate the first anniversary of ContemporaryIdentities. Our focus this year is, as before, on the current state of contemporary art around the globe. The energy and enthusiasm of our team, artists and writers move us forward to begin a new year. So, we'd like to thank everyone involved in this edition.

For the current issue we had the chance to interview Faig Ahmed, a well-known artist from Azerbaijan who is best known for his surrealist weavings which integrate visual distortions into traditional oriental rugs. In 2007, Ahmed's work was included in Azerbaijan's first pavilion in the Venice Biennale. In this issue we talked to him about his "It is what it is" project that was featured at Yarat Contemporary Art Centre in Baku in 2017.

We would like to note that in addition to our board members, we also had the pleasure of working with international art writers such as Genevieve Gamache (Canada-Malaysia), Francesca Merz (Italy) and Fereshte Moosavi (Iran-UK).

Last but not least, we extend our concern about the current struggle in the world regarding Covid-19. We wish everyone the strength and will to care and persevere. During this moment of difficulties we would like to offer distraction and hope through aesthetics.

Sara Berti & Elham Shafaei

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Front Cover:

Faig Ahmed
(Virgin, 2016, Hand-woven carpet, 230x150 cm)

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ARTISTS

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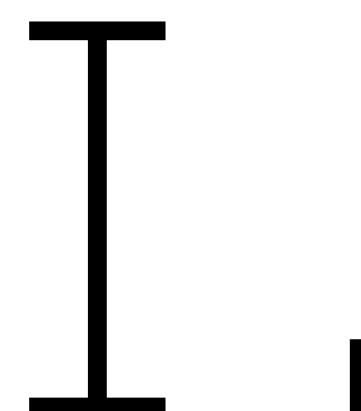
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G.

GÜLER ATES

(Turkey-UK)

ZOLTÁN SOMHEGYI

In the elegant and carefully staged photographs by the London-based Turkish artist Güler Ates, a female figure, wrapped in textiles and dresses of harsh colors, appears in various contexts, including historic buildings, museums, libraries, palaces and villas. When examining these two elements, the figure and the context, the observer realizes that the real subject-matter of Güler Ates is not (simply) a figure in any space, but the inextricable relationship of the two: through the insertion the figure will question the space, and parallel to that the place will provide the novel aspects in understanding what the figure stands for.



Buddha and woman in blue I, 2019, Digital photography, 66x57.2 cm

A.



Blanket II, 2018, Digital photography, 90x60 cm



A wave of black I, 2018, Digital photography, 90x60 cm

M.

MONICA CAMAGGI

(Italy-Germany)

GENEVIEVE GAMACHE

Nature's imprints as artworks. This is what Monica Camaggi is creating through her artistic practice. Her artworks are not merely physical objects asserting themselves in an artistic space, forcefully claiming their places as ends in themselves. Instead, the artist strives to create artworks that are suspended between two distinct spaces: Art and Nature. As such, her works are not artistically finished representations of nature but are witnesses to a transformation, between art and nature. Although physical, she wants her works to be expressions and at the same time witnesses to ephemeral and transitional moments, between the physicality of nature and art: when the former becomes the latter, while the latter embodies the former. This is why her work often looks ethereal without being fantastical or out of this world. Instead, her art brings nature and art into the same space, making her work suspended in time between two physical realities, moving from nature to art and back again.



Suspensa Levisque Series, 2014-2016, Photographic print on canvas, 110x175 cm

C.



Suspensa Levisque Series, 2014-2016, Photographic print on canvas,
110x175 cm



Suspensa Levisque Series, 2014-2016, Photographic print on canvas,
110x175 cm

L.

LIA De JONGHE

(The Netherlands)

IZMER BIN AHMAD

Lia De Jonghe's evocative portraits are threaded patiently out of patches and textiles. Embroidery serves as a technique of intimacy to connect her (and us) to her subject through the attentiveness and delay of needlework. The softness and warmth of the material as well as the prolonged contact demanded by the embroidery process lends personal and affective appeal to these images. Yet, they were also made at a distance. The duration of making, weaving faces out of drawn sketches of photographs, foreground an absolute deferral of spontaneity and presence. Proximity in these works is induced by virtue of distance. The artist and her subject strive in this gap, neither in the *here* of stitching nor *there* of the image, but in the abyss between where contact and touch slip. We now look at this absent presence that arrives without a body.



