

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Art in America



Installation view of Haris Epaminonda, "VOL. XVII," at Casey Kaplan. Courtesy Casey Kaplan, New York. Photo Dawn Blackman.

Haris Epaminonda at Casey Kaplan

through Apr. 23
121 West 27th Street

Hanging near the entrance of Haris Epaminonda's elegant solo show "Vol. XVII" is a framed page of text—apparently excised from a catalogue of Korean painting—that could be considered a substitute for the conventional gallery press release. The concise description of a landscape painting by Ra Ong, a sixteenth-century intellectual, praises the "ancient dignity" of the work and concludes simply: "The economy of line is noteworthy." Epaminonda is likewise adept at building worlds using spare means. The Cypriot-born artist carefully arranges found objects—including plinths, stands, and other display furniture—and artifacts from different cultures and eras. Many of the tableaux Epaminonda creates appear incomplete or fragmentary, inviting viewers to fill in a missing context. A vase is placed on the extreme edge of low riser, which is bounded only at the corner by a low metal fence. A scholar's rock stands simply on a metal side table. A small sculpture of a fish sits on the ground in front of a tall mirror. A face peaks out from beneath a pile of sand. These objects "oscillate between past and present," as the artist has said of previous works, generating "multiple plots." The title of the exhibition suggests a literary dimension to the project. Whatever narratives are present here, they are all rendered "a simple but elaborate manner to produce a satisfactory response in the beholder," as the show's introductory statement says about the work of Ra Ong.

—William S. Smith

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ART

In the Flower District, Galleries Bloom

BY KAT HERRIMAN
MARCH 30, 2016



An installation view of "Haris Epaminonda: Vol. XVII," currently on view at Casey Kaplan gallery in the flower district. Credit Dawn Blackman, courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York

Slotted between the wholesalers, flower peddlers and midrange hotels, a new crop of galleries have sprung up in New York's flower district. They're in the area for various reasons, but they share one thing in common — a love for their neighborhood. "We decided to move into the flower district and Tin Pan Alley because it has history and personality, like our gallery. It's a part of a New York that exemplifies what this city used to be like," says Galeria Nara Roesler's artistic director, Alexandra Garcia Waldman. Waldman oversees the Brazilian gallery's recently opened outpost on Tin Pan Alley — the stretch of 28th Street between Sixth Avenue and Broadway — but this is not the curator's first time in the city; she went to school here and has been back and forth ever since. This April, Waldman promotes the films of Cao Guimarães, one of Brazil's most prolific artists of the 1980s. As Guimaraes's first solo show in New York, the exhibition exemplifies the gap Nara Roesler hopes to fill in the cultural landscape.

Turn right out of Galeria Nara Roesler and you'll see the neon of Planthouse, an independent gallery that takes its name from its first home, a wholesale florist on 27th street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues. When their previous landlord told Planthouse's owners, Katie Michel and Brad Ewing, that their gallery would be demolished, they scored a second-story space across the avenue. Both printers by day, Michel and Ewing rely on outsiders for curatorial direction. Their upcoming show, "Dark Star: Abstraction and Cosmos," curated by Raymond Foye, looks at the universe through the eyes of eight artists including Jordan Belson, Tamara Gonzales and Sally Webster. While Ewing and Michel love the industrial feel of the area, they really chose it because of its proximity to their day jobs at Grenfell Press. "It was really convenient for us," says co-owner Ewing. "I've been commuting here for 11 years. When we found the flower shop, it just felt right."

A block away, the veteran dealer Casey Kaplan just celebrated his one-year anniversary on 27th Street. The gallerist moved to the neighborhood in 2015 after finding an ideal space for a white cube among the mostly commercial offerings. "I had been looking in Manhattan for about a year," Kaplan says. "When I saw this space, I believed it was a place the gallery could inhabit for the next 10 years." The current show, "Haris Epaminonda: Vol. XVII," makes use of the space's refurbished architecture with references to display and structure. Epaminonda's sculpture vignettes, made of pedestals, vases and models, bring to mind the eclectic amalgamation of purveyors and manufacturers right outside the gallery doors. Familiarizing themselves with the area, Kaplan and his team are continually discovering new hole-in-the-wall shops. "I didn't set out to be here, but I like the neighborhood," Kaplan admits. "It's very much real New York."

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MILAN

THOMAS DEMAND: L'IMAGE VOLÉE

18 Mar – 28 Aug 2016

Fondazione Prada

"L'image volée" (The stolen image) is a group show curated by artist Thomas Demand, open to the public from 18 March to 28 August 2016. Within an exhibition architecture designed by sculptor Manfred Pernice, the show occupies both levels of the Nord gallery and the Cinema at Fondazione Prada in Milan.

The show includes more than 90 works produced by over 60 artists from 1820 through the present day. Demand's idea for the exhibition is to explore the way we all rely on pre-existing models, and how artists have always referred to existing imagery to make their own. Questioning the boundaries between originality, conceptual inventiveness and the culture of the copy, the project focuses on theft, authorship, annexation and the creative potential of such pursuits.

The exhibition presents three possible investigations: the physical appropriation of the object or its absence; theft as related to the image per se rather than the concrete object itself; and the act of stealing through the making of an image. The exhibition has been conceived as an eccentric, unconventional exploration of such topics through empirical inquiry. Rather than an encyclopedic analysis, it offers visitors an unorthodox insight into a voyage of artistic discovery and research.

The first section of the exhibition displays photographs, paintings and films in which the stolen or missing object becomes the scene or evidence of a crime. Included in this section are works that directly echo criminal ideas, such as Maurizio Cattelan's framed theft report for an immaterial artwork he claimed as robbed – *Senza titolo* (1991) -, or *Stolen Rug* (1969), a Persian carpet that Richard Artschwager commissioned to be stolen for the exhibition "Art by Telephone" in Chicago. Other works evoke the absence resulting from an act of theft, like the canvas by Adolph von Menzel, *Friedrich der Grosse auf Reisen* (1854), which had the portrayed faces incised from it.

Other pieces are based on the alteration of preexisting artworks, for example, *Richter-Modell (interconti)* (1987), a painting by Gerhard Richter that was transformed into a coffee table by Martin Kippenberger and Pierre Bismuth's *Unfolded Origami* (2016), who made new work out of original posters by Daniel Buren. All these works explore the notion of authors' control over their own creations.

The second part of the exhibition analyzes the logic behind appropriation within the creative process. This section begins with the concept of counterfeiting and falsification, exemplified by the hand-reproduced banknote by forger Günter Hopfinger. The exhibition moves on to explore practices that are close to Appropriation Art, such as Sturtevant's *Duchamp Man Ray Portrait* (1966), who reclaims a photographic portrait of Marcel Duchamp realized by Man Ray, substituting both the author and the subject of the photograph with herself. Other artists drive the logic of counterfeiting to its limit, including taking possession of another artist's identity. Other artworks are 'improvements' or modifications of preexisting images, for example the *défigurations* by Asger Jorn, or collages such as those by Wangechi Mutu, realized from medical illustrations and anatomical drawings. Artists such as Haris Epaminonda, Alice Lex-Nerlinger and John Stezaker, meanwhile, encompass postcards, photograms or archival images into their works. Along with these, Erin Shirreff and Rudolf Stingel create their paintings or videos using a photographic reproduction of an artwork from the past as their starting point.

This section continues with a group of works in which the artists borrow elements from another medium or language, or decontextualize the images themselves. Thomas Ruff, in *jpeg ib01* (2006) alters an image sourced from the web; Anri Sala explores the potential of film to reveal hidden temporal dynamics in *Agassi* (2006); Guillaume Paris, in the video *Fountain* (1994), presents a loop of brief sequences from the animated film *Pinocchio* (1940). The ground floor of the Nord gallery also includes sculptural work by Henrik Olesen, and new works by Sara Cwynar, Mathew Hale, Oliver Laric and Elad Lassry.

The third part of the show is installed in the lower level of the Nord gallery, marking the first time this area has been used as an exhibition space. This final, subversive part of "L'image volée" deals with the production of images which, by their very nature, reveal hidden aspects on a private or public level. John Baldessari, in his installation *Blue Line (Holbein)* (1988), inserts a hidden camera that produces stolen images of visitors inside an adjoining space, calling into question the role of the spectator.

Sophie Calle, in the series *The Hotel* (1981), aims to combine the artistic and private realms in her research, revealing intimate details of strangers' lives. Another cluster of works develop considerations on public or openly political issues. Christopher Williams in *SOURCE...* (1981) reveals unofficial perspectives on institutional communication, by selecting four archive photographs of John Fitzgerald Kennedy that portray the American President from behind, and therefore considered inappropriate for public circulation at the time.

In the photographs *Americas II*, *Bahamas Internet Cable System (BICS-1)* and *Globenet* (2015), Trevor Paglen exposes the material infrastructure of mass surveillance, documenting the transoceanic system of undersea cables transmitting sensitive data.

The final part of the exhibition presents a show within the show curated by a prominent contemporary industrial designer, featuring spy tools used by the GDR and the Soviet Union on their citizens: technological instruments capable of breaking down the barriers of the private sphere, selected for the prophetic beauty of their rational design as related to contemporary computers and smartphones.

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FRANCE

Ulla von Brandenburg, Haris Epaminonda & Francis Upritchard
ART: CONCEPT, PARIS

frieze



Haris Epaminonda, *Untitled #07 t/e*, 2013, iron plates and frame, two old clay Indus Valley figurines on iron stands

The first group exhibition to take place at Art : Concept since the gallery relocated to a new space in the Marais last September coincided with the launch of carnival festivities across Paris, ushering out the winter. Fittingly, paper streamers, images of dancers, and eerie but colourful figurines in trancelike poses filled the immaculate room. The gallery represents Ulla von Brandenburg, with whom Parisians are familiar after she transformed the cavernous Agora of the Palais de Tokyo into a multi-coloured skateboarders' ramp in 2012, and who is one of the four nominees for this year's Prix Duchamp. Art : Concept's director, Olivier Antoine, decided to show her work alongside that of Haris Epaminonda and Francis Upritchard, grouping them together for the first time.

All three women live away from their homelands: Von Brandenburg is German but based in Paris; Upritchard hails from New Zealand and lives in London; and Cyprus born Epaminonda is based in Berlin. They share an interest in folklore and rituals and, more specifically, in how

these customs are understood by outsiders. In late 2015, for 'Volume XVI', her solo exhibition at Le Plateau in Paris, Epaminonda filled the gallery with the paraphernalia of a Japanese tea ceremony. But her meticulous staging disregarded the traditional cultural conventions: rather, she simply imagined what such a scene might look like and then re-created her imaginings. The power of objects to embody both the reality and assumptions we might have about cultures, traditions and histories is something Epaminonda also brought to the show and which resonated with the works of Von Brandenburg and Upritchard. The latter's frail clay figures, which she 'dresses' in found textiles and trinkets, look at once primeval and futuristic, solemn and psychedelic, while the former's paper cut-outs on canvas of dancing silhouettes (*Schattenkreis*, *The Round Dance of Shadows*, 2016) or colourful grotesque figures (*Drei Figuren mit Stock*, *Three Figures with Sticks*, 2016), seem to engage in obscure pageants. All evoke anthropological findings as much as pop culture - Upritchard's fluorescent green *Leader of Men* (2012) looks like a levitating Master Yoda, its supporting structure hidden under its flowing robes. Upritchard also contributed a lamp with two shades entitled *Shiny Face* (2015) which, on closer inspection, reveals delicate cartoonish faces inscribed on the surface. Her interest in bringing together art and craft was also manifest in *Pink and Purple Strike* (*scarf set*) (2012) - three small pots laid out in a line on a tiny carpet.

Epaminonda, Upritchard and Von Brandenburg are fascinated by masks and puppets, figurines and ceremonial artefacts; in other words, with the objects associated with theatre, folklore and religion. How these objects then perform as artworks is central to their practice. Upritchard works with her husband, the designer Martino Gamper, to create the metal structures that support her figures. Epaminonda creates the frames and supports that she teams with found objects, intentionally disguising what is made and what is found. In the show, her elegant metal rectangular sculptures, *Untitled #02 t/a* and *Untitled #03 t/a* (both 2014), were propped up against the wall and resembled discarded picture frames. *Untitled #07 t/e* (2013), with its methodically arranged tiny metal slabs and ceremonial terracotta figurines from the ancient Indus Valley, was laid out on the floor. All are minimal juxtapositions - works without plinths and supports without content. Von Brandenburg also confuses this distinction between presentation and representation by layering used pieces of paper onto the canvas in order to create discreetly 3D images, which stand out against offwhite backgrounds. The sculpture *Prolog* (*Prologue*, 2016), installed at the back of the gallery, was her most enigmatic work here: it consists of a metal square next to a rolled-up piece of blue cloth arranged on ochre fabric placed on the floor and partly up the wall. But what is this unassuming *Prolog* a prologue to when it is presented at the end of the show? The assemblage reiterated a shared concern amongst all three artists about upsetting the genealogy of objects and with confusing the distinction between what is made, found or appropriated.

- CHARLOTTE GOULD

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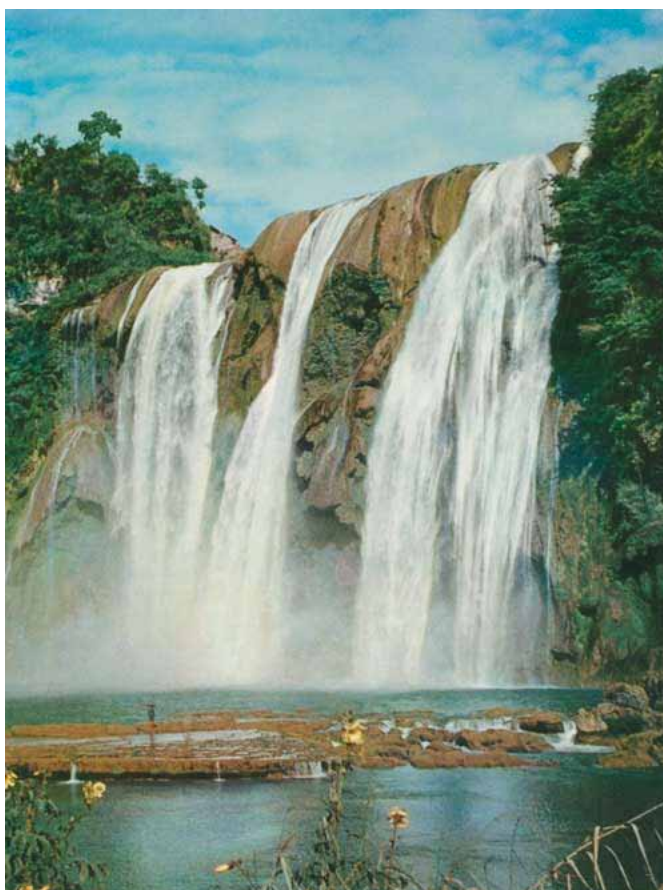
Haris Epaminonda

VOL. XVI

24.09–6.12.2015

Opening Wednesday 23 September, from 6 to 9 pm

Curator: Xavier Franceschi



Frac Île-de-France is presenting the first solo exhibition in France by Haris Epaminonda at le plateau.

The work of the Cyprus-born artist, who currently lives and works in Berlin, comprises mainly films, sculptures and installations that incorporate images and objects borrowed from various origins and epochs, to stage multiple encounters, while cultivating an explicit relationship with the past.

Epaminonda's approach is characterised by a careful choice of objects and meticulous presentations. The fact that her exhibits are taken from contexts that can be inferred by the observer, but are never explicitly revealed, contributes to their intrinsic strangeness. Pages of old books, vases or statuettes are put into relation through visual associations and form a fictional space. Shown as they are – as readymades, essentially – they appear like elements of an interrupted narrative that spectators are encouraged to reconnect. Their mode of presentation, or exposition, is key, and although they are often displayed in conventional museum settings – plinths, display cases, etc. – the scenography is invariably revisited and altered, as the plinths become sculptures, the display cases turn into aquariums, or frames overlap with more frames to focus on a detail of an image.

Epaminonda's films, as in her series *Chronicles* (2010 – on-going) evidence a similar relationship to the world: scenes of still-lives of objects and images variably composed and recomposed in front of coloured backdrops resulting in takes reminiscent of archaeological documentation –, landscapes vibrating to the rhythm of the elements moving through them; a palm tree moving with the wind, clouds passing over a mountain top, the sun setting at the horizon of the sea – reaffirm the poetic vision that underpins the artist's work.

The exhibition at le plateau marks an important and new step in Epaminonda's practice, which, as the title suggests, shall be seen as one large work building up over time through different volumes and chapters. For this occasion the artist has devised an extensive environment that occupies the cleared spaces of le plateau with a series of cubicles, platforms and screens conceived both as sculptures and presentation devices. Including other elements, films and sound – the soundscapes of the installation will be composed by the music duo 'Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides', with whom the artist often collaborated in the past –, the whole set exceeds the exhibition space itself with parallel and temporary appearances connecting the inside and outside of le plateau. Like an emphatic homage to the Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu, these performed interventions shape a kind of inhabited archipelago in constant evolution.

By condensing the different angles of her approach, in which the idea of travelling and movement – in time and space – plays a fundamental role, the exhibition as a whole will offer a unique opportunity for a simultaneously sculptural, spatial and filmic experience.



frac
île-de-france
le plateau
paris

Interview between Haris Epaminonda and Xavier Franceschi

Xavier Franceschi, director of the frac île-de-france, curates the exhibition *UOL. XVI*.

XAVIER FRANCESCHI : One of the main characteristics of your work is that it integrates existing images and objects. Could you explain how this practice developed? And do you remember the first time you presented an object or an image in this particular way?



HARIS EPAMINONDA : For many years I have been collecting artefacts, old ceramics and pottery, fabrics, statuettes and books – basically all sorts of things that I am drawn to. I surround myself with them and sometimes realise that one or the other has become part of one of my works.

XF : How do you select these images and objects? Would you say that there are larger ensembles in your work – images of landscapes, classical sculptures, vases and Asian urns, African or Oceanic statuettes, etc. – which are expanding in the course of your research?

HE : I like certain colours, shapes, sceneries. I like pictures with surfaces that suggest a certain depth and density, and I like imperfect things done with the greatest care and attention to detail. Selecting these images and objects has always been an intuitive process.

XF : In parallel – or rather, simultaneously – to these objects, you are showing a series of minimal sculptures. These slender metal shapes – reminiscent of lines drawn into the space, or pedestals, which, beyond their functionality, exist as parallelepiped volumes – are in stark contrast to the objects you choose. How do you deal with these oppositions – formal or other?

HE : I believe it's through oppositions like these that objects can be brought to life. I'm interested in the tension that manifests itself through the materials. The metal structures and plinths sit somewhere between the architecture of the exhibition space itself and the objects they support. For me, the work exists in the ambiguity of the moment – everything is seemingly fixed in the space and yet things remain open, and together they tell a story.

XF : Another striking characteristic of your work is that it plays with elements of museum scenography, which are often diverted from their original function. Does this allow you to indicate clearly that you are working on the idea of presentation as such? In other words, that what really matters is the way in which things are presented, or framed?

HE : Images generate ideas and vice versa. Questions of presentation come much later in the process, and although they certainly play a role in the overall set-up, I'm interested primarily in how objects tend to oscillate between past and present and in their potential to generate multiple plots. In this process, all decisions on how to treat these objects and images depend on their very objecthood and potentiality: their specific materiality dictates all my actions.

XF : Putting several elements next to each other, connecting them as you do, implies that you allow for a narrative. But is there every time a precise and final meaning to establish for each of the associations you are suggesting?



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HE : I don't really think of my work in terms of definitive ideas or meanings. In my mind, my installations are like images that suggest space, a memory, a place. I would like to think of my work as a growing collection of images that resonate with spectators and thus stimulate their imagination.

XF : Would you say that you follow the same approach in your films? Or rather, should your installations be seen as edits – of images and objects, that is – similar to those that structure the films in the field of cinema?

HE : To a certain extent, yes. There are of course obvious differences: in many instances, the films are not found but filmed by me, and the installations are straightforward, that is, without objects or other elements interrupting the filmic experience. Still, you are right, the sense of suggestive narrative is quite similar in both types of work.

XF : At le plateau you are presenting a specially conceived environment composed of cubicles or cells that function as both exhibition displays and sculptures in their own right. Is it true to say that you changed the scale but that the underlying logic – of combining objects in space – remains the same?

HE : I suppose yes, though I don't think there is a change in scale. I have always been playing with architectural interventions and alterations or additions, perhaps even at times much too subtle to notice.

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XF : The environment at le plateau incorporates plants, animals, etc. The exhibition space is literally inhabited; even more so as it is regularly attended by a person who uses it for various activities: drinking tea, polishing a stone, etc. How should these other forms of presence be considered?

HE : Their presences and actions bring to life some of the elements inside and outside the exhibition space. There is the old man (a marginal character) inside le plateau, who at various times on certain days throughout the show, will be performing different tasks interrupted by frequent pauses. Meanwhile, two young women will be walking through the nearby Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, as if to absorb their own image, diffusing into the image of the other. Perhaps to become a mirror image, a reflection in the water that dissolves with the first rainfall.

XF : How would you connect these two appearances?

HE : The various elements inside and outside the exhibition space combine to form an image – in this case of three fictional characters meeting on a mountaintop. Although the characters seem unconnected (they never come into direct contact with each other), they meet in multiple time dimensions as they ascend or descend the mountain. Over the course of the exhibition, they appear at specific moments, according to a schedule illustrated by an imaginary graph that follows the shape of the mountain.

XF : The other link between the characters is the fact that they are both Japanese... And inside the exhibition space, most of the elements are linked to Japanese culture. What about this connection with Japan? And why do you use this particular way – very much classic and traditional – to evoke it?

HE : The exhibition is a fiction. Many elements of the show have an actual historical and physical origin – and many elements come from Japan. This ranges from fabrics from Kyoto to Japanese performers and so on. But these elements come together with other elements from other places – from Italy, Cyprus, Greece, China etc, book pages sourced in various second-hand stores, geometric iron structures, fish etc... Still, there is something in the Japanese culture, a way of seeing, a strive for simplicity, an emptying out, that I feel very close to. I have never been to Japan. I would love to go there one day. For the exhibition, the appearance of Japanese elements is as relevant as the place of the exhibition, Le plateau in Paris, the park, the water in the fishtanks, the time tables etc.

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I am attracted none the less, their variousness, their ingenuity, their élan vital, and that something, essence quiddity, I cannot penetrate or name.

Organized by Loring Randolph

June 25 – August 7, 2015
Opening June 25, 6-8pm

Casey Kaplan is pleased to announce our first summer group exhibition in the new gallery on 27th street. The title "I am attracted none the less..." introduces the unexplainable phenomena that lies at the heart of the exhibition – the notion that there is a visceral, transcendental connection that is experienced with certain images and objects. Possibly, a reason why many of us find ourselves so attracted to art.

In a humble effort to explore this power of transference and the respective ability to extend or impart this energy given materiality, process, and evocation, works were chosen by artists Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili, N. Dash, Jay DeFeo, Jason Dodge, Haris Epaminonda, Eloise Hawser, Dwyer Kilcollin, Nancy Lupo, Jean-Luc Moulène, David Nilson, Anna-Bella Papp, Diego Perrone, Hugh Scott-Douglas, and Phillip Zach to convey a shared tactile pull. What resulted were diverse media that possess familiar forms – of our bodies, the objects that we surround ourselves with, the landscapes of this world – yet in other respects are strange and alien. The mediation or translation across media by the artists is registered through process, material and experience, without being overt or requiring a clear connection to each of their unique lives. The works do not embrace spectacle nor do they convey easily identifiable moments in time.

Maybe for a moment, time is suspended.

The hands of the clock from the city hall in Le Havre, France have fallen from their place in the sky and lie side by side on the gallery floor. A street lamp is eternally on and a skeletal form hangs from the wall, which we know within the present, but seems to have been unearthed from Pompeii. Waterfalls position themselves in space on pause as if to defy gravity. 250 years pass before the light from Spica, the 14th brightest binary star we can see in the night sky, reaches our eyes. The earth beneath our feet is displaced to the wall and into various other forms. Koi fish find a pond within a cheek, a father from the future was standing here, and a woman stares out at us, but we are not connected somehow.

We see into a black void. The floor undulates.
Is that the moon?

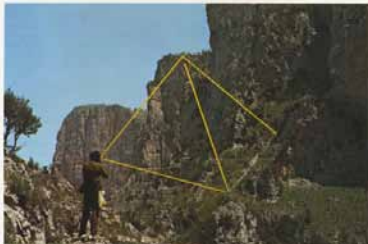
The title of the exhibition is from Robert Hayden's 1978 poem, "American Journal." It is the wording of the last line.

For further exhibition information please contact Loring Randolph, loring@caseykaplangallery.com or Emily Epelbaum, Emily@caseykaplangallery.com. For press inquiries please contact Veronica Levitt, veronica@caseykaplangallery.com. Special thank you to Alex Fitzgerald and to all of the galleries who loaned for this exhibition.

Ketuta Alexi-Meskhishvili (1979) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. N. Dash (1980) was born in Miami Beach, Florida. She lives and works in New York and New Mexico. Jay DeFeo (1929-1989) was born in Hanover, New Hampshire. Jason Dodge (1969) was born in Newton, Pennsylvania. He lives and works in Berlin, Germany. Haris Epaminonda (1980) was born in Nicosia, Cyprus. She lives and works in Berlin. Eloise Hawser (1985) was born and works in London, United Kingdom. Dwyer Kilcollin (1983) was born in Chicago, Illinois. She lives and works in Los Angeles, California. Nancy Lupo (1983) was born in Flagstaff, Arizona. She also lives and works in Los Angeles. Jean-Luc Moulène (1955) was born in Reims, France. He lives and works in Paris. David Nilson (1982) was born in Yngsjö, Sweden. He lives and works in Malmö, Sweden. Anna-Bella Papp (1988) was born in Chişineu-Criş, Romania. She lives and works in Rome, Italy. Diego Perrone (1970) was born in Asti, Italy. He lives and works in Asti and Milan. Hugh Scott-Douglas (1988) was born in Cambridge, UK. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Phillip Zach (1984) was born in Cottbus, Germany, and is currently based in Zurich, Switzerland.

