Kunsthalle Wien

BLUE

Museumsquartier

TIMES

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Blue Times

Any history of colour is, above all, a social history: What would the world look like if we looked at it through the filter of the colour blue? How can we use a colour as a way of seeing and understanding our history?

The group exhibition *Blue Times* brings together over 30 international artistic positions in an open space so as to chart an associative social history of the colour blue that not only focuses on its psychological, metaphorical and associative power, but also on its instrumentalisation for ideological, political and economic purposes. The juxtaposition of these artworks and selected other objects allows for a discussion of the perception and use of this popular and multifaceted colour, moving from the past and into the future.

The *Blue Salon* is a dedicated knowledge room within the exhibition *Blue Times* that functions symbiotically and further expands the exhibition into the field of cultural history. Based on the principles of a "*Wunderkammer*" [chamber of marvels] and a study room, a selection of objects from the natural sciences, handicraft practices and pop culture are presented in this space.

The *Blue Salon* is a rich and open source replete with ideas and materials related to the multifaceted perceptions and connotations of the colour blue – where the presented objects and images are to be seen as conversation pieces. Just as the exploration of blue is not limited to the visual arts, it taps into, amongst other things, popular culture, politics, science, craft, literature, music and film. The colour blue functions as a thread, tracing its way through evolving stories. It invites the public to engage and weave through the presented elements by reading books, listening to music and watching films. On select days, the *Blue Salon* will be activated in the course of the *Blau Machen* series (a German expression for skipping work/school), hosting workshops, roundtable talks and music and film nights.

Amira Gad (Guest Curator *Blue Times*, Exhibitions Curator at the Serpentine Galleries, London) and
Nicolaus Schafhausen (Director, Kunsthalle Wien)

Saâdane Afif

* 1970 in Vendôme, lives in Berlin

Blue Time (Poster), 2014
Three-colour screen-print on paper
142.5 x 96 cm
Courtesy the artist and Galerie Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin, Xavier Hufkens, Brussels and Raeber von Stenglin, Zurich

Saâdane Afif's work often revolves around interpretation, appropriation, exchange and circulation. He utilises a wide variety of media including performance, sculpture, text, sound and poster making, that he sometimes combines to create complex constellations. These change according to the contexts of creation and of reception: his works can manifest themselves either as pure ideas or artefacts realised by the artist or other people from inside or outside the art world. The exhibition is the pretext for the production and activation of a selected avatar of his polymorphous artwork.

For *Blue Times*, the artist has produced a unique silk-screen poster that is part of a larger series using the same elements: the exhibition title, the art institution's name, the dates of the exhibition and the announcement of a performance.
The *Blue Time* poster serves as a save the date for a concert-like performance that will take place during the exhibition's closing

weekend, Saturday, January 10, 2015. A group of musicians will perform "Blue Time" lyrics commissioned by Afif and written by other artists and friends such as Lili Reynaud-Dewar and Maria Loboda.

Billy Apple

* 1935 in Auckland, lives in Auckland

BLUE CHIP, 2014
Paint on wooden plinth, plexiglass
100 x 61.8 x 61.8 cm
Courtesy the artist

Billy Appletini, 2008
Cocktail recipe printed on postcard and print on canvas
150 x 65 cm
Courtesy the artist

The Billy Apple brand turned 52 this year: in 1962, the artist changed his name, thus forging his artistic identity through a conceptual self-branding exercise, to programmatically remove the arbitrary distinction between art and life, between concept and fact, between art and advertisement. For *Blue Times* a big blue plinth in the exhibition space supports an empty cap of the same size and bears on each side the words "BLUE CHIP" – branded like an advertisement. A "Blue chip" is the highest-value poker chip, carrying with it a sense of top-drawer pleasure and risk, as well as a very high-quality investment involving a lower-than-average risk of loss of principal or a reduction in income. Apple extrapolates these meanings to the art world and its commercialisation, letting the art-value machinery run on empty, potentially ad infinitum.

Billy Apple often treats exhibition ephemera as art, dissolving the high and low distinction and incorporating the whole spatial and economic environment around the exhibition in his practice and into the exhibition space. For *Blue Times* the artist makes use of the Kunsthalle Wien shop in order to display *Billy Appletini*, a cocktail of his invention, its corresponding canvas advertisement sign as well as postcards revealing its recipe, free to take. The cocktail will be served during the opening night and at some special events during the exhibition, extending the actualisation of the artwork in different ways.

Nadia Belerique

* 1982 in Toronto, lives in Toronto

The Counselor, 2014
Inkjet print on coroplast
172.7 x 68.6 cm and 182.9 x 78.7 cm
Courtesy the artist

Nadia Belerique's *The Counselor* consists of two life-size cardboard cut-outs, standing in front of each other, like the standees one can find in cinema halls, featuring film stars. These ones are featuring Deanna Troi, the ship's councelor (or even the super-therapist of blue moods) aboard the Starfleet starships Enterprise from the famous science fiction television series *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Belerique's installations play with different modes of representation and presentation to investigate how our perception and understanding of contemporary reality is influenced by images and other codes – especially the ones coming from mainstream cultural production. She provokes the performativity of objects, photographs, objects in photographs and photographs in objects by playing with different shooting angles, with positive and negative, with front and back, with figure and material, and with formal repetition, to create both curiosity and disorientation. The artist's works, even if they look simple and low-fi, are complex constructions, that defy the photographic medium and

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question the very ability of any medium to convey a 'feeling' of reality, and undermine the tricks used. The blue screen, for instance, is a special-effects process used in film, television, video and, more recently, in the world of computers to create the illusion of a background. Science fiction space operas like *Star Trek* used these technologies often and, ironically enough, the Deanna Troi cut-outs recall in absentia the wonderful backdrops of *Star Trek*.

Irma Blank

* 1934 in Celle, lives in Milan

Eigenschriften, Pagina A-31, 1970
Pastel on paper
70 x 50 cm
Courtesy the artist and P420, Bologna

Radical Writings, Schrift-Atem-Bild, 18-1-93, 1993
Oil on canvas, diptych
90 x 60 cm each, 90 x 120 cm overall
Courtesy the artist and P420, Bologna

For this exhibition, Irma Blank presents two works from two different cycles. The works from the first cycle, *Eigenschriften*, are mainly done with pastel on paper in colours most commonly associated with writing: blue, black and red. Here, the inscribed signs on paper record a manual tracing full of variations and flaws. The slender lines of these works remind us of a page of text but it is a page that bears an incomprehensible language. Blank's practice alludes to the exercise and space of writing, but detaches itself from any claim to meaning; it is a writing prior to its encoding in language, an utterly self-referential sign. It makes no sense, but if anything it is a pure 'sense,' pure sensation transmitted from the hand to the surface, from the body to the work, like the tracing of a seismograph.

