

NO ORDINARY LOVE

Jesse Darling · Celia Hempton · Paul Maheke · Sejourner Truth Parsons · Dardan Zhegrova

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JESSE DARLING

- « Cavalry (sugar n stone) », 2016, fondant sugar, steel, clay, 105 x 102 x 37 cm.
- « Sentry », 2016, clay, fondant sugar, steel, dimensions variables.
- « Saint Batman », 2016, welded steel, sugar, antivirus mask, expanding foam, 159 x 61 x 27 cm.

Born in 1981, in Oxford, United Kingdom. Lives and works in London.

Jesse Darling's practice is concerned with the human condition and how it is mediated through the structures, narratives and technologies that govern lived experience. Considering the social and physical body as a site where architectural, [bio] political and social structures manifest and become transformed, Jesse Darling works in sculpture, installation, text and 'dasein by design' (the space where performance and unmediated experience meet). Recent exhibitions include: "The Shadow of the Dome of Pleasure", Artspace, New Zealand; "Absolute Bearing", LD50 Gallery, London; "Spirit Level" (with Takeshi Shiomitsu), AND/OR Gallery, London; "Devotions", MOT Projects, London; They/Them, DREI, Cologne (all 2015); and "Art After the Internet", MoMA, Warsaw (2014). Later this year, they will present a solo exhibition at Company Gallery, New York, and will also be published in the upcoming anthology Best British Poetry 2015. Jesse Darling works as editor-at-large for The New Inquiry, publishes texts and essays when absolutely necessary, and is represented by Arcadia_Missa.

CELIA HEMPTON

- « bulgaria 25th november 2015 », 2015, Oil on linen, 25 x 30 cm.
- « Unknown (video loop) russia », 22nd october 2015, 2015, Oil on polyester, 25 x 30 cm.

Born in 1981 in Stroud, United Kingdom. Lives and works in London.

For all the flesh depicted in Celia Hempton's portraits, sensuality is only one part of the story. Although Hempton's nudes are typically titled with proper names, they are impersonal, their faces cropped out. They communicate something unknowable and ungraspable in even the frankest exposure of the body; try to clasp Kajsa (2015), and she would slip between your palms like an icicle. The subjects aren't strangers; they are Hempton's friends, acquaintances and, for the picture that initiated the series, her boyfriend. Initially, she wanted to paint his erection, but this required him to watch pornography while he posed – 'which put me in an interesting position', she tells me – so she eventually asked him to flip onto his front. Though the foregrounding of male buttocks carries cultural baggage, the sexual inflection of this particular presentation of the body is, in some sense, incidental. What Hempton seeks, rather, is the chance to paint from an 'interesting position' – in this case, the fascination, rage, hilarity or whatever it is that ensues from watching your partner turned-on by someone else. 'What I am looking for when painting', Hempton says, 'is a situation more important than the painting itself.' For her series 'Chat Random' (2014–ongoing), which was first shown at Southard Reid in London in 2014, the artist utilizes *chatrandom.com*, which connects global users via webcam – usually for the purposes of masturbation. Hempton asks random men if she can paint them, and then, brush in one hand and typing with the other, she depicts as much of the on-screen feed as the subject's patience – or arousal – allows. To see and be seen: this aspect of Chatrandom is compulsive, trance-like and occasionally aggressive. But then 'without awkwardness', Hempton says, the process 'just becomes about making a painting again'. It's as if self-consciousness – something that even the most eager users of Chatrandom, not coincidentally, lack – is, for the artist, a luxury antithetical to creativity. Recent solo exhibitions include "The Female Gaze, Part Two: Women Look At Men", Cheim & read, New York, USA (2016); "Prediction" cur. By Milovan Farronato, Mendes Wood DM, São Paulo; "Lupa", Galerie Sultana Paris, France (2015); "Chat Random", Southard Reid, London, UK; "Paintings on Wall and Canvas", Galleria Lorcan O'Neill, Rome; a performance and presentation of work made in Stromboli as part of Fiorucci Art Trust's festival Forget Amnesia (2014); "Cur", Southard Reid, London, UK and Vug, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen, Germany (2013). Selected forthcoming and recent group exhibitions include "The Painting Show", British Council Touring Exhibition; "Electronic Superhighway 2016 – 1966", Whitechapel Gallery, London; "I'm here but you've gone", Fiorucci Art Trust, London; "Tomorrow: London", South London Gallery, London; "Burning Down The House", Gwangju Biennale and Abstract Cabinet, David Roberts Art Foundation, London, (2013).