No title, 2018, Fabric and thread, 25x19 cm

D.



Two women (2), Fabric and thread, 25x33 cm



Two women (3), 2019, Fabric and thread, 17x20 cm

C.

CETIN EROKAI

(Turkey)

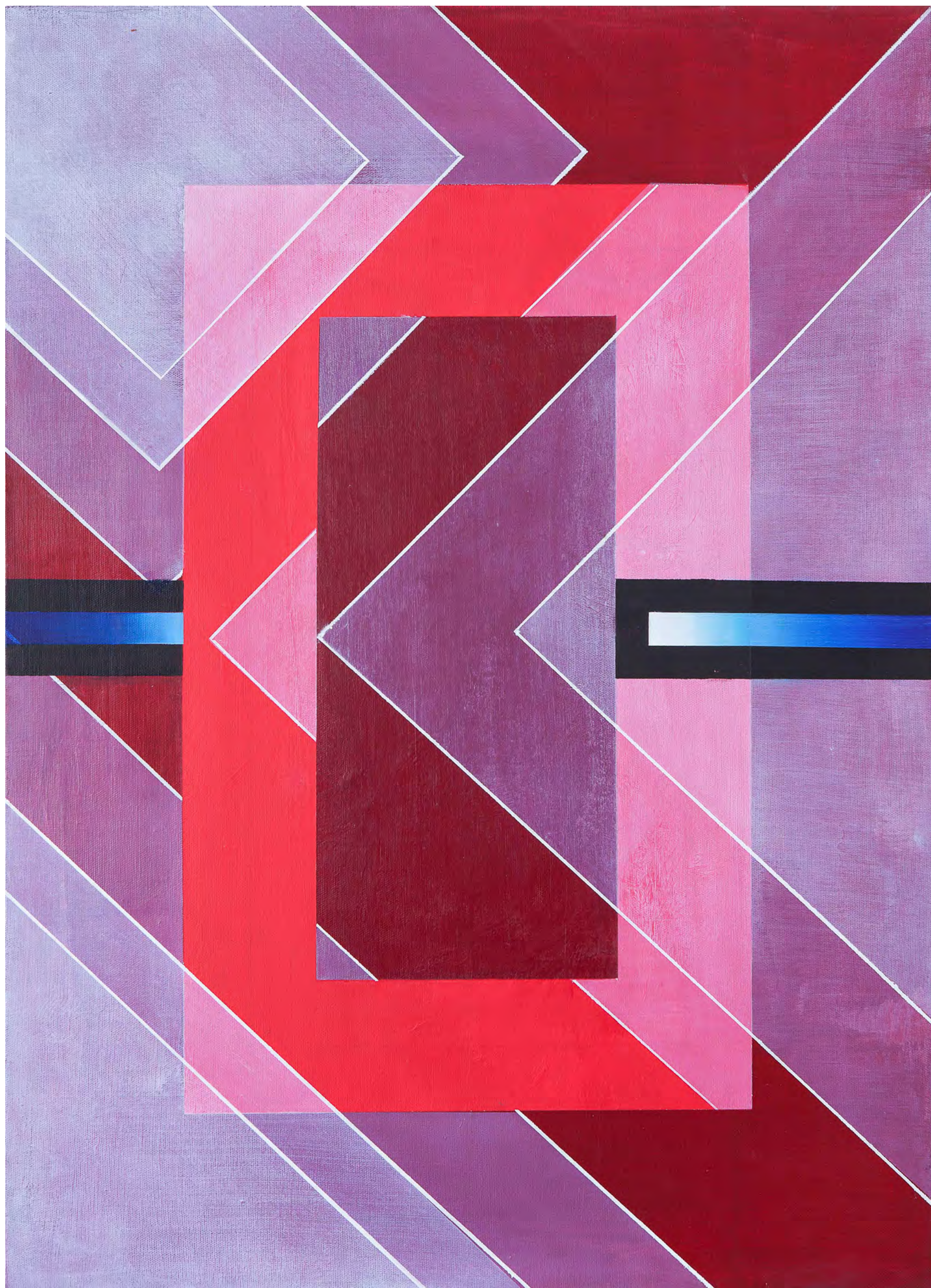
GENEVIEVE GAMACHE

The work by Cetin Erokai follows in the footsteps of modern artists from the Persianate and Greater Islamic world, where colours, shapes and forms are used to create highly symbolic abstract compositions. His work is, at first glance, deceptively simple. Yet the formal elements in his composition demand more of its audience. The monochromatic hues of his work, clearly the entry point of his work, calm the mind, yet the complexity of his work soon reveals itself. The multiplicity of directional lines creating energy and movements, leading our gaze to openings created by the geometric shapes, soon revealing the multiplicity of layers and spaces within the composition. Cetin Erokai's oeuvre creates a contemplative gaze in its audience. Absorbed in the complexity hidden behind the deceptive surface, our contemplation leads to possible symbolic interpretations.



The tune of lines in blue, 2019, Oil on canvas, 100x100 cm

E.



Transparent surfaces on red, 2019, Oil on canvas, 70x50 cm



Transparent surfaces on bordeaux, 2019, Oil on canvas, 70x50 cm

C.

CSABA FÜRJESI

(Hungary)

ZOLTÁN SOMHEGYI

It is always the visual borders and aesthetic transition territories that are in the focus of the creative practice of the Hungarian artist Csaba Fürjesi. His pictorial world is often between real and unreal, personal and collective, serious and ironic. Through different means he manages to enhance classical forms and styles of representation, in order to tackle various issues that may range from individual themes taken from family history through more social-oriented topics connected to the current state of the world to questions of art, media, form and rhythm.