With the *Radical Writings* series (produced from the early 1980s to the early 1990s), Blank makes her sign even more abstract, clarifying its relationship with time. The inscribed marks of colour (first rose-violet, then blue) made with a brush on canvas are linear and uniform. Blank literally paints 'in one breath,' with absolute concentration and without hesitation. Here, writing is breathing, painting is breathing, working is living. Each mark, in fact, is the length of one breath, from left to right, from beginning to end, from emptiness to fullness. At the start of the stroke the colour is more intense, and the combination of the two panels of the diptych generates a shadow zone that still references, though in a less imitative form, the space of the book. Writing and painting blend here in the continuity of a time-sign.

Irma Blank's artworks, in her own words, "give autonomy back to the sign, to the body of writing in order to give voice to the silence, to the void" and attempt to relink writing to being and not to knowing.

Edith Dekyndt

* 1960 in Ypres, lives in Tournai

Something Blue, 1996–2011
Disc player and demineralised water
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

Edith Dekyndt's art is at the crossroads between science and daily life and is nurtured by small details, micro phenomena and invisible things she manifests and makes remarkable. The installation *Something Blue* invites us to listen to the silence of water. The needle of a turntable penetrates the liquid surface and carves a random groove. Driven by this dynamic search of evasion and observation, this work is based on a meticulous reflection on the physical

world as well as a poetic consideration of the passing of time, in the moment of the contemplation of the work, as well as in its 'preparation' for the audience: each morning the evaporated liquid needs to be replenished, turning the pragmatic production of a work into a gesture of care.

From September 8th until November 8th, 2014, Edith Dekyndt presents the new installation *Devil is in the details* in the shop window of Swarovski Wien at Kärntner Straße 24, the result of a collaboration between Kunsthalle Wien and Swarovski Wien. With a certain edginess, Dekyndt's shiny black flag offers an ambivalent statement in times of fetishised transparency: cut out from deep, dark, metallic, woven fabric usually used to make jewellery, the flag contaminates a space of appearance, ornament and luxury with its association of death, darkness, fear and anarchy and absorbs it through its heavy stare.

Simon Denny

* 1982 in Auckland, lives in Berlin

Frankfurt Declaration Memorial Paels 2 (Kempinski Gravenbruch), 2014
Oil on canvas and print on plexiglass
280 x 200 cm
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Cologne/Berlin

Simon Denny's installations reinterpret icons of the contemporary tech economy, on cultural as well as political and economical levels, through exhibitions that bring together objects and images from many different sources around a theme. For *Blue Times*, Denny develops an extension of *New Management*, a project he first presented in summer 2014 at Portikus. He investigates international corporate culture and the tendency towards monopolistic domination, the inclusion of nationalistic views in global projects and to ever growing

market expansion by using a "global, material language of corporate pride and self-representation". The title of Denny's project refers to a legendary speech delivered in 1993 by Lee Kun-hee, chairman of the Samsung Group, in Frankfurt, known as the seminal declaration of their "New Management" principle. This philosophy emphasised the need to aggressively globalise production and management in order to turn Samsung into a world market leader. Retelling and recontextualising the legend, Denny highlights its currency and raises general questions about globalism and economic influence in politics.

Sylvie Fleury

* 1961 in Geneva, lives in Geneva

Color Lab – white neon study blue, 2012
Neon, transformers
100 x 150 cm (square form)
and 12 x 315 cm (neon text)
Courtesy Mehdi Chouakri, Berlin

Sylvie Fleury is known for her mise-en-scène mixing glamour, fashion and luxury products in spectacular and shiny installations. Although at first glance her works may seem like an affirmation of consumer society and its values, on closer inspection a more subtle commentary on superficial beauty and dictatorship through collective taste becomes apparent. The two-part neon installation *Color Lab – white neon study blue* features a geometric figure of interleaved squares recalling the work of Josef Albers and a neon text reading: "Do not think of the color blue for thirty seconds". Of course, the instruction provokes the opposite of the intended effect: one cannot stop thinking of the colour blue. Using branding strategy in an ironic way, Fleury both celebrates and criticises our status as either consumers influenced through marketing

and fashion, or as artists influenced through dominant artistic legacies such as conceptual and minimal art – where blue, as one of the primary colours, played an important role. As such, Fleury adopts branding strategies that play with consumerist expectations or anticipations. *White neon study blue* is part of a larger body of works, *Color Lab*, which deals with the artist's interest in Bauhaus colour theories from the early twentieth century.

Peter Friedl

* 1960 in Oberneukirchen, lives in Berlin

Ohne Titel, 1990
Natural resin paint on wood
Three parts, 100 x 200 cm each
Courtesy Christine König Galerie, Vienna

Three wooden plates painted with blue natural resin paint, shining very differently according to the lighting angle, constitute the untitled work by Peter Friedl presented in *Blue Times*. Friedl's high conceptual oeuvre investigates the forms power can take, politically, socially and culturally and the representation and aesthetics it develops to maintain itself. Each artwork can be seen as an attempt to give an answer to a specific problem related to these issues, being at the same time self-critical about the very ability of an artwork to visually convey complex ideas and to dissolve aesthetical categories. Therefore, Friedl pushes the boundaries of the conditions and genres of representation, using strategies of bracketing, exposing, editing and other contextual transfers. His artistic practice emphasises the friction between aesthetic and political awareness in the framework of their respective narratives. Throughout his artistic practice lies a deep concern about the language of what remains outside or excluded from hegemonic symbolic systems.

The complete work *Ohne Titel* consists of six plates (from which three are presented here) out of a special kind of wood, cut at a special time of the lunar calendar, stored to adjust to the atmospheric conditions and then finally covered by natural resin paint. The work reflects and slightly shifts Rudolf Steiner's vision of a new cooperation between crafts/handwork, manual training, spiritual understanding and artistic feeling to design education rooms as well as our everyday surroundings. With his organic functionalism, he intended the human soul and body to be harmoniously connected with its environment. Meticulously applying Rudolf Steiner's principles to create quite a hermetic, abstract, monochromatic and apparently autonomous work, Friedl leaves spectators to their own devices when confronting this conceptual and experiential autonomy.

Ryan Gander

* 1976 in Chester, lives in London

Imagineering, 2013
HD projection, stereo sound
1 min 8 sec
Courtesy Lisson Gallery, London

Ryan Gander's works are about the deconstruction and disclosure of narrative strategies, and take their origin from a precise research process. While they remain firmly connected to a conceptual logic, they can take every possible form. Still, Gander's works always provide snippets of lived experience, referring to various fields of knowledge, clichés, art history, the art world, the realm of creative industries and the media, and create a perpetual movement into which the spectator can slide.

