### MO.CO. PANA CEE **EXHIBITION** PERMAFROST **FORMS OF** DISASTER 01.02.2020 30.08.2020







# PERMAFROST FORMS OF DISASTER

#### INTRODUCTION

The exhibition *Permafrost* unfolds as an unstable landscape, transforming the art center into an immersive experience. The exhibited works pertain to natural, social or political disasters resulting from global shifts, and confront the visitor with the vulnerability of an evolving world.

Conceived as a metaphor for current or imminent crises, the thawing permafrost serves as the anchor of the exhibition. Permafrost is the term used to describe the frozen layers of soil that cover a quarter of the Northern hemisphere's surface. Subject to climate disturbance, these grounds thaw and release large quantities of methane and carbon, causing erosion, disappearance of lakes, landslides and soil subsidence. The thawing also upsets the composition of plant and animal species and activates the release and spread of previously unknown bacteria and viruses that have remained frozen for thousands of years.

Permafrost explores more specifically how these current natural, economic and symbolic systems adapt and transform in an uncontrollable and unstable morphogenesis. The works generate a reality and a sciencefiction. They also ask the question: which symbols, forms and myths will still exist when known systems collapse, landscapes crumble, and cycles go out of sync? The artists in *Permafrost* appropriate and invent different aesthetic, formal and narrative modes. In blurring the boundaries between distant past and near future, geological eras and production chains, they seek to develop aesthetic systems that meet the challenges of our time, that are forms of resistance.

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Resonating with the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennale exhibition *The 7<sup>th</sup> Continent*, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, *Permafrost* brings together installation, sculpture, video and drawing, many of which have been co-produced by or reconfigured for MO.CO. Panacée. A rich program of events will accompany the exhibition.

Curators: Vincent Honoré, Director of Exhibitions, Caroline Chabrand, Curator and Rahmouna Boutayeb, Project Manager, assisted by Taddeo Reinhardt.

Lighting Designer: Serge Damon

In partnership with IKSV Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts – 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial and with the support of Fluxus Art Projects and the Lithuanian Culture Institute.

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## DENIZ AKTAŞ OZAN ATALAN NINA BEIER DORA BUDOR **ROCHELLE GOLDBERG** ELOISE HAWSER **MAX HOOPER SCHNEIDER** NICOLAS LAMAS PAKUI HARDWARE MICHAEL E. SMITH LAURE VIGNA

#### **DENIZ AKTAŞ**

Born in 1987 in Diyarbakir (Turkey). Lives and works between Istanbul and Diyarbakir (Turkey).

"In most of my works, I view the city as a continuous construction site."

The works of Deniz Aktas reflect the stigma of radical urban change, forced evictions, demolitions, and even armed conflict.

The artist's three drawings depict waste, banal signs of a society in chaos. The two small framed formats show on one a fallen tree stump, and on the other a pile of pipes, perhaps misplaced from a building site (or is this a nest?). The facture is classic, the subject current: the images can be read as an archive of the contemporary.

The third ink on paper is a large format of a heap of tyres presented in a direct manner. Again, man is only present through traces left by his practices. Its title, The Ruins of Hope 2, makes reference to the romantic tableau by Caspar David Friedrich, *The Wreck of Hope* (1823-1824). Akin to Friedrich's piece, Deniz Aktas' work oscillates between paintings of history and landscapes. This dark wall of tyres is merely a pretext to demonstrate an urban reality: that which allowed movement, the tyre, has now become an obstacle. The imposing dimensions confront the viewer with the reality of a world without horizons. The piece

nonetheless expresses great fascination for its subject. This wall of tyres ultimately becomes a tragic object to contemplate.

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Deniz Aktaş participated in group exhibitions in Paris, Munich, Milan and Istanbul. He has recently shown in the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial; *Confusion*, MACAO, Milan (2017); *Poser son temps*, On-Off-Studio, Paris (2017); at the Pasinger Fabrik Gmbh, Munich (2016). He was a resident at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris in 2016.

Works co-produced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial and MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain With the support of SAHA-Supporting contemporary Art from Turkey.