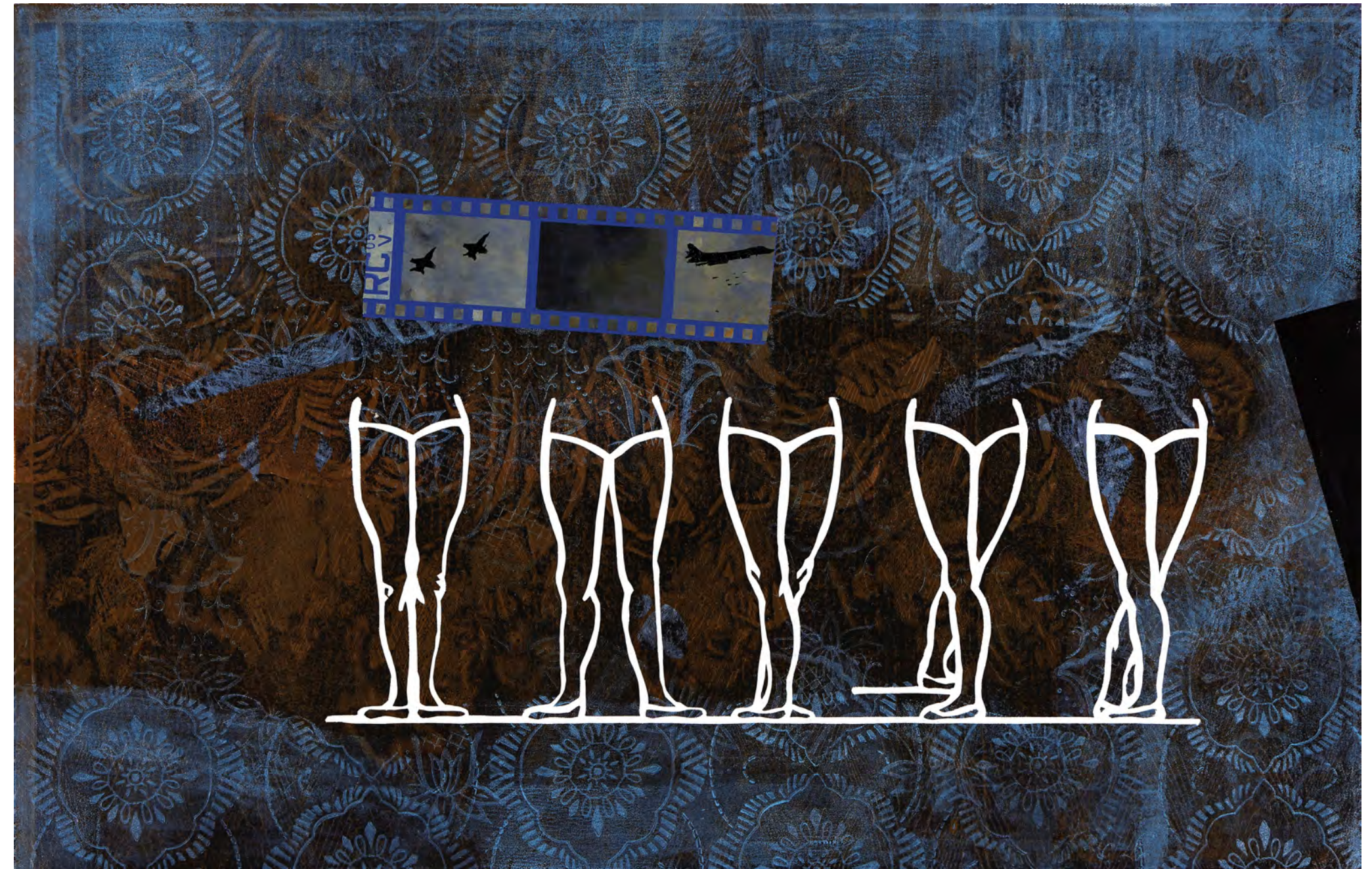


Only for official use, 2019, Relief print oil on paper maps, 20 pieces installation, 240x180 cm

F.



Futurum exactum, 2019, Relief print, Oil on paper, 12 pieces, Installation, 180x252 cm



Choreography, 2016, Relief print, Oil on paper, 100x150 cm

C.

CYRIL LANCELIN

(France)

IZMER BIN AHMAD

Cyril Lancelin's art is rooted in the capitalist landscape marked by the ubiquitous advertising language, that mother tongue of ours whose chorus of signs and structures guides us with operative persuasion. Amidst the greening of contemporary consumerism, Lancelin's duplicative rendering of what he terms "primitive forms" (spheres, cylinders and torus) offers meditative possibilities through non-organic industrial material and quantitative experience. This observation might be counter-intuitive to the usual petition for bio-qualitative measure of things. Yet 'numbers' have always been at the root of life. Primordial molecular and cellular multiplication is the quantitative core of the world that started it all and continues to be the pulse of everything. Lancelin's art heeds to the transformative force of excess and enacts immersive moments through size and quantity. Their abundance awakens the senses, forging transformative possibilities in us through the aestheticization of our habitat.



Knot, 2017, Nylon fabric, 8x30x15 m, Hangzhou, China, Photo credit: Sam Hsueh

L.



Pyramid sphere & pyramid tube, 2019, Nylon fabric, MIA-Philadelphia, USA, Photo credit: Cyril Lancelin



Half Pyramid, 2019, Electro polished stainless steel, aluminum, 3,25x8,50 x8,50 m, Artron Art Museum, Shenzhen, China, Photo credit: Wavelength

T.

TORBJÖRN LÄNK

(Sweden)

FRANCESCA MERZ

“The starting point is usually my own photographs of people captured on streets and squares”.

This is where Torbjörn Länk's vision starts, capable like few others artists of giving shape, texture and color to everyday life, taking up styles that bring back to mind the composed linearity of Renaissance masters, as well as the dreamlike visions of the pre-Raphaelites.

Immersed in a tangible present, the people of his daily life are photographed and then extrapolated from their context to be immersed in other worlds, in other meanings, through scenarios masterfully built by the perfect direction of the artist, capable of not losing any of the fundamental traits of the character of his models. An artist whose works can be observed for hours, discovering at every glance new significances and perspectives.