For *Imagineering*, Ryan Gander commissioned the advertising agency Kirke and Hodgson to write and produce a TV advertisement and a series of

posters to promote "Imagineering" – a pretend initiative by the government's Department of Business, Innovation and Skills. "Imagineering", a combination of "imagine" and "engineering" – which automatically recalls Walt Disney's slogan – aims to encourage the public to nurture their imaginations and re-acquire a sense of childhood wonder in order to, as the advertisement says, "create a better future". Supported by precise editing and an effective soundtrack, as well as by wonderful images in which blue is one of the dominant colours associated with endless dreams and infinite possibilities, one almost falls into the trap. "Spectators have to share my belief and they have to suppress their disbelief to be able to engage with the works. So maybe people that already come in with a stigma won't get anything from it. So if there is a critique, maybe it's a critique of a bad spectator" (Ryan Gander).

Liam Gillick

* 1964 in Aylesbury, lives in New York City and London

Margin Time, 2012
HD video, sound
24 min 43 sec
Courtesy the artist

Renovation Filter Lobby, 2000
Wall painting
20 x 4.5 m
Courtesy the artist

For *Blue Times*, Liam Gillick presents two works: the video *Margin Time* and a mural painting. The mural features an arabesque of repeated and interlaced forms derived from the ancient Greek pattern meander, in blue and white. Gillick is in fact not interested in colour and form as such but rather in their status as relics of modernist art theory and claims for universality. Colour is here deployed in relation to form

to demonstrate the futility of these ideas, while at the same time clearly falling victim to them. *Margin Time*, on the other hand, considers three specific sites of power in a form that deconstructs specific approaches from science fiction from the 1960s and 1970s – specifically the writings of Stanislaw Lem (*Solaris*) and Christopher Priest (*The Inverted World*). Gillick filmed, on a daily basis over a period of a few weeks, workers arriving to construct a temporary building on the site of the United Nations Headquarters sculpture gardens in New York. The film also takes in the adjacent Roosevelt Island master plan for middle-class modern housing and shopping arcades by Philip Johnson and the recently completed F.D. Roosevelt monument by Louis Kahn at the tip of Roosevelt Island. These three sites are linked by a cable-car shuttle. The film is a narrated series of shots that develops a revised language that reconsiders representations of power, memorial, connections, renovation and the temporary displacement of bureaucracy. Within the context of *Blue Times*, Gillick's video work draws loose connections with the UN's predominantly blue logo as well as forming a parallel with Remco Torenbosch's *EU* installation and Hito Steyerl's *Universal Embassy* video work.

Derek Jarman

* 1942 in Northwood; † 1994 in London

Blue, 1993
35 mm film transferred to digital file, colour, Dolby SR
75 min
Courtesy Basilisk Communications Ltd

Look left
Look down
Look up
Look right

Blue flashes in my eyes

Blue bottle buzzing
Lazy days
The sky blue butterfly
Sways on the cornflower
Lost in the warmth
Of the blue heat haze
Singing the blues
Quiet and slowly

Blue of my heart
Blue of my dreams
Slow blue love
Of delphinium days
Blue is the universal love in which man
bathes – it is the terrestrial paradise.
– Excerpts from *Blue* (1993)

Filmmaker, writer, visual artist and activist
Derek Jarman created an eclectic work
mirroring his own fluid identity, between
a past caught between glamour and
apocalypse, the freedom of future utopia
and the weight of a too-heavy present.
When he released *Blue*, his most personal
and innovative film, Jarman was unable to
see blue anymore due to his HIV medication.
For him, blue was a filter 'in absentia.'
Consisting of a monochrome blue image
accompanied by a compelling soundtrack
and the voice of the artist himself reading a
fragmentary text, combining poetry, theory
and storytelling, the film magically unrolls a
new landscape, beyond the visual.

Toril Johannessen

* 1978 in Harstadt, lives in Bergen

Words and Years – Logic and Love in Art, 2010
Silkscreen print
76 x 56 cm, 83.4 x 63.4 cm framed
Courtesy the artist

*Words and Years – Hope and Reality in
Political Science*, 2010
Silkscreen print
76 x 56 cm, 83.4 x 63.4 cm framed
Courtesy the artist

Toril Johannessen's series is an inquiry
into how the zeitgeist is reflected in
language by the use of certain words and
how unseen trends are reflected through
editorial tendencies. Going through the
complete volumes of particular academic
journals and news magazines from the
first issues until today, the artist selects
resonant and contentious words and
maps the frequency of their use in elegant
scratch graphs. Johannessen's work
is concerned with decentring scientific
knowledge by forcing exchanges
between disparate fields and concepts,
drawing poetic correlations for instance
between the natural and the economic,
hence suggesting abstracted and elastic
historical narratives. At the same time,
the graphs uncover a certain ambivalent
truth, ironic and sincere, illustrative and
narrative, rational and fictional. For *Blue
Times*, Johannessen selects two silk
screens from the series: *Hope and Reality
in Political Science* from the magazine
Political Science and *Logic and Love in Art*
taken from the *Art Newspaper*.

Chris Kabel

*** 1975 in Bloemendaal, lives in
Amsterdam**

Coral Vase, 2005
Porcelain, glaze painting (by artist José
den Hartog)
30 x 16 x 16 cm
Courtesy the artist

Blue Sky Lamp, 2014
LED, resin
60 cm diameter
Courtesy the artist

Designer Chris Kabel combines the
conceptual side of a design with the
practical aspect, developing new
materials, smart technical solutions or
using common elements or forms in a

surprising way. He draws his aesthetics from experiments with materials and techniques and not from a superimposition of functions or stories. Within *Blue Times*, he presents two works: *Coral Vase* is a hand-painted vase that continues, in drawings, the flowers placed in the vessel. The vase reflects on a history of the Delft Blue and porcelain vases produced in China as well as drawing a parallel with Raed Yassin's work *China* though the field of design. The second work, *Blue Sky Lamp*, his most recent design, is a lamp that recreates the light quality of a sunny day. The blue colour of the lamp is caused by exactly the same physical effect that happens when light from the sun enters the earth's atmosphere. Special particles in the resin diffuse the cold light of the power LED and disperse the blue light waves, leaving the orange waves intact. Originally conceived for the *Winter Anti Depression Show* at Marres (Maastricht, the Netherlands), the lamp was intended to make people happier as it is scientifically proven that light with this particular blue hue brightens people's moods.

Tobias Kaspar

* 1984 in Basel, lives in Berlin

Lumpy Blue Sweater, 2010
Series of 18 framed photographs, C-print, screen-printed text, mannequin, blue sweater, booklet
Each framed photograph 46 x 33 cm
installation dimension variable
Courtesy Silberkuppe, Berlin

Tobias Kaspar is an artist and publisher investigating social dynamics and norms, the creation and circulation of symbolic value, and the relation between the different fields of cultural production, high and low, hermetic and commercial, old and new. Playing with appropriation and variations around heteroclite

imagery taken from modernist art history, pop and institutional critique, but also driven by fashion imagery, his works are constellations of juxtaposed elements, seemingly fragmentary, subtly related to each other through the formal use of colour and thematic references, that are at once seductive and disturbing.