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studio international
Visual Arts, Design and Architecture



Haris Epaminonda: 'I imagined the Cypriot landscape to be the main protagonist'

The artist talks about the making of her four-channel video installation Chapters, filmed in her native Cyprus, and the importance of the space in which her works are shown

by A Will Brown

The artist Haris Epaminonda was born in Nicosia, Cyprus, in 1980 and now lives in Berlin. She works in film, video, installation, photography, sculpture, text and collage. Her work is often presented in multipart installations made up of objects, collages and moving images taken from television and film, which juxtapose contemporary motifs with a series of fictional and real moments from untold and innumerable pasts. Epaminonda's works distort reality to present mundane moments and objects in fresh and engaging ways through subtle manipulations in colour, composition, sound and duration.

A Will Brown: Do you have any forthcoming projects or exhibitions that are particularly exciting, or dramatically different for you?

Haris Epaminonda: I have just come back from a residency at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. We travelled in the Californian desert ... amazing things to see out there ... and, hopefully, there will be a film as a result of my research. Right now, I'm in the process of changing studio, about which I am really excited.

AWB: Can you tell me about the process of working on your four-channel video installation Chapters?

HE: It all started with a handful of vague ideas. For about two years, I was sketching thoughts, making drawings, diagrams, mood boards. From the beginning, I imagined the Cypriot landscape to be the main protagonist, located in the Mediterranean south. I wanted it to be a place before it was given a name: a place of light and shadow, of rough surfaces and reflections. Rocks and stones are everywhere. In the Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Kouklia in Palaepaphos, there is a large piece of stone, thought to be a non-figurative symbol of fertility worshipped by an aniconic cult. When I thought of the film, I always thought of this place as a gravity point. The actual filming lasted for two weeks, almost without a break. It was a really intense experience. For the scale of the project, we were quite a small crew – about 10, together with Andre Zivanari, the producer and a close friend, without whom this whole project would have not been realised. At first, we designed costumes and had them produced. Some were lent by the National Theatre of Cyprus. We gathered different objects, some found in Cyprus, others gathered from all over. There is a room to which the film returns over and over, a whitewashed space, worked on and treated like a white canvas. Throughout the film, we had a lot of discussions: there were these two questions rubbing each other ... how can you tell a story and, at the same time, have all the elements exposed as individual and somehow independent parts? How can you tell a story through objects or via interaction with objects?



People were performing tasks, acting as mediators, at times being mere symbols. Most of them were not professional actors. There were no rehearsals, no script, and most was improvised on the spot.

AWB: Can you describe some of the specific scenes in the work?

HE: It is dark. A man begins to dig a hole in what seems to be an empty, arid landscape. The sun rises and he continues till the sun sets, in the end forming a large sand heap right next to him. On another screen, the same figure walks across sandy ground, leaving footmarks. Somewhere else, a woman sits inside a room without windows or exits, facing the camera. Outside, a stone falls on to the ground, crashing to bits. For a short moment, birds draw their lines in the sky.

AWB: Can you tell me how the figures, settings, ideas and costumes relate to Cypriot and regional (and general) mythology?

HE: It is rather a subconscious sense of a place, one that spreads invisibly over multiple aspects of different cultures and regions.



AWB: Would you say that you were constructing a new, yet archetypal and historically grounded, mythology for Cyprus, a land surrounded by ancient mythological landscapes – Greece and Italy – at least, these are the commonly told myths.

HE: No, not really, I didn't think of it this way.

AWB: As your career has progressed, what are some of the biggest shifts in both your working methods and how you approach ideas? Have specific exhibitions of your work provided a dramatic shift for you in these areas? I'm interested in how the reception of your work has given you new insights or perspectives.



HE: I can't really see dramatic changes in my work. I keep switching from film to sculpture and installation, from three-dimensionality to flatness and vice versa. I sometimes alter spaces in order to shift the attention from object to space. In all, my work is very personal. I have always been driven by intuition.

AWB: What are the most compelling ideas out there for you today. What kind of things, places, people or ideas do you find yourself drawn to?

HE: Thousands of people have already signed up to leave Earth for good on a one-way trip to Mars!

AWB: You work in video and installation, often in combination. What separates a video, seen more traditionally, from a video installation for you? When is it necessary to give a video more deliberate surroundings in your work?



HE: I see film more as something that should be experienced solitarily and empirically in space. It can be quite a somatic experience.

AWB: When I showed Tarahi IV, V, VI at CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts [in San Francisco] as part of the Cinematic Moments exhibition, you worked with me to make a three-channel installation of the work on monitors, where it is normally shown in room-size installations. I think our solution worked quite well. Do you find yourself imagining the montage for a work first, or the setting or media – monitor, projection, installation? When does the content dictate the setting, and the other way around? I ask because your work is often so sensitive to space, and the composition of space, that shifting a display method must be trying.



HE: Yes, it was good to experiment with it and to see whether the work had the same resonance when shown on monitors. I suppose, eventually, it becomes something else, which is not necessarily bad. Still, one gets a very different experience when being in a



room in the dark surrounded by screens than by standing in front of monitors. When the work is a single film or video, it is much more flexible in terms of ways of showing, or its relation to space, though even in this case I am quite particular with the way it should be presented. But as in the series *Chronicles*, for example, I am very specific about how the works should be shown, positioned, sized, and so on, as the presentation is as much part of the work. In this case, I feel the room (colour, architecture, light) should be such that it would enhance the experience of viewing, to keep the projected image more vivid, and to make sure that the viewer can only see one, or maximum two, screens at a time. So I often have to build extra walls and divisions. The same applies to the sound quality in the space, as sound is an integral part of the work. I often speak with the musicians I have been collaborating with for some time now – Kelly Jayne-Jones and Pascal Nichols – who have precise ideas of how the sound should be adjusted, so as to avoid too much reverberance and so on.

AWB: How do you approach your audience when making a video or installation? What are some of the key differences for you between creating in each form?

HE: I consider the exhibition space as part of the work – not only the occupied zones, but equally the empty gaps, rhythm, distances. In a Japanese garden, nature becomes representation, points of contemplation and reflection, seeing something outwardly manifesting itself as an intense internal experience. At times, one can only see a piece from a fixed vantage point of view or, on another occasion, you are forced to walk around the corner, or make a turn. There is this choreography of things, and a sort of filmic quality to the way one navigates through space, as in the way one tries to put all the disparate scenes together to make some sort of sense. A lot is improvised in the space, if not most; the way the elements and pieces end up as constellations, for example. I see film and video in a similar way, collecting the material I shoot or find (in the case of earlier works), and then putting them together in a quite intuitive way, usually drawn by a tempo or a sense. In both cases, it is the way things are juxtaposed with one another, the way they speak to each other, or how they are rearranged in space or on the timeline, that creates tension, voids or moments of calm. The work is done in a specific space at a specific moment in time, and it can never repeat itself in the same way. [It is] perhaps closer to a performative act – elements dancing together in time and space – which the viewer is invited to join in. It is space that defines the boundaries, on a macro or micro-level.

AWB: What exhibitions, shows, or artworks have you been looking at or gone to recently? Have you seen an exhibition or an artist's work that you felt strongly about?

HE: I regret that I missed Pierre Huyghe's recent show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. I was on my way back from Las Vegas and got stuck in crazy traffic. Next morning, we flew back to Berlin.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM



Beauty Codes (order/disorder/chaos) ACT I



ACT 1

STAGE Fondazione Giuliani Rome

Pedro Barateiro, Pablo Bronstein, Fischli And Weiss, Haris Epaminonda, Jacopo Miliani, Amalia Pica, Lili Reynaud-Dewar, Alexander Singh, Daniel Steegmann Mangrané

opening reception MAY 21
through July 17

"At the origin of modern thought there is a contrast between order and disorder, "contrasting impulses and tendencies, the modular combination of which produces in every epoch the work of art." Taking Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* as a point of reference, the exhibition *Beauty Codes (order/disorder/chaos)*, is a collaborative project between three international art spaces, CURA., Fondazione Giuliani and #kunsthallelissabon, which unfolds over a six-month period, in three consecutive legs.

Loosely constructed around the narrative codes of Greek Tragedy, *Beauty Codes* begins with a single voice, then shifts to a gradual process of layering and accumulation, which disrupts the original order with multiple viewpoints, fractured boundaries and subverted roles, finally transitioning to a subsequent subtraction with a new set of objects and traces of previous actions. The complete exhibition cycle is a trajectory from a state of order and harmony, to disorder and chaos, leading to the formation of a new order and quietude.

The project began at CURA.BASEMENT with the installation *Why Should Our Bodies End At The Skin?* (2012) by Lili Reynaud-Dewar, a work which serves as the link between the three acts of a play performed on three separate stages, and which will be present in a different form in the exhibition at Fondazione Giuliani. As in the classical tradition, the narrator is called upon to introduce the stage action before its actual beginning, to explain the events and consequent actions that cause a reversal of roles, the multiplication of forms and perspectives, disorder, and finally the (never truly orderly) rearrangement of the previous situation.

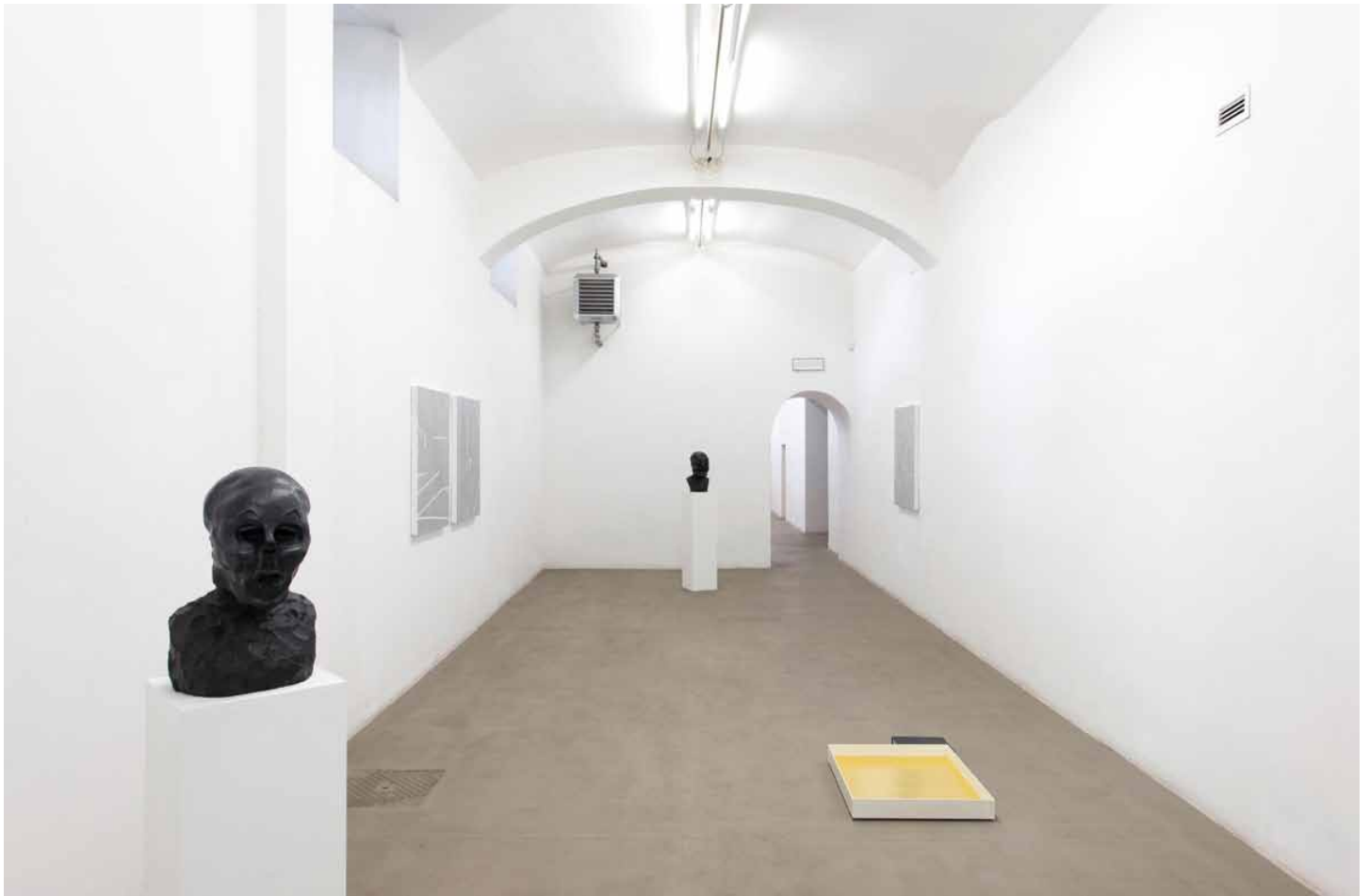
The work of Reynaud-Dewar, which consistently focuses on the relationship between body, language, literature and identity, is part of the *mise en scène* of the exhibition, the *deus ex machina* of ancient memory, the narrative voice that supports the complex unfolding of the entire performance.

Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's / (- \ (2013) heralds the beginning of Act 1 at Fondazione Giuliani. Upon crossing the threshold into the Foundation's exhibition spaces, the viewer passes through four aluminium curtains, as if crossing the *proscenium* of a stage. This relational demarcation of space and movement confounds the distinction between stage and audience, actor and viewer, and creates anticipation for what is to come.

Upon crossing the *proscenium*, the viewer finds himself centre stage, observer and participant in a juxtaposition of different artistic practices and display. Works by Haris Epaminonda punctuate the exhibition space like notes of a spatial composition, both centering the setting of the scene of action, while dismantling conventional modes of exhibition display. This space of action is observed by the bronze busts of Bullen, Dandy and Strumpet (all 2013), themselves characters from Alexandre Singh's *The Humans*, a 3-act play about introducing chaos into an otherwise orderly cosmos, itself modeled after the comedies of Athenian poet Aristophanes.

Yet rather than creating a singular narrative logic, Act I builds a disorderly juxtaposition of artworks in which different narratives link or intersect freely to generate a superimposition of storylines. Any straightforward trajectory is further dismantled by a stratification of interventions, a tumbling together of performances that reorganize the role of the actors and viewers. Works by Amalia Pica, Pedro Barateiro and Jacopo Miliani particularly reconfigure the space with performative sculptures. With *Plans for the Construction of Paradise* (2010-2013), Barateiro disrupts the division between author and spectator by both interacting with the public and activating the traditionally passive role of the viewer. An allusion to games, rituals and riddles, the work's myriad possible abstract patterns indirectly dialogues with Amalia Pica's *ABC (line)* (2013), both installation and performance that is activated by the continual reconfiguration of multi-shaped Perspex elements, and metaphor of the different meanings, function and interpretation of personal and collective communication. In the works of Jacopo Miliani, whose research is primarily based on an investigation of *teatralità*, sculptures become moving physical bodies. Through minimal actions, refined gestures and simple materials, the spaces of the Foundation become the stage where chaos both takes shape and leaves residual traces.

In the video by Pablo Bronstein, *Young man spills cremated remains onto the floor I* (2012), exhibited to the public for the first time, a highly stylised *mise-en-scène* portrays a single male figure whose theatricality suspends him between the representation of a Classical Greek sculpture and of a Baroque courtier. Finally, Fischli/Weiss's iconic film, *Der Lauf der Dinge* (1987), transforms everyday objects into agents of motion. A journey of action and consequence, precarious moments of balance and stability, transmutation and collapse, the connection between cause and effect leads the viewer to metaphysical questions about the world, about the way things go."





"Beauty Codes", [Cura](#) (online), May 21, 2015

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Wilson-Goldie, Kaelen, "Think Piece: The Stories They Need", *Frieze*, Issue 166, October 2014.

frieze

Issue 166 October 2014

The Stories They Need THINK PIECE

A slew of recent exhibitions and projects — from Berlin and Cairo to Marrakech, New York and Paris — reveals an interest in the artist as anthropologist



Haris Epaminonda, *Images*, 2010, black and white riso print artist's book, 20 x 25 cm. Courtesy: the artist, Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia, and Rodeo, Istanbul

In her fourth novel, *Euphoria* (2014), the American writer Lily King sends an erotic charge through a most unlikely subject – the story of three intellectually striving, socially awkward anthropologists stumbling through the swamps of the Sepik River, in New Guinea, in the lull between the 20th-century's two devastating world wars. The book is a thinly veiled fiction about the amorous entanglements of Margaret Mead, her second husband, Reo Fortune, and her third husband, Gregory Bateson. Looming in the background are Mead's mentor, Franz Boas, and her colleague, Ruth Benedict, a former classmate and, possibly, her lover. *Euphoria* opens with the disgruntled members of a warrior tribe chucking the body of a dead baby at a woman named Nell Stone. A stand-in for Mead, Stone is wounded and sickly and travelling by canoe with her overbearing partner, Fen. She is clearly brilliant, to the extent that he can't hope to match the strength and flexibility of her mind. With Fen left seething in Stone's shadow, a toxic strain of competitiveness has crept into their marriage. The two of them have also failed, miserably

in their joint mission to understand the lives of the Mumbanyo people (all the tribes in the novel are fictitious) and are retreating to Australia in defeat.

On their travels, they run into Andrew Bankson (i.e. Bateson), an older, gentler anthropologist who has been studying another tribe, the Kiona, for years. He falls for Stone and, in the manner of all unhealthy love affairs, is both tortured by her presence and desperate to keep her close. The resulting relationships – tangled and confused – end more or less disastrously for everyone. The group's grand theory of the world's cultures becomes famous for a time but is then taken up as a favoured text by the Third Reich. Bankson, by then the only author left alive, disavows the work and asks that every known copy of it be destroyed. Hard-won wisdom and substantial pain have shown him that the spark and fervour of their ideas were only ever dangerous.

At its best, *Euphoria* captures the heat of those ideas amid the intellectual friction that was ascendant in anthropology's early days, when the so-called soft science was just beginning to stretch its capacities for understanding the world. Bankson, Fen and Stone represent divergent approaches to the same task – each puzzling out, in King's words, 'the story of humanity' from 'the psyche of a culture'. One of the novel's most intriguing subtexts considers how anthropology's communities of concern – a generation of young practitioners, their academic elders and the tribes they encountered in the 1930s – were both recovering from and readying themselves for unconscionable conflict.

However, what drives the plot and undoes everyone in the book is not the trauma of first contact but the desire for good art. All of the main characters are searching, whether respectfully or rapaciously, for the work of potters, painters and mask-makers; for the rituals and ceremonies that smuggle the stories of a people's origins into live performance; for the code-like evidence of tribal artisans; and for the objects of study that support the creation of language or the transmission of knowledge.

Obviously, the relationship between art and anthropology has always been complicated and, arguably, it has only become more so since Mead's studies. A curator of ethnology at the American Museum of Natural History from 1946 to 1969, Mead studied adolescent sexuality in Samoa, and, unlike Stone in *Euphoria* – whose body was thrown from a ship carrying a sacred flute stolen from an avenging tribe – she was able to divorce, remarry and live a long and fruitful life. Still, the era that Mead most memorably represents – those interwar years when anthropology was extracting itself from colonial enterprise and pushing for cultural relativity over elitism and hierarchy – continues to stir academic debate, and has lately marked out fertile territory for contemporary artists to return to, reflect on and reassess.

One of the most mesmerizing works in this year's Whitney Biennial in New York, for example, was Jennifer Bornstein's four-and-a-half-minute video *Untitled* (2014), featuring a handful of supple young dancers – all naked, all women – engaged in a strange choreography oscillating between sensual and combative. Based on a film that Mead and Bateson shot in the 1930s (and released in 1952) titled *Trance and Dance in Bali* – which, for decades, was assumed to be an ethnographic document depicting a ritual dance for a witch and a dragon, but which turned out to be a collage made from disparate film fragments, including a performance staged for Mead's birthday – Bornstein's video is, in essence, a re-enactment of a re-enactment.

As such, Bornstein's video, which was chosen for the Whitney by Michelle Grabner, delves into a controversy that dogged Mead for years: namely, whether she'd been the victim of a hoax, fooled by the tribes she studied, who were said to have given her the material she wanted while keeping their authenticity to themselves. A similar sentiment is expressed, albeit with humour, in Belgian artist Johan Grimonprez's video *Kobarweng, or Where Is Your Helicopter?* (1992), which quotes from numerous anthropological sources and ethnographic texts, including one of Mead's informants, who declares: 'We never tell everything. We always keep something for the next anthropologist.'

However, the veracity of one historical figure's fieldwork does not appear to be the objective, or even the interest, of Bornstein's art – nor of Grimonprez's, for that matter. More to the point for Bornstein are the ways in which early anthropologists made use of certain forms – etchings, photographs, 16mm films – which she revives in her own work, using old modes of documentation to find new elements of vocabulary and voice. At stake for Grimonprez – who, like Chilean video artist Juan Downey or French photographer Jean-Luc Moulène, is a godfather figure for what might be called 'the anthropological turn' that is taking shape and gaining momentum in contemporary art today – is the fragile, possibly delusional, notion of there being any such thing as objectivity, neutrality or detachment in the collision of cultures at all.

Certainly, a tender affection for outdated forms of anthropological and ethnographic display is currently evident in contemporary art across the board, from the gorgeous iPhone-to-35-mm footage of a ruined Iraq in Cyprien Gaillard's *Artefacts* (2011) to the dried and pressed flowers in Camille Henrot's *Jewels from the Personal Collection of Princess Salimah Aga Khan* (2011 – 12). Both artists revel in the seductions of a certain National Geographic aesthetic, which walks a fine line between the romantic and nostalgic on the one hand, and the critical and provocative on the other.

The diamond-shaped arrangements of Polaroids in Gaillard's 'Geographical Analogies' series (2006 – 11) or the petal-folded

pages of his own collection of National Geographic magazines (2013) may be pretty, but they also allude to modes of seeing, engaging with and understanding the world that have been lost, arguably to our peril, even as they were driven by divisions between rich and poor, tourist and local, first world and third.

A fellow artist who is largely sceptical of Henrot's work – describing her breakout film, *Grosse Fatigue* (2013), which won the Silver Lion at last year's Venice Biennale, as 'hip but too digestible' – told me he admired her recent survey at the New Museum, titled 'The Restless Earth', because it included earlier works, such as the videos *Coupé/Décalé* (Cut/Offset, 2010) and *Le Songe de Poliphile/The Strife of Love in a Dream* (2011), which were keenly, self-critically aware of their own problematics. Indeed, for the catalogue accompanying the New Museum exhibition, Henrot speaks candidly in an interview with the celebrated anthropologist Arjun Appadurai about the pitfalls of being both a tourist and an artist, out there in the world, guided by curiosity and intuition alone. There ensues a brilliant exchange on Gilles Deleuze and Claude Lévi-Strauss, the minefield anthropologists face when naming a purpose for art, and the imperative to keep fluid the categorical boundaries between objects, species and the spirits they hold to be true.

This interest in the tools and methods of anthropology, and in the discipline's ability to discover the world and organize knowledge, has found its fullest expression in a number of recent sprawling group shows, beginning with Okwui Enwezor's 'Intense Proximity', the main exhibition of the Paris Triennial in 2012. Setting out, according to his curatorial statement, to explore the convergence of art and ethnology 'in the renewal of fascination and estrangement', Enwezor brought together the anthropologist Timothy Asch's Sphinx-like riddle of a film, *The Ax Fight* (1975), about a seemingly spontaneous but actually staged altercation in a Yanomami village in Venezuela, with the rarely seen drawings of Lévi-Strauss, the films of Jean Rouch and a slew of contemporary artworks tracing the cross-cultural tensions – and the politics of post-colonialism in particular – by Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc, Yto Barrada, Eric Baudelaire, Henrot, Bouchra Khalili and others.

Dieter Roelstraete's 'The Way of the Shovel', at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in 2013, considered the archeological impulses in works by artists including Marianna Castillo Deball, Gaillard, Moulène and Anri Sala. Hicham Khalidi's exhibition 'Where Are We Now', for the 2014 Marrakech Biennale, proposed a fascinating sub-theme about the violence of cultural encounter, most powerfully expressed in Shezad Dawood's *Towards the Possible Film* (2014), depicting an epic clash of quasi-punk cavemen and blue-tinged astronauts, and Kader Attia's towering installation *Political Anthropophagy* (2014), inspired by the forgotten histories and leftover traces of the Moroccan Rif War. Khalidi also assembled a sensitive study of old-fashioned exhibition styles, as evidenced in both delicate and muscular works by Eric van Hove, Adriana Lara and Walid Raad. Katarina Zdjelar's 2014 video, *Into the Interior (The Last Day of the Permanent Exhibition)*, was among the show's highlights, digging into the guts of the Royal Museum of Central Africa in Belgium, allegedly the last expressly colonial museum in the world, which closed for renovation in 2013.

Earlier this year, Juan Gaitan's Berlin Biennale pulled several of these strands together into a singular and sustained study of museum culture and architectural restoration. Using the ethnological collection of a soon-to-be-abandoned Modernist museum complex, the Museen Dahlem (which also houses museums of Asian art and European culture), Gaitan's exhibition considered what he calls 'the loose ends of history', exploring the politics of using art for the edification of citizens versus the attraction of tourists, and revealing the ways in which stories continually trump facts whenever narratives of the past are reconstructed in the present.

'One of the aspects we have disregarded in the study of ethnographic collections is the role imagination plays,' Gaitan told me in an email. 'I don't mean imagination tout-court but its mediating function, where it places itself as the arbiter between the objects, as surrogate subjects of scientific study and knowledge, and the audience, which is commonly perceived as an amorphous mass of under-educated individuals who need some degree of entertainment.'

Outwardly, Gaitan's exhibition situated itself in locations that fell outside prevailing narratives about Berlin, which tend to focus on either the political history of the East-West axis or the architectural revival of the city's Prussian past, allowing for a questionable kind of storytelling that skips over the 20th-century's highly localized horrors. Inwardly, among participants, Gaitan established only one rule for the show, for which he asked artists to refrain from intervening directly in the Museen Dahlem's collections.

'In contemporary art as a whole,' he says, 'very often we operate under the impression that we are the enlightened children of the current age and are thus allowed to cast judgment on anything and everything, disregarding pre-existing knowledge. This has something to do with the fact that, if treated as a movement – in the same sense that Modernism can be seen as a movement – contemporary art operates against history.'

Mitigating against that, Gaitan's biennial approached the museum as if it were a readymade, with new works of contemporary art placed alongside, but not within, the show of ethnographic objects. The point was not only to establish a kind of dialogue with the past but also to keep the exhibition's own display style from becoming too clean or clinical. The idea, in other words,

was to maintain a certain awareness of where we, as viewers, might stand in relation to history, and in relation to the other, whoever that other may be.