Ink on paper 70 x 100 cm

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#### **OZAN ATALAN**

Born in 1985 in Gelibolu (Turkey). Lives and works in Istanbul (Turkey).

Ozan Atalan's installation, *Monochrome* (2019), stems from the destruction of the water buffalo's habitat in the vicinity of Istanbul. The constructions of a new airport– the largest in the world – and that of a third bridge over the Bosporus (Strait of Istanbul) have displaced this endemic species.

The sculpture is composed of a buffalo skeleton placed on a base of concrete, soil and glue. It is emblematic of the jeopardy nature is in and of the changes to equilibrium; particularly in Turkey, ranked in the top five countries for use and production of concrete, to which their production alone contributes to 5% of global annual carbon dioxide emissions. A documentary video completes the installation. It shows the water buffalos' habitat in Kemerburgaz and the construction frenzy leading to its destruction.

Text: Pablo Larrios

Ozan Atalan's work was shown in exhibition spaces of national and international reputation, such as Corridor Project Space in Amsterdam (2019); the Chelsea Town Hall in London (2017) or at PØST in Los Angeles (2015). He also took part in the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial.

Works co-produced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial and MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain.



Installation view (water buffalo skeleton, concrete, soil, 2 videos) Variable dimensions



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#### **NINA BEIER**

Born in 1975 in Aarhus (Denmark). Lives and works in Berlin (Germany).

Through collage processes and supposedly incongruous associations, Nina Beier appropriates and diverts the universes (iconographic, historical or commercial) of common objects. Through these acts, Nina Beier devalues these objects, rendering them inoperative and repulsive. They are laid bare and confronted to their own symbolic dimension, which she mocks.

In *Permafrost*, we find sinks with siphons clogged by hand-rolled cigars (Plug) and sliced Mars bars, half unwrapped, placed on asphalt chunks (Mars). These sculptures exhibit sexual and scatological signs that point to the pathetic and obscene nature of the frivolous and bourgeois capitalist society that they embody. As they stand, they become hybrid forms ungrateful of a world structured by fluctuations of economic value. The sharp sense of materials and the alliances of shapes and textures developed in her work also demonstrate the quality of her sculptural gesture, through which she addresses a certain kind of violence, which is both cultural and material.

She has recently exhibited at the Kunsthal Gent and at the Villa Arson in Nice (2019); at the Kunstverein in Munich (2018); at the Kunsthaus in Zürich and at the ARoS Aarhus Kunstmuseum in Helsinki (2017). She has also taken part in the 13<sup>th</sup> Baltic Triennial (2018) and the 13<sup>th</sup> Lyon Biennial (2015).

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Ceramic sinks, handrolled cigars Variable dimensions



#### **DORA BUDOR**

Born in 1984 in Zagreb (Croatia). Lives and works in New York (USA).

The works *Origin I (A Stag Drinking), II (Burning of the Houses)* and *III (Snow Storm)* by Dora Budor could be miniature landscapes of sci-fi films. Only desolate and rugged horizons remain, pale light, dense dust incessantly whirling round. As in most of her works, Dora Budor composes an anticipative fictional universe, fuelled by the stories of cinema, literature, architecture and paintings.

These dioramas are namely inspired by three tempest paintings by J.M.W. Turner, who already at the turn of 19th century represented landscapes rendered abstruse by volcanic dust clouds or pollution particles. Despite their desert-like and purely mineral appearance, these landscapes have conserved traces of human activity. Functioning similarly to the test chambers used by scientists to test the resistance of manufactured objects to time and erosion, these works interpret the variations in sound layers recorded on construction sites. These inaudible echoes define the frequency and intensity of the pigment eruptions, clouding the air of the vivarium.

She has recently exhibited at the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial (2019) and has had her first major solo show in Europe at the Kunsthalle Basel (2018).

Recent exhibitions also include Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2017); Whitney Museum of American Art in New York (2016) or at the Halle für Kunst & Medien in Graz in Austria (2015).

She took part in the 13th Baltic Triennial (2018) and in the 9<sup>th</sup> Berlin Biennale.

Works co-produced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial and MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain.