Flora, 2019, Oil on linen, 73x54 cm

L.



Boots, saints and cigarette, 2019, Oil on linen, 122x115 cm



Women and clouds, 2017, Oil on linen, 90x120 cm

S.

SEBASTIAN REIS

(Austria-Finland)

FRANCESCA MERZ

In Sebastian Reis's work "I am the revolution", it is the artist himself who tells us how the idea was born: Starting point for this work was the unexpected encounter with the painting "Il Quarto Stato" from Giuseppe Pellizza da Volpedo. The artist is particularly interested in the fact that Pelizza places himself within the painting, just as Reis elaborates in his work.

From here the founding theme for the work of Sebastian Reis: the interest on the role that artists play in our society, the possible impact that artists might or might not have.

The focal point of his artistic reflection goes back to being the creative role, of the creative/creator artist, but also of the artist as part of the society, which must confront it, which must relate to it to participate in its construction.



I was told there would be cake, Project Room, Helsinki, 2017, Installation view
 Background: Baustelle, 2017, Gelatin silver prints, tape, 88x125 cm.
 Glashaus, 2017, Gelatin silver prints, ink, tape, 87x113 cm
 Bank, 2017, Gelatin silver prints, gouache, tape, 101x148 cm

R.



I am the revolution, 2018, Paper, toner, gouache, watercolor, gesso, graphite, tape, wood, glue, cotton duck, screws, staples. 240x131x53 cm



My great-grandfather and I, 2018, Paper, toner, gouache, watercolor, gesso, tape, glue, cotton duck, 230x170 cm

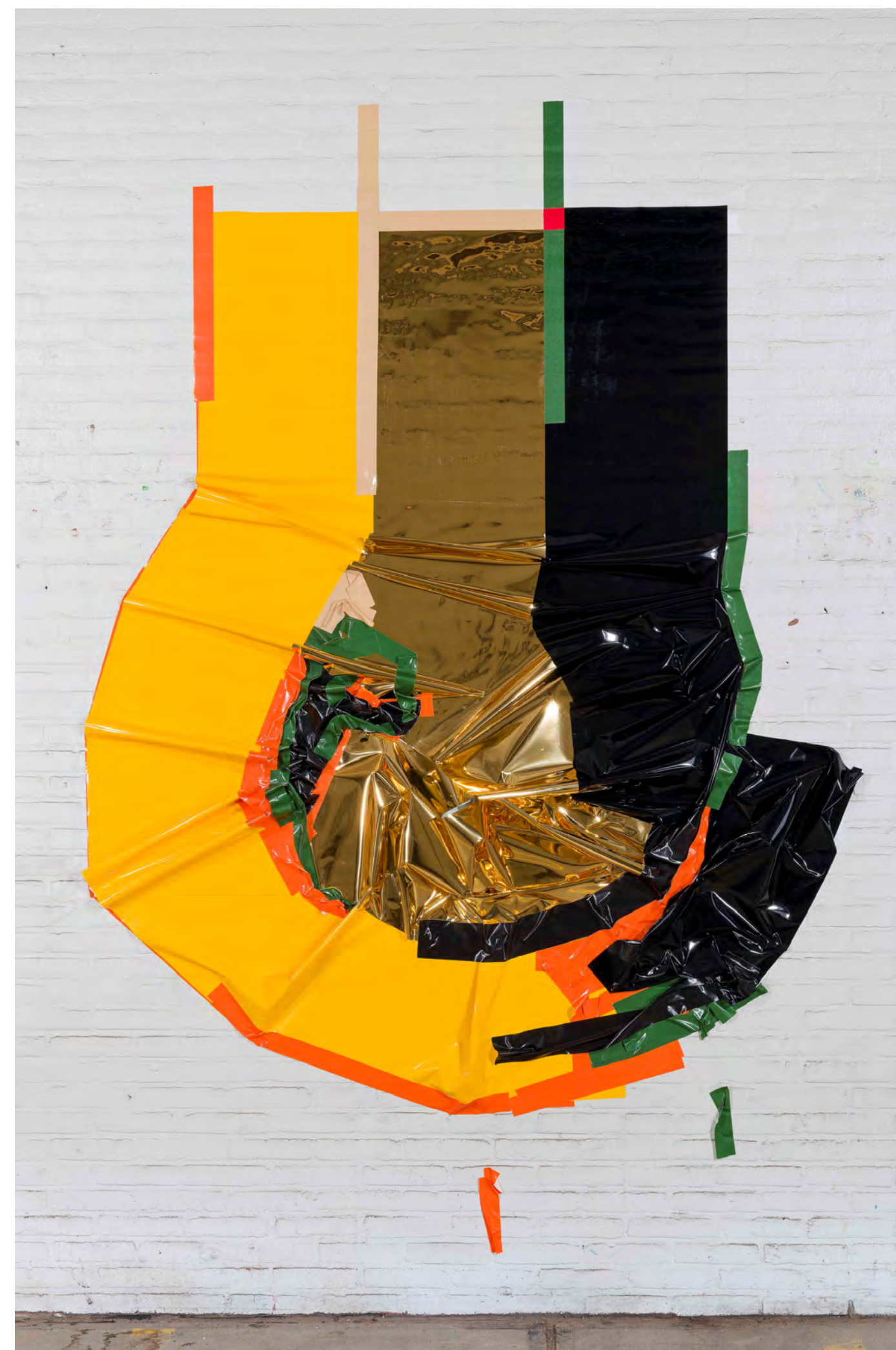
J.