Riffing off ideas of labour and its symbolisms epitomised by blue jeans, Tobias Kaspar's *Lumpy Blue Sweater* looks at cycles of the fashion industry and the reception of trends. The installation consists of a half-naked white PVC mannequin wearing only a blue sweater, a booklet attached to its backside, and a series of 18 framed photographs. The booklet is a combination between an artist's book, a fashion designer's sketchbook and a manufacturer's brochure featuring drawings of body dynamics and abstract outlines of pieces of clothing, as well as a photograph. The framed works show close-ups of this photograph featuring a woman bearing a *Barre de bois rond* by André Cadere. The legends in the pictures are taken from the chapter headings of Guy de Maupassant's *Bel Ami*, and enumerate social ladder climbing (undergone in the novel by an incompetent journalist). The vinyl wall text is an excerpt from a monologue by Miranda Priestly from the film *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006). She explains the cycles of the fashion industry from the original design of "cerulean gowns" to the department store's "lumpy blue sweaters", highlighting the fact that everything leads back to the system it originally comes from: ideas, jobs, clothing. Linking the fashion world's staging strategies with institutional critique (André Cadere), Kaspar establishes a rupture within standard mediation mechanisms and compels the viewer to enter a self-reflexive and productive participation in the meaning of the work.

Yves Klein

* 1928 in Nice; † 1962 in Paris

Monochrome Bleu, 1961
Pigment on molino on chipboard
72 x 54 cm, 90 x 71 x 7.5 cm framed
Collection mumok - museum moderner
kunst stiftung ludwig wien, Vienna

French artist Yves Klein's famous International Klein Blue (IKB), which shifted the discourses of the authenticity of the pure idea and the validation of art as creation, is here a reference to a key art-historical moment in the impact of the colour blue. From 1947 onwards, the artists created nearly 200 blue monochrome paintings, considering them to be a way of rejecting the idea of representation in painting and of attaining creative freedom. The early paintings have an uneven surface, whereas later ones, such as the work presented here, are fine and uniform in texture. IKB is a distinctive ultramarine that Klein registered as a trademark colour in 1957. He considered that this colour had a quality close to pure space and he associated it with immaterial values beyond what can be seen or touched. To obtain this shade, the artist first stretched his canvas or cotton scrim over a wooden backing, which had been treated with casein to assist the adherence of the paint that was then applied with a roller. Klein used an industrial blue paint, similar to gouache, which he mixed with a highly volatile fixative. When the paint dried, the pigment appeared to hover above the surface of the canvas, creating a rich velvety texture and an unusual appearance of depth. Many of Klein's artistic activities, such as selling zones of 'immaterial' space for the price of gold, or producing monochrome paintings, oscillate between spiritualism and commercialism. Like other artists of the Nouveau Réalisme movement in France, Klein's practice was strongly influenced by the originality, irreverence and wit of the French artist Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968). As a way of delineating layers of historical time, Klein's monochrome painting is displayed on the mural *Renovation Filter Lobby* by artist Liam Gillick.

Walt Kuhn

* 1877 in New York City; † 1949 in New York City

Blueprint of Armory Show Floorplan, 1912–1913
Facsimile of a blueprint
24 x 32 cm
Walt Kuhn Family papers and Armory Show records, 1859–1978
Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution

The Walt Kuhn Family papers and Armory Show records date from between 1859 and 1978, with the bulk of material dating from between 1900 and 1949. The papers contain records of the legendary Armory Show of 1913, also known as the International Exhibition of Modern Art, which introduced modern European painting and sculpture to the American public. As the secretary of the Association of American Painters and Sculptors (AAPS), and as the selector of European works included in the show, artist Walt Kuhn was heavily involved in the conception, organisation and production of the Armory Show. Records in this series document the exhibition, including the selection of artworks in Europe and the US, selection of venues, negotiation of contracts, production of the exhibitions, publicity, promotion, sales and the wide array of responses to the exhibitions in New York, Chicago and Boston. Interestingly enough,

exhibition floor plans were made with the blueprint technique up until the 1920's. The exhibition features an inkjet print of the original blueprint floor plan of the legendary show, at the time produced with a simple tool, which now assumes an artistic aura.

Edgar Leciejewski

* 1977 in Berlin, lives in Leipzig

Pictures, 2014
564 found images, digital photo frame
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

Edgar Leciejewski's work investigates the different social, political and scientific uses of photography to find out if and how this medium can challenge contemporary issues and how old and new media influence our understandings of and actions within the social realm. Communication and codes of perception are at the core of his practice. At the same time, his works constantly reflect his own authorship and power as an artist, always opening up reception rather than directing it in a didactic way. In the last years, he amassed a huge archive made of found and new materials he uses to develop his work. For *Blue Times*, he created a new series made of material taken from the web, featuring a wide range of events and situations, in public and private spaces, in different regions of the world and different contexts, where colours, flags, slogans and emblems are used. The pictures frieze highly emotional political demonstration moments, TV screens showing heads of states delivering speeches or crowded streets with huge electoral posters. In the series, well-known faces like those of Barack Obama,

Ayatollah Khomeini, Vladimir Putin, Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and many more alternate with the anonymous mass, supporting or contesting them. All the pictures uncover the representation of politics and the politics of representation and show how this imagery can be appropriated by the people.

Goshka Macuga

* 1967 in Warsaw, lives in London

On the Nature of the Beast, 2009
Tapestry
290 x 560 cm
Collection M HKA, Collection Flemish Community, Antwerp

Goshka Macuga's artistic practice often uses art history as a point of departure to explore wider themes, such as the nature of collaboration between different people or groups. Her work tends to begin with research related to the places where she is exhibiting, providing her with a seed or backdrop from which to develop a series of narratives that intertwine her research in a site- or context-specific manner. In 2009, she was invited by the Whitechapel Gallery (London) to produce the first commission for their expanded exhibition space. This invitation allowed her to dive into the history of the gallery since its inauguration in 1901, and she discovered, through the gallery's archive, that Pablo Picasso's famous *Guernica* (1937) was shown at the gallery in 1939. This finally resulted in Macuga's large-scale tapestry *On the Nature of the Beast*.

Picasso's *Guernica* was commissioned for the Spanish Pavilion at the International Exhibition in Paris in 1937, just before the outbreak of World War II. The spirit of the time was manifested through major architectural undertakings such as the German Pavilion that

promoted fascism and the Russian Pavilion that promoted communism. The Spanish Pavilion's goal was specifically to celebrate the Republic's social programmes, particularly those in agriculture and education, and to bring worldwide attention to the suffering of the Spanish people in the civil war. At the time of its presentation in London, *Guernica* had a growing reputation for commemorating the aerial destruction of the Basque town of Gernika by the Nazis and Italians and the exhibition took place two years after a notorious battle between local residents in Whitechapel and Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts. In addition to this presentation at the Whitechapel Gallery, Picasso's painting had also been installed in the UN building, where the image of *Guernica* had functioned as a backdrop for democratic discussion. In 2003 at the UN, this tapestry was covered with blue cloth for Colin Powell's address to the UN Security Council before the invasion of Iraq.

