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SYLVIA SLEIGH

BRIAN O'DOHERTY *Beyond the White Cube*
JEAN-FRANÇOIS CHEVRIER *On Hallucination*
ALEXANDRA BACHZETSI
My Influences

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ROBERTO PACI DALÒ
Galleria, Milan

Paci Dalò's film *Ye Shanghai* (2012) is a strikingly vivid work. Its subject is the Jewish ghetto: during the Japanese occupation of the city (1937–45), no visa was issued to enter its harbour; as a result, it housed around 20,000 Jewish refugees, all of whom were forced to live in Hongkou, one of the city's poorest districts. The film's soundtrack – performed live by the artist on the opening night of the show at Marsèlleria – is a mix of urban soundscapes, voices in Yiddish, Chinese and German, as well as musical samples, which are only revealed at the end. In the black and white, we see men laughing, playing at school, artisans manufacturing lamps at prodigious speed, a dignitary, friends having tea, military parades and crowds in the amateur footage was shot by Paci Dalò in Shanghai during the 1930s, and is preserved in the archives of the British Library. The exhibition was accompanied by *Radio Cage* (2012), a micro FM radio station that transmitted an audio work based on John Cage's voice, which could be listened to via mobiles and iPhones while walking around the gallery. Cage (who in 1958 was invited to Milan by avant-garde composer Luciano Berio to work for the Phonology Studio of RAI, the Italian state radio, and in the following decades performed extensively in Italy) is an obvious point of reference, and Pacì Dalò pays homage to his legacy by dedicating 'Time Line' to the American master, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth. The artist also has a personal connection to Cage, who composed a mesostic for Pacì Dalò in 1990, which was included in the show: 'In two worlds Roberto / the one of nature and the other / the musical / One'. In one of his Radio Happenings with Morton Feldman, recorded in July 1966 at WBAI radio station in New York, Cage explains that he ended up making works that included transistor radios in order to come to terms with the so-called problem of intrusions and 'interferences' within the artist's environment. One of the Cage's utterances from that conversation sums up 'Time Line' perfectly: 'Now whenever I hear radios, I listen to it with pleasure,' he says, 'and by pleasure I mean I notice what happens [...] The radio simply makes audible what was not.'

BARBARA CASAVECCHIA



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JULIÃO SARMENTO
Museu Serralves, Porto

'White Nights' is Julião Sarmiento's most comprehensive retrospective to date. This major survey comprises more than 160 works – including drawing, painting, performance, photography, sculpture and video – and spans his 40-year career. It successfully sets out to highlight the Portuguese artist's exploration of the domestic sphere; works were grouped around representations of the home and of architecture.

The museum's interior structure is used to highlight the works' relation to space: 'Seven Houses and Six Flats' (2006), a set of photographs and architectural plans of the houses in which Sarmiento used to live, is presented in two groups. The series is divided by the doorway of the room showing *R.O.C. (40 Plus One)* (2011), a video of a woman undressing as she recites extracts from Ludwig Wittgenstein's 'Remarks on Colour' (notes he wrote in the last months of his life, in 1951). The intimate information about the artist's life in 'Seven Houses and Six Flats', revealing the inside structure and the outside features of his most private spaces, is echoed by the model's nudity in the video. The two short 8mm films, *Shadow and Faces* (both 1976), that flank *R.O.C. (40 Plus One)*, further develop a sense of voyeurism. The films reveal brief glimpses of naked female bodies obscured by shadows, extreme close-ups and the texture of the footage; this erotic game of hide and seek is magnified by the hut-like constructions in which they are installed that allow the visitor to see the images from the outside.

In her essay 'Cut! Reproduction and Recombination' (2012), Hito Steyerl analyzes the ways in which cinema reconfigures the human form; bodies are

fragmented and reorganized by the cinematic frame. Sarmiento's work relates to this cinematic device in the sense that the highly sexualized female bodies that inhabit his universe are often mutilated – in his large white canvases of the 1990s, such as *A Seemingly Innocuous Dialogue* or the life-size fibreglass and resin sculptures such as *Licking the Milk Off Her Finger* (both 1998), in which the faces are left empty, erased or cut. In the sculpture *A Human Form in a Deadly Mould* (1999), another faceless life-size female figure wearing a black summer dress bends forward with a rope around her neck, balancing herself against a wall. Voyeurism here is clearly highlighted, its repressive violence enacted.