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Custom environmental chambers (reactive electronic system, compressor, valves, 3D printed elements, aluminum, acrylic, LED light, glass, wood, paint), organic and synthetic pigments, diatomaceous earth, FX dust, felt Dimensions of each chamber: 152 x 160 x 86cm



#### **ROCHELLE GOLDBERG**

Born in 1984 in Vancouver (Canada). Lives and works between New York (USA) and Berlin (Germany).

Rochelle Goldberg's installation, specially created for *Permafrost*, exists as a miniature landscape where the ideas of time, scales, growth or preservation are shaken and constantly recomposed. At the piece's centre, life develops: the celery will have had barely enough time to grow, yet be in decline; the gold chips which cover the water's surface parallel a phenomenon of organic contamination in a precious-looking shift; a bronze figure inhabits space with the poise of a fossilised deity.

Faithful to the principle of 'intraction', which she herself conceptualised, and which characterises the relationships between the different entities of her installations; Goldberg proposes an unstable ensemble confronting a plethora of symbols. Following this phenomenon, the relationship between the elements is constantly being altered, alternating between conflictory and harmonious in nature.

In her hybrid ecosystems, the artist engages in a synthesis of her subjects, chiefly conceptual, theological and poetic. One of the founding principles of the exhibition is therefore at play within the installation itself: by shifting our perceptions, couldn't we detect a potential in the risk that accompanies the decline of systems? Rochelle Goldberg has exhibited at DOC! in Paris and at The Power Station in Dallas (2019); at the Casa Masaccio in San Giovanni Valderno and at Eclair in Berlin (2018).

Work produced by MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain.

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Film, celeriac, glass bowls, water, gold glitter, bronze Variable dimensions



#### **ELOISE HAWSER**

Born in 1985 in London (United Kingdom) where she lives and works.

Eloise Hawser's work has investigation at its core, revealing that which is hidden, buried or invisible.

For this piece, co-produced with the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial, the artist filmed the largest recycling centre in Istanbul: resulting in an installation video (two films and a series of sculptures) exploring the economic and social issues raised by these recycling circuits.

The waste is charged with effective and symbolic resonance- of loss and regeneration.

Professionals using specifically designed cranes handle the waste. The film follows, in a kind of choreographic performance, the orchestration of the machines' movement punctuated by the process at work.

Hawser avers, "Nature, in this sense, is no longer a material on which industry can work, as we might previously have considered wood, gas and petrol. Instead, in this age of mass waste consumption, it seems that there is now second-rate material, already composed and recomposed by industrial processes. The aim of the so-called circular economy is to perfect this procedure, whereby all that the industry works with has always already been composed, decomposed and recomposed by infrastructural processes." Recent solo or duo exhibitions include *Hawser / Hofer* at the Mumok in Vienna (2016); *Sol Lewitt and Eloise Hawser*, Vistamare in Pescara (2016); *Lives on Wire*, ICA in London (2015). She participated in a number of group exhibitions at White Cube (2016) and Tate Britain (2015) in London or at the New Museum in New York (2015), among others. She also took part in the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial (2019).

Works co-produced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial and MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain with the support of Bilge & Haro Cümbüşyan, Arts Council England and artgenève/artmonte-carlo. Presented with the support of the British Council and Fluxus Art Projects.

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Videosculpture Steel and laminated and repurposed glass panels, video  $268 \times 310 \times 20$  cm

ELOISE HAWSER ↑ The Tipping Hall, 2019 Courtesy of the artist and VI, VII, Oslo © Sahir Ugur Eren

#### **MAX HOOPER SCHNEIDER**

Born in 1982 in Los Angeles (USA) where he lives and works.

Max Hooper Schneider studied biology, urban design and landscape architecture. He imagines ecosystems, examining the interactions between human and non-human species.

The universes he creates take on different forms: terrariums or aquariums, dystopian dioramas in which he confounds the biological and synthetic ephemeral with aquatic and vegetal life, and a shadow-puppet play.