Macuga's *On the Nature of the Beast* is a tapestry that weaves layers of historical narrative using Picasso's *Guernica* as its backdrop.The title of the work refers to the destructive, inevitable repetition of events, emphasizing the pattern that emerges from history repeating itself. It also plays on the mythology of Picasso's erotic intensity and the symbols he used like the Minotaur and the bullfighter. This 'mise en abyme' also collates a found photograph of Clement Attlee, the then leader of the opposition Labour party, giving a speech on a platform with Picasso's painting as a backdrop. Through her work, Macuga puts us in front of a fait accompli, inviting us to piece together different fragments of history and asking us as viewers to actively engage by raising our awareness of the gravity of the subject matter at hand and calling for a sense of commemoration. Indeed, as Macuga puts it in an interview with Anthony Spira published by the

Whitechapel Gallery (2009): "It sometimes seems that we have become passive observers stuck in a Kafka-esque reality".

Jonathan Monk

* 1969 in Leicester, lives in Berlin

The World in Workwear, 2011
Diverse fabrics
156 x 197.5 cm
Collection Frédéric de Goldschmidt, Brussels

Jonathan Monk adopts the aesthetics and practices of 1960s conceptualism, but infuses the tradition with humour, levity and autobiographical elements. Monk's textile work *The World in Workwear* illustrates a map of the world's nations through a patchwork of common workwear fabrics. The presented work itself is part of a series on which Monk has been consistently working since 2011. By using common clothes such as blue jeans, printed shirts or handkerchiefs, parts of dungarees as well as high-visibility vests, Monk inverts the invisibility of workers and maintenance agents in the social realm. By using only a few fabrics he focuses on globalisation and resemblances more than on differences and individuality: *The World in Workwear* is a symbolic map without the attempt to adopt any form of scientific research. A typical worker's fabric (cotton used for dungarees or jeans) serves as the map's background and symbolically represents workers as the base of our complex world economy. Monk's artwork draws from the history of the blue jeans as a uniform for labour, and reflects on notions of globalised labour through today's clothing and textiles. Moreover, he is also referring to the globalised fashion industry – recalling the issue of exploitative outsourced production in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, a manufacturing system enacted under terrible working conditions.

Alex Morrison

* 1972 in Redruth, lives in Vancouver and Düsseldorf

A Kernel Of Doubt In The Mind Of The Banqueter Walking Home Under Gaslit Dark, 2011
Steel, aluminium, perspex, paint, neon components
93 x 65 cm (lamp), 184 cm (metal structure length)
Courtesy the artist and Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam

Alex Morrison explores themes of activism, domestic architecture and urban space through an analysis of the gap between authentic experience and aesthetic projection. His artistic practice deals with both private and public spaces – their function, occupation, extension and interaction, that is, their complex relation under political and economical determination. More recently, his work has referenced the revival of craft ethics that took place at the height of modernism. Through an awareness of the political efficacy of folk vernaculars, the artist aims to reactivate their subversive potential. Morrison shows that the narrative of endless progress through technical rationalisation does not guarantee an improvement of our ethics and often collides with the irrational, archaic and regressive. His early works, which documented the skate and punk culture that he is familiar with, attempted to epitomise this paradox.

For *Blue Times*, Morrison presents an outdoor lamp that resembles an old gaslight, titled *A Kernel Of Doubt In The Mind Of The Banqueter Walking Home Under Gaslit Dark*. The glass in the lantern is alternately blue and white, referring to the symbol used on the UNESCO heritage label: a blue and white shield. This label aims to protect important monuments or objects of cultural value from destruction even in times of armed conflict. It refers not only to a conflict between past and present, but also to protection against anti-cultural or anti-intellectual tendencies. The "kernel of doubt" of the work's title suggests that the route society has chosen to take might not be the best one.

Otto Neurath

* 1882 in Vienna; † 1945 in Oxford

Gesellschaftsgliederung in Wien, 1930
Lithograph
45.5 x 30.3 cm
Herausgeber Österreichisches Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftsmuseum
Verlag Bibliographisches Institut AG., Leipzig Collection
MAK-Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst/Gegenwartskunst, Vienna

Otto Neurath was a philosopher and social theorist best known for his work published in the journal *Erkenntnis* [Knowledge], which eventually evolved into the project "Social and Economic Museum". The project aimed to communicate the complex relationship between economics and the social to the Viennese public and became known as the "Vienna Method". The Vienna Method consists of pictorial statistics whereby graphic design is used as a (visual education) tool for raising mass awareness, eventually leading to social change. The pictorial statistics developed by Neurath present a complex combination of the socio-economic facts of the time in a readily comprehensible form. Within *Blue Times*, Neurath's main works highlight the presence of blue-collar workers and his pictorial representations showcase the clothing

of workers, which is dominated by the colour blue. As a parallel with Toril Johannessen's works *Hope and Reality in Political Science* and *Logic and Love in Art*, both Neurath and Johannessen highlight historical facts in statistical forms, albeit activated for different purposes and leading to very different aesthetic results, and make visible the diversity of art and the differentiation in aesthetics and approaches throughout the last century.

Wendelien van Oldenborgh

* 1962 in Rotterdam, lives in Rotterdam

Après la Reprise, la Prise, 2009
Slide projection in architectural setting, three slide projectors, synchronised sound and subtitles in English, separately projected
Loop, 15 min
Collection Generali Foundation, Vienna

Wendelien van Oldenborgh's films take a look at how public spheres influence our social behaviour. *Après la Reprise, la Prise* is the first in the artist's trilogy of slide works that also includes: *Pertinho de Alphaville (So Close to Alphaville)* (2010) and *Supposing I love you. And you also love me* (2011). This latter work is actually an entr'acte, as the official third part of the trilogy is *Bete & Deise* (2012–). In the 15 minute slide work *Après la Reprise, la Prise*, Van Oldenborgh takes as her point of departure the conditions of contemporary labour, and the artist combines three seemingly divergent themes: manual labour, women and the production of culture. The film is made in collaboration with a group of women who were formerly assembly-line workers at a Levi's jeans factory in Belgium, which closed around the same

time as the Renault factory in Vilvoorde. However, the women have found new roles as actresses after transforming their experience into a theatre production. For this slide piece they share their stories with students from the Royal Technical Atheneum of Mechelen. The challenge for the viewer is not to only understand the industrial and demographic shifts through the women's personal stories, but to be confronted with the emotions they reveal.