PAUL MAHEKE

« To Read the Wavering of the Swarm », 2016, impression numérique sur tissu, dimensions variables.

To read the wavering of the swarm as a resilient flicker, a gesture towards transformation
(Lire l'oscillation de l'essaim comme un éclat de résistance, une invitation à la transformation)

Born in 1985, Brive-la-Gaillarde, France. Lives and works in London.

Maheke has recently completed a programme of study at Open School East, after receiving an MA in Art Practice at l'École Nationale Supérieure d'Arts de Paris-Cergy (FR) in 2011. His practice is grounded in emancipatory and decolonial thought with an emphasis on cultural identities and new subjectivities. His current research focuses – through video, installation, sculpture and furtive interventions – on the body as both an archive and a territory, as a utopia to be reimagined through different strategies of resistance. With particular attention to dance, he proposes to defuse the power relations that shape Western imaginations and to rearticulate the representations that emerge from them. Over the past year Maheke has pursued his research initiating a series of public conversations, at Open School East, entitled “Beyond Beyoncé: Use It Like a Bumper!”, which considered Hip-Hop cultures through the lens of Queer and Black Feminist theory. Recent solo shows: “Green Ray Turns Out To Be Mauve”, Green Ray, London (March 2016) and a performance at Guest Projects, London (April 2016). Other selected group exhibitions and residencies include “Ruptures”, ABI, cur. Katy Orkisz, London (2015); artist-in-residence at Darling Foundry, Montreal, Canada (2015); “ODRADEK”, Les Instants Chavirés, cur. Mikaela Assolent + Flora Katz, Montreuil, France (2015); “Re-former le monde visible”, Le 116, cur. Marlène Rigler, Montreuil, France (2014); 59th Salon de Montrouge, Montrouge, France (2014); artist-in-residence at CIAP - Île de Vassivière, France (2014); “Videoakt”, French Institute, Barcelona, Spain (2013); “VIVA!”, at Centre CLARK, Montreal, Canada (2012); “Pratiques Furtives : fragments d'une enquête”, cur. Patrice Loubier, Skol art center, Montreal, Canada (2012). Upcoming: “Take the Weight”, SixtyEight Art Institute, cur. Tom Clark + Iben Elmstrom, Copenhagen, Denmark (2017, group show).

SOJOURNER TRUTH PARSONS

« The same rope that pulls you up will hang you his and hers edition II », 2016, collaged canvas, acrylic, sand and glitter, 180 x 130 cm.

Born in 1984 in Vancouver, Canada. Lives and works in Toronto.

Sejourner Truth Parsons received her BFA from The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Parsons, a Toronto-based artist (who shares her first two names with a fantastic 19th century African-American freedom fighter) has an indulgent, slacker-ish rebelliousness to the way she works. Her paintings look like they were made by that smart girl who gets it—one who knows that painting has had its mid-century heyday, has died, and has been born again with a market friendly vigor—but is making the choice to not care. Parsons' lack of seriousness would be annoying if it felt like she were angling towards something—say, if she, like Helen Johnson, paired her casualness with just enough control to look post-Internet cool. And some work, like the “Untitled video”, leaning in the corner, or the slightly flatter paintings with long fingers holding cigarettes, do read as too self-consciously composed. But the best work seems driven by a desire for juicy, funny, infectious impudence. Paintings like the first fruit to fall, an awkwardly off-kilter composition of falling red fruit against pink protruding bricks, grab you for the heck of it. In 2014, she was awarded the Canada Council for the Arts Residency grant to attend Santa Fe Art Institute. She has exhibited at Phil Gallery, Los Angeles; Night Gallery, San Francisco; and Mulherin, Asya Geisberg, New York, USA; Jessica Bradley Gallery, Cooper Cole, Toronto; and Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Canada. Parsons currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California.

DARDAN ZHEGROVA

« Your enthusiasm to tell a story (White) », 2016, Mixed media and sound, Dimensions variables.

Born in 1991 in Prishtina, Kosovo. Lives and works in Prishtina.

Dardan Zhegrova's works play with the flux between language and its translation into visual representation. In his works emotion is used as an artistic medium that potentially could act as a means to questions our assumptions about intimacy and expression. Mostly known for his videos the artist can be regarded as a poet in a time where physical proximity is being replaced by an ubiquitous availability through modern means of communication. Recent exhibitions and performances include: “Where we meet sometimes at night, bright bright, long talk in white”, LambdaLambdaLambda, Prishtina; “Your Enthusiasm to tell a story”, Gallery 12Hub, Belgrade.