

## **SELECTED THEMES**

### **“THE GENERATIONAL: YOUNGER THAN JESUS”**

During the research and selection of the fifty artists included in this exhibition, various themes seemed to emerge. This exhibition does not claim to make any broad statement supporting the idea that the Millennial generation can be defined by a few traits, but rather strives to seek out the connections and inspirations of those selected, as an attempt to understand how artists from this same generation might interpret the world in which they emerged. Here are some ways to consider how these artists and their works can be linked:

#### **IMAGINING THE FUTURE: Possible worlds and fantasies of identity**

Cao Fei (China, 1978), Mariechen Danz (Ireland, 1980), Emre Hüner (Turkey, 1977), Ryan Trecartin (USA, 1981), and others create artworks that depict retro-futuristic life styles and alternate realities, in which the self can be re-invented and performed as in a fictional world or in a role game.

#### **THE ROMANCE OF OBSOLESCENCE: The artist as archeologist**

Cory Arcangel (USA, 1978), Mark Essen (USA, 1986), and Icaro Zorbar (Colombia, 1977) recuperate old technologies and obsolete software to create non-figurative paintings, kinetic sculptures or abstract videogames. Visitors will be able to play Mark Essen's video games in the show.

#### **REWRITING THE PAST: What do we remember? How do we forget?**

Haris Epaminonda (Cyprus, 1980), Patricia Esquivias (Venezuela, 1979), and Tris Vonna-Michell (England, 1982) confront the themes of history and memory, either through personal recollections or collective traumas. Vonna-Michell repeats the same story over and over in performances and audio works. Haris Epaminonda creates small collages from history books.

#### **DOCU-FICTION: Storytelling and reportage**

Mohamed Bourouissa (Algeria, 1978), Keren Cytter (Israel, 1977), Luke Fowler (Scotland, 1978), Cyprien Gaillard (France, 1980), Tigran Khachatryan (Armenia, 1980), and Alexander Ugay (1978, Kazakhstan) create narrative films, photos and videos that are part documentary and part fiction. Gaillard's videos depict abandoned buildings as they are being blown up. Fowler tells the story of an unconventional mental hospital. Cytter writes a new chamber theater of the absurd. Bourouissa stages photographic reconstructions of Parisian peripheries.

#### **THE IMAGE-MAKING MACHINE: How can art cope with the explosion of images in the digital sphere?**

Many artists confront the proliferation of images in the digital world, on such platforms as YouTube, FlickrR, MySpace, etc. Elad Lassry (Israel, 1977) creates images that are carefully manipulated with the collaboration of commercial photographers. Guthrie Lonergan (USA, 1984) appropriates videos from the Net. Ciprian Muresan (Romania, 1977) and Ziad Antar (Lebanon, 1978) rediscover a new form of intimacy in short, poetic videos.

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**HYSTERICAL REALISM: A new obsession with language**

Many works in the exhibition reflect the flow of unconsciousness typical of chat rooms and blogs – an avalanche of words that makes up the daily soundtrack of the digital community. Information becomes a character in the over-heated narratives of many artists in the show. The collective AIDS-3D (USA, 1985/86) creates an ironic homage to digital jargon with an alter-like installation that spells out the letters OMG, which stand for “Oh My God” in abbreviated, SMS friendly form. The paintings of Adam Pendleton (USA, 1980) deconstruct poetry and words. Luke Fowler (Scotland, 1978) analyses schizophrenia as a linguistic explosion. Wojciech Bąkowski (Poland, 1979) turns a Samuel Beckett-like monologue into a cartoon. The characters in Ryan Trecartin’s (USA, 1981) multi-channel epics communicate in a new language created from a mash-up of contemporary argot, technical terms, and abbreviations, with words tumbling forth from every mouth at what seem like breakneck speed.

**FAMILY MATTERS: Alternative families, urban tribes and the clash between generations**

Some artists seem preoccupied with creating new personal ways to exist within society, either as members of groups, collectives, alternative families. Liz Glynn (USA, 1981) builds a miniaturized model of Rome in 24 hours with the help of her friends. Emily Roysdon (USA, 1977) creates paintings that are also props for performances in which she works with friends and members of an informal group. Other artists make work about their own family: Kateřina Šedá (Czech Republic, 1977), for example, follows her parents for a whole day, doing whatever they do, and presents hundreds of drawings realized by her grandmother as she loses her memory. LaToya Ruby Frazier (USA, 1982) captures intimate family moments in black and white photography.

**ABSTRACT VALUES: A return to abstraction**

Artists as different as Tauba Auerbach (USA, 1981), Cory Arcangel (USA, 1978), Kerstin Brätsch (Germany, 1976), Mark Essen (USA, 1986), Adam Pendleton (USA, 1980), and Josh Smith (Japan, 1976) combine the vocabulary of abstraction with technological motifs, vernacular influences, and perceptual distortions. Appropriating art history with a nonchalant attitude, contemporary abstraction functions variably as pure decoration, spiritual experience, and popular entertainment, while still managing to compete against the inflation of media images and digital spectacles.