Prinz Gholam

Wolfgang Prinz (* 1969 in Leutkirch, lives in Berlin) and Michel Gholam (* 1963 in Beirut, lives in Berlin) have worked together as Prinz Gholam since 2001.

Gitarre, 2014
Guitar, wall mount, embedded video with sound played with Samsung Galaxy Tab3
94 x 35 x 12 cm (guitar), 18.8 x 11.1 cm (tablet)
16 min 52 sec
Courtesy Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris

The artist duo Prinz Gholam utilises body language that has been constructed by centuries of social gestures and cultural codes. They question the way we experience, appropriate and transform the world we live in through images, sound and other gestures and try to find through their performative practice new 'anarchistic' imagery. Their installation *Gitarre* [Guitar] consists of a real guitar ornamented with children's stickers and containing a tablet showing the two artists performing, embracing, rolling on the ground and sometimes mimicking well-known poses from paintings and films. The guitar recalls the universes of teenagers feeling blue, of famous and unknown blues musicians on the road, and symbolises a pure nomadic creation, freed from any rule or genre.

Walid Raad

*** 1967 in Chbanieh, lives in
New York City**

Secrets in the Open Sea, 1994–2004
Plate 016-021
Inkjet prints, six plates, vinyl
111 x 178 cm each
Secrets in the Open Sea is a project by
The Atlas Group and Walid Raad.
Courtesy Sfeir-Semler Gallery, Beirut/
Hamburg

Walid Raad's works offer a radical
counterpart to the contemporary
obsession with visual documentation,
and refuse – most of the time – any
differentiation between truth and
imagination. *Secrets in the Open Sea*
is a conceptual work consisting of six
photographic prints in different shades
of blue. The wall text accompanying
the work, tells a story of pain, fear and
forgetting behind the abstract images.
Raad explains that a series of 29 blue
prints, which were found buried under
rubble during the 1992 demolition
of Beirut's war-ravaged commercial
districts, were handed over to the artist
and The Atlas Group for preservation
and analysis in 1994. Two years later,
The Atlas Group sent six of the prints
to a French laboratory for a detailed
technical analysis. In the process of
chemical detection, small latent black
and white images were recovered from
the blue prints. The found images portray
small groups of men and women. After
embarking on an intense research
process, The Atlas Group was able to
identify all the individuals, and discovered
that they all drowned, died or were
found dead in the Mediterranean Sea
between 1975 and 1991. *Secrets in the
Open Sea* is neither true nor fictional
and thereby gives an idea of how history
is constructed and influenced by visual
media. Never free of "ghosts" – a term
used by Derrida to describe the fictive
moments that appear in our memories
– history is being shaped, changed and
constantly rewritten.

Mark Raidpere

* 1975 in Tallinn, lives in Tallinn

10 Men, 2003
Video, sound, colour
7 min 58 sec
Courtesy the artist and Gallery Michel
Rein, Paris/Brussels

Mark Raidpere's work moves along
the border between being staged and
documented, as if depicting events but
still speaking of a general condition. He
unravels, discreetly but mercilessly, issues
of vulnerability, isolation and the rejection
of the human body. *10 Men* is a video
work depicting ten long-term inmates
at Tartu Prison performing their social,
psychological and physical isolation
on video. The viewer can observe the
men posing: they flex their muscles and
proudly show their tattoos. The camera
reflects on them with great intensity,
but what we see is a fleeting moment
of innocence and fragility: In line with
his ongoing exploration of identity and
solitude throughout his practice, the artist
seems to show us the true essence of the
inmates' souls. Additionally, the use of
montage, slow motion and a low-quality
but sentimental soundtrack supports the
somehow claustrophobic atmosphere. *10
Men* reflects upon the psychological uses
of the word blue to describe emotions and
sentiment. Also in parallel with Lawrence
Weiner's literal and idiomatic use of the
colour within his work *OUT OF THE BLUE*,
Raidpere's video shows us how one could
"feel blue".

Willem de Rooij

* 1969 in Beverwijk, lives in Berlin

Blue, 2012
Polyester thread on wooden stretcher
170 x 170 x 5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

Black, 2012
Polyester thread on wooden stretcher
170 x 170 x 5 cm
Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

De Rijke / De Rooij

Jeroen de Rijke (* 1970 in Brouwershaven; † 2006 in Takoradi) and Willem de Rooij (* 1969 in Beverwijk, lives in Berlin) worked as an artist duo from 1994.

Orange, 2004
Sequence of 81 35 mm colour slides, soundproof box, projector
56 x 56 x 50 cm (box)
Courtesy Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/ Cologne

The artist duo De Rijke / De Rooij's artworks refuse visual referentiality and at the same time are still subordinated to it. *Orange* consists of a series of 81 monochrome slides, projected in succession on a white wall and accompanied by a referential wall text. This installation points to the difficulties of constructing meaning through images. It oscillates between ambiguity and criticality, deconstruction and the construction of meaning, but also between the abstract and the literal: on the one hand the reference for the slide works is seemingly abstracted from meaning and then further reconstructed through the accompanying text. However, one could also emphasise the power of images in inciting the viewer to go further in gaining an understanding of the work.

The wall text is part commentary and part travesty of the conventional wall texts or explanations provided by art institutions and the processes of legitimising and marketing misunderstandings. As such, the installation is a criticism of the status quo of current contemporary art production that attempts to legitimise its endeavours through such means.

As a parallel, Willem de Rooij presents a more recent work comprising of a set of two weavings, titled *Black* and *Blue*. These works are in reality exactly the same, they are made of a woof of ten shades of black and a weft made of ten shades of blue. One is however turned 45 degrees so that the light hits the threads in another way, making it appear slightly different.

Pamela Rosenkranz

* 1979 in Bern, lives in Zurich

[Title TK], 2014
Five PET bottles, silicon, pigment, plexiglas cabs, wooden plinths
118 x 75 x 50 cm each
Courtesy Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York City and Karma International, Zurich

Recent scientific experiments have demonstrated that our perception of colour is a result of evolution. Pamela Rosenkranz investigates how such ideas undermine artistic production as such. In her work, plastic Evian water bottles are filled with a silicon mass resembling water. Silicone is used in the film industry for special effects. Each of the five bottles features a slightly different bluish hue. In an interview earlier this year, Rosenkranz describes her work: "[In] bottled water, there are particles that make plastics smoother that go into the drain system and back into rivers and oceans. This contamination has effects on

human hormonal balance: by mimicking estrogens, these chemicals are most likely responsible for girls menstruating earlier and boys growing less hair, alongside other more complicated consequences. This water looks pure and wet but is in fact soaked with human influence". In her work the combinations of product and idea, surface and volume, skin and water, culminate in an abstract portrait of the human body in a bottle.