The analogue slide-show and sound installation *Cage* (1975–6), created after a performance inside a tiger's cage at the Lisbon Zoo, is a further example of Sarmiento's interest in the power-play of the gaze. The installation documents the animal's point-of-view; the observer becomes the observed. The proliferation of different gazes (the artist, the visitor, the objects looked at) echo the instability of desire and of its representations. In the show's title piece, the large-scale drawing *White Nights* (1982), a central image of two female figures touching each other is combined with smaller unfinished and abstract drawings. It's a representation that hints at the fleeting presence of desire and at the impossibility of ever fully portraying it.

JOÃO LAIA

1
Julião Sarmiento, 'White Nights', 2012, installation view

2
Roberto Paci Dalò, *Smallville #2*, 2011, transistor radio, miniature figures and mixed media, 56 x 56 x 130 cm

3
Katarina Šević, 'Raft Stage', 2012, installation view



3

KATARINA ŠEVIĆ
Knoll Galéria, Budapest

Handcrafted objects often carry a certain intimacy and a sense of the slowing down of production. The irregularity, tacit knowledge, and even moral weight associated with craft, however, have also been associated with anti-progressive or conservative values – the implication of dropping out of modernity. Serbian artist Katarina Šević takes pleasure in manipulating the temporal and ideological expectations of the handmade. Her handcrafted wooden objects explore socialist science fiction, while her rough DIY wearable structures and handmade costumes and props evoke at once the re-enactment enthusiast's attention to detail and an anarchic sense of open-endedness of use and function.

Šević's recent solo exhibition, 'Raft Stage', featured *News from Nowhere* (2009–ongoing), an assembly of wooden objects, most of which looked as mundane and familiar as they were ambiguous in our practical memory of them. Taking as its point of reference William Morris's 1890 work of Utopian socialist science fiction, Šević's project explores the potential of linking early socialist thought with a late-19th-century Arts & Crafts take on physical objects. The installation also featured four miniature stages, ranging in design from the classical proscenium stage to an unassuming outdoor platform and a more visionary birdhouse-like structure. Strangely familiar in form, as if belonging to a recycled or reconstructed version of the future, these sculptures had an ill-fated sense of anticipation about them: they were too small to be filled with activity, and unspectacular in their modest take on futurism. The productive tension could be found in the asymmetry of form and content: handcrafted miniatures evocative of the 19th-century bourgeois home, coupled with the future promise of their socialist Utopian underpinnings.

What appeared to be the disorientated props and costumes for these stages populated the rest of the gallery. Šević's series of wearable structures, *Cape, costume, Headdress, costume and Shirt, costume* (all 2012) evoked at once a rest-less avant-gardism reminiscent of Oskar Schlemmer, mixed with something a great deal more mystical and pre-historical: a cape meets a miner's costume, gesturing towards the impossible structure of the 'shirt costume' with its eight arms – we can only imagine the arrival of the performers.

Whereas most of the costumes had a certain promiscuity of use and history, the installation *Gasium et Circensens / Dear Zoltan!* (2011–12), made in collaboration with the artists' group Tehnica Schweiz, maintained a certain fidelity to its narrative. Taking the form of a video documentation of an outdoor play, a wooden wearable structure and a theatre poster, the work revolved around an abandoned open-air stage at a now-closed housing estate for workers at a Budapest gas factory. It is a site marked by planned urbanism from both antiquity and modernity: built atop the excavation site of the Roman city of Aquincum, the spot was part of an exemplary model for workers' dwellings in the 1910s and served as a Culture House from the 1950s onward. Using this rich history as material, Šević's play was based on her two-year correspondence with the Historical Museum of Budapest about the building's use since its closure in the early 1990s. The dialogue plots a complex journey of the re-adaptation of a piece of socialist architecture, as well as exposing the tight bureaucratic web surrounding its recent past. From the performed correspondence, we learn little more than the fact that the Historical Museum uses the structure as a storage unit, but nothing about what these excavated objects might be and for whom they are available. As such, the building simply stands as a new-age socialist ruin that houses antique and medieval finds.

Gasium et Circensens resonated with the row of potential stages in *News from Nowhere*. These are structures that both contain a certain longing for activity and a complex version of a previous, and potentially exhausted, sense of the future. It is within this state of exhaustion of symbols and methods that the stage as a space for performed actions in Šević's work also gains an additional charge. There is nothing stable about a 'Raft Stage', and as such it is also open to the anachronistic encounter, an abstract sense of the stage as a largely unpredictable yet anticipatory structure for future activity.

FATIMA HELLBERG