Some of the most interesting instances of anthropology being repurposed by contemporary art take place on the seams of post-colonialism, at the edges of a rapidly expanding, ever-globalizing art world. Consider, for example, how the National Geographic bent of recent projects by Egyptian artist Iman Issa (objects referring to off-kilter museum collections in 2013's *Common Elements*), Greek Cypriot artist Haris Epaminonda (gorgeous old books, doctored photographs, found sculptures) or Palestinian artist Basma Alsharif (in the materials gathered to piece together a missing narrative in her 2011 video *The Story of Milk and Honey*) draw on museological styles that remain distinctly 19th-century, as are common in much of the Middle East, North Africa and Southern Europe. Whether in Egypt, Cyprus or Palestine, to be a young person engaged in contemporary art practice and searching for a sense of belonging to a functional state, is to be involved in pursuits that are inherently, painfully fictional when compared to the nationalist or lingering colonialist ideologies at play in the region's crumbling museums, schools, monuments, theatres and other derelict houses of culture.

The anthropologist's way of working also plays into the nomadic logic of moving from one residency programme to the next. The artist Rheim Alkadhi, for example, has created an enigmatic series of Francesca Woodman-style self-portraits in Cairo. She turned blankets into sculptural objects while living with a Berber family outside Marrakech and replicated burial mounds for an ill-fated public artwork in Bahrain. As a child growing up in Iraq, she remembers watching her mother, a cultural anthropologist, at work on an ethnographic study of a girls' school in Baghdad. From that experience, she told me: 'I understand anthropology [as] an immersive practice, whereby personal narrative and consequence are always at stake, at risk of expanding. In my mind, immersion is key, and what makes it effective is self-reflexivity. This is what has redeemed anthropology, placing the gaze at once inward and outward.'

Alkadhi pushed that practice furthest in 2012, when she spent days sitting with elder Palestinian women in an occupied village, collecting hair from a donated pile of women's hairbrushes, knotting the long strands together to reach from there to Jerusalem, a symbolic journey that is the substance of one of her most poignant projects. *Collective Knotting Together of Hairs* yielded maps, texts, photographs, spools and innumerable clumps of hair – but mostly it gave rise to an experience that could never be adequately documented except in the artist's retelling.

And perhaps that is the defining characteristic of the anthropological turn. After the mad archivist and the melancholy archeologist, the artist as anthropologist is heir neither to Mead nor to the tribes she studied. He or she is most like Lily King in *Euphoria* – a storyteller or fabulist using the techniques of anthropology to tell again, or tell differently, a story of encounter. And if the novelist ultimately tells a polished fiction, then the artist may often find him- or herself searching not only for anthropology's stories of origin but also, closer to the present (and to quote Joan Didion), for the stories we tell ourselves in order to live.

A strong undercurrent, and one rebellious reference among many, in Dawood's *Towards the Possible Film*, is his discovery of the work of the French anthropologist Pierre Clastres, who broke rather famously from the work of his mentor, Lévi-Strauss. 'A young curator named Cinthya Lana first suggested I read Clastres's book of essays, *Archeology of Violence* (1980),' Dawood told me. 'That led me to his 1974 book *Society Against the State*, which was a revelation. Clastres had set the field alight with the radical notion that so-called primitive tribes engaged in perpetual warfare not due to some essential primitive drive but as a much more nuanced refusal of state formation and the bureaucracy that would necessarily accompany it.' Dawood found this idea such a radical shake-up of his 'liberal, pacifist views' that he turned Clastres's theory into a guiding principal for the film.

If anthropology as a discipline has moved, over the decades, from colonial complicity to the bombast of identity politics and multicultural apologia, then Dawood today locates 'the salient edge of anthropology in documentary films that are taking a bold step back into the ring to make anthropology radical again. Anthropology is, in many ways, a failed discourse within a politically correct framework.' But, he adds, 'contemporary art is always looking for new frontiers'. Artists may be reviving the discipline's radical potential 'as a reaction to the apologetic neoliberal tone of a lot of contemporary anthropology, and as a way of excavating not just the accumulated knowledge of earlier formations but also celebrating their poetic and often-times quixotic qualities'.

In a similar vein, the artist and writer Naeem Mohaiemen, who works between Bangladesh and the us, is in the process of making a series of accomplished books and films about the ultra-left in the 1970s, including *United Red Army: (The Young Man Was, Part 1)* (2012) and *The Young Man Was, Part 2: Afsan's Long Day* (2014). He is also pursuing a doctoral degree in anthropology at Columbia University. Mohaiemen defines his artistic practice as 'a search for objects'. He emailed me: 'Without the object there cannot be work on the wall, and one of the factors for doing anthropology is reeling back further to find the people, or social groups, that invented the myth of that object – the missing film canister, the trunk full of documents. It is [about] embracing the impossibility of a certain mythic object, and writing about that absence, about why people invent the story of the object – akin to inventing a god to structure your society – to give themselves the story they need.'

- Kaelen Wilson-Goldie

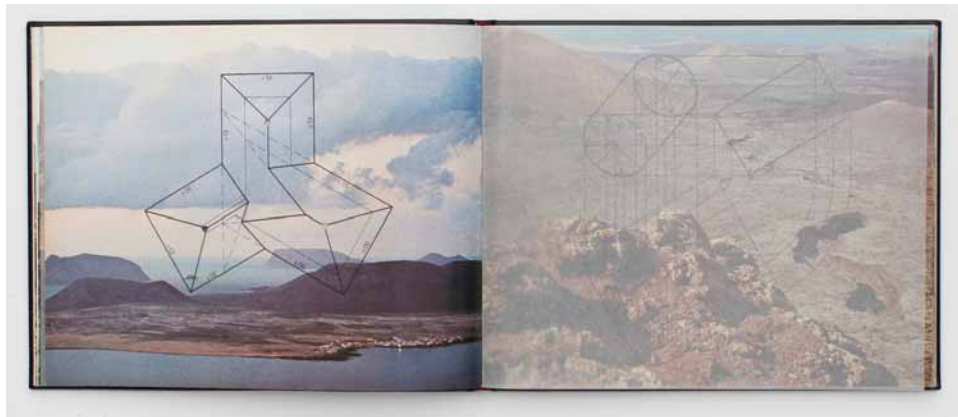
CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Objektiv

THE INFINITE LIBRARY - Q&A WITH DANIEL GUSTAV
CRAMER AND HARIS EPAMINONDA

May 7, 2014

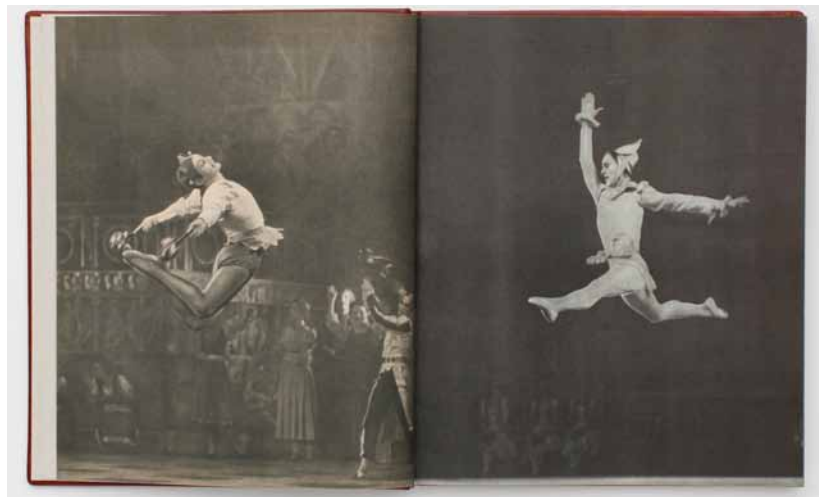
Interviewed by Tiago Bom



At Documenta 13, the exhibition *The End of Summer* by Daniel Gustav Cramer and Haris Epaminonda extended vertically along two floors and the attic of a former office building behind Kassel's train station. The carefully orchestrated progression of works included an array of books, photographs, found images, statuettes, 8mm films, among other 'surgically' displayed imagery. It was like entering a space where time had stood still and contemplation reigned. Within this ethereal juxtaposition of images, accessibility had to be constantly negotiated through spatial constraints and other artifices of placement. In a similar way, the artists' ongoing archival project, *The Infinite Library* (started in 2007), tries to make a very particular sense of the heritage of images and texts belonging to the history of printed matter.

Tiago Bom: Your Documenta exhibition was one of those rare presentations that I recall vividly long after experiencing it. I was not only mentally immersed in the work, which made me lose track of my geographical situation, but there was a very natural synergy between both of your interventions. At times, I thought I was experiencing work by the same person. When and how did you start collaborating?

Daniel Gustav Cramer and Haris Epaminonda: We met in 2001 at the Royal College of Art in London, on the first day of our studies. We gradually became best friends and later, around 2006, we worked on our first collaboration, an online project titled *The Beehive*. In the beginning, we were living in different places and talked about our thoughts and troubles for hours on the phone. Later, when we started living in the same city, we continued to do this, and still do today. This has probably made us very sensitive to each other's work. The situation in Kassel was very particular, since we don't usually collaborate in this way. Actually, that exhibition was one of three such shows, the other two at Kunsthalle Lissabon in 2012 and Samsa, Berlin, in 2010. Perhaps our closeness has helped us to find the right balance in pushing and pulling the individual works to attain this unity in the space; in a way, we've created a third language.



Bom: The notion of archive and found/collected material seems to be a recurrent idea in your works, especially in the Infinite Library. How has this process affected your general practice and this project in particular?

Cramer & Epaminonda: We both, in different ways, look at what's there in the world around us. Both of us enjoy browsing through books – this is where The Infinite Library began. Haris loves to collect – vases, images and objects of all kinds of cultures and eras – and Daniel loves collections themselves, their particularities, especially when they're incomplete or attempting the impossible.

Bom: The choice of books and images seems to focus mainly on a specific set of decades. Is there a particular reason for this selection?

Cramer & Epaminonda: For us, there are two main reasons why we focus more on books from certain periods. Firstly, it's the quality of the paper, the printing, the original sources (Kodachrome, etc). Nowadays every printer tells you the same thing: 'The quality of the paper is decreasing year by year.' The other reason is the level of abstraction. A contemporary photograph is very close to today. A photograph from the 1980s is somehow connected to our childhoods. Older pictures have this feeling of coming from another time – although depicting what we can relate to, they remain quite abstract.

Bom: It seems that the title and the nature of the project alludes to Jorge Luis Borges' work. Did you draw inspiration from his writings?

Cramer & Epaminonda: One of Borges' short stories, *The Garden of Forking Paths*, describes a vast library filled with books with all the letters, punctuation and spacing organised randomly and without meaning. This library is made up of hexagonal rooms. Each room has walls full of shelves, mirrors and doors to the next rooms. Every day, people walk into the library to search for one specific room, somewhere deep inside the library, which is filled with books that give all possible answers – a room that's never found. In a sense, one could say that The Infinite Library inverts this narrative. For us, it's a liberating moment to open a book, written by an individual mind, and connect it with another, constructed by someone else. When these two poles come together, you establish an open conversation of fragments where a certain level of authorship still remains, but it acts within another structure: that of the newly created book. Each book is rebound and numbered.

Bom: Also, when considering your infinite library, I can't help but think of André Malraux's ideas, in particular the book trilogy *Le Musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale*. There, within the layout, images are at times freed from a conventional historical association based on time and geography. Do you have any specific method or historical/chronological concerns when assembling the images and texts?

Cramer & Epaminonda: We have an extensive library of picture books that we collect. At times we sit down and look at them. We disassemble them, place them on the floor and test the individual pages. We rearrange pages, take out a few, add others from another book, and in the end come to a point where certain decisions form a new book. There's no method; the only concern is to make the new book work as a book, visually, conceptually. It's an intuitive process. On one occasion, we took all the pages from a book with the exception of one, and just showed this singular picture, framed on a wall. Another time, the content of the book led us to an installation consisting of a film, a slide projection and several images from other books in the space.

Bom: Is the idea of a virtual museum in the form of a book something you can relate to within this project? And what are your thoughts on the use of photographs (in this case found material) at a time when sight has never been so essential to our way of life but at the same time is so over-stimulated?

Cramer & Epaminonda: Perhaps a book is more like a space in which something can happen, comparable to an exhibition space. A museum has its own history and motives that we wouldn't necessarily connect to a book. A book and a space have an outside and an inside. You're right, there are so many images that there's total over-stimulation. On the other hand, there are always stories to tell – with words, sounds and images. The fact that there's an overload of information doesn't influence the experience of a moment or a story.

Bom: Does the book format allow you to bypass some social and spatial constraints that you face, for example, in your exhibitions? What challenges does it offer when composing image associations?

Cramer & Epaminonda: The project, at its heart, is a way for us to communicate with each other in a playful way. We sit together and try things out. The exhibitions of the books always confront us with the difficulties of showing a unique book to an audience.

Bom: You often refer to subjects such as history, monumentality, architecture and anthropology in your work, but it seems that it's never with the intention of treating information in a chronological way. Instead, you create new meanings and new relations based on your aesthetic considerations. Therefore, I wonder what role monumentality plays in this work and in your general practice?

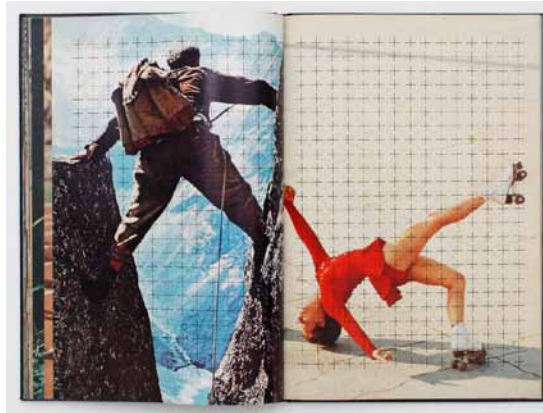
Cramer & Epaminonda: We select the books by their quality – a purely subjective measure. We like certain papers, colours, ideas about the placement of images and text. We allow almost all topics into the work and collect books from all genres. The collection becomes more specific when we reassemble the books. There's no rule to it, but we feel that some books of different origin work together beautifully and others simply don't. A book works when it tells you something more than its content. This can only really be explained when sitting in front of it and looking at it page by page. Somehow, there's always a moment when two things find each other and immediately connect; there's almost a chemical reaction in the air – it just makes sense. That's a monumental moment, when it feels as if these elements were waiting for that moment to be reactivated and given a new life.

Bom: There's a certain degree of violence in the act of tearing books apart, in separating or excluding parts of its original content. By shuffling the content, you generate hybrids, a new meaning, in an implicit and potentially infinite motion, like an illustration of an unfinished, always mutating world.

Cramer & Epaminonda: That's a nice way to put it. We agree, there is a certain violence in the act of tearing books apart, but in most cases we have a second copy of the same book. It doesn't justify the act, but it calms our minds to know that we're not destroying a unique object, but dismantling one copy in a larger edition. We treat the books with care and respect and give them a new life. Still, there is a certain violence, its true.

Bom: The subversiveness and the meta character of this archive challenges established hierarchies in the dissemination of information. I remember having the same impression at your exhibition in Kassel. Even though the works fascinated me, one particular aspect that seized my gaze was the general installation of the pieces and the relation between images – as if they were acquiring a personified character and could sometimes shyly hide behind each other. It's obvious that the arrangement and set-up of the shows play a crucial role within your practice, but how does the question of hierarchy manifest itself in the content and layout of The Infinite Library?





Cramer & Epaminonda: You're right about the importance of placement in the show in Kassel. There, we wanted to create narratives, even just through the way things were installed in the space, since the show was meant to be felt as an experience in its totality – not just what, but how and where things were placed, which rooms were accessible or not. We needed to build up focal points, vanishing points, moments of dispersal and a sense of disorientation, losing and finding oneself again through markings and remembrance. We thought of the space as one that had no beginning or end, seemingly with many repetitive aspects and connecting threads. One entered, turned one's head, decided to go this way or that. The entrance and the exit door were one and the same, so that when you assumed you'd come to the end, you had to go back to where it all started. The thread of connections and tensions was built up by the relation of the elements within the space as much as by the viewer, depending on which work or room one encountered first, the length of time one spent in a room or in front of a work etc. As for the books, the rules are somewhat different. As we stated before, in *The Infinite Library* each book is a new beginning with a new set of rules.

Bom: Do you have any plans for the preservation and storing of the library once it reaches an overwhelming volume?

Cramer & Epaminonda: At the moment, we've reached about eighty books in total. The library, if we placed one book next to the other, would extend over perhaps 120 cm. Those books are kept in a shelf in our storage room. The original books have stayed on shelves since they were first published. We maintain them in the same condition, and protect them from too much natural light, although much of the ageing is unavoidable and natural.

Bom: What are you working on now?

Cramer & Epaminonda: A book about *The Infinite Library* that will show each individual page of the first fifty books, to be published by New Documents. Also a book published by Kunsthalle Lissabon and Mousse Publishing about the three collaborative projects we've done together, as mentioned above. And as always, we're working on our own individual projects.

Haris Epaminonda (b. 1980 in Nicosia, Cyprus) is a Berlin-based artist. Her practice mainly consists of film, photography, collage and installation. She often works with found images, both still and moving, and collected objects. Epaminonda co-represented Cyprus at the Venice Biennale in 2007 and participated in the 5th Berlin Biennale in 2008 as well as Documenta 13 in 2012. She has had solo exhibitions at Malmö Konsthall (2009), Tate Modern, London (2010), Museum of Modern Art, New York (2011) and Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany (2011).

Daniel Gustav Cramer (b. 1975 in Düsseldorf, Germany) is a Berlin-based artist. His practice ranges from sculpture, to film and photography. He has had solo exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Mulhouse (2013), Kunsthau Glarus (2012), Badischer Kunstverein (2012), Kunsthalle Lissabon (2012) and at the Kunstverein Dortmund (2010). He has also participated in group shows such as Documenta 13 (2012), at Nouveau Musée National de Monaco (2012), Kunstmuseum Bochum (2010), and the Stiftung Schloss Moyland (2010), as well as the Athens Biennale (2009).

Tiago Bom (b. 1986, Portugal) is an artist and curator currently finishing his Masters degree in Fine Art at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts. Last year, he co-curated the Central Asian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale, its parallel programme and the respective publication, *Winter: Poetics and Politics*, by Mousse Publishing.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM



Vol. XIV. Haris Epaminonda

Vol. XIV is the title of the first solo show by Cypriot, Berlin-based artist Haris Epaminonda at Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia. The exhibition gathers together delicate and fragile sculptural pieces, all pervaded by an aura of Minimalist beauty, conceived and made on-site by the artist. The works on display seem to be ordered by chance; their forms are simple, thin and rectangular; the artist has used gold leaf, wax and soft colors – a homage to Carlo Scarpa's architectural poetry. In parallel, Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice hosts the first Epaminonda's solo exhibition (Chapter IV) in an Italian institution, in which a new version of the artist's last 16mm film Chapters (2012) is on view. The exhibited works occupies the space designed by Carlo Scarpa inside the Foundation, entering into a dialog with its lyrical architecture.

Vol. XIV by Haris Epaminonda
Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia
Through May 18

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Wall Street International

Haris Epaminonda: VOL. XIV

25 March to 25 May 2014 at Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia



Haris Epaminondas, Chapter IV, 2014, the Foundation Querini Stampalia, Venice
Photo: Haris Epaminondas, Courtesy Galleria Massimo Minini, Brescia

How do you write a press release of a young artist, already known but not yet famous, whose work is delicate, poetic, in the making, someone who has a poem that comes from day to day, around ideas safe, deep, but still open pending definition?

How can you describe an exhibition of works that are largely designed in situ, made on the premises (Galleria Massimo Minini) with opening March 25, 2014, Tuesday, at 18 o'clock, with the artist who, I'm sure, you will have just finished moving a few millimeters small sculpture there on the far right because that imperceptible movement will allow the visitor a perspective more appropriate?

We speak with Haris Epaminondas of this exhibition long awaited for two years and one year in particular we write and let us reason often and she keeps me informed on the progress of the entire project.

But it is a little 'how to read a phrase of Robert Barry: "Something That is unlike anything else and not completely understood or ever completely Realized and can seem absurd, and yet with a ring of truth and beauty That is deeply personal ...".

In this sense the works of Epaminonda are conceptual, precisely for quell'alea of indefinite that leave, for that aura of beauty minimum that hold out, for that the fragility of bodies made of nothing yet so present in the given space. Bodies simple, parallelepipeds minimum thickness, with gold leaf, wax, soft colors, with a tribute to the ways of Carlo Scarpa for the beauty of the details, the geometry of the building, the poetics of the result.

A tribute Mediterranean, an artist born in Cyprus, like Venus, lived in Berlin as so many artists of today, with its first exhibition in Italy, art has always been great country. March 14 show at the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice, great cities of art, Mediterranean city, with deep ties to Cyprus, and then his second show, in fact, to Brescia with inauguration Tuesday, March 25.

On the occasion of the two exhibitions will be presented the new book 'Chapters' published by Humboldt Books, Milan.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Haris Epaminonda - Chapters

9 October - 20 December 2013

Point



This is Epaminonda's first solo exhibition in Cyprus, focusing primarily on the film *Chapters*, her most elaborate film project to date, filmed in various locations in Cyprus last autumn and created in close collaboration with Point Centre for Contemporary Art.

Haris Epaminonda often uses pre-existing materials, assembling them in ways to create works, multi-layered installations and videos that remain enigmatic while defying classification. Her works rather suggest a flattening of the hierarchy between things offering a place where illusion coexists with the tangible, and where each thing can be read and examined on a single plane.

Chapters is a poetic series of meticulously staged scenes, with underlying narrative elements of love, longing, afterlife and ritual. Visitors can expect to encounter a universe of melancholic beauty in which the artist crafts timeless atmospheres, placing Cypriot landscapes as the protagonists. Many of the objects, sets and costumes have been designed and produced in Cyprus, others have been granted by the Cyprus Theatre

Organization. The scenes duel between light and dark, day and night, interior and exterior, the near and the far. The actors, objects, animals and spaces shift back and forth between sculptural representations and their own symbolic and metaphorical meanings. There are various references to ancient myths and poetry, Renaissance painting and Byzantine iconography. The use of fixed camera is reminiscent of the *tableaux-vivant* from avant-garde cinema. A contemporary epic, *Chapters* is challenging the nature of classical film-making. Originally filmed in 16mm film, and later converted into digital, it consists of four asynchronous projections (each about an hour long), totaling in a four-hour length film. The projections are playing simultaneously and on loop, with no beginning or end. There is no particular narrative structure and any linearity is deliberately undone, taking us on an associative journey that is constantly altered and recombined by the action of chance, time and the viewer's gaze.

The mesmerizing soundtrack is composed by British sound-artists Kelly Jayne Jones and Pascal Nichols, also known as Part Wild Horses *Mane On Both Sides*. The artists parallel the methods used in the construction of the film, by piecing together sounds recorded on set with samples they produced using instruments from various eras as well as using field recordings from the set.

The symbolic and formal aspects of the film are abstracted and extended off-screen, in an installation of sparse arrangement of sculptural works in the rest of the exhibition space, belonging as such to Epaminonda's ongoing series *Volumes*, which began in 2009.

Chapters is co-produced by Point Centre for Contemporary Art, Modern Art Oxford, Kunsthau Zürich, and the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice. In each gallery Epaminonda presents the film in an entirely different way, crafting a succession of intimately connected but distinct exhibitions.

Haris Epaminonda was born in Cyprus in 1980, and now lives and works in Berlin. She works in a variety of media from collage to film, installation and sculpture. She emerged on the international scene in 2007, representing Cyprus at the 52nd Venice Biennale together with Turkish Cypriot artists Mustafa Hulusi. She was educated at the Royal College of Art, Kingston University, and Chelsea College of Art & Design, and she has since gone on to exhibit at major art centres such as the Tate Modern in London, MoMA in New York, the Malmö Konsthall in Sweden, and dOCUMENTA(13) in Kassel. She has held residencies such as at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin with the support of the UNDO Foundation, Nicosia, and has recently been nominated for the 'Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst' in Germany.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

frieze

Issue 161 March 2014

Haris Epaminonda

POINT CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, NICOSIA, CYPRUS



Haris Epaminonda Chapters, 2013, 16mm film transferred to DVD, four-channel video installation

In late 2013, the New Yorker art critic Peter Schjeldahl wrote of the 'art-historical amnesia' of much contemporary art, suggesting the term 'Neo-Mannerism' to describe artists who recycle generic styles without wanting to acknowledge tradition or influence. While at first glance Haris Epaminonda might be lumped in with other high-profile young artists who promote this sense of rootless nostalgia, a closer look reveals someone genuinely engrossed in the landscapes and mythologized history of her native Cyprus. Having encountered her exhibition, 'Chapters', after visiting Nicosia's beguiling archaeological museum, I was immediately struck by Epaminonda's preoccupation with Cyprus's art-historical identity – an aspect of her work that can seem obscured by exoticism when shown outside of its local context.

Developed by Point Centre for Contemporary Art in collaboration with Kunsthau Zurich, Fondazione Querini Stampalia and Modern Art Oxford, the exhibition's title derived from Epaminonda's video installation Chapters (2013), displayed on the upper level of the gallery. Comprising four asynchronous digital video projections converted from 16mm film, each running for about an hour, Epaminonda configured her projected images around the darkened maze-like space to appear both connected to and cut off from one another. The arrangement generated different juxtapositions over the course of the exhibition, giving the installation a fragmented quality, and yielding a mysterious sense of incompleteness common to almost all of the artist's serial-driven work.

Purportedly inspired by an eclectic range of undisclosed myths, Chapters exploits the evocative landscapes of Cyprus, utilizing sets and paraphernalia made by local collaborators, including many from the Cyprus Theatre Organisation. In one scene,

a black woman dressed in a white dress stands in a stone interior passively facing the camera as a man wearing gold trousers and white make-up performs a choreographed ritual, waving a large feather and what appears to be a miniature devil's pitchfork. This engrossing and subtly comic scene plays out whilst another projection depicts clouds passing over the moon during daylight; another repeatedly shows a closely-framed scene of a Japanese woman in a silk robe facing away from the camera before slowly turning to face it, vaguely referencing Kabuki theatre.

The work's saturated colours, desert imagery, abstract mythological references and geometric cinematography recalls Chilean filmmaker Alejandro Jodorowsky's *The Holy Mountain* (1973) and *El Topo* (1970), but not in the tokenistic way that is so often encountered in contemporary video art. The control that Epaminonda wields over her imagery places her on equal footing with the acclaimed director, while also bringing to mind sequences in films by cinematic greats such as Andrei Tarkovsky and Sergei Parajanov. Adding to its cinematic affect, the atmospheric soundtrack – specially composed by the British duo Part Wild Horses *Mane On Both Sides* – features cymbals and reverbed field recordings that are perfectly attuned to Epaminonda's traversing of auteurist cinema, New Age spiritualism and conceptualist video art.