The piece *To become a melon head* is a filmed shadow-puppet play (the marionettes are handled by a horizontal stick). The story is that of Tiryaki, and his wife of 33 years, Bebe Ruhi. Co-produced and shown at the Istanbul Biennial, the story is based on a satirical, traditional Turkish show, Karagöz & Hacivat.

The couple, having just had a car accident, argumentatively decide on a divorce whilst struggling between life and death at the hospital. The divorce enacted, they meet again, each of them metamorphosing: Tiryaki becomes a Denyo, an evolutionary hybrid whose head is turning into a square watermelon, and Bebe Ruhi, a headless djinn. The show is offbeat, caricatured and rife with absurdity and humour à la Ionesco or Raymond Queneau, an almost vaudeville, interspersed with hardcore music. His last solo show, *Hammer Projects: Max Hooper Schneider*, took place at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles in 2019. He's recently shown works in the exhibition *You: œuvres de la Collection Lafayette Anticipations* at the Musée d'Art Moderne in Paris (2019).

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He also took part in the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial (2019).

Work co-produced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial and MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain.



(Video, screen, curtain, sound scape) Variable dimensions



#### NICOLÁS LAMAS

Born in 1980 in Lima (Peru). Lives and works in Brussels (Belgium).

In his sculptural ensembles and installations composed of disparate objects, diverted or taken from his daily life and direct environment, Nicolás Lamas brings to the forefront the fragility of an era undermined by the abundance of information.

In *Permafrost*, the artist shows a part of his *Planned Obsolescence* series: disembowelled machines that might resemble mutilated or dissected bodies. He develops an analogy between human and machine, through the circulations, flows, productions and memory that they generate. The artist shapes and symbolises man's relationship to the disclosure and preservation of ideas, equally as to their manifestations, natural and artificial, autonomous or programmed. The work makes different symbols of knowledge coexist and collide, from ancient culture to that of reproduction and immediacy.

The same applies to the piece After the end, consisting of a series of used objects and organic elements, half waste, half evidence, kept in a refrigerator.

It becomes a showcase for a hybrid memory, whose values are continually being recomposed.

Recent group or solo presentations include Galerie Meessen de Clercq in Bruxelles, Tenderpixel in London, the Musée de Grenoble (2019); la Spazio Tripla in Bologna (2017); la Fundaciô Joan Miro in Barcelona and the Brand New Gallerv in Milan (2016).



Printer, plaster, paper, electrical card, book, foam, camera lens 132 x 106 x 65 cm

NICOLÁS LAMAS Planned Obsolescence, 2019 Courtesy of the artist and Meessen de Clercq, Brussels © Philippe De Gobert

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#### **PAKUI HARDWARE**

Neringa Černiauskaitė and Ugnius Gelguda. Born in 1984 in Klaipėda and in 1977 in Vilnius (Lithuania). Live and work in Berlin (Germany).

Pakui Hardware is the name given by curator Alex Ross for this artist duo formed in 2014. The name is a reference to Pakui, special servant of Haumea, the Hawaiian goddess of fertility. Legend has it that the children of Haumea were all born from different parts of her body; Pakui is known to have travelled round the Hawaiian island of Oahu six times in a single day. The symbolism of fertility in this myth, hinged on fragmentation and acceleration, becomes a point of reference for Pakui Hardware in their exploration of the contemporary body, and the social and technological dynamics in which it is embedded. The duo creates their installations by borrowing from the fields of synthetic biology, metabolic processes, regenerative medicine and tissue engineering.

The works of the *Extrakorporal* series are made of organic and artificial materials (glass, fake fur, various textiles, leather, latex). Their origins lie in medical research on organs and tissue cultivated outside the body, and self-rejuvenation. **DERMAFROST • FORMS OF DISASTER** 

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The duo equally shares an interest in the relationships between technology, economy and materiality; the fusion and confusion of the natural and the artificial; the way technology shapes economies, virtual and material, and the physical reality itself, to the point of understanding its impact on the human body.

They have recently shown at the Museum der bildenden Künste in Leipzig and at the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial (2019); in a collective exhibition at Musée d'Orsay in Paris (2018); in the 13<sup>th</sup> Baltic Triennial (2018) and at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts in Australia (2017).