JOCHEM ROTTEVEEL

(The Netherlands)

FERESHTE MOOSAVI

Jochem Rotteveel's works shows a great deal of interest in mass-produced materials that are expandable on surfaces. Whether be coloured self-adhesive sheets or masking tapes, he uses such matters to disrupt, provoke, break and reshape them. This is done in a way that traces of every single artist's decisions and moves remain visible to the viewers eyes. Though the first encounter with his work may suggest a minimalistic approach, the shapes, lines, and shades in Rotteveel's works offer a more complex relationship. To a greater degree the wrinkles take the viewer far from the perfection and makes the work even more tangible and vulnerable at the same time. In the *Landscape Mural of Foil and Tape*, the artist installs the artworks straight on the wall so the building itself becomes a part of the artwork. In *About To*, he places free-standing walls in the middle of the space offering a spatial intervention.



Golden blend, 2018, Mural of foil and tape, 230x140 cm, Photo credit: Jeroen Arians

R.



A landscape, 2019, Mural of foil and tape, 350x750 cm, Photo credit: Jeroen Arians



About to, 2019, Mural of foil and tape, 350x850 cm, Photo credit: Jeroen Arians

N.

NAN SEE TAN

(Malaysia)

FERESHTE MOOSAVI

Tan Nan See has for a while employed food within her creative practice. In the Artist's Sojourn exhibition (Kuala Lumpur, 2011) she focusses on the conflicts of food and environment. In *Artist's Menu* series she works on the daily experiences, cultural knowledges and shared memories in a formative manner. While doing so, Tan's specific choice of ingrediencies, like the alphabet-shaped pastas, offers interesting intersections with economy, politics and ethics of food production.

Tan is originally from Kuala Lumpur; a place wherein the centrality of food in social and political identity is unmissable. Through arrangements of mixed materials Tan reflects on cultural and historical complexities that underline the current human condition. For instance, in the *Smoked Salmon*, Tan creates a picturesque image resembling traditional Japanese paintings. However, by using salmon as a highly valued imported fish she addresses a larger scope of global issues and underlines different layers of food politics and the complex global economy.



Artist's menu: Turmeric rice, 2012, Inkjet on Epson Premium Luster photo paper (Edition 1 of 3), 45.72x30.48 cm

T.



Artist's menu: Spaghetti, 2012, Inkjet on Epson Premium Luster photo paper (Edition 1 of 3), 45.72x30.48 cm



Artist's menu: Smoked salmon, 2017, Inkjet on Epson Premium Luster photo paper (Edition 1 of 3), 45.72x30.48 cm



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