On the ground floor of the gallery, Epaminonda's sparse installation of thin, black minimalist-style structures, white picture frames, antique pottery, museum plinths and Cyprian archaeological imagery was masterfully understated, revealing the far-reaching cultural perspectives underpinning her work. Part of the series 'Volumes' (2009–ongoing), the installation metaphorically conflated the museum and its collection, presenting museological analysis as if it were just one narrative in the potentially long history of a collected object. This concern for history was the poetic thrust of the exhibition, and reflected the scope of Cyprus's artistic heritage – which spans the rise and fall of ancient Eastern and Western regimes. Coming from the Greek side of the divided city of Nicosia, Epaminonda transforms her home country into a backdrop for a multitude of mythological identities, working against Schjeldahl's 'art-historical amnesia' to portray art-making as a kind of enigmatic social ritual.

- *Wes Hill*

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

PURPLE.FR

CHAPTERS TRAILER BY HARIS EPAMINONDA

27/01/2014

Purple TV presents the trailer from Berlin-based artist Haris Epaminonda's film *Chapters* (2013), a four-channel video installation. *Chapters* is a poetic series of meticulously staged scenes, with underlying narrative elements of love, longing, afterlife and ritual. One encounters a universe of melancholic beauty in which Epaminonda crafts timeless atmospheres, placing Cypriot landscapes as the protagonists. Many of the objects, sets and costumes have been designed and produced in Cyprus, others have been granted by the Cyprus Theatre Organization. The scenes duel between light and dark, day and night, interior and exterior, the near and the far. The actors, objects, animals and spaces shift back and forth between sculptural representations and their own symbolic and metaphorical meanings. There are various references to ancient myths and poetry, Renaissance painting and Byzantine iconography. The use of fixed camera is reminiscent of the tableaux-vivant from avant-garde cinema. A contemporary epic, *Chapters* is challenging the nature of classical film-making. Originally filmed in 16mm film, and later converted into digital, it consists of four asynchronous projections (each varying in length approximating about an hour long), totaling in a four-hour length film installation. The projections are playing simultaneously and on loop, with no beginning or end. There is no particular narrative structure or linearity, taking us on an associative journey that is constantly altered and recombined by the action of chance, time and the viewer's gaze. The mesmerizing soundtrack is composed by British sound artists Kelly Jayne Jones and Pascal Nichols, also known as Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides. The artists employ flute, percussion and electronics alongside a vast cache of sonic artifacts to create a bold and evocative ancient/modern sound spectrum. [close info](#)

Epaminonda emerged on the international scene in 2007, representing Cyprus at the 52nd Venice Biennale. Educated at the Royal College of Art and Chelsea College of Art & Design, she has since gone to exhibit at the Kunstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin; Tate Modern, London; MoMA, New York; and Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, Germany.

"Chapters" 2013, 16mm film transferred to digital, four-channel video installation, duration: approx. 4 hrs, sound by "Part Wild Horses Main On Both Sides" UK

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

MODERN ART OXFORD

PRESS RELEASE

CHAPTERS

Modern Art, Oxford, UK
06 July – 01 September 2013

Haris Epaminonda's first major exhibition in the UK centres on the newly commissioned film *Chapters*, 2013. Filmed in remote Cyprus landscape, *Chapters* is a poetic series of meticulously staged scenes with underlying narrative elements of love, longing, afterlife and ritual. The scenes are independent and run in a non-consecutive order, with narrative evoked by the actions of the performers. The static frame of the camera shapes the film as a continuously evolving series of 'pictures' or 'tableaux'. The film draws together a spectrum of cultural influences, inspired by myths, ancient poetry, theatre and painting. Highlighting how the construction of the film was informed by her current practice, Epaminonda describes the work as an object that continuously moves – a sculpture without a fixed form.

The soundtrack to *Chapters* was composed by British sound artists, *Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides* (Kelly Jayne Jones and Pascal Nichols). The artists parallel the methods used by Epaminonda in constructing the film, by piecing together sounds recorded on set with samples they produced using instruments from various eras.

The subsequent rooms act as chambers containing a sparse arrangement of sculptural works, including both found and constructed objects. These relate to the logic of the film, such as its symbolic and formal aspects, yet they are also a continuation of her ongoing series *Volumes*, which began in 2009.

Haris Epaminonda was born in Nicosia, Cyprus in 1980, and now lives and works in Berlin. She works across a variety of media from collage to film, multi-layered installation to sculpture. *Chapters* is co-produced by Modern Art Oxford, Kunsthaus Zürich, Point Centre for Contemporary Art in Nicosia, and the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Haris Epaminonda

at Modern Art Oxford

by Katherine Rundell



On closer inspection, the field is uneven and barren, Still from Haris Epaminonda's *Chapters*, 2012, four-screen 16mm film transferred to digital, approx. 60 minutes; at Modern Art Oxford.

set pieces evoke the iconography of Renaissance paintings: empty arches, golden vases, exotic birds, donkeys. Just as Fra Angelico used empty space to give visual form to the mystery of faith, Epaminonda intersperses scenes of colorfully dressed men and women with shots of desolate landscapes, as if to acknowledge the presence of things unspoken and ineffable. The hand gestures of her actors are reminiscent of the careful gestural language of biblical figures in 15th-century frescoes.

The work is elegiac in tone, a hymn to a past of wide spaces, sparse populations and lost traditions. References to death are plentiful. In one scene a man dressed all in black observes another who digs a hole amid heavy piles of stones that resemble cairns and tombs. The dour visuals are offset, however, by the percussion-heavy musical score composed for the film by Kelly Jayne Jones and Pascal Nichols. Their music rustles and sounds alive.

The impossibility of seeing all four screens at once—each was partially enclosed by dividing walls in the darkened gallery—meant there was no single version of the exhibition, and the absence of narrative precluded any quick summing up. But there is a sense of longing on display in Epaminonda's work that supersedes trite exoticism.

Art in America

Shot in Cyprus on 16mm film, Haris Epaminonda's *Chapters* (2013) is divided into four hour-long sections projected simultaneously, each on a separate screen. The installation, Epaminonda has said, can be thought of as an object that continuously moves, a sculpture that has no fixed form. With an archaic mise-en-scène that recalls the Renaissance-inflected style of Pasolini's *Trilogy of Life* and Parajanov's *Color of Pomegranates*, Epaminonda's work abandons conventional narrative to showcase human beauty, erotic desire and the stark loveliness of white light in a hot country.

Chapters has a prevailing dreamlike quality, in part because it eschews obvious logic and linearity. Mysterious figures appear suddenly: two geishas walk down a dirt path by the sea; a bald man painted white and dressed in gold sits cross-legged in a spare interior. Unexplained rituals are enacted with cryptic precision. A black woman paints herself with white stripes; men assemble and then dismantle the framework of a house in the desert.

There are also several scenes of children dressed in white running across a field. These seemingly playful images are intercut with shots of the shining sea. If executed in a slightly different manner, these scenes could appear to speak in the cheap vernacular of advertising and travel guides. But they are saved from banality by the harshness of the scorching light in Epaminonda's native Cyprus, and by the skillfulness of her compositions, which simultaneously evoke and evade cliché. The children wear heavy shoes, and they do not smile.

The influence of the Renaissance is everywhere. Epaminonda cites Fra Angelico as a touchstone, and echoes of the quattrocento artist's work are visible in the gold, orange and ultramarine palette. Epaminonda's

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

The Oxford Times

Chapters: Modern Art Oxford

by Theresa Thompson

A man, perhaps a mystic, his face concealed behind a golden starburst, stands before us, gold necklaces about his chalk-whitened neck; people in white robes stand holding staves as though guarding something sacrosanct; the same duo reappears, now a trio with a man sitting cross-legged on the floor waving a palm frond slowly to and fro; behind them the pure white wall and alcove suggest some temple-like space.

Elsewhere, on other screens in the darkened room at Modern Art Oxford, a classically robed woman raises her arms to the firmament on a scrubby mountainside; somewhere else, now wearing white and orange robes, she tends a macaw, we presume a sacred bird, in a sanctum of sorts; then, two women who may be Japanese, in white and orange costume, amble up a bleached barren hillside; then, the filmic collage continuing, a man with a camel appears, disappears, returns with two, while on another screen wrestlers grapple in balletic choreographed moves over rocky ground. Soon, someplace, anyplace, we see a daytime moon, a sparkling sea, a palm, a pyramidal mountain ... We don't know what is going on. And we won't know even if we watch the entire four-hour screening of *Chapters*, a new film from young Cypriot artist Haris Epaminonda. All we can do is take in and process the imagery and construct our own narrative from the dreamlike sequence that Epaminonda offers in her "moving painting".

"It was an exercise for me, something with no clear narrative that can develop through a series of images," says Epaminonda. "I liked the idea of a film having no fixed point that you enter, and the idea of never-ending relationships between screens."

Divided between four screens, hour-long films running in parallel show a constantly altering succession of meticulously staged scenes. They have no order and no set narrative, yet, somehow as the viewer's eyes flit between screens, the actors, animals, natural and architectural settings and the actions of the performers combine and recombine in the mind as narrative elements such as love, longing, ritual, or separation. "The way I construct the film is not through a script. I create situations and start composing, and things come together to suggest an atmosphere, that suggest something is happening. The colours and forms also help suggest relationships." Epaminonda draws from a spectrum of cultural influences, citing archaeology, anthropology and ethnography as interests, and the frescoes of Renaissance artist Fra Angelico, ancient poems, Japanese Kabuki theatre, and the films of Georgian director Sergei Parajanov as influences for *Chapters*. Born in Nicosia in 1980, trained in London at the Royal College of Art and Chelsea College of Art & Design, the Berlin-based artist swiftly made her name on the international stage. She has represented Cyprus at the 52nd Venice Biennale, and shown at Tate Modern, London, and MOMA, New York, among others. *Chapters*, filmed last year at remote sites in Cyprus, is co-produced by Modern Art Oxford, Kunsthaus Zürich, Point Centre for Contemporary Art in Nicosia, and the Fondazione Querini Stampalia in Venice.

Moving from darkness into light, in a second gallery, visitors encounter a white-walled meditative space and some carefully sited sculptures. There is no direct relationship between the sculptures and film. She said: "I know the film is a very loaded experience, and I wanted a more calm space, not-directed, so the energy of the space is reduced."

Modern Art Oxford
Until September 8

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Aesthetica

Review of Haris Epaminonda: Chapters at Modern Art Oxford



Haris Epaminonda: Chapters, Installation view. Courtesy Modern Art Oxford

Cyprus-born artist Haris Epaminonda has a new exhibit on display at Modern Art Oxford. The exhibit features four screens in a blackened room playing a continuous loop of tableaux filmed in Cyprus. Captured using 16mm film converted to digital, the exhibit is tinged with an air of reminiscence that questions the presentation, expectations and interpretations of cultural rituals. Examining themes that include love, death, dress and the body Epaminonda's series is set in remote Cyprus both outdoors amongst ruins and inside historic buildings.

The film addresses a variety of practices that include the use and merits of film as a medium of presentation. As a medium that allows for staging, editing, directing and candid exploration Epaminonda's role as an artist morphs into that of a director and curator.

In one scene, two young women remain close to each other against the harsh and dry backdrop of the Cyprus. Dressed in vibrant kimonos with white makeup, the placement of this traditional Asian dress in the desert creates a jarring disconnect that reveals the role of environment in creating a seemingly cohesive cultural impression. This creates a disconnect that leads the

audience to question the potential negative repercussions of environmental expectations on fostering cultural understanding. The tableau serves to invert expectations about the presentation of cultural practices with the effect of highlighting the challenges that face the promotion of intercultural understanding.

The film also features a scene of a young woman moving through Cyprus against an arid backdrop and waning daylight. Wearing a white, translucent kaftan the fabric blows around the woman's slender body she slowly approaches the camera and then poses for close-ups. If this scene were available on the television it could easily be mistaken for a rough cut of lingerie commercial. However, Epaminonda's staging veers away from the edge of objectification and instead functions as a dynamic moving-sculpture that provides a complex representation in a medium typically associated with superficiality.

Together the tableaux create an atmospheric examination of cultural rituals, their presentation and preservation. Through the use of film the exhibit carries a distinctly modern, yet historic feel that highlights the evolving role of film as an important and increasingly versatile medium of cultural exploration.

Haris Epaminonda: Chapters, 5 July until 8 September, Modern Art Oxford, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford, OX1 1BP. www.modernartoxford.org.uk

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

EYEOUT the mobile art guide

National Gallery Prize for Young Art 2013

30 August 2013 – 12 January 2014

14 SEPTEMBER 2013

Arielle Bier

This year, the shortlist of exhibiting artists for the Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst (National Gallery Prize for Young Art) at the Hamburger Bahnhof includes Simon Denny, Kerstin Brätsch, Mariana Castillo Deball and Haris Epaminonda. The goal of the competition is to support and promote young Berlin-based artists whose innovative works cultivate new perspectives in contemporary art. So they would form a counterpoint to one another, the jury selected artists who work with distinct styles in printed new media, painting, installation, or film, and who explore their practice with a communicative and characteristic approach. No theme has been announced, yet the works are interestingly linked by their similar focus on shifting modalities, cultural exchange, and the transposition of time and information.

For the group show, the upstairs galleries have been equally distributed, providing singular exhibition spaces to each artist. In the first room, New Zealand-born Simon Denny created a series of printed canvas posters designed with images, quotes, and facts from presenters at the DLD (Digital Life Design) Conference REDUX, held in Munich in 2012. The posters mimic the kitsch fonts and styling of keynote presentations at such conferences, and function like advertisements or even study notes featuring topic titles such as "Need, Speed and Greed," "Women Want More," or "Conversation," featuring life-size images of the presenters' faces hung at eye level. Denny's work critically follows new developments in the ways that media is used to convey information, who the people are that dictate how we communicate, and how powerful ideas are exchanged in developing a new sharing economy of data.

Kerstin Brätsch is a German-born artist working with the performative and interactive elements of painting. Her works playfully highlight the malleability of perspective according to color and form. She has created a constellation of works including geode slices, large round colored glass plates set vertically on the floor, a projection series of portraits, and a light sculpture. The main works in the room are her abstract oil paintings on paper, titled *Psychic Series* (2005–08), where she pushes, pulls, expands, or scrapes color across a surface using broad strokes and repetitive gestures.

In the next room, Mexican-born Mariana Castillo Deball has created an archeological installation based on cultural exchange between Mexico and Europe. Built into the floor is a giant woodcut, a recreation of the first map of Mexico City that was drawn in Europe. Plate by plate, she printed the images with black ink on paper and archived them in a giant book which lays on a table in the corner. Throughout the space, metal stands host elements of colorfully woven masks and costumes of *Chinelos* dancers, which parody the traditions of Spanish Carnival. Deball's installation highlights the importance of markings and the transference of culture and symbols over time and space.

In the final space, Haris Epaminonda, born in Cyprus, has developed a maze of rooms and images. First, you are confronted with a black-and-white photo of a waterfall. This leads to a small room filled with objects, including three stones and an arrangement of black geometric shapes made from steel plates and rods. It is a curious combination of elements, functioning like an amuse-bouche to prepare the mind for new ways of seeing. A small gong hanging on the wall indicates the way into a four-channel video room. There you find *Chapters* (2013) – four hours of mesmerizing video work featuring a curious cast of characters in exotic settings. Epaminonda develops a rich visual interplay of character studies, objects, and color while a chimerical narrative unfolds and time stands still.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

ARTFORUM

“Displays”

AUTHOR: CHRIS BORS

05.21.13-07.20.13 Point Centre for Contemporary Art

A fresh perspective is taking place in an evolving exhibition of art on loan from the Cypriot State Collection of Contemporary Art. Chosen by twenty-seven participants from a range of disciplines, such as art history, archaeology, and dance, these works will be displayed in stages, forming a group exhibition with accompanying events to produce a lively discourse. The undated Gauguinesque painting *The Two Orphans* by Loukia Nicolaedes, with its earth-toned depiction of two young girls with distant gazes, might act as apt entrée into this multifaceted presentation. The painting's subdued focus emphasizes personalities over circumstances, causing it to eclipse the more traditional and generic social-realist works the collection has in abundance, like an enlarged portrait of the country's first president Archbishop Makarios III titled *Makarios*, 1979. This image, attributed to the photo agency Foto-Cine, is in fact a photograph of a reverential painting of the nation's leader by C. Averkiou. Considering that Makarios was a spiritual and political leader who had a major impact on this island nation and whose policies are still being debated today, it's fitting that such straightforward works are presented as they create a juxtaposition with the more conceptual works on view.

Of this latter category, see Savvas Christodoulides's sculpture *Thesi se Kipo* (Seat in a Garden), 2007, a graceful, if perilous throne whose seating angle indicates the potential for a fall; it boasts a lofty perch bookended with winged birds roosting on pieces of rough wood held by clamps. Upstairs, another form of control is taking place in Haris Epaminonda's mesmerizing video, *Nemesis 52*, 2003, showing a performer's hands in latex gloves parting silk drapery in a game of exposure and hiding, which becomes highly sexualized because of the mirror-image effect added in postproduction. While Vera Hadjida's hard-edge diamond-shaped canvas *Untitled*, 1973, whose geometric composition is split down the middle and repeated, relates only formally to Epaminonda's video, it is another example of contrasting works shown not to create a harmonious grouping but to reevaluate each piece based on its own merit.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Epaminonda

by Dietrich Roeschmann

artline > **Kunstmagazin**



Epaminonda, Chapters, 2013. Stills, 16mm film, digitally converted, four-channel video installation, 65 min. (# 1), 43 min. (# 2), 70 min. (# 3), 64 Min. (# 4), Loop, Sound: Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides © Epaminonda sections of paper, film, space and history: the Greek Cypriot artist Epaminonda invents Collage new to see at the Kunsthau Zurich.

Kassel is not a place of poetry. That is expected to remain until further notice and so, let the wasteland guess at the main station. Empty shed and orphaned offices from the sixties rotten here to herself. From studios once there was talk that should move in there, but instead of the creative scene sprouts on the premises only weeds. A perfect place for Epaminonda. The young Greek-Cypriot artist has a penchant for such spaces in standby mode. Lightheadedness are their subject, stored things, found images and recordings faded color films her material. With great care Epaminonda arranges these nameless remains an everyday life culture museum-style installations of breathtaking seduction - with remarkable success. When she represented Cyprus at the 2007 Venice Biennale, she was only 27. This was followed by exhibitions at the Tate Modern and MoMA in New York. But her breakthrough had Epaminonda 2012 - in Kassel. Together with the Ger-

man artist Daniel Gustav Cramer turned them there one of the vacant station building in a mysterious cosmos of accurately cut collages, ethnographic arts and crafts, Super 8 Nature films and slides of ancient objects, the time and space seemed completely caught up. The winding course, lapped by whirring sound collages, was one of the absolute highlights of the Documenta.

The Kunsthau Zurich is currently on display its latest and so far most elaborate work, with which it also opening a new chapter. The roughly four-hour film collage "Chapters" which turned the now Berlin-based artist last fall in Cyprus, has been produced especially for this exhibition. Instead of the previous fall back on found footage from old TV soaps or Greek melodramas, dedicated Epaminonda this first actors who sent them charged, reminiscent of films by Pasolini, Isaac Julien and Derek Jarman images on a journey through the land of their birth. Their idiosyncratic aesthetics, this self-forgetful flow slow motion, incorrect exposures and Stoic settings, the jump from the found invented image does not detract. Even with "Chapters" is Epaminonda its principle of collage faithful - in the knowledge that often a single cut is sufficient to create two images a new world in which the spilled memory of our presence is visible.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the work of Cypriot revolve around this state of in-between, where memory, association and dream coincide. Born in Nicosia, Epaminonda grew not far from the "Green Line" on a provisional material collage of oil barrels, wooden shacks and barbed wire that divides Cyprus since 1974. In wide no man's land between the Greek and Turkish part since patrolling UN peacekeepers and ensure that this temporary remains untouched. A sequence in "Chapters" captures this reality of division in an almost enchanted landscape picture: Behind a lone palm tree that weighs gently in the wind, stands on the horizon the pale silhouette of a volcano off. What the mountain will not betray. He is now in the zone of peace, at his feet on both sides of the border, the ruins of two villages destroyed during the war.

Epaminonda: South of Sun.

Kunsthau Zurich , helmet Platz 1, Zurich.

Opening times: Wednesday to Friday 10.00 bis 20.00 clock, Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday 10.00 am bis 18.00 clock. To 5 May-2013.

Roeschmann, Dietrich, "Epaminonda", *Artline KunstMagazin* (online), April 22, 2013

CASEY KAPLAN

121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

MIND IS OUTER SPACE

MARKUS AMM, MARK BARROW, LOUISE BOURGEOIS, GINO DE DOMINICIS, THEA DJORDJADZE, TRISHA DONNELLY, HARIS EPA-MINONDA, GEOFFREY FARMER, AURÉLIEN FROMENT, MATT HOYT, HAO LIANG, MARISA MERZ, NAVID NUUR, MAAIKE SCHOOREL, RICKY SWALLOW, JOSH TONSFELDT

Organized by Alice Conconi and Loring Randolph

EXHIBITION DATES: JUNE 27 – AUGUST 2, 2013
OPENING: THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 6-8PM

Perhaps because I have never been able to swim, I decided to learn to fly. For three years now I have repeated this exercise every day. Probably I will never fly, but if I get my children and my children's children and their own children to repeat this exercise then perhaps, one day, a descendent of mine will suddenly know how to fly.¹

1 2 3 2 3 2 1 4 5 6 7 6 7 6 5 4
2 3 5 7 1 4 6 2 3 4 6 1 5 1 3 6 7 2 4 5 2 4 6 7
1 2 3 2 3 2 1 4 5 6 7 6 7 6 5 4
c: 2082 m: 7380 y: 14357 k: 269

But, of course, music is terribly important also. In hearing, there is also the sense of touching, in the sense that the piano player touches the keys.

Hearing has the most power.

The king of Spain, who was a little insane, could only be brought to reason by listening to the very high voice of a certain male singer who was a castrato.

Beauty of the ear kept him sane, well, perhaps really not sane, but at least not dangerous.²

Her own method for memorizing isn't based on a pathway through a place but on an association between numbers and images. With this method, she no longer sees 1, which no longer exists: instead of 1, she sees a tree. 2 no longer exists, 2 is a nest. Number 3 is a mole. Each number is replaced by an image. Ideally, the images have to be fixed and permanent, but when you create your own images you don't always know where you're headed. She has a number of images that she'd like to change because some are too similar to others: in 51, she has a lottery ticket and in 67 a bank check, two slips of paper of roughly the same size and shape. If she wants to replace it with something else it will require a great deal of effort. She would have to stop doing memory exercises for a year or two, and then reconstitute the list without thinking of a bank check. Today she'd like to replace the lottery ticket with a ladder but for the moment it's always the lottery that is the winning ticket. The list is called a memory chart. It's a chart that helps with recall. Each item on the list is called a peg, like a hook on which you can hang a coat. The chart is like an arrangement of pegs on which to hang things. Each image is a peg. For instance, her cat is a peg.³

Descending from the mount, they first unbind
Their vests, and veil'd, they cast the stones behind:
The stones (a miracle to mortal view,
But long tradition makes it pass for true)
Did first the rigour of their kind expel,
And suppl'd into softness, as they fell;
Then swell'd, and swelling, by degrees grew warm:
And took rudiments of human form.
Imperfect shapes: in marble such are seen,
When the rude chisel does the man begin;
While yet the roughness of the stone remains
Without the rising muscles and the veins
The sappy parts, and next resembling juice,
Were turn'd to moisture, for the body's use:
Supplying humours, blood, and nourishment;
The rest, too solid to receive a bent,

Converts to bones; and what was once a vein,
Its former name and Nature did retain
By help of pow'r divine, in little space,
What the man threw, assum'd a manly face;
And what the wife, renew'd the female race.⁴

12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
3 4 5 6 7 11 4 5 6 8 10 3 4 5 9 10 11 2 4 10 11 12 1 5 9 10 11 12 6 8 9 10 12
1 5 6 7 8 9 2 4 6 7 8 1 2 3 7 8 9 1 2 8 10 12 1 2 3 7 11 12 2 3 4 6 12
12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
c: 3235 m: 7316 y: 11087 k: 357

The state of no-mind-ness refers to a time prior to the separation of mind and world, when there is yet no mind standing against an external world and receiving its impressions through the various sense-channels... This we can say is a state of pure emptiness, but (if) we stay here there is no development... It is death itself... But we are not so constituted... There rises a thought in the midst of emptiness... The separation of unconsciousness and consciousness... The rise of the fundamental dialectical antithesis... The unconscious and the (conscious) are in direct opposition, yet they lie back to back and condition each other... One negates the other, but this negation is really affirmation.⁵

Vision needs no eyes to see.

The noise that passes the ear comes not from passers-by, but from the engines pushed to the limit when starting up. No ear, no piece of apparatus could grasp this whole, this flux of metallic and carnal bodies. In order to grasp the rhythms, a bit of time, a sort of meditation on time, the city, people, is required. Other, less lively, slower rhythms impose themselves on this inexorable rhythm, which hardly dies down at night: children leaving for school, some very noisy, even piecing screams of morning recognition.⁶

there's a bluebird in my heart that/ wants to get out/ but I'm too clever, I only let him out/ at night sometimes/ when everybody's asleep./ I say, I know that you're there,/ so don't be/ sad./ then I put him back,/ but he's singing a little/ in there, I haven't quite let him/ die/ and we sleep together like/ that/ with our/ secret pact/ and it's nice enough to/ make a man/ weep, but I don't/ weep, do/ you?⁷

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
2 6 10 1 5 7 1 2 3 4 8 1 2 3 9 1 2 6 10 1 2 3 9
2 3 4 8 3 4 5 7 4 5 6 7 8 10 1 5 6 7 8 9
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
c: 4099 m: 2693 y: 22480 k: 0

It is I who dust them and alas sometimes accidentally break them. I always beg her to promise to let me have them mended by an expert before I tell her which it is that is broken, she always replies she gets no pleasure out of them if they are mended but alright have it mended and it is mended and it gets put away. She loves objects that are breakable, cheap objects and valuable objects, a chicken out of a grocery shop or a pigeon out of a fair, one just broke this morning, this time it was not I who did it, she loves them all and she remembers them all but she knows that sooner or later they will break and she says that like books there are always more to find. However to me this is no consolation.⁸

PLEASE SHUT THE DOOR BEHIND YOU!!!