Five works co-produced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial and MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain. One work produced by Moly-Sabata. Supported by the Lithuanian Culture Institute.



Glass, various textiles, faux fur, leather, metal hanging system, silicone 165 x 60 x 65 cm



#### **MICHAEL E. SMITH**

Born in 1977 in Detroit (USA). Lives and works in Providence (USA).

In Permafrost, Michael E. Smith's sculptures are nothing more than discrete interventions: a computer keyboard covered in rolled oats; a disembowelled rucksack in which a catfish skeleton is lodged; a leather baseball glove with a tiny fossilised ear canal. These works are the result of a meticulous hybridisation of common objects gleaned by the artist, and of unexpected materials: organic materials and remains of dead animals. Tinged with black humour, they are the metonymies of deserted industrial landscapes, scraps; tiny ruins bearing witness to a fleeting economical and ecological decline.

The hanging of the sculptures, as well as their minimalism, shed light on the artist's fascination for space. They all belong to a landscape that surpasses them, in a dizzying effect of disproportion. Smith's compositions are as dramatic as they are innocuous. In the heart of the wreckage, what traces remain?

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He teaches at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit. He has exhibited at the Kunsthalle Basel (2018); at MOMA PS1 in New York and at S.M.A.C.K in Gand (2017). He also took part in the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (2019) and in the 13<sup>th</sup> Baltic Triennial (2018) and in numerous group exhibitions in institutions such as the Modern Insitute in Glasgow or Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2017).



Backpack, catfish 64 x 39 x 23 cm



#### **LAURE VIGNA**

Born in 1984 in Saint-Rémy (France). Lives and works between Brussels and Paris.

The exhibition space becomes revolutionised with Laure Vigna, articulated by interventions that construct and deconstruct it.

The artist plays on the coexistence of different materials, either organic and transformed (rice leaves, soil, gelatine, seeds, sugar, food colouring, etc.), or artificial or hybrid (metal, fibreglass, tar, epoxy resin, glycerine, etc.). Her works confront space and time in a game of appearances and disappearances.

By manner of an alchemist, it is in losing control of these materials that Vigna hopes to master them. Many parameters and external factors, including temperature, hygrometry, and natural or chemical compounds, cannot be fixed, influencing the result.

Incorporate, Schimmer and Dispersion are raw steel structures, on which Vigna suspends semi-organic forms made of bioplastics, evolving according to their environment. Through these assemblages and associations, the artist puts into perspective the fundamentals of sculpture: suspension, elevation, verticality and horizontality in a play of tension and precarious equilibrium. The outcome is a deployment of shapes, materials and colours interacting with space, light and the physical movement of the visitor.

LAURE VIGNA → Schimmer, 2019 Courtesy of the artist © Ernesto Sartori **DERMAFROST • FORMS OF DISASTER** 

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Laure Vigna has taken part in many alternative art education and residency programs, including the Independent Study Program at the Rogaland Kunstsenter in Stavanger in Norway (2017) ; at the Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles (2017) ; at the 18<sup>th</sup> Street Arts Center in Santa Monica (USA, 2013) ; at the Kunststiftung Baden-Württemberg in Stuttgart in Germany (2011). She has recently shown at DOC ! in Paris (2018) ; at the Rogaland Kunstsenter in Stavanger and at MonChéri in Brussels (2017).

Works produced by the Parc Saint-Léger – Centre d'art contemporain



# ON VIEW THIS WINTER ....

NOHEMÍ PÉREZ → Catatumbo Project Panorama Catatumbo (Rio), 2012/16



### MONTPELLIER CONTEMPORAIN: ONE INSTITUTION, THREE VENUES

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	With Sol Calero, Anna Bella Geiger, Teresa Margolles, Beatriz Milhazes, Ernesto Neto, Hélio Oiticica, Ivan Serpa, Luiz Zerbini
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#### **PHOTOS CREDITS**

Front and back covers Nicolás Lamas, *Planned Obsolescence*, 2019 © Philippe De Gobert Courtesy of the artist and Meessen De Clercq, Bruxelles