Julia Scher

* 1954 in Hollywood, lives in New York City

Security by Julia, Blue Chase Scene, 1988
Video shot on Betamix tape, NTSC, 4:3
12 min 25 sec
Courtesy the artist

Julia Scher creates web, installation and performance works, sometimes interactive, that explore issues of power, control and seduction. She was one of the first artists to systematically investigate technology and its interaction with society and to critically engage electronic security, surveillance issues and the pervasive and ubiquitous obsession with these forms in Western society. The *Security by Julia* series began in 1988 as filmic fictions staging the pink-uniformed personnel of Scher's fictive eponymous company, equipped with the latest in surveillance technology. Each short scene satirises a society in which electronic monitoring has become an increasingly familiar, paranoia-inducing experience, invading personal freedom within the public realm. Ironically installed on a monitor in the shop of Kunsthalle Wien, Julia Scher's *The Blue Chase Scene* is a bluish video of a chase in a theatre hall, between two barely recognisable people, not recorded by a surveillance camera but by the artist, with a hand-held camera. The original

scenario extended the work into public space: the artist recorded passers-by looking at a video screen, making them believe that a real chase was happening and leading them to run into the building on-site to alert audiences inside.

Société Réaliste

Ferenc Gróf (* 1972 in Pécs, lives in Paris) and Jean Baptiste Naudy (* 1982 in Paris, lives in Paris) have worked together as Société Réaliste since 2004.

EU Green Card Lottery: The Lagos File, 2006–2009
Self-adhesive matt vinyl
491 x 356 cm
Courtesy the artists

Société Réaliste appropriates and distorts communication and visualisation tools used by economic, cultural or political power structures such as maps, emblems, signs, typographies and architectures to critically engage with the biased content they convey as well as the realities they occult. The new visual and spatial language they create by subtly comparing, extrapolating, interpreting, analysing and combining data and systems uncover historical evolutions and contemporary trends and can be seen tools for a free reading of the contemporary world.

In 2008, approximately 14 million people participated in the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (also known as the Green Card Lottery) initiated by the US. Since 1990, every year, the US offers 50,000 green cards that allow permanent residency. It is free to enter the lottery and it is now possible to do it online. Once registered, the candidate requesting immigration simply needs to wait to be selected, randomly, by a computer. If selected, the candidate wins an appointment at the American embassy in their country of residence during which

staff decide whether the person is granted a green card or not. The program's goal is to diversify the geographic provenance of immigrants; all the while the following nationalities, deemed overly represented in the US, are excluded from the program: Mexican, Chinese, Indian, Polish etc. The increasing demand for green cards has enabled the establishment of a parallel economy that makes millions of dollars in profit per year, including fraudulent websites offering fake green cards. As a response to such a flux of immigration controlled by the economy rather than equity, Société Réaliste started an online website in April 2006, that distributes a free European Union version of the green card to each subscriber: *The EU Green Card Lottery* (EUGCL – www.greencard-lottery-eu.org). As a pastiche for a seemingly plausible and official European Union program, it emphasises and is a satire of ideological formations that pretend to have a democratic character when, in reality, they are simply random. For *Blue Times*, Société Réaliste presents a wall-based collage of these EU green cards, highlighting metaphorically that a wall is built between politics and individuals, and that immigration policy exists as an obstacle to reaching true democracy.

Michael Staniak

* 1982 in Melbourne, lives in Melbourne

IMG 980 (Internet Blueprints), 2014
IMG 981 (Internet Blueprints), 2014
IMG 982 (Internet Blueprints), 2014
IMG 983 (Internet Blueprints), 2014
Casting compound and acrylic on board with stainless steel frame
122 x 91.5 cm each
Courtesy Steve Turner Contemporary, Los Angeles

Michael Staniak develops experimental, digital media-inspired casting paintings. The four monochrome works he created for

Blue Times are part of his ongoing series *Internet Blueprints* (2014–) that explores the flattening aspect of digital media on our viewing experience. However, these sleek works do not reveal the physical struggle with which they are produced: Staniak obtains solid and heavy plaster plates by repeatedly wrapping them in cellophane foil. Although the works possess a sense of relief-like form, they still emanate a digitally printed flatness. Moreover, with this series, Staniak focuses on the Internet's most prevalent colour – blue – and frames the works in highly reflective stainless steel. His works refer to the clear dominance of the colour in logos for organisations and social-media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Skype and Vimeo. These companies (and the Internet itself) precisely use the colour blue – recalling ocean, sky and air – because it is psychologically associated with reliability, familiarity and trust and thus potentially seduces online users. Staniak describes himself as an artist whose work is informed by the act of surfing the web and engaging in its aesthetics. The dissolution of the notion of authorship is also part of his practice, as he puts somebody else in charge of naming his works according to a system of numeration. By doing this, his art works are unmoored and start to float around as numbers like the billons of images circulating online.

Hito Steyerl

* 1966 in Munich, lives in Berlin

Universal Embassy, 2004
Mini-DV, sound
4 min
Courtesy the artist

"Art affects […] reality precisely because it is entangled into all of its aspects. It's messy, embedded, troubled, irresistible. We could try to understand its space as a political one instead of trying to represent

a politics that is always happening elsewhere. Art is not outside politics, but politics resides within its production, its distribution, and its reception. If we take this on, we might surpass the plane of a politics of representation and embark on a politics that is there, in front of our eyes, ready to embrace", explains artist Hito Steyerl in an essay from 2010. Looking at the intersection of art and activism in real life, Steyerl's film, *Universal Embassy*, documents an artist/activist project based in the former Somali diplomatic mission in Brussels. The embassy instituted from that project assists *sans-papiers*, undocumented individuals, while questioning the notion of statelessness, borders and universal human rights. Within the context of *Blue Times*, her work refers to the European Union's blue flag as a symbol of longing for unification and peaceful cohabitation. In correspondence to Remco Torenbosch's installation *EU*, the seemingly peaceful blue of the flag emerges as an utopic ideal and as an indicator of an unreachable state.

Derek Sullivan

* 1976 in Richmond Hill, lives in Toronto

Problems That Arise From Continually Confusing Left & Right, 2014
Sculpture (coloured pencil on white wall)
Five wall segments, 200 x 244 cm each
Courtesy the artist and Jessica Bradley Gallery, Toronto

In his artistic practice, Derek Sullivan uses drawing and sculpture, in addition to producing various ephemeral conceptual projects, to reinterpret the familiar and open up new areas of inquiry. Employing formal and textual elements that frequently contradict and alter relationships with one another, Sullivan draws upon overlapping histories of modernist design, abstraction and conceptual art to unsettle notions of meaning and authorship. For *Blue Times*,

Sullivan presents his specially reiterated and adapted installation *Problems That Arise From Continually Confusing Left & Right*. The sculpture imposes on visitors the choice between left and right, a performative path that has connotations to left- and right-wing political parties, also most often symbolised by the colours blue and red. The line Sullivan has drawn on the partition wall in blue and red emphasises this reference, in as much as it draws on the difficulties and limitations of a linear history or the idea of a straightforward political inclination. With his work, Sullivan has created a spatial shift, indicated through the partition wall in the exhibition, attempting to separate the space into areas with different political connotations. By doing this, his work raises the question of the relationship between space and politics.

Walter Swennen

* 1946 in Brussels, lives in Brussels

Super blaue Reiter, 1998
Oil on canvas
170 x 160 x 6 cm
Collection Mu.Zee, Ostende

Walter Swennen's *Super Blaue Reiter* [Super Blue Rider] epitomises the artist's work as a pioneer of the "new painting" of the 1980s, whereby he preferred (as opposed to the expressionist paintings of his contemporaries) precise pictorial treatments that used poetic and humorous means to analyse the relationship between symbols, legibility and meaning. *Super Blaue Reiter* recalls, in a more dynamic way, coats of arms and characterises the colour blue as one of strength and courage. Moreover, Swennen ironically refers to the famous avant-garde movement "Der Blaue Reiter" (1911–1914), constructed around the modern painters Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc. Against the common artistic practice of that time, the group of mostly

Russian emigrants shared the desire to express spiritual truth in their works. 20 years after the movement, Kandinsky wrote that the movement's name was derived from Marc's enthusiasm for horses and Kandinsky's love of riders, combined with a shared love of the colour blue. All these symbols can be found in Swennen's work, which thereby invokes the question of whether new art movements can be established in the contemporary art scene.

Remco Torenbosch

* 1982 in Assen, lives in Rotterdam

EU, 2011–2014
Textiles, official documents lent from the Council of Europe Archives in Strasbourg
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist
Special thanks to the Council of Europe Archives

EU also known as *European contextualizing in analytical sociology and ethnographic representation on history and the present* (2011–2014) by artist Remco Torenbosch features utterances of different blue shades that circulate in the monolithic European Union, presumably symbolising alliance. *EU* is the result of an extensive period of research into the history of the European flag, opening up intriguing discussion on the changing socio-economics of EU nations, the disappearance of once booming textile industries and the strong individual identities of a union in flux. *EU* profiles the documents, design proposals and written correspondence between Arsene Heitz, Paul Levy and further collaborators that would form the painstakingly diplomatic development of an iconic vexillological moment. As part of Torenbosch's research, a collection of fabric monochromes woven by weavers

from all 28 member states of the EU in the base colour of the flag was compiled. These collated monochromes as such become a map of the socio-economic shifts within EU member communities, and an embodiment of the disappearing textile industries of Europe. The diverse shades are meant to subtly evoke the discrepancy between a fictionalised unified Europe and its cracking political reality, and the work culminates with an idea of an utopic European Union.

Lidwien van de Ven

* 1963 in Hulst, lives in Rotterdam

Berlin, 02/10/2010 (die Freiheit), 2010
Inkjet print on paper
200 x 300 cm
Courtesy the artist

Lidwien van de Ven's work *Berlin, 02/10/2010 (die Freiheit)* shows an image of a crowded office in Berlin. Above all heads we get a glance at a blue wallpaper, where the white words "Wir lieben die Freiheit" [We love freedom] are clearly written. Van de Ven has shot the photograph on the occasion of Geert Wilders inaugural speech in Germany. Dutch politician Wilders is known as strict populist and leader of the 'Party for Freedom' (Partij voor de Vrijheid – PVV). While his views regarding Islam have made him a controversial figure in the Netherlands and abroad, he also gained a lot of reputation within the right-winged community. In 2010, he followed an invitation by René Stadkewitz, the former Christian Democratic Union politician, to give one of his first welcome speeches to support the newly founded party PVV in Berlin. This appearance was part of the Wilders 'International program', which is now called 'International Freedom Alliance'; a branded organization that strives to spread the Dutch politician's views abroad.

Germany was one of five key countries targeted by the undertaking. The backdrop of Van de Ven's wallpaper resembles one of the party's branding images: a light blue, slightly clouded sky with white words written on top of it. It says 'freedom' in many languages – but one is tempted ask, who this statement actually addresses.

Lawrence Weiner

* 1942 in New York City, lives in Amsterdam and New York City

Green as well as Blue as well as Red, 1976
Video, colour, sound
18 min
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix,
New York City

OUT OF THE BLUE, 1999/2014
Language and vinyl letters
Dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

Most often, artist Lawrence Weiner's composed wall texts describe physical instructions, processes, structures and materials. However, the in-situ piece *OUT OF THE BLUE* plays with the immaterial dimension of the colour blue as well as its presence in or infiltration into our idiomatic language to convey mood and emotions, and can be read as an ironic comment on the whole exhibition endeavour. *OUT OF THE BLUE* describes a moment of surprise and turns the saying into a written manifestation.

In the presented video work, two woman, Tina Girouard and Susanne Harris, meet at a table to play a game with two red books and black poker chips. The books are placed at diagonal corners of the table, the poker chips right in its middle. Weiner's early work *Green as well as Blue as well as Red* presents a silent video with a voice-over recording. A dialogue between Weiner and Kathryn

Bigelow about "the structural definition of logical positivism" and "the structural form as in the manner and use of your language" begins. Weiner directed the camera, mixed the soundtracks and maintained the dialogue with Bigelow simultaneously, while the performers performed. In this single-shot video work the artist investigates how to produce a live recording with no cuts.

Raed Yassin

* 1979 in Beirut, lives in Beirut

China, 2012
Seven porcelain vases
54 x 55 cm, 80 x 58 cm, 96 x 33 cm, 64 x 42 cm, 75 x 36 cm, 78 x 48 cm and 94 x 56 cm
Dimensions variable
Commissioned by the Abraaj Group Art Prize, 2012

Under the title *China*, artist Raed Yassin exhibits a series of seven porcelain vases produced in Jingdezhen – China's capital of porcelain. They represent hand-painted images depicting Lebanon's civil war (1975–1990), the aftermath of which is marked by uneasy amnesia and Lebanon's struggle coming to terms with it. Key battles such as the War of the Hotels (1975–1976), the Battle for Tal al-Zaatar (1976), the Israeli invasion of Beirut (1982) and the so-called War of Liberation (1989) can be found – frozen – on the Chinese blue porcelain vases. In an ancient style, the part-historical, part-fictive images are painted patiently onto the fragile ceramics. Within the framework of the exhibition, the vases are placed in a circle – there is no beginning and no end – so a spatialised moment is created that refers back to the unresolved situation in present-day Lebanon. Yassin's work investigates the country's current struggle with its past and communicates key historical events that have been immersed in silence for more than two decades.

Colophon

Information

For more information on the program,
please visit:
kunsthallewien.at
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Jonathan Monk

Alex Morrison
Otto Neurath
Wendelien van
Oldenborgh
Prinz Gholam
Walid Raad
Mark Raidpere
De Rijke / De Rooij
Willem de Rooij
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