1. Gino De Dominicis, Tentativo di volo, 1969, 16 mm transferred on video, b/w, sound 2. "Sunday Afternoons: A Conversation and a Remark on Beauty", Louise Bourgeois in conversation with Bill Beckley, 1997 3. After Benoît Roesmont 4. Ovid, Metamorphosis, as quoted by Ester Coen in "Moon Threads", Marisa Merz, 2012 5. Suzuki, D.T., The Zen Doctrine of No Mind, 1969. 6. Lefebvre, Henri, Rhythmanalysis, 1992 7. Bukowski, Charles, Bluebird, c. 1992 8. Stein, Gertrude, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, 1933

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CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

GalleristNY

ON VIEW

‘Mind Is Outer Space’ at Casey Kaplan Gallery

By Will Heinrich | 07/30/13 5:03pm



Installation view. (Courtesy Casey Kaplan Gallery)

“Mind Is Outer Space,” a trippy group show organized by the gallery’s Alice Conconi and Loring Randolph, is as slippery and opaque as a highly polished marble floor. In the back, Haris Epaminonda’s thin but terrifying Pond (2012) plays a snippet of footage of a hula dancer—something Ms. Epaminonda might have seen on Cypriot television as a child—forward and backward, with uncanny, elastic reversals, to the sound of Leadbelly’s “In the Pines.” At one point, as if to emboss the soul-killing melancholy of mechanical reproduction even more deeply into the already ample melancholy of the singer’s piercing voice, the dancer seems to sing along to the word “last,” as in, “Where did you sleep last night?” In the front, Aurélien Froment’s Second Gift (2010) slowly circles a set of wooden blocks in geometric shapes designed by German educational pioneer Friedrich Froebel to teach children to think. “I’m telling you all this really quickly,” says Tiffeni Goesel, a kindergarten teacher, as she lists the multitude of inferences a classroom could draw from the set’s materials and construction. “This could take months to discover!” In between are Matt Hoyt’s Untitled (Group 93) (2010-13), two low shelves holding a collection of small objects that might have been found on a forest floor or been robbed from some elegant medicine pouch, two translucent color-field oil paintings by Markus Amm, a pink rubber ear by Louise Bourgeois, three of Mark Barrow’s elegantly suppurating grids of CMYK dots and an untitled series of candy-bright images by Josh Tonsfeldt, projected on the wall to a deep-bass beat emerging from under the projector. (Through Aug. 2, 2013)

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

MAP

THE OBJECTS: CHAPTER TWO

Kyla McDonald engages with the importance of the moving image and photography as a way of capturing the 'object' in an increasingly fast-moving and changing age



A young girl, obscured by an exotic plant, plays with an anonymous plastic object. She speaks to herself repeatedly about a 'thing', saying 'a thing that never came back again... everyone was mad about it and sad about it... but nothing ever happened... the thing never came back again... it wasn't the same thing... that thing, was nice.' The work is a short video by French filmmaker Michel Auder entitled 'Talking Head' 1981/2009.

The 'thing' the little girl is obsessively talking about is never revealed but its presence is powerfully evoked. Unlike the works displayed in the recent exhibition I curated at Glasgow Sculpture Studios 'The Objects', the object is missing from view, yet the video gives prominence to the importance of objects, or 'things', and the emotional, nostalgic and economic value that humans often invest in them.

Critic JJ Charlesworth recently wrote about the decrease of actual 'things' in contemporary art in his article entitled 'At what point does nothing become too much of a good thing?'. He said, 'It's been bothering me for a while, this growing cultural animosity towards things. It seems to run alongside an equally creepy fascination with the supposedly dwindling experience of materiality, brought on by the expansion of networked, digital image culture.' He likened this trend to the dematerialisation of the object that arose in the 1960s and '70s with the birth of conceptual art. Although Charlesworth is discussing the rise of virtual objects that are created through digital platforms, it is also true that in recent years it has become much more likely that when you walk into a gallery you will see objects mediated through the medium of film, video or photography.

Haris Epaminonda, 'Untitled #03 o/g', framed found image, 32 x 25.6cm, 2012 as part of 'The End of Summer', with Daniel Gustav Cramer, dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel, 2012

While Charlesworth's text seems to criticise the negotiation of objects through a second media, I would argue that film can provide the objects with as much artistic value, if not more, than when we experience them in reality. The medium of film provides an alternative way of translating, capturing and perceiving them as Auder's video demonstrates. Indeed, as Susan Sontag wrote, '...in the era of information overload, the photograph [film] provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form for memorizing it.'

Amongst the myriad objects, sculptures, pedestals and found imagery in Haris Epaminonda and Daniel Gustav Cramer's expansive collaborative installation for dOCUMENTA (13), The End of Summer, 2012, was a space devoted to works on film. They were all part of Epaminonda's ongoing series of films entitled Chronicles 2010-ongoing. All shot on Super 8, transferred to DVD,

this selection of films depicts collected fragments of various landscapes, trees, objects and animals. One displays a series of static objects set against empty backgrounds of one colour; a series of white rocks placed in a composition against a red background, unmoving, followed by a cut and a new frame revealing the same rocks with a photograph of a bronze head placed behind them. Here the two-dimensional is combined with the three-dimensional, yet both are flattened by the camera. In another cut we see a different rock, followed by a bowl, then a series of vases in changing compositions, then another head—this time white porcelain with a sense of exotic otherness, treated to a series of close ups and position changes. The work goes on like this, displaying a series of found, seemingly forgotten, objects one after another. Later, the frame changes completely and we are shown a landscape—the top of a rocky mountain peeking out from some clouds. Here, caught in a succession of images of inanimate objects, the mountain appears like just another rock placed by the artist for our examination.

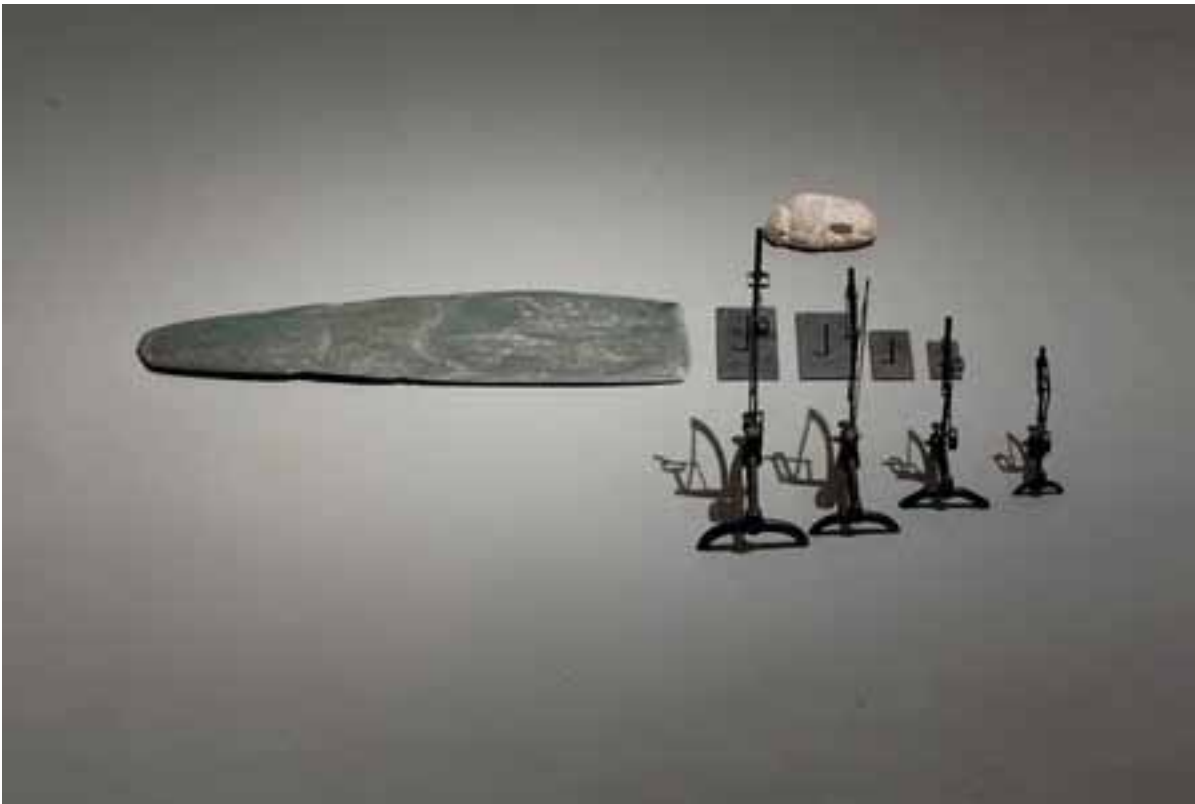
The lack of context for the objects chosen, the reasons behind the order in which they are placed and the subsequent juxtapositions, is left open. Film, however, is of course a manipulative medium, creating slippage between reality and a translation of reality: the artist has a level of control over what the viewer sees and what they choose to conceal. Epaminonda's films promote a flattening of the hierarchy between things. A small rock is treated in the same way as a large mountain. The differences between a picture of an object and an actual object are collapsed. While photography and film can provide only a simulation of reality, here the artist is able to transcend it, offering a place where illusion co-exists with the tangible, and where each thing can be read and examined on a single platform.

French artist Isabelle Cornaro similarly offers a translation of objects on film with her carefully composed arrangements of things captured on camera. She is an artist who interprets, re-represents and reproduces objects in various mediums. Her double-projection 'Premier reve d'Oskar Fischinger, (Part 1 and Part 2)', 2008 is filmed on 16mm. In 'Part 1' the camera scans a group of disparate objects ranging from ornate perfume bottles, jewellery, white porcelain heads, and glass panes to a camera lens, all set against a black background. The forms and background colour change occasionally, offering the viewer new juxtapositions and perspectives upon them. In 'Part 2' the camera shows a number of glass paperweights, each with a different intricate design. The camera zooms in, examining each in detail, creating abstract patterns on the screen. The framing devices and filmic cuts employed by Cornaro distort the scale of the objects and obscure direct readings of them. Cornaro is fascinated with the projection of emotion onto objects; each thing she selects has a familiarity to it. However, by employing such filmic non-linear and temporal sequences, as well as cuts, close-ups and panoramic shots, her films explore representational codes and their effect when they are displaced.

A further example of the transformative potential of film upon objects is witnessed in Rosalind Nashashibi and Lucy Skaer's film 'Flash in the Metropolitan', 2006. Here, the artists provide the viewer brief glimpses of their chosen objects (ancient artefacts taken from the Near Eastern, African and Oceanic collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). Filmed after-hours at the museum, it is shot almost entirely in complete darkness but for an occasional flash of light that illuminates one of the chosen objects. Given only seconds to view these things, the audience becomes captive spending longer looking at the film with the hope of ascertaining the exact subject. The artists have, similarly to Epaminonda and Cramer, removed any traces of narrative or context and in turn question a traditional sense of viewing. Our conventional expectations of museum and gallery displays are thus undermined.

Shahryar Nashat's video 'Today', 2009 offers another view of the museum—one taken behind the scenes at the Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Basel, Switzerland where two sculptures by Swiss artist Karl Geiser (1898-1957) are explored in different ways. Geiser was, at one time, one of Switzerland's most revered artists. The two sculptures chosen from the museum's permanent collection, however, have never been on public display. The first scene shows large sculptures being moved from one part of the museum's store to another. The camera focuses in on a tall bronze sculpture and a red screen appears with text akin to a museum label telling us the work is 'Velofahrer (Cyclist)', 1928-34. Museum staff handle the sculpture with exemplary care. Treated with value, yet rarely seen outside of the museum store, the video gives the audience an opportunity to consider the sculpture's status as a renowned work of art, yet one hidden from public view. In another scene shot in the photography studio we see a second bronze statue on a red background. The camera moves and jerks, coming in and out of focus, mimicking the still camera that will eventually take its image. Another catalogue entry comes on screen revealing that the work is 'Stehender Nackter Knabe (Nude Boy Standing)', 1926. A series of coloured treatments—blue, green, red—wash over the video screen transforming the sculpture's appearance, revealing to the audience how objects can, and often are, manipulated by filmic or photographic reproductions. The work is a clever demonstration of film's capability to change the viewer's perception of objects in two distinct ways.

Reflecting on the mediation of time through a collection of objects is the subject of Fiona Tan's most recent video, 'Inventory', 2013. The work explores the private collection of British architect Sir John Soane (1753-1837) who opened up his London home as a museum in the 1820s. The museum remains largely unaltered since that date. Filmed using six different cameras in order to capture every detail, the house appears as a large cabinet of curiosities as every corner, shelf and wall is occupied by a vast array of Roman antiquities. Like much of Tan's practice, the work explores time, space and memory. Each object in the



Haris Epaminonda, 'Untitled #08 o/g (stone #1)', mixed media, dimensions variable, 2012 as part of the exhibition 'The End of Summer', together with Daniel Gustav Cramer, 2012, DOCUMENTA(13), Kassel, 2012. Photo: David Brandt

museum is a fragment of memory from Soane's life. Similar to the way Auder's little girl speaks affectionately for her 'thing' from memory, Tan's film attempts to demonstrate a passion and love for the collection and preservation of things. If the museum is itself a time capsule, then here the artist has created, on film, an additional memory of the museum nearly 200 years since its inception. This version thus becomes an object that will exist in itself, for contemplations by a new set of viewers in different spaces and at another time.

While each of these films and videos presents a remove from the physicality of objects and sculptures, they all demonstrate the varied potential of film to alter an accepted reading of objects. The tangible object and its filmic translation work together to provide the viewer an opportunity to gain new perspectives on the familiar and expected. In Susan Sontag's writings on the subject of filmic reproduction in *On Photography*, 1973, she argued: 'Photographs actively promote nostalgia. Photography is an elegiac art, a twilight art. Most subjects photographed are, are, just by virtue of being photographed, touched with pathos... All photographs are *momento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt.'

If film performs a similar action then all the artists discussed here have created a space where the subjects captured will remain in perpetuity. Despite Charlesworth's protestations that digital imagery devalues the tangible object, these film and videos each demonstrate a celebration and love of the objects they display. In turn they exist as entities in themselves that work both as autonomous things and as extensions of the objects they survey.

Kyla McDonald, Head of Programme at Glasgow Sculpture Studios, curated 'The Objects' for GSS, 16 February—6 April 2013

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Bucharest Biennale 5

VARIOUS VENUES, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

frieze

Issue 149 September 2012

'We received neither municipal nor government funding.' With these words, the co-founder of the Bucharest Biennale, Razvan Ion, opened the press conference. What followed was a statement outlining the almost completely self-organized and subsistent nature of mounting the biennial's fifth edition. A testament to the haphazard Bucharestian context, the exhibition, curated by Anne Barlow, focused on artistic responses to issues of precariousness and uncertainty. Comprising works made by only 20 artists, 'Tactics for the Here and Now' stretched across seven sites dispersed throughout the city – ranging from the University's Institute for Political Research, an artist-run space, to The House of the Free Press, one of the city's many landmark Stalinist buildings.

The strength of Barlow's approach lay in the modest number of invited artists and the itinerant viewing experience of the Biennale. Where dispersal can often dilute an exhibition's overarching theme, here it provided for sparse solo shows and focused group presentations across context-laden sites. The House of the Free Press provided perhaps the most poignant location. Built in the mid-1950s, it once housed the Party's official newspaper *Scînteia* and, as is typical of many post-communist transitional paradoxes, today it is home to most of the Romanian dailies. Scattered inside the former main printing hall were copies of Jill Magid's *Failed States* (2012), a 'non-fiction novel' that departs from the artist's witnessing of Fausto Cardenas opening fire on the steps of the Austin State Capitol in 2010. Examining the limits of representations of acts of terror and violence, *Failed States* was also excerpted in several local magazines.

Truth was likewise suspended in David Maljkovic's *Out of Projection* (2009), a two-channel video showing car prototypes tested at the Peugeot headquarters in Sochaux, France. A silent commentary mouthed by now-retired employees accompanied long shots of landscapes and the test-track. Somewhere between documentary and science fiction, the work plays upon the dissonance between the streamlined futurist car prototypes and where between documentary and science fiction, the work plays upon the dissonance between the streamlined futurist car prototypes and the aging protagonists. Exhibited alongside was Vesna Pavlovic's composite slide projection, *Search For Landscapes* (2011), consisting of found images of a family's travels around the world in the 1960s. The faded slides portray the typical familial scenes of pointing, toasting and – uncomfortably for the viewer – posing among the 'natives'.

Travel landscapes bind Pavlovic's work with Haris Epaminonda's untitled series of Polaroids (2008–09), which comprise tastefully composed panoramas – a palm tree here, a beach vista there – photographed from books. Considering this expression of wanderlust in the context of life under Communism brings to mind the restricted mobility experienced by those behind the Iron Curtain. The melancholic note in this venue was further heightened by the nostalgic media used by Pavlovic and Epaminonda – slides and Polaroids – both of which are almost obsolete today.

Marina Albu's room-sized *The Real People's House* (2012) referred directly to one facet of life under Nicolae Ceausescu – recurring power shortages. Candles, battery-powered torches and a gas camping stove were assembled to give light to this domestic interior, which also included a chess set, children's storybooks and an official pamphlet from 1977 entitled 'Fundamental Issues of Party and State Activities'. Far from an allegory of a harsh Communist reality, Albu's installation spoke of familial comfort, moments of pause and pastimes. *The Real People's House* is a glimpse into Albu's faint recollections of growing up in Romania in the 1980s, a childlike perspective on what was simply part of the everyday routine. A more tongue-in-cheek representation of making-do was illustrated in Ciprian Homorodean's *Take the Book, Take the Money, Run!* (2010), a manual that outlined pick-pocketing, lock-breaking and shoplifting techniques.

The Bucharest Biennale foregrounded artistic practices that infiltrate and play with expectations of everyday life. In a local restaurant, Ruth Ewan's *A Jukebox of People Trying to Change the World* (2003–ongoing) played a collection of more than 2,000 songs addressing issues of gender, power, civil rights and control. Klas Eriksson's performance *Com'on you Reds* (2012), however, provided the most dramatic artistic rupturing of Bucharest's everyday reality. In what must have looked like a fiery blaze to unknowing passersby, Eriksson positioned a team of volunteers equipped with flares to stand on several of the balconies of the Intercontinental Hotel. On cue, they ignited the flares, shrouding the building – once a symbol of the city's increased openness to the West and a prime terrorist target – in a burning red haze.

'Tactics for the Here and Now' was finely attuned to the current debates on the precarious nature of everyday life and labour, the ever-present vocabularies of austerity and uncertainty. However, for a biennial in a context where such issues are paramount, it could have been even more tightly embedded in the local scene. Only two of the artists in the show were Romanian and only one of those continues to reside there. Bearing in mind Bucharest's rich local art-historical heritage (such as the actions of Ion Grigorescu and Paul Neagu, Andre Cadere's 'unlimited paintings', and the studio actions of Geta Brătescu), the fifth Bucharest Biennale struggled to engage with local artistic responses to the emerging infrastructures and systems it sought to examine.

- Pavel S. Pys

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM



Early Summer

a collaboration by Daniel Gustav Cramer & Haris Epaminonda

Kunsthalle Lissabon, Lisboa, Portugal

21 June - 18 September 2012

Early Summer

Daniel Gustav Cramer and Haris Epaminonda first met in 2001. An experimental internet project, 'The Beehive', was released in 2005, which lasted for two years and eventually led to the collaborative project 'The Infinite Library'. The Infinite Library is an ongoing book project which is primarily an expanding archive of books, each created out of pages of one or more found books and bound anew. Today, about 50 books exist. An online catalogue serves as a preliminary index.

Both artists' individual work appears fragmentary, creating constellations in the space. In 2010 Epaminonda and Cramer created an exhibition environment in which both practices were shown together, in communication with each other, yet again creating a single image/ atmosphere. Certain themes, such as water in motion or a sense of displacement and reorganization connected the individual elements. Cramer's overall practice is comprised of mainly photographs, but at times also objects such as sculptures, books and videos that form a visual system. The works appear and reappear in different constellations within various exhibition spaces, creating an ongoing narrative of overlaps, loops and poetic interludes. The different themes that connect the artist's images, objects and texts are testimony of a complex universe, which stands in constant dialogue with the world itself. The intricate system of references and fragments of visual and textual accounts expands and transforms, and in doing so, echoes essential criteria of human existence – memory, love, death, time, knowledge, doubt and belief – and their representation. Epaminonda's works touch upon similar perspectives of wonder and mystification. The artist's pictorial, filmic and spatial compositions all share a similar sensibility and texture. Her subtle and yet strangely emotive language opens up a space in which one can lose oneself in a realm of relations and gestures. Her small collages, her carefully considered and precise installations and measured films – many of which are created using found images, objects or pre-existing clips – appear to hold a solution, a clear explanation but ultimately unveil a boundless sea of possibility and uncertainty. The feeling is akin to stepping into a mirrored maze, where reflections show endless new vistas, leaving us in awe and puzzlement with only a shallow conception of time and space, with neither beginning nor end.

For the exhibition in the Kunsthalle Lissabon, the two artists will create an open narrative using found images, photographs, books, a video and small sculptures. The exhibition will continue the series of exhibition titles inspired by Japanese film-maker Yasujiro Ozu (Late Spring (1949), Early Summer (1951), Early Spring (1956), Late Autumn (1960)). An artist book will be published as part of the project.

The exhibition Early Summer is generously supported by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, the Cyprus Embassy in Lisbon and the ambassador Thalia Petrides, and the Goethe Institut.

Acknowledgments: Instituto de Investigação Científica Tropical, Museu da Ciência da Universidade de Coimbra, Observatório Astronómico de Lisboa, Planetário Calouste Gulbenkian, Fundação EDP and Vera Cortês Art Agency.

Daniel Gustav Cramer was born in Neuss, Germany, in 1975. He lives and works in Berlin. A selection of his recent solo shows include Works, Kunsthau Glarus (2012), Daniel Gustav Cramer, BolteLang, Zurich (2011), Eight Works, Dortmunder Kunstverein, Dortmund (2010) and Twelve Works, Vera Cortês, Lisbon (2009). His work was featured in numerous group shows, namely Salon de Lecture, La Kunsthalle Moulhouse (2011), End Note, Tanya Leighton, Berlin (2011), The Happy Interval, Tulips and Roses, Vilnius (2009), Playtime, Betonsalon, Paris (2008), A principle of Assumptions, Rodeo Gallery, Istanbul (2008), 5th Berlin Biennial and Art Sheffield 08.

Haris Epaminonda was born in Nicosia, Cyprus, in 1980. She lives and works in Berlin. A selection of her recent solo shows include Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda, MoMA, New York (2011), Haris Epaminonda, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt/Main (2011), VOL. VI, Tate Modern, Level 2 Gallery, London (2010), VOL. IV, Rodeo Gallery, Istanbul (2009), Haris Epaminonda, Malmö Konsthall, Malmö (2009). Her work was featured in numerous group shows, namely Green Light, Laura Bartlett Gallery, London (2009), Solaris, Gio Marconi Gallery, Milan (2009), Deste Prize 2009, Deste Foundation, Cycladic Museum, Athens (2009), The Generational: Younger than Jesus, New Museum, New York (2009), Provisions for the Future, 9th Sharjah Biennial and 5th Berlin Biennial (2008).

Haris Epaminonda and Daniel Gustav Cramer have presented their work collaboratively on several occasions: documenta XIII, Kassel (2012), The Infinite Library, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (2011), Late Autumn, Samsa, Berlin (2010), The Infinite Library, Biblioteca Universitaria Bologna & Museo Aldrovandi, Bologna (2010), The Infinite Library_book #16, with Rodeo Gallery at solo projects, Arco, Madrid (2009), Daniel Gustav Cramer & Haris Epaminonda, BolteLang, Zurich (2009), The Infinite Library_book #14, with BolteLang at Nada, Miami (2008), The Infinite Library @ Moufflon. Nicosia (2008), Daniel Gustav Cramer & Haris Epaminonda, Pharos Centre for Contemporary Art, Nicosia (2006).

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

EARLY SUMMER. Daniel Gustav Cramer and Haris Epaminonda

cura.



The collaboration between Daniel Gustav Cramer and Haris Epaminonda, begun in 2001 and developed over the years through common projects, is characterized by a fragmentary language, in which elements of various origins find new meanings through combinations and relocations. On the occasion of Early Summer at Kunsthalle Lissabon, the two artists construct a story from photographs, images and books, a video and some small sculptures. The exhibition, the title of which is inspired by a series made by the Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu, also includes the publication of an artist's book.

June 21 – August 18

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

dOCUMENTA (13)

dOCUMENTA (13)
Featuring Daniel Gustav Cramer and Haris Epaminonda
Jun 9th—Sep 16th, 2012
documenta (13), Kassel



Daniel Gustav Cramer's photographs, books, films, texts and sculptures seem to exist only in their own woven net of echoes and references. In and between the spaces of these fragmented works, a poetry develops, circling around the fundamental and inexplicable moments of existence, the a priori conditions of perception itself – time and space, nature and culture, history and the present, love and death. Within this practice, fragments of stories and abstract forms stand in direct dialog and open up a vague narrative, mapping a partly scientific, partly emotionally cartography. Cramer often works in ongoing series and groups among them Trilogy (2003-ongoing), a photographic atlas of archetypical landscape studies.

Haris Epaminonda & Daniel Gustav Cramer work and exhibit both individually and collaboratively; in their collaborations they act as curators, creating a narration within a space through loose associations of objects and images— among them their own works. Their shared interest in the poetics of micro- universes also manifests in the format of artist books, such as The Infinite Library (2007-ongoing), a long-term collaborative project which unfolds as an expanding, seemingly arbitrary archive inspired by the writings of Jorge Luis Borges.

Epaminonda mostly works with found images from decades past, both still and moving, which she cuts, edits, layers, and reframes. There is a peculiar quality to her material—faded travel photographs, pages of old nature magazines, ethnographic artifacts or footage from forgotten television programs—a curiosity in natural and cultural phenomena that the artist excels and transforms in her collages through an act of visual alchemy: "Ancient Egyptian and Cypriot artifacts begin to radiate colored auras, buildings are gripped by architectural and spatial schizophrenia, and polite living rooms are fractured by shards belonging to far-off locales and disparate temporal registers."

For dOCUMENTA (13), Epaminonda and Cramer developed an exhibition that unfolds over the two floors and attic of a former office building (ZNL) behind the Hauptbahnhof. The artists turned the space into an orchestrated, mazelike stage by shutting up the interior from the outside world and transforming some, while closing other of the spaces, making them inaccessible yet present in one way or another.. An empty corridor between the ground floor and the attic— "describing the distance between things and formulating distance as a necessary virtue to overcome blindness"—connects and separates two spheres, creating a pause, a transitional passage. Inside their imaginary museum, Epaminonda and Cramer installed video works, photographic documents, found images as well as objects and artifacts from different cultures, grouped together or dispersed throughout the rooms, creating a suggestive meandering narrative through formal, aesthetic and conceptual associations. There are also book objects and two films: one filmed in Cyprus, loosely connected to Dante's Divine Comedy, and the other filmed in Romania. The placement of all elements in the space is part of a creative process, during which tension transforms into a continually reconnecting rhythm.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

MOMA

Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda
November 17, 2011–February 20, 2012
Floor 2, Projects Gallery

For her first solo museum exhibition in the United States, Berlin-based artist Haris Epaminonda (b. 1980, Nicosia, Cyprus) constructs a world based on connections between a three-channel video projection—part of her work titled *Chronicles* (2010)—and a museological-style installation of antique pottery, columns, plinths, niches, and pictures culled from old magazines and books. Among the books are travelogues about archeological sites that are visually related to one another but separated by centuries of history.

Composed of short Super 8 films (transferred to video) that the artist shot over several years, *Chronicles* eschews narrative in favor of fragmented images that probe the nature of time and assert the permeability of memory. One film shows ancient artifacts from different cultures either isolated against colored backgrounds or in images torn from the pages of an art history book, subtly animated by the slight motion of the handheld camera. In another film, views of the Acropolis exude a twilight state of entropy or decay. The third film simply portrays a pair of superimposed palm trees flickering in the wind amid a barren landscape, remnants of a civilization in decline. The artist enlists a range of techniques, from long takes and unedited footage to fast cuts, narrative rupture, and intensified color. Because the films are looped and of varying lengths, the image combinations do not repeat. A soundtrack of mixed instrumentation and natural sounds by the band Part Wild Horses *Mane On Both Sides* provides an acoustic link between the three projections. The moving images, in turn, inform the sculptural installation, creating a three-dimensional audiovisual montage that cuts across temporal and geographic borders.

Organized by Roxana Marcoci, Curator, Department of Photography. The Elaine Dannheisser Projects Series is made possible in part by The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art.

CASEY KAPLAN

121 WEST 27TH STREET

NEW YORK NY 10001

TEL +1 212 645 7335

FAX +1 212 645 7835

WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

MYSTERY AT MOMA

122

February 19, 2012,
12:30pm, Cairo
University: No Country
for Old Men? — (De)
Constructing the
Concept of Citizenship

HARIS EPAMINONDA

New York City

MoMA

November 17, 2011 – February

20, 2012

www.moma.org

A long-gone museological universe framed in a postcard: amid intarsioed marbles, a lady in a red cashmere sweater, pearl necklace, and earrings, looks up at a massive sculpture of two figures, a lunging male and a defenseless female. It might be a perilous lift in an ice-skating competition, if not for the lion at their feet. The man, bearded and old, clasps the naked young woman to his hip, suspending her in midair as she throws her arms up, alarmed or thrilled. It is Bernini's *Abduction of Persephone* at the Galleria Borghese in Rome, and on either side of the sculpture there are medallions set into the wall of the museum with white figures posed in a classical fashion. In a glass cube, another tinted postcard: whoever he is, he is too young to be married to the lady in the red sweater, though he may well be from the same Roman drawing room. He stares up at a headless Venus gathering her robes with one hand held just at the height of her crotch, such that her knees and thighs are revealed and the cloth forms a wide shell around her lower form. He is taking notes, like me. Behind him a sheet of white paper, larger, framed in fine lustrous wood.

The present is a wonderful place if you are patient, and if someone like Haris Epaminonda has collected a few dozen things for you to consider in a space of whiteness, with color and silence. Perhaps you will remember a visit to a museum when you were seven in Greece. Or in Rome, or Detroit, or Berlin, when your mother, or Epaminonda's mother, was seven. The show fills one with longing for a time when a museum, its walls, floors, and speaking chambers, weren't jammed with explanations. Epaminonda has re-created the chance encounter between a person looking and the object or place being seen, through the lace or grid of a particular moment in history — one in which the mystery and chasm between different ages, between you and things, tends to be left intact. You see everything as though in a movie, or in the film of memory. Built into the experience is a pre-nostalgia achieved by seemingly minor technical peculiarities — captions without images and images without captions — unthinkable in any museum context now, except possibly in rare treasure houses

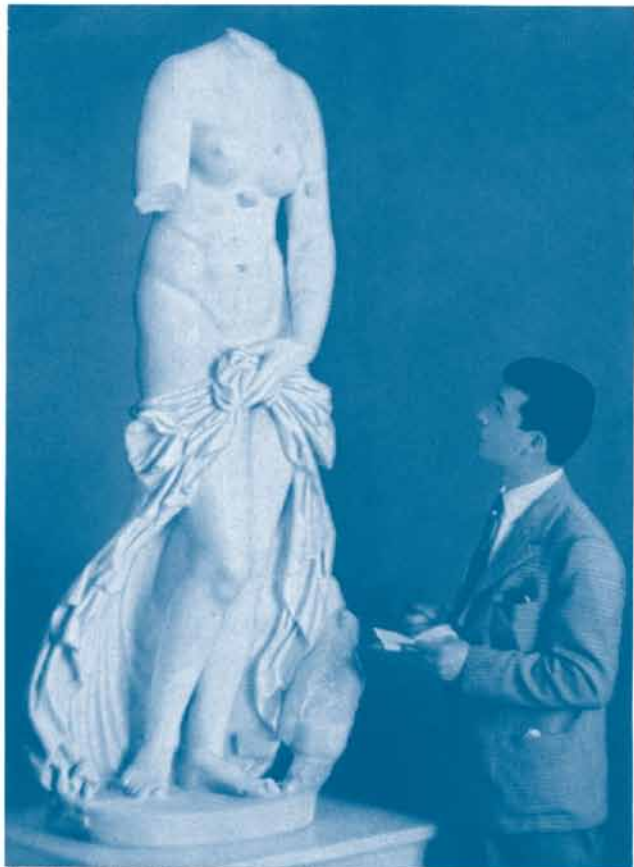
such as the Archeological Museum of Corfu, which Epaminonda's show reminded me of, where the unobtrusive low-tech modesty of a setting can be the most effective backdrop for, say, a dazzling Corgon relief. One might dedicate the Frank Sinatra song "My Funny Valentine," to the idiosyncratic museum: "Your looks are laughable / Unphotographable / Yet you're my favorite work of art.... Is your figure less than Greek? / Is your mouth a little weak / When you open it to speak? / Are you smart? / But don't change a hair for me / Not if you care for me."

The show unfolds quietly, unobtrusively. There is a black wall. An interruption. A white wall. A passage. On the right, entering the gallery, I'd encountered an image of someone who might have been a friend of my mother's, in a red dress, gazing at a large marble head. Next to it is

the monumental hand of the colossus of Emperor Constantine. Two right hands were found, oddly, each with an upraised index finger as high as the technicolor woman. That is what happens in the subtle regime of viewing Epaminonda imposes: everything is within her museum, an arrangement of artifacts and representations of same, with the atmosphere of a Cabinet of Wonder.

Another postcard: more well-to-do figures gazing at art, now amid powder-blue walls. A little girl in a pinafore and white blouse, a lady in a Mercedes-seat-blue suit sitting on a couch. They are looking at a painting diagonally split into two uneven triangles — rather, two paintings joined, an old stove and a draped cloth that hangs down in folds.

Now the space opens out onto a proper gallery whose walls are white with a tall white niche built in. The museum floors



Untitled T35 from Vol. VII, Haris Epaminonda, 2011. Courtesy the artist and Rodco, Istanbul. © 2011 Haris Epaminonda

are mottled gray, as though waiting for some liquid to be spilled on them that they might then render invisible. On a tallish white plinth is a thunderous turquoise urn. Wavering over a part of its wide belly is a looping brush mark of darker blue, like an acrobatic plane's signature in the sky. In the white niche, nothing happens.

After an empty corner, a four-sided slim bronze pipe rises from the floor and travels into the wall. On a short octagonal column stands a small celadon green urn. I can see into its shadowy mouth. Above, a smiling warrior. He has perfect Greek features and his hair, long tidy dreadlocks, is draped over his shoulders. Now a short white flight of unclimbable stairs resting against the wall ends beneath a tiny open arch with a small white ceramic vase standing in it, through which I catch a blurred glimpse of the red polo and black hair of a man, a live

man, walking by on the other side.

The words "Central Asian Beluchistan Prayer-Carpet" appear beneath an absent image. A tenderly chipped stand, like a screen in a fireplace. An image of columns, the ruins of a temple. Blue sky. On the other side of the arched opening, a huddle of clay pots. An image of broken columns in an overgrown field and a framed absence next to it. A framed black-and-white picture of the interior of a church is on the floor, along with other framed pictures. A large dark urn, mottled by time. The guard in the gallery is from the Dominican Republic; he speaks a little Greek, Portuguese, Japanese, or Italian to visitors, according to their nationality. He loves the work, he tells me. "I live in a Greek community. I want to learn the language."

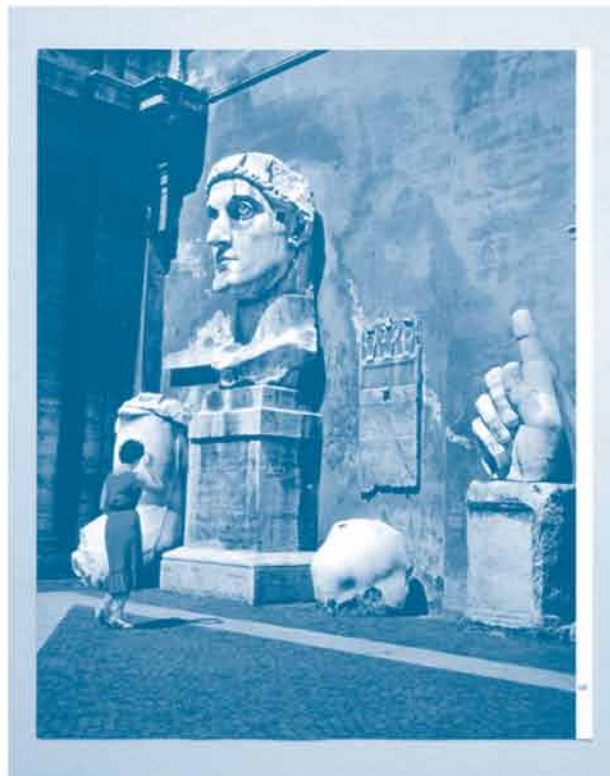
I enter the big dark room where there are three screens: one shows palm trees, the

air quivering around them; another frames the Acropolis, with rocks in the foreground; the third shows sculptural objects against a red or a green background — images from antiquity, a Chinese vase, a perfume bottle, a statuette of a boy with startled eyes — in reproductions from a more recent antiquity, the 1950s perhaps, against magenta or purple or sea-green backgrounds, everything touchingly drab and real like a place you have already visited and wouldn't mind going back to. Never the same combination of images — a solution to the dilemmas of editing. One can sit back and absorb every possible alternative without having to choose one, cut out all others, or decide which might be best. And yet the same image differs according to what came before it — the vase after the boy or the boy after the bottle. On the soundtrack, gongs, bells, the subdued snorting of an animal, flutes. The images are grainy. On one screen a book reveals first a flying elephant, then a girl with a high, high forehead and cheeks like little balloons, the pages turned by an unseen hand. From the carpeted floor of the darkened room, I watch the changing images of stills and the unmoving Acropolis in the dancing multicolored specks of air on film, as riveting as the temple itself.

— Cini Alhadeff



Untitled T3 from Vol. VII, Haris Epaminonda, 2011. Courtesy the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul. © 2011 Haris Epaminonda



Untitled T5 from Vol. VII, Haris Epaminonda, 2011. Courtesy the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul. © 2011 Haris Epaminonda

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Cut by Cut

BY AMANDA COULSON

frieze

FEATURE - 11 NOV 2011

Haris Epaminonda began working with found photographs, films and objects – and ended up with a novel form of collage



Haris Epaminonda/Daniel Gustav Cramer, Book #15, Konrad Onasch, Ikonen (Icons), from the series: „The Infinite Library“ (Courtesy: the artists & Rodeo, Istanbul, private Sammlung)

Haris Epaminonda's oeuvre – collages, sculptural groups, films and photographs, many of them based on found items, whether images or objects – appears to be boundless. One work is conceptually born from the last and flows into the next; each exhibition connects to both the preceding and the following ones.

Yet the Greek Cypriot artist can easily pinpoint a beginning. After graduating from London's Royal College of Art in 2003, she returned to Cyprus. In a second-hand shop in Nicosia in 2004, she happened upon a stack of French magazines from the 1950s and found that the images inside resonated with her. Such an accidental encounter suits the artist's practice. Her small, subtle collages may be excruciatingly precise; her installations, carefully considered; and her films, measured. Yet she courts chance, both in the creation of individual pieces and in their final installation.

Images seem to double as guides for Epaminonda, who now lives and works in Berlin. Early in her career, they consisted mostly

of photographs and plates found in books and magazines from the 1940s–60s, which have a certain composition and colour, due to their age and the printing techniques of that era. Epaminonda brings them back to life through simple yet immediate gestures: cuts or erasures leave empty spaces, often to be filled with a landscape from elsewhere, an abstraction or perhaps a solid colour. Reflecting the rise in leisure and tourism, many images show people looking – at art or nature, monuments or sculptures, animals – consuming the world as an encyclopaedic picture book. Epaminonda's gestures can effect a strange inversion of lifelessness and animation: the people start to look like objects while the objects come alive.

In 2005, the artist started making black and white collages featuring children in vaguely unsettling situations. The scenes look idyllic – a family porch, a rose garden – but the children may be surrounded by intimidating adults, or their eyes have been cut out like spooky paper dolls: part human, part photographic paper. In 2007, she turned to architectural images, cutting up well-known monuments in such a way that they appear empty or in ruins. Captions may escape her scissors, leading to mistaken identities. Untitled *36 (2007) declares itself 'La Tour Eiffel' when it's clearly Notre Dame de Paris, although the cathedral's intricately carved rosette windows, heavy wooden doors and tympanums have been excised so that one glimpses the Champs de Mars behind while the curving underside of Eiffel's tower modestly peeps through the door.

Around 2007, Epaminonda introduces colour, either by using found colour pictures or by placing coloured paper behind the interstices sliced in them. She photographs found photographs, creating new compositions of her own through cropping, as in her 'Polaroid' series (2008–9). She will shoot her own material from life or re-film old television shows and movies with Super 8. Her contribution to the 2007 Cyprus Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale – the three-channel installation Tarahi III, V, VI (Turmoil, 2007) from the 'Tarahi' series (2006–ongoing) – featured Greek movies from the '60s re-filmed and re-edited digitally. Along with these works, the artist screened the first five films of the series 'Chronicles' (2010–ongoing) at the eponymous exhibition at Site Gallery in Sheffield in 2010. Filmed on Super 8 and transferred digitally, the films present mere fragments which the artist places in a way that creates new associations between them.

Both photography and film appear to arrest the world at a particular moment in time. Yet Epaminonda's cuts, edits and collages underscore how these mediums make a particular moment capable of appearing in different times and places. Her preference for older visual material may seem nostalgic, but her gestures prove that they have passed through not only her hands but also other contexts. The viewer is not transported directly to a pure past but rather sees a hybrid accumulation of various visual histories on one image along with forms and relationships inside it. The found image is found by others; looking becomes a kind of glue. Gazes or people may be connected in her collages, sometimes forming geometric shapes in a circuit. A person gazing at a green mountain creates an inlaid pyramid of connecting yellow lines in Untitled 009c/g (2007); a Greek bronze of a javelin thrower on a plinth becomes encased in a red cube in Untitled 001 1c/g (2007).

For the 5th Berlin Biennale in 2008, Epaminonda added another dimension to the flat found photograph: taking over a space inside the Neue Nationalgalerie and carefully orchestrating it with self-designed plinths and display cases alongside collages in a faux museum arrangement. This installation_ Untitled_ (2007–8) marks the first time she paired her collages with found sculptures and other objects, including a goldfish tank and a plant. The ancient Greek Kouros figure in Untitled 008c/g (2007) seems to glow with a faint yellow aura alongside a group of African girls, scantily dressed in beaded finery, in Untitled 03c/a (2007). In the shift from two to three dimensions, the collages become less an image than another kind of object to be placed, each with its own specific frame. The placements become another manifestation of collage, although images are paired with others according to the recurrence of a particular colour, motif, gesture or line. What the pictures depict is as important as their purely formal elements; the Greek Kouros figure becomes as significant as the yellow-coloured aura.

The vitrine displayed open books, which are excerpts from Infinite Library, an ongoing project started in 2007 with the artist Daniel Gustav Cramer. Epaminonda and Cramer dismantle found books, swap their pages and rebind them, allowing for new possibilities, contrasts and connotations. Her decision to display only excerpts is typical since the interstices in her work – cuts, caesuras – are often as crucial as the actual objects or images. What's shown points to what's missing. The installation was so precise that viewers could have been lulled into the sense of being in a historical museum exhibition. Yet there were no display labels, no context given, and ultimately viewers were forced to guess what the collection of items meant, why they even belonged in a group.

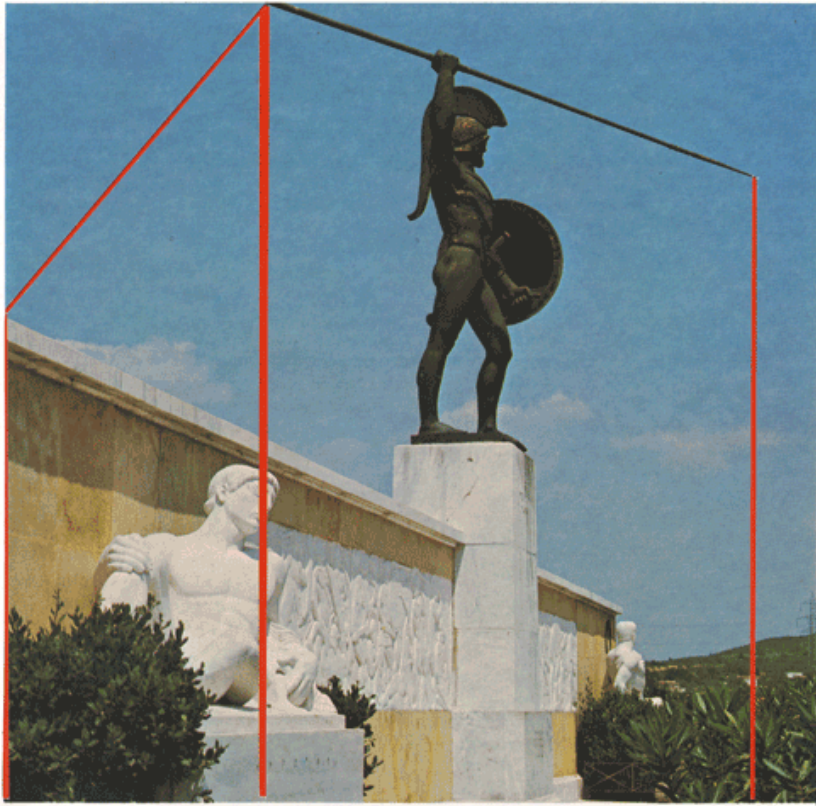
Many shows – such as 'VOL. I, II & III' at Malmö Konsthall in 2009, 'VOL. IV' at Rodeo gallery in Istanbul in 2009 or 'VOL. VI' at Tate Modern in 2010 – offer partial presentations of possibly infinite series. Primitive or ancient sculptures, ethnic vases, paper collages, black and white and colour bookplates arranged in groupings- seem to exist as three-dimensional collages, which refer to museum practices yet fail to deliver their didactic messages. These collections seem to constitute a specific archive but exist as an open-ended question. With these exhibitions, Epaminonda perfected her treatment of space and came up with a walk-in collage, based on movement, colour, composition and a consideration of how people navigate their way through a show. Once you are in the space, you are in the work.



Haris Epaminonda, Untitled *36, 2007 (Courtesy: die Künstlerin & Rodeo, Istanbul, private Sammlung)



"Untitled", Installation view, 5. Berlin Biennale for contemporary art, 2008 (Courtesy: the artist & Rodeo, Istanbul, private Sammlung)



Haris Epaminonda, Untitled 0011c/g, 2007 (Courtesy: die Künstlerin & Rodeo, Istanbul, private Sammlung)

This concept came to fruition this past summer at Frankfurt's Schirn Kunsthalle. Epaminonda's solo show added seven new films to the 'Chronicles' series debuted at Site Gallery, which were screened in a specific setting designed by the artist. She created a parcours – a maze across four darkened spaces – which forced visitors to follow a path and to discover the films sequentially while using them as beacons. In her take on Plato's cave, images flickered on the walls, offering a glimpse of an ideal yet missing whole. In one space, three projections were positioned so that visitors could see them separately or together as a triptych. Only the sound offered a sense of completion. The path through the show was accompanied by haunting music commissioned from the Manchester group Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides.

Four films featured prolonged shots, captured by the artist on Super 8 and digitally transferred. All of the films were screened as loops. One film gradually circles a neo-classical sculpture in a park; a glistening sun repetitively sets through the tops of some trees in what becomes an endless dusk; a mountain looms over a stunning lake, its craggy point reflected in the still mirrored surface; on another lake, a small boat cuts a frothy wake, reaching its destination, only to recommence its voyage. Another film captures a flowing waterfall – an infinite image that reappears in many of Epaminonda's works – while others move through a series of still images: antique sculptures in black and white or colour; natural vistas; ceramics, pots and vases, which look like Giorgio Morandi paintings saturated in Technicolor.

Some objects are filmed from life; others are filmed from photographs or postcards; many are set against paper backgrounds in primary colours. In one sequence, a postcard shows a man standing in front of a neo-classical sculpture against a red background; the postcard itself is filmed against a bright orange paper background. Screened at the end, this sculpture recalls a statue captured in the show's first film. Indeed, the films are connected through deliberate and accidental pairings of scenes, images and footage. Although Epaminonda set up a path for viewers, each film loop has a different duration so that every visitor could experience a unique combination of images and associations. Calculating how many times one could visit, how many contrasts and connections one could see, inevitably leads to a consideration of infinity and chance. The feeling is akin to stepping into a mirrored maze, where the reflections show endless new vistas, leaving us in awe and puzzlement, with only a shallow conception of time and space, with neither beginning nor end.

For her show at MoMA's Project Gallery, which runs from November 2011 to February 2012, Epaminonda is presenting Tarahi III, V, VI in a new installation with images, objects and structures, all informed by the films. Her solo show at Kunsthau Zürich has been postponed until the beginning of 2013. She plans to work on a new film with a producer in Cyprus and to shoot most of it on the island. Filming in Cyprus could bring the artist back not only to her origins but also to that moment in 2004 when she accidentally discovered the old French magazines in a second-hand shop. This beginning may soon become part of the future.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

1000 WORDS

HARIS EPAMINONDA

TALKS ABOUT "PROJECTS 96"
INTRODUCTION BY KATHY NOBLE

ARTFORUM



Haris Epaminonda, *Tarahi IIII*, 2007, still from a color video, 1 minute 27 seconds.

tution's gallery, creating alcoves, culs-de-sac, and dead ends. Via these constructions, she directs the viewer's journey while creating a rupture between the self-contained world of her work and the larger institutional "world" that houses it.

This month in New York, Epaminonda will present a new installation as part of the Museum of Modern Art's ongoing series of "Projects" exhibitions. A kind of architectural folly, the installation will comprise several discrete spaces. In the first room, Epaminonda will create a museological-style display using a number of different items from her collection. In the darkened second room, the three-channel video installation *Tarahi IIII, V, VI*, 2007, will be shown. Epaminonda created each of the component videos, which will play sequentially in a continuous cycle, by editing together excerpts of Greek movies from the '60s. The suburban melodrama of the source material is transformed by Epaminonda's editing, which loosely synchronizes fragments of the original films to Alexander Scriabin's eerie, dissonant Piano Sonata No. 10 (1913). Devices such as slow motion and superimposition amplify the music's ominousness, estranging such innocuous images as a couple crossing a footbridge or a little girl standing on a bright green lawn. Faced with these decontextualized snippets, viewers are thrown back on their own memories and associations—as is the case in all of Epaminonda's work, which transposes the relics of the past from historical time to psychological time, to use Henri Bergson's formulation. In this register, temporality is nonlinear and subjective, and the experience of duration is as mysterious, recursive, and unpredictable as memory itself.

—Kathy Noble

IN GREEK, *tarahi* means "turmoil"—specifically, a moment of calm followed by something intense happening. It's also a state of mind, and I think this state of mind, this mood will be echoed throughout the exhibition at MoMA. There will be two rooms; the films will be shown in one, and in the other will be architectural interventions: a large niche and a little window—similar to the window I made at Tate Modern in 2010—as well as a selection of framed images, some pedestals and found objects. There are



Haris Epaminonda, *Tarahi VI*, 2007, still from a color video, 2 minutes 59 seconds.

formal relations between the rooms, a kind of fragmented and twisted narration in the films and in the space, turning both into visions of the world as a slow-motion whirlwind.

When I began the “Tarahi” series in early 2007, I had just started looking at some Greek movies from the 1960s. In Cyprus, these were popular films—romances, thrillers, dramas, comedies—that were often shown on TV. I watched them many times during my childhood, and when I saw them again years later, I realized what an impact they had had on me and decided I wanted to rework them. Instead of re-creating the narratives of the original series, I would put together short sequences, isolating a small movement or the appearance of a shadow. In this way I could build up a collage of fragments, selected according to my own emotional responses and arranged according to color or imagery rather than any sequential story line. In those days I was spending a lot of time listening to a piece by Alexander Scriabin, Piano Sonata No. 10. The composition has crescendos and a restlessness in places, then

returns to calm. Like Scriabin’s music, the “Tarahi” films develop rhythmically, based on changes of mood and atmosphere, building to peaks, creating tension.

For the installation of *Tarahi III*, *V*, *VI* at MoMA, I imagine counterbalancing the intensity of color and motion in the films. I would like the first room to be a very static space. I’ve decided to create a separation between the two rooms, a corridor that leads from a brighter ambience into total darkness. The project won’t take its final shape until I’m installing; I know that the moving images will in some ways inform my visual approach to the installation. In the films there are two people, a man and a woman, who seem disconnected yet waiting and longing for each other. In an abstract way, such notions will also be echoed in the second room.

I like to think of the whole space as the work. For me it all appears as a kind of closed form, an image. Once you’re inside the space, you’re inside the work, and all the images, objects, and display structures are part of it. I’m always collecting—I take my Super 8 camera with me during my travels, capturing scenes and moments. And as I collect, I’m already editing, cutting out the bits and pieces of material that I don’t need, in a struggle between storing and erasing. When I want to make a work, I begin by picking different elements and slowly juxtaposing and rearranging them. Certain motifs become important for me and repeat, an accumulation of gestures that is like a form of language.

I am often asked whether being a Cypriot has shaped my identity as an artist. This hasn’t been so much a conscious or a literal thing, but it has affected my vision. Today, as I sit in my car in a traffic jam in the center of Nicosia, looking at the modern architecture overshadowing the different periods and styles, I can feel both the tragedy of erasure and the memory that remains, accumulating in things and places.

- Haris Epaminonda

CASEY KAPLAN

121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM



Haris Epaminonda @ The Museum of Modern Art February 2012



Installation view of the exhibition Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda. November 17, 2011 through February 20, 2012. Photographer: Jonathan Muzikar. Image courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art

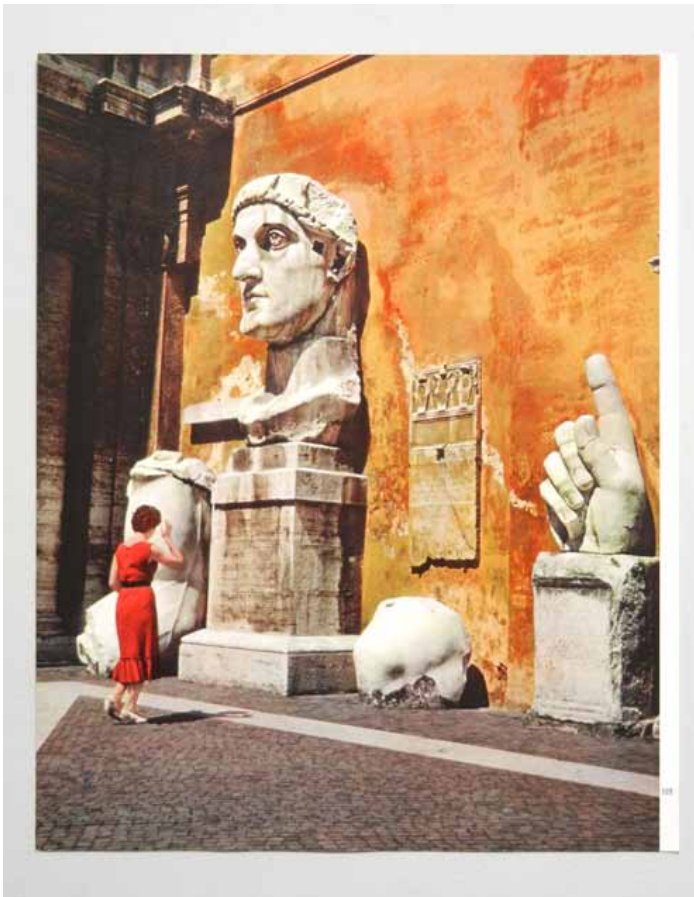
Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda
The Museum of Modern Art
November 17, 2011–February 20, 2012
Projects Gallery, second floor

Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda is a peculiar show in the Projects wing of the MoMA. It's a multimedia installation consisting of photographs, pottery and three video projections. The viewer enters the exhibition through a narrow hallway that doubles over itself and then spills into a large room. On the walls of the hallway are small photographs with a noticeable pattern: they feature people looking at artwork. A man in a suit holds a clipboard and examines a nude statue. A woman in a red dress stands at a Greek ruin and looks at an enormous crumbling sculpture of a face and hands. The dated clothing of the people places the photos in the 1950's. In addition to the photographs, small antique urns from different cultures and time periods stand on wooden platforms that are painted white. The urns are solid colored— red, teal, seafoam—and match the backgrounds in the photographs.

The viewer discovers more oddities as they enter the main room, including a tall octagonal pillar with nothing on top of it, as well as a miniature flight of stairs that ends at waist height. Above the miniature stairs, a small niche is cut into the wall that contains an urn. Most puzzling is a tall rectangular stand with a bronze urn on top. A container made of thin strips of wood, similar to the frame of a house, encloses the urn. On the floor, propped against the wall and partially obscured by the stand, lies a stash of framed photographs. It looks as if the art handlers tucked them there while hanging the show and then forgot about them.

Epaminonda's motivations are mysterious, however it's clear that her pieces are tied together in aesthetic—the vintage photographs share a matching color palette and depict images of crumbling artwork and architecture from lost civilizations. A palpable atmosphere is felt in the exhibition—it's a bit like walking into an old library and sensing the history contained in the old books. The artist continues to create interesting juxtapositions in the final room of the exhibition. Three videos are projected onto separate walls, inviting the viewer to stand in the dark surrounded by them. As the viewer watches a video in front of them, a second plays to their right and a third plays directly behind them. While each video is different, the three films are unified by a soundtrack that plays over the speakers: a triumphant soundscape of strings and shakers composed by the band Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides.

The first video is a slideshow of archaeological sites. A building on the edge of a cliff displays for a few minutes and then switches to a cracked courtyard beside stone pillars. On the next wall, the second video rotates between close-ups of statues, idols, and urns similar to the ones in the main exhibition. The image slightly shakes as if the camera was rattled by the wind. When one of the images suddenly slides off the screen and a turning page is seen, it's revealed that the artworks are actually photographs filmed out of a book with a camcorder. The third video depicts a landscape of a palm tree standing before a blue sky. The image shakes as a result of the camcorder, but never changes to a different page. This simple landscape is possibly the most intriguing in Epaminonda's show—it's the only one of her images that doesn't allude to decay, instead remaining new and implacable in any time period. One is inclined to stare at it for a long time. In fact, it's difficult to look away. When absorbed in the image, it's as if time has stopped.



Haris Epaminonda. Untitled T5 from Vol. VII. 2011. Found printed paper, 11 7/8 x 9 11/16 x 1 in. Courtesy the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul.



Installation view of the exhibition Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda. Photographer: Jonathan Muzikar. Image courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Andy Warhol's Interview

ARMCHAIR TRAVELER: FROM ROBERTO MATTA TO MATT KEEGAN



The art world too global for you? Each week, Interview highlights in pictures the shows you'd want to see—if you could jet-set from one international art hub to the next.

At MoMA through Feb. 20.

Haris Epaminonda. Untitled T35 from Vol. VII. 2011. Found printed paper, 6 1/8 x 4 5/16" (15.5 x 11 cm). Courtesy the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul. © 2011 Haris Epaminonda

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

artdaily.org

Berlin-based artist Haris Epaminonda has first solo museum show at MoMA



Haris Epaminonda. Untitled T14 from Vol. VII. 2011. Found printed paper, 10 13/16 x 7 1/16 x 1" (27.4 x 18 x 2.5 cm). Courtesy the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul. © 2011 Haris Epaminonda.

NEW YORK, N.Y.- For her first solo museum exhibition in the United States, Berlin-based artist Haris Epaminonda (b. 1980, Cyprus) constructs a world based on connections between a three-channel video projection—part of her work titled *Chronicles* (2010)—and a museological-style installation of antique pottery, columns, plinths, niches, and pictures culled from old magazines and books. Among the books are travelogues about archeological sites that are visually related to one another but separated by centuries of history.

Composed of short Super 8 films (transferred to video) that the artist shot over several years, *Chronicles* eschews narrative in favor of fragmented images that probe the nature of time and assert the permeability of memory. One film shows ancient artifacts from different cultures either isolated against colored backgrounds or in images torn from the pages of an art history book, subtly animated by the slight motion of the handheld camera. In another film, views of the Acropolis exude a twilight state of entropy or decay. The third film simply portrays a pair of superimposed palm trees flickering in the wind amid a barren landscape, remnants of a civilization in decline. The artist enlists a range of techniques, from long takes and unedited footage to fast cuts, narrative rupture, and intensified color. Because the films are looped and of varying lengths, the image combinations do not repeat. A soundtrack of mixed instrumentation and natural sounds by the band Part Wild Horses Mane on Both Sides provides an acoustic link between the three projections. The moving images, in turn, inform the sculptural installation, creating a three-dimensional audiovisual montage that cuts across temporal and geographic borders.

The exhibition is organized by Roxana Marcoci, Curator, Department of Photography, The Museum of Modern Art.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

BLOGINITY

Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda

313 words by Daniel Haim



Haris Epaminonda. Untitled T3 from Vol. VII. 2011. Found printed paper, 10 1/4 x 7 11/16 x 7/8" (26 x 19.5 x 2.2 cm). Courtesy the artist and Rodeo, Istanbul. © 2011 Haris Epaminonda

For her first solo museum exhibition in the United States, Berlin-based artist Haris Epaminonda (b. 1980, Cyprus) constructs a world based on connections between a three-channel video projection—part of her work titled *Chronicles* (2010)—and a museological-style installation of antique pottery, columns, plinths, niches, and pictures culled from old magazines and books. Among the books are travelogues about archeological sites that are visually related to one another but separated by centuries of history.

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CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

frieze

Published on 26/07/11

Snail Fever

THE THIRD LINE, DUBAI, UAE

The era remembered as the 'Golden Age' of Arabic music (and cinema) is synonymous with the remembrance of an Arab heyday. The period encompassing the 1920s through to the 1950s produced some of the region's biggest stars, and figures such as 'Abd El-Halim, Um Kulthum and Fayrouz are now deified in popular Middle Eastern culture. 'Snail Fever', then, did not solely reflect the sensationalism of this particular period, but also used it as a stepping stone, exploring the viral-like quality of music and its insidious ability to seep into different political, social and familial situations. In fact, it was El-Halim himself who inspired the title for the show, curated by Sara Mameni, for it was the Bilharzia virus, transmitted by snails, which eventually killed the Egyptian singer.

Marking the gallery's final exhibition before closing for the torrid Gulf summer, there was a sense of space that seemed more prevalent than in previous shows. Perhaps it was the discreet way in which Abbas Akhavan's Greener Pastures (2011) a large digital print, was propped up against the wall in a corner and surrounded by seemingly discarded glass bottles, or in the visual illusion of Rayyane Tabet's Sherihan, Sherihan, anzili chaa'raki (Sherihan, Sherihan, Let down your hair, 2011), an artist book comprising 29 pieces of white paper on which Arabic calligraphy has been punched out in small dots, rather like Braille. The whiteness of the work made it seem at first that the wall on which they were hung was in fact empty. All in all, the works felt disjointed.

So, what was it that linked them? Featuring works by Akhavan, Fatima Al-Qadiri and Khalid Al-Gharaballi, Ala Ebtekar, Haris Epaminonda, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Tabet, Slavs and Tatars and Newsha Tavakolian, Mameni began developing 'Snail Fever' a year and a half ago. 'Looking at contemporary works from the region I was struck by how many artists make work about music,' she explains. 'I specifically wanted to look at music in the contemporary moment – art and music have always been related. Music in the exhibition is what brings people together, reminds one of home and even marks identities. It was important to me that each of these artists approached these issues with humour in a tongue-in-cheek kind of way.'



Humour was certainly present, along with a hefty dose of pain and longing. Hymns of No Resistance (Stuck in Ossetia With You) (2010) by Slavs and Tatars – a piano score of the song of Stuck In The Middle With You (1972) – employs a light touch to talk about the Ossetian-Georgian conflict, rescored for regional instruments such as the ney. Next to it Al-Qadiri and Al-Gharaballi's Dala3 (in Vegas) and WaWa Complex (both 2011) play on the contemporary stereotype of female Arabic pop stars who, far from being the revered icons of the past, are now treated as dangerously clichéd objects of desire for the mass market. Sobering, however, are four C-type prints by Tavakolian. The 'Listen Series' (2010) features Iran's underground female singers, unable to perform in public due to the country's strict moral and religious codes. Standing against sequined backdrops and singing with eyes shut, swaying ever so slightly to the beat, they are mesmerising and emit an aura of serenity tinged with sadness. In their intimate expressions, much more is conveyed than could ever be said in words.

There was music in the gallery, as two video works provide an ongoing soundtrack, yet in some ways the experience risked being muted. The quirky catalogue, designed to look like an old LP cover, features no information beyond the curator's statement as to what each work is about and it was challenging to understand the sometimes complex references in each piece. Where Panayioutou's Slow Dance Marathon (2005) exudes a languid intimacy that is easy to be drawn into, others, like Ebtekar's Electric Del Roba (2011) need rather more scratching below the surface. 'The works in the show are all research based and fairly difficult to access at the surface level, but I think there is enough there for everyone to be able to enter each work,' admits Mameni, pointing out that the works – bar three – were not made specifically for 'Snail Fever'. 'The issue of accessibility is a question that haunts contemporary art, as well as museum and gallery displays in general. I chose to eliminate all explanations from the catalogue because I did not want to give just one linear explanation to the works in the show and, by doing so, limit their meanings to the ones given.' This was certainly not an easy show, but it is an eloquent one, and, with a little work from the viewer, the results were supremely rewarding.

- Anna Wallace-Thompson

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM



HARIS EPAMINONDA. FILMS

13 May - 31 July, 2011

The SCHIRN presents a solo exhibition of the young Cypriot artist Haris Epaminonda's work. Her production is essentially determined by the collage technique which she has extended by combining pictures, films, photographs, sculptures, earthenware vessels, pieces of woodwork, Chinese porcelain, antique figures, and other found objects from a wide range of sources to complex installations. Epaminonda deliberately avoids all references to her objects' date and place of provenance and meaning. The viewer is rather thrown back upon himself and his own associations.

All the artist's pictorial, filmic and spatial compositions share a similar sensibility and texture. Epaminonda's subtle and yet strangely emotive language opens up an imaginary space in which one can lose oneself in a realm of relations and gestures of its own while moving through the exhibition. For the SCHIRN, Epaminonda will create a new installation which will question aspects of time, motion, stillness, as well as of representation and presentation.

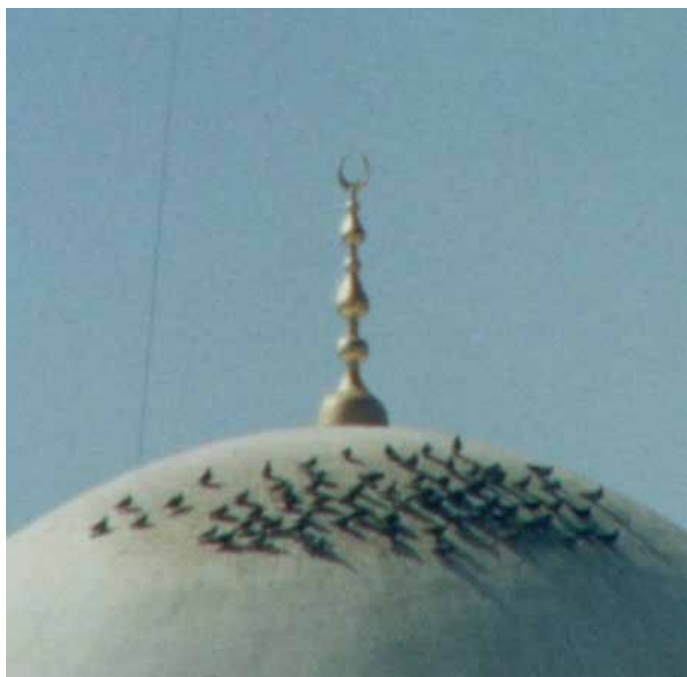
SCHIRN
KUNSTHALLE
FRANKFURT

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

"Haris Epaminonda", [Cura](#) (online), May 13, 2011

cura.

Haris Epaminonda





From today, May 13, through July 31 Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt dedicates to Haris Epaminonda an extensive retrospective, which comprises a new installation. The project includes a number of looped projections, taken from the work *Chronicle*, each with its own length, each with no consistent narrative, all sharing the recognizable artist's approach to the fragmented story, marked by leitmotifs and a constant esthetic quality.

The artist from Cyprus expands the concept of collage from the image to the film, from the photography to the sculpture and to objects, establishing connections which can be variously interpreted, thanks to the diversity and the different origins of the materials, as well as the exoticism of the subjects. Epaminonda interacts with the viewers and the exhibition space, resorting to imaginary worlds which she makes by superimposing varied techniques and times.

The "audio-video collage" on view in Frankfurt is enriched with the sound composed by the French-British experimental duo Part Wild Horses *Mane On Both Sides*. A catalogue accompanies the exhibition, supported by the SCHIRN ZEITGENOSSEN, with installation views and comments to the films.

1-9/9 Haris Epaminonda, *Chronicles*, video still detail, digital transfer from super 8 film, 2011-ongoing, commissioned by Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt Courtesy: the artist; Rodeo gallery, Istanbul

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121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

cura.

#08 SPRING/SUMMER 2011

DEVOTED
TO CONTEMPORARY
ART



A « L'atelier », une classe de dessin.

En « L'atelier », une classe de dessin.

At « L'atelier » - A drawing lesson.

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Cura No. 8
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Cover by Haris Epaminonda

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Level 2 Gallery: Haris Epaminonda, VOL. VI

Tate Modern: Exhibition
29 May – 30 August 2010

TATE
MODERN



Photo: Tate Photography © Courtesy of the artist and RODEO, Istanbul

As part of her ongoing series Volumes, Haris Epaminonda creates precise installations consisting mainly of found objects and images. Adopting and then undoing conventional modes of exhibition-making and museum display, Epaminonda develops all-encompassing environments that are simultaneously familiar and new. Each exhibition is posited as a new 'Volume' in the consecutively numbered series.

For VOL. VI, Epaminonda has brought together a series of objects from around the world. Wooden carvings, clay vases, statuettes and pages of books – all taken out of their original context – are juxtaposed with each other to form new associations and readings. The artist purposefully avoids stating the origin of each element.

Viewers are invited to draw from their own cultural and social experience and engage with the work without relying on a predetermined explanation of origin and meaning. Though constructed from tangible objects arranged in a specific physical space, the work offers visitors the potential for imaginary journeys through distant times and places.

Further extending the notion of journeys, Epaminonda's installation paces the visitor's movement through the gallery: spare minimalism is followed by areas brimming with objects, some partly hidden and imbued with intrigue. Together they form a spatial composition, akin to a three-dimensional collage.

The final space houses a new film, part of an ongoing series of short sequences filmed in different locations over the last three years. The music that accompanies the film had been specially created by Part Wild Horses Mane On Both Sides. Epaminonda approaches the filmic space in a similar way to the rest of the exhibition; each excerpt forms another element of her overall 'collection' of images, objects, times, spaces and experiences.

Haris Epaminonda was born in 1980 in Nicosia, Cyprus. She now lives and works in Berlin.

Haris Epaminonda, VOL. VI is curated by Kyla McDonald and Kathy Noble.

Haris Epaminonda - VOL. VI



Haris Epaminonda VOL. VI, 2010, Installation view

VOL. VI was an installation made for Tate Modern's former Level 2 Gallery space in London by Cypriot artist Haris Epaminonda. This sixth part in an ongoing series of Volume works consisted of an array of framed appropriated images taken from anthropology publications - often, but not always, paired - alongside collections of found objects divided by temporary walls in an artfully laid out series of discrete rooms the final of which housed a video.

The objects have the look and feel of a collection of exotic souvenirs gathered by a colonial explorer: statuettes, carvings, rugs, vessels, utilitarian or decorative.

Adopting a spare and minimal approach that mimics museological conventions in order to unravel them, Epaminonda's installations bemuse and obfuscate where they should explain, and craft narrative arcs through the creation of unexpected linkages. The deftly executed juxtapositions generate almost-tangible relationships through their exposure of similarity and difference in the found content. The origins of her objects remain hidden.

ARTFORUM

Haris Epaminonda

RODEO | ISTANBUL

The work of Haris Epaminonda consists primarily of found material. Her early videos are excerpts from Egyptian soap operas and fragments from Greek films. Her objects are relics from antique dealers and curiosities from flea-market stalls. Her images are pages from antiquarian books that have been carefully cropped, photographed, or used as the base layer of lacelike collages. The work hums with the nostalgia surrounding such archaic stuff. Here, framed images, found sculptures, custom-made plinths, a low-slung wooden table, a glass-topped box with a book inside, an earthenware bowl, a lump of rock perched on an antique scale, and a swath of fabric laid on the floor beneath a spread of diminutive, bone-colored objects served as the focal point for the Berlin-based Cypriot's first show in Istanbul. The installation, *Untitled #07 I/g* (all works 2009), created an intriguing tableau. On one hand, the arrangement was meticulous and austere, with everything carefully stacked against the back wall of an otherwise empty gallery. On the other, it was strangely emotive—one of the figurines, for instance, appeared to be coyly hiding behind rather than sitting atop its plinth. This tendency to endow inanimate objects with feeling echoed elsewhere in the show. Shielded by a large gray slab, another figurine, *Untitled #03 I/g*, placed before a slightly elevated picture like a viewer entranced by a masterpiece in a museum, seemed to be ruminating on a scene from antiquity. Nearby, *Untitled #04 I/g*, a thin wooden frame with four tiny legs, wrapped around the base of one of the gallery's imposing square columns, as if it were embracing the building's architectural support.



The show was called "Vol. IV," after an exhibition Epaminonda staged at the Malmö Konsthall in Sweden in the spring of 2009, "Vol. I, II & III." The first of those "volumes" was a mysterious set of Polaroids depicting plants, animals, landscapes, ruins, tribes, riverboats, rock formations, and more. All of the photographs are of pages from books and magazines that clearly concern anthropology, ethnography, travel, or art history. But Epaminonda strips away the context to create chains of association and patterns of meaning that operate outside any specific temporal or cultural references. "Vol. IV" included no Polaroids; instead, the series' organizational principle was transposed to book pages—framed, paired, or arranged in triptychs—showing lush waterfalls, a leopard, or an archaeological site. One page carried no image at all but rather a short text, provenance undisclosed, about a carpet. These images and isolated forms conversed in a barely decipherable yet evocative language of gestures, connections, and clues. Holding everything together, both literally and figuratively, were the supports: Epaminonda placed as much emphasis on frames, pedestals, and plinths as on objects and images. This is where the work was most affecting, in the crafting of special encasings and enclosures, the idea of giving shelter to a collection of lost, discarded, and dissociated things.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

MAP

Haris Epaminonda: Images in Search of Lost Time

Haris Epaminonda's recent series of Polaroids dovetail reality and imagination. Isla Leaver-Yap investigates



Untitled #67', polaroid, 2009

In Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, the novel's protagonist K comes across a prison chaplain on his labyrinthine journey through the municipal legal system. During their first meeting the chaplain enquires about a book tucked under K's arm. 'What are you holding in your hand? Is it a prayer book?' K answers the chaplain in the negative, explaining instead that the book is, 'an album of the city's tourist sights'. The chaplain demands that K throw away the book, to which he immediately acquiesces. As the book falls across the floor its pages are inadvertently torn.

Tucked under K's arm during half the novel (a handbook he plans to pass to a group of Italians), this photo album is an apparently minor detail. In fact, it appears to be such a casual feature that the album is mentioned only twice: once when K picks it up, and once when he discards it. Yet this is nonetheless an intentionally curious element. The compendium of images K carries is already framed within the register of 'the foreign' or 'the exotic' while, on the other hand, K becomes increasingly incarcerated within the concrete reality of the very city whose portraits he carries. These images are not intended for the protagonist's familiarised consumption, nor for any character in the novel, but rather, for those who do not yet know their content. Until K's meeting with the chaplain, the album contains an unexpected space of representation—it proposes a re-reading of a familiar city space that is, in the end of this photo album's life, fundamentally misread as an object of worship.

Touristic images, ethnographic photographs, pastoral landscapes, and portraits of strangers, taken by strangers and viewed by strangers: all these images are complicit in the proposition of singular worlds. And where such photographs pose as bona fide



Left to Right: 'Untitled #63', polaroid, 2009, and 'Untitled #69', polaroid, 2009

representations of those same worlds, artist Haris Epaminonda (born Cyprus, 1980, lives in Berlin) appears acutely attuned to the suggestive content of these types of images. Aware of the malleability of such material, in many of her videos, collages and, most recently, her 365 Polaroid films, she exploits this space of representation to create symbolic realms.

For this latter photographic series (all 'Untitled', 2008-ongoing), lately installed in Malmö Konsthall, Epaminonda shot hundreds of Polaroid images of printed matter. In her sequenced display, these re-imaged images smack of an Everyman traveller. The time frame of these images is hesitant to divulge itself, while the contemporary style of each cropping seems anachronistic to the thing it depicts; frame and photograph are always at odds. Yet despite this formal discord, there is an undeniable seductiveness to the series. The viewer encounters camels, peacocks and zebras; oddly cropped palms and impossibly steep ravines; painterly landscapes and cinematic vistas. The grain of the photograph, sometimes a burnished auburn glow and other times a classic monochrome, renders each image into a wistful and painterly abstraction of the concrete.

One particularly memorable photograph, for example, shows a coastal vista. With a silhouetted tree trunk bisecting it, the image is seemingly shot from a forest overlooking a bay. A chromatic aura, meanwhile, sweeps across the image but is indistinguishable as either a chance rainbow or an accidentally over-developed surface of the Polaroid. The romanticism inherent in these images mimics the register of fin-de-siecle expedition journals and the utopian exoticism of 20th century travel writing. Shown in their hundreds, Epaminonda's Polaroids become a hallucinatory image of travel's own desire.

In its generalised form, the tourist's photographic album flattens multiple worlds into one single continuous plane. Ordered according to the traveller's personal logic, a compendium of travel images portends to know territories and peoples. It carefully documents the elusive moment of voyage in the frame of leisure, and it is stored later to become nostalgia—the memory of travel. It creates its own classification system, and builds up a sequence of singular horizontal images creating another zone divorced from the context's initial context and condition.

Despite its carefully deployed similarities, the tone of Epaminonda's Polaroid series is inherently distanced, critical and watchful. Her excursion into the photographic archive of the well-travelled image is, ultimately, a decisive one. It does not celebrate a retreat into the past, but uses nostalgia as a conduit between past and future. 'Images,' explains Epaminonda, 'need to keep open the potential of reading them always as if anew.' The very material of Epaminonda's series, however, presents a paradox in the project's relationship to renewal. In 2008, when she began the project, the Polaroid Corporation had recently ceased production of its instantly developing photographic papers. And while Fujifilm is one of the few remaining producers of instant film, the medium edges closer into the site of its own obsolescence and, inevitably, nostalgia.

Polaroid's cameras and its accompanying instant film were both developed by Edwin Land in the late 1940s, reportedly from his daughter's question: 'Why can't I see them now?' And, unlike other film or digital cameras, Polaroid's instant film presented a simple gimmick that was also a helplessly rare magic; it allowed the photographer to be both maker of and witness to the transformation of a single moment into a single image. The instantaneousness of this process demonstrated the mobility and casualness of image making, and showed photography not necessarily as a tool of consecration, but rather one of rich metamorphosis. A possible precursor to digital instantaneousness, there was something exceptional about the transformative properties of the Polaroid that proposed an interstitial moment of an image's becoming. Yet Epaminonda's Polaroids retain a touch of that lingering instant, just before the image reveals itself in crystalline form. On the precipice of placelessness and timelessness, they present an a priori image.



Left to Right: 'Untitled #64', polaroid, 2009, and 'Untitled #72', polaroid, 2009

The Polaroids series is not an isolated investigation of the archived or near-forgotten image, however. Although distinct in its seamless editing process, in many ways the project is another facet of Epaminonda's extensive photographic collage and video practice. Her work variously weaves through ideas of the unconscious, diaristic or historical image, and within each medium she persistently investigates the porousness of past images as raw material through which to construct new visual 'passages' to our present.

Many of Epaminonda's collage works, such as 'Untitled 03c/a', 2007, are carefully nuanced composites. Presented in an intimate installation in the Neue National Galerie as part of bb5 (Berlin Biennial), 2008, 'Untitled 03c/a' depicts a landscape, which is barely visible and used primarily as a border to an overlaid ethnographic portrait of a group of young boys. A few small incisions at the centre of the portrait reveal what lies underneath. Also part of the bb5 installation, 'Untitled 009c/g', 2007, extends this scenario in a more explicit gesture. The collage shows a photograph of a figure in a landscape. From the figure's cupped hand, a golden pyramid has been cut into the photograph to expose a sheet of yellow paper below. The image appears to stand in for speech or else an imaginary Euclidean calculation of the landscape. Unlike Epaminonda's Polaroids, however, this manner of editing deals not with the collusion of one type of photography with another, but rather with the explicit edit and intervention of the artist's hand. Detail is unambiguously removed or else directly recomposed.

In this sense, the Polaroid series has more in common with the artist's collaborative project initiated with Daniel Gustav Cramer, entitled *The Infinite Library*. In 2007 she and Cramer began creating an archive of books. The pair would swap pages, rebind whole catalogues, create impossible montages using photographs culled from a diverse range of sources, and reorder the publications according to their own arbitrary logic.

Both *The Infinite Library* and the Polaroid series are contingent on seriality and association for the construction their otherworldliness—both play on the traits of the traveller's picture album. Yet the photograph-of-a-photograph format presents different territory for Epaminonda.



Left to Right: 'Untitled #62', polaroid, 2009, and 'Untitled #39', polaroid, 2009



Left to Right: 'Untitled #70', polaroid, 2009, and 'Untitled #73', polaroid, 2009

CASEY KAPLAN

121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

VOL. I, II & III: Haris Epaminonda

2/4 – 10/5 2009

S:t Johannesgatan 7
Box 17127
200 10 Malmö
www.konsthall.malmo.se

Haris Epaminonda (Born 1980, Cyprus. Lives and works in Berlin) works mainly with collage, video and photography. The point of departure for her paper collages is found material from books and magazines from the 1950s and 60s. Her videos are composed out of disparate found filmfootage as well as the artist's own filmed sequences.

Epaminonda's moving images are in many instances overlapping or juxtaposed with one another so that threads of potential meaning (political utopias, gender, cultures of collecting) weave in and out of each other and thus evoke a dreamlike distant world. In the 1950s and 1960s, from which the found footage often derives, the idea of progress and fascination for the future seemed filled with both hope and fear, and Epaminonda's work moves between a real and a potential or illusory past/future. This creates a poetic, surreal and uncanny maze as if the found and reworked material is a loop-hole in time.

The exhibition, VOL. I, II & III, at Malmö Konsthall will be the first large solo exhibition by Haris Epaminonda in northern Europe. The exhibition is divided, as the title indicates, into three parts. The three parts consist of two separated spaces in Malmö Konsthall and a book produced for the exhibition.

VOL. I is a book containing approximately 120 Polaroid images, which is 1/3 of the 365 Polaroids Epaminonda has taken since 2008. She has re-photographed images from books and magazines, details of images, places, situations and collections, with an instant Polaroid camera. The many images make the book appear as a photo album done by a well-travelled traveller, artist, anthropologist or simply a tourist with the ambition of becoming just that – a traveller, artist or anthropologist. Today Polaroid films are not produced anymore and the factories were shut down in February 2008, so the nostalgic instant film era ended after 62 years.

VOL. II & III consist of two installations, attempting to transform the two Malmö Konsthall spaces into a kind of 'theatre of the world'. The installations will appear as 'rooms of wonder' consisting of an assembly of images, plinths, objects – such as ostrich eggs – and sculptures that aspire to envision a shadow realm, offering an enigmatic puzzle that insists to remain unnamed and unresolved. Intimate space is confronted with the surreal.

Both VOL. II & III will play with the institutional notion of the museum and of display. The spaces will attempt to juxtapose the highly modern and the ancient as compressed time, compressed memory, compressed dream-like fiction within sculptures and images.

Haris Epaminonda studied at the Royal College of Art and Kingston University, London. She represented Cyprus at the 52nd Venice Biennial (2007) and took part at the 5th Berlin Biennial, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2008) as well as the 9th Sharjah Biennale, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (2009).

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V) Indischer Flamingo Adjacent (Lappengrass Island)

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Provisions for the Future: Past of the Coming Days

Sharjah Biennial 09
16.03.2009—
16.05.2009

16 MARCH - 16 MAY
2009
SHARJAH
BIENNIAL
9

9th edition of the Sharjah Biennial will transcend central themes and pre-cast frameworks, exhibiting instead a wide range of works selected by open invitation.

The SB9 program will comprise the exhibition programme titled 'Provisions For The Future' curated by Isabel Carlos, and the performance and film programme 'Past Of The Coming Days' curated by Tarek Abou El Fetouh. The entire city of Sharjah will be offered to artists for context-specific work, and other SB9 activities will take place across a wide range of venues including the Sharjah Art Museum, the Heritage Area of Sharjah, and the American University of Sharjah.

'Sharjah is a geographic and cultural meeting place, where the notion of future is permanently evoked,' comments Isabel Carlos, Curator of the Sharjah Biennial 9. 'More than a presentation of a global selection of art works, 'Provisions For The Future' aims to be a place of production and development of artworks in the context of the city of Sharjah.'

As well as exhibiting works by more than 50 artists from around the world, there are a number of events and programmes designed to support and nurture creativity for local and visiting participants. These include the March Meeting, a networking opportunity for regional art institutions; the Sharjah Biennial Production Programme which explores various schemes and methodologies of artistic production through the provision of resources and know-how; and the Artist-in-Residence Programme, a scheme that hosts visiting artists in Sharjah with the goal of developing context-related work.

'The Sharjah Biennial has a track record as one of the few art institutions in the region leading a programme of support for artists' productions,' explains Jack Persekian, Artistic Director of the Sharjah Biennial 9. 'This support needs to be sensibly extended to artists operating in the region and those working elsewhere who can positively contribute to the crucial dialogue amongst artists and practitioners, the exchange of experience and the progress of knowledge.'

List of participating artists in Provisions for the Future: Hamra Abbas, Haig Aivazian, Reem Al Ghaith, Diana Al Hadid, Basma Al-Sharif, Halil Altindere, Juan Araujo, Tarek Atoui, Samira Badran, Doris Bittar, Melissa Chimera & Adele Njame, Eugenio Dittborn, Lili Dujourie, Alberto Duman, Jawad Al Malhi, Hala Elkoussy, Haris Epaminonda, Ayse Erkmen, Sophie Ernst, Amir H. Fallah, Lara Favaretto, Lamy Gargash, Mariam Ghani, Simryn Gill, Sheela Gowda, Laurent Grasso, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, N.S. Harsha, Doug Henders, Agnes Janich, Lamia Joreige, Fernando José Pereira, Narelle Jubelin, Nadia Kaabi Linke, Hayv Kahraman, Elena Kovylin, Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen, Maider Lopez, Robert MacPherson, Lani Maestro, Firoz Mahmud, Waheeda Malullah, José Luis Martinat, Hiroyuki Masuyama, Gita Meh, Yonamine Miguel, Giuseppe Moscatello, Nika Oblak & Primož Novak, Liliana Porter, Karin Sander, Nida Sinnokrot, Valeska Soares, David Spriggs, Ana Vidigal, Sharif Waked, Liu Wei, Lawrence Weiner, Jane & Louise Wilson.

List of participants in Past of the Coming Days: Ahmed El Attar, Sherif El Azma, Sulayman Al Bassam, Nacera Belaza, Néjab Belkadi, Camp, Romeo Castellucci, Ahmed Foula, Tarek Halaby, May Al Ibrashy, Iman Issa, Eva Meyer-Keller, Abbas Kiarostami, Elena Kovylin, Maha Maamoun, Rabih Mroué, Shinichiro Ogata, Samer Omran, Rimini Protokol, Walid Raad, Adila Laidi-Hanieh, Mahmoud Refat, Mounira Al Solh, Raed Yassin.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

frieze

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Sharjah Biennial 9

VARIOUS VENUES, SHARJAH, UNITED ARAB EMIRATE

One of the trickier things about evaluating biennials is that there is no consensus on the function they should fulfil, the type of experience they should offer, or the audience they should serve. For some biennials, the curators seek to put international contemporary art in dialogue with a specific (often beleaguered) local social context; in others, the location serves as the backdrop for a clamour of imported perspectives and agendas. In 2007, the Sharjah Biennial took an ecological theme, one that is particularly pertinent to a country that is currently pouring resources pell-mell into construction with little regard for the long-term environmental effects. This year, however, artistic director Jack Persekian's key achievement was not initiating a topical debate, but instead transforming the Biennial's agenda by directing his budget towards commissioning new work, in large part through an open submission process. Commendably over half of the included artists were women. Concurrent to the exhibition, talks and performance programmes shared equal billing, aiming to foster a climate of productivity and exchange in what is the region's most significant professional cultural hub.

As a result, the Biennial as a whole felt, at times, a little hard to pin down. While curator Isabel Carlos' title for her exhibition, 'Provisions for the Future', did chime with that of Tarek Abu El Fetouh's performance and film programme, 'Past of the Coming Days', the temporal thematic affinity did not develop much further. If indeed there was a theme, it might be said to be Sharjah itself; many works, such as Mariam Ghani and Erin Ellen Kelly's film *Smile You're in Sharjah* (2009), were flat-footedly illustrative of the city, or else, like Eugenio Dittborn's 'Airmail Paintings' (1984–ongoing), allusive of geographical drift and dislocation – reflecting the experiences of much of Sharjah's predominantly immigrant population.

The performance and film programme shared this latter approach; El Fetouh writes (in a bravura display of evasiveness) that "‘Past of the Coming Days’ is a programme that positions itself as an interface between the ideologies, conditions and various cultural frameworks that constitute the distinct arts and culture landscape of Sharjah". His selected films and performances sat in relation to Sharjah, even if they refrained from addressing it directly. Works such as CAMP's research-based dockside project *Wharfage* (2009) or Rimini Protokol's extraordinary *Call Cutta in a Box* (2009) – a one-on-one telephone conversation with a worker in an Indian call centre, who could control devices in the hotel room in which the participant sat – both drew attention to the complicated lines of manipulation that spider out from, and into, the city.

In case any visitors might have attributed the mild critical seasoning of such work to the fact that the ruler of Sharjah is also the father of the Biennial's director, a work by Turkish artist Halil Altindere at the entrance to the show featured the Sheikh's portrait only partially concealing a wall-mounted safe. Such political provocation, however, is so **obvious as to be** toothless; the reality of life in the United Arab Emirates is far more complex and intriguing than stereotypes suggest.

The most successful works in the Biennial were in fact the most elusive; they refused to defend their contextual relevance, but nevertheless seemed appropriate in ways that were hard to identify. Lara Favaretto installed uneven pairs of coloured car-wash rollers along the wall of a courtyard; as they intermittently whirled, centrifugal force made their nylon strands touch, then flop apart again as they slowed. Even without the work's title (Amamiya and Sasayama; Bobby and Laura; Harold and Maude; Kelly and Griff; Maria and Felix; Shirley and Cyril; Stephanie and Sabrina, 2009) it made me think of couples. Beyond that, the work was like a hallucination in a city in which the brand new sits alongside, and tentatively touches, the decrepit.

While it was nowhere acknowledged as a curatorial concern, some of the best works made subtle use of sound, or its implied absence. Around another courtyard, Brazilian artist Valeska Soares collaborated with O Grivo on (Shushhhhhh.....) prelude (2009), a ripple of recorded shushes from hidden speakers that initiated hesitant silences in gathering crowds, and disturbed the peace when one was alone. Lili Dujourie's clay fragments and iron-wire wall drawings are strange and timeless, and here also seemed to call for quiet. A significant retrospective display by the artist Robert MacPherson used Australian slang in text works, paintings and sculptures that were variously humorous, ebullient and austerely tight-lipped. Two outstanding installations by Sheela Gowda employed sound: in *Some Place* (2005) voices whisper from the ends of a network of pipes; in *Drip Field* (2009) the sound of a dripping hose is transmitted into the museum from a picturesque flooded roadway beneath the window. Accompanied by a Johann Sebastian Bach cello prelude, Haris Epaminonda's bewitching projection *Zebra* (2006) was worth the seven-hour plane trip alone.

There were a few obvious duds by artists whose work was so out of step with the rest that it undermined one's faith in the cohesiveness of the whole enterprise. However, as Persekian stated, the Biennial prioritized process over product. In a country that seems to be interested only in the short-term future and the immediate past, a slower, more long-sighted approach is perhaps not just prudent but vitally necessary.

- Jonathan Griffin

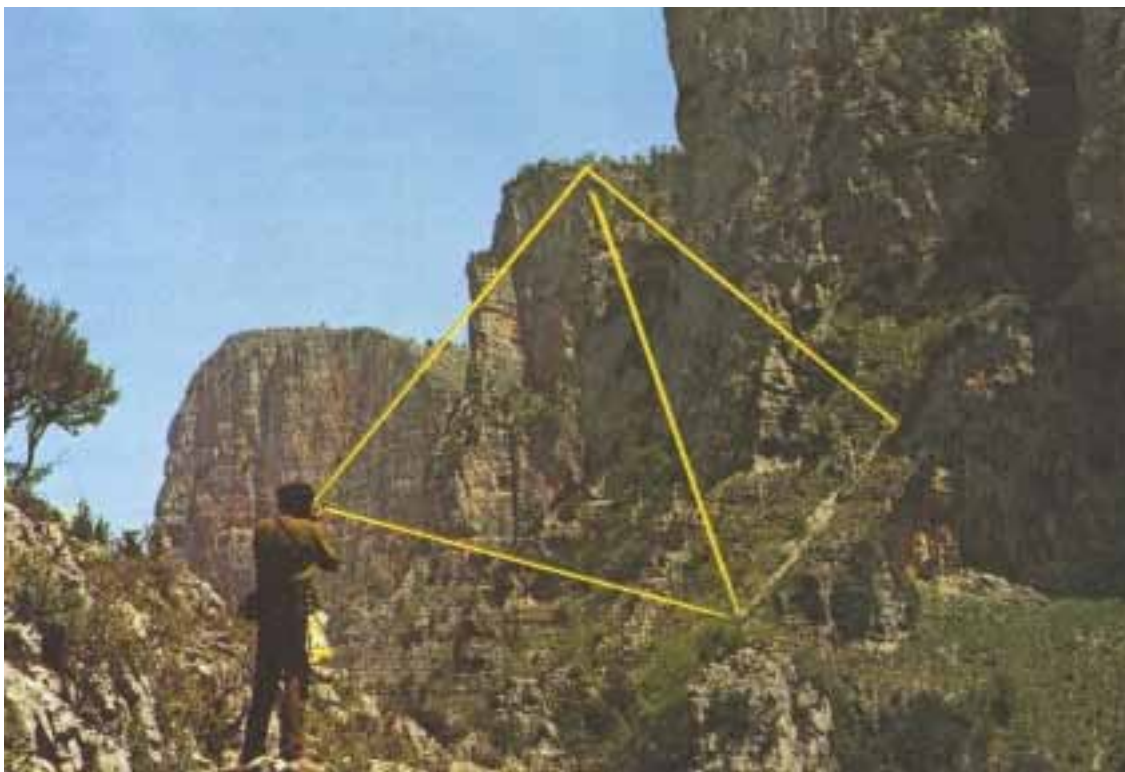
CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

frieze

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Biennials and Survey Shows

frieze asked 18 critics and curators from around the world to choose what they felt to be the most significant biennials and survey shows of 2008



Haris Epaminonda, *Untitled 009c/g* (2007), 5th Berlin Biennial for Contemporary Art

Gigiotto Del Vecchio

Berlin- and Naples-based curator, and Co-Director of the project space Supportico Lopez, Berlin, Germany

The 5th Berlin Biennial placed its stakes on an emotional and reflective cultural and aesthetic program that was at once minimal and vast. Curators Adam Szymczyk and Elena Filipovic did a fine job of setting up a show that carried subtle nuances, which were occasionally too cerebral, based on a direct intellectual exchange with the infinite evocative possibilities of the city of Berlin: its history, its social and architectural tradition, and its empty, open spaces.

CASEY KAPLAN

121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Afterall

Artists at Work: Haris Epaminonda
Sonia Campagnola
Artists at Work / 07.10.2008

Haris Epaminonda is a Cypriot artist who has lived in Berlin since July 2007, when she started a residency at the Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien. Epaminonda's work was recently shown at the Berlin Biennial (2008) and at the Cyprus Pavilion of the Venice Biennale in 2007, where she presented Tarahi III, V, VI (2007), a three-channel video installation that forms part of her ongoing series of short films sourced from re-edited sequences of found footage.

Epaminonda works in a mode of assemblage, often processing the content of found images and footage. Playing with synchrony, symmetry, repetitions and cuts, she uses magnified colours as well as orthodox black and white, and often simple optical effects, in her installations, collages and video alike. Cultivating an interest in the written word and privileging images from the past particularly from the late twentieth century Epaminonda evokes a remote time and space, adding one degree of separation between us and the representation of our reality.

SONIA CAMPAGNOLA: Where did you study in London?

HARIS EPAMINONDA: I got my M.A. at the Royal College of Art, in London. I finished my studies in 2003.

SC: Did any of the artists or teachers you met and studied with influence your work?

HE: Yes, very much, especially Jonathan Miles, who teaches in Humanities Studies. I was in the printmaking department, but from the beginning I thought I was in the wrong place and decided I was going to do things that did not quite fit the department. That is when I started experimenting with video.

SC: You studied in London, but you grew up in Cyprus. How do you feel now, when you go back to Cyprus? Does your work have roots there?

HE: I like its dryness... I feel a strong connection to the memories of my home and my family. The years I lived in Cyprus have influenced my way of seeing things, but I can't say it's a source for my work itself. It's more my thinking of home. Something I miss is my language sometimes I get frustrated, so I write. I always keep a diary with me, with what I do and my thoughts, especially when I travel.

SC: You live in Berlin now, and you are taking part in this year's Berlin Biennial with your installation, Untitled (2008), at the Neue Nationalgalerie. What's the story behind it?

HE: In the beginning I wanted to show a new series of collages together with the project The Infinite Library that I am working on with [German artist] Daniel Gustav Cramer. We work mainly by focusing on books from the 1920s to the 1970s. We love the way the ink sits on the paper, and look for images that have an abstract quality. One can sense the time that is lost. We use mainly picture books, putting one part of a book on another.

SC: What kind of picture books?

HE: All different subjects from architecture, animals, sports. For instance, we might combine architectural sketches and images from 1932 with pictures of gems and somehow see that these two different subjects belong together so, for instance, page one of an architecture book might be followed by page 37 of a different book. Each book is numbered and re-bound. For example, N.4 is a double book, where we found two of the same books and combined them into one.

SC: So, the original content of the book is no longer the same. Does each book have a topic in the visual associations you apply to it?

HE: Each book has its own system made of a certain rhythm, pattern or strategy. We treat the old picture books as what they literally are a number of pages bound together to create a book object. The starting and end points are always books: images and texts contained within the covers. Dismantling and rearranging them means causing an interruption to their original system.

SC: Experimenting with random associations of words and images is an old method think of the historic avant-garde, with games and jokes such as the cadavre exquis and the automatic poetry of Surrealists, Dadaists and Futurists, and later on that of Fluxus, John Cage, experimental cinema and so on. What is your take on these historical precedents? What is the shift that makes what you do different from what they did?

HE: I wouldn't really be able to say. In *The Infinite Library*, pages are not taken out of the book content and transformed through collage, assemblage, etc, into new kinds of works. They remain as books, and by shifting the content, several parallel worlds can co-exist. There has been a radical change in the process of knowledge production and dissemination through recent developments, the Internet in the first instance 'the web of all potential knowledge', in a rhizomatic organization. The books of *The Infinite Library* turn transmittance into a similar loose conglomerate filled with dead ends and chances. Its not a library in the sense we know it, but merely an image of it. When we started working on it, we also thought of Borges and his idea of the Library of Babel.

SC: Is this the first work you and Daniel have done together?

HE: We did other works together, since we graduated from the RCA, such as *The Beehive*, an online project based on the associations of true and fictional stories, images and sounds. Daniel works a lot with books, and we had both been looking at found images. Ideas just flowed.

SC: Lets go back to the piece you prepared for the Berlin Biennial.

HE: In the beginning, I was allocated to the Kunst-Werke but the curators [Adam Szymczyk and Elena Filipovic] felt my work was better for the Neue Nationalgalerie. I already had some works in mind, and so I built the room around the collages and books I knew I wanted to show. I thought of creating a space where all the elements would exist on their own and at the same time refer to each other. The built glass panels reflected Mies van der Rohe's architecture. Meanwhile I also decided to use a few sculptures from African tribes that I set on plinths, where they referenced elements within the images on the wall, which, in their turn, resonated with elements from the 1950s and 60s the time period of the museums architecture. The vitrines were also a van der Rohe design. In the end, the room feels like it has always been there. I wanted people to go in and not really know which parts were the work. I also needed some movement, to give it life, so I thought two goldfish and plants would create the ambience I had in mind.

SC: The room recalls the display mode of anthropological museums. Working on it, were you thinking of museology and how the selection, display, and association of different elements give a different interpretation of history?

HE: Oh, yes. In many ways this work looks at how institutions present things, and the importance of the word display. If you see the same object in a different environment, its meaning is transformed; and it is influenced by what might be hanging or standing nearby, behind or around it. For my part, I tried to create an image, a mood. It is a life-size image with a frame around it. The process of association is the same as that of the collages, just on a different scale. I took something existing and I worked around it.

SC: The same cut-and-paste process recur in the series of short videos titled *Tarahi IV* assemblages of fragments from found videos and films. First of all, what does *Tarahi* mean?

HE: *Tarahi* is a Greek word, in English it translates as something like turmoil.

SC: Lets take *Tarahi VI*. How did you realise it, where did you source the images and how did you choose the music?

HE: The images were taken from Greek films of the 1960s. I chose the ones that I felt closest to. I never know what I will come up with but I generally have a strong feeling of how to work with images and sound. It is all about rhythm and the way things come together. Robert Bresson says: ...you take two images, they are neutral, but all of a sudden, next to each other, they vibrate, life enters them.... This is what I feel with moving images, it is what you do with them and the order they appear in that can trigger a movement not just motion but also emotion. Of course sound plays a big role as well. In this case, one piece runs through *Tarahi III, V, VI* Alexander Scriabins Tenth Sonata [1913].

SC: Bressons work is a point of reference in your work, whom else you find important to observe?

HE: Photographer Luigi Ghirri and Bresson are the two names I can think of right now. Both of them have left deep impression on me.

SC: What are you working on now?

HE: I am gathering the material I have filmed with a Super 8 camera. I filmed mainly animals for the moment. I would like to create an octagonal space where each side is a screen for a projection, so you can turn around yourself and view them all at once like a panorama.

This interview was recorded at Haris Epaminonda's studio, in Berlin, April 2008.

- Sonia Campagnola

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Art Review:

Haris Epaminonda by Brian Dillon Future's Greats

The art of Haris Epaminonda is a matter of sutures, folds and strange symmetries. Among the videos that she showed at the Biennale in 2007 (Epaminonda shared the Cyprus Pavilion with Mustafa Hulusi). the most exemplary in this sense was Nemesis 52 (2003) seven discrete segments depict various involutions of matter, space and time. A pair of disembodied hands - their symmetry in fact a mirror image produced in camera - folds and unfolds a mass of fabric so that it seems to come alive a spirited or sexualised substance. Elsewhere the foldings temporal: footag from Egyptian soap operas - slowed down, pixelated or cropped - seems to exist in some oneiric region that crosses decades and cultures. Once again, drapery is everywhere: in another fragment of appropriated television, a pair of dancers whirl endlessly before a backdrop of luxuriant fabric.

But it's in Epaminonda's meticulous and somewhat unsettling collages that the processes of cutting, folding and grafting produce the most startling meetings between times, places and bodies. In many of the images, the historical background seems to be mid-twentieth century, but incised by huge mirrored shards, suggesting an inhuman future. Certain images are almost consumed by these slivers from another time. In others, jagged holes have opened in the surface of the picture that provides the original ground, as if something alien were forcing its way through, invading eerie civic spaces and grey architectural interiors. In an untitled piece from 2006, a group of schoolgirls are pictured in a wood, beneath an article on a modernist school built by French architect Ecochard: their eyes have been covered by fragments from another scene. In a more recent example the usurper is a painting: a vast, wavering fauvist mass, like a malfunctioning television, that has hypnotised a scattered group of museum-goers.

CASEY KAPLAN
121 WEST 27TH STREET
NEW YORK NY 10001
TEL +1 212 645 7335
FAX +1 212 645 7835
WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM
INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

frieze

IN FOCUS

Haris Epaminonda

Lyrical apparitions that commune with the past

The ghostly folds of a curtain, a couple strolling backwards on a sun-dappled path, the limpid eyes of a disconsolate diva: these are just some of the suspended moments captured in the video works of Haris Epaminonda. In the last few years, the artist has produced a series of radiant, emotional, audio-visual vignettes, which are long enough to soak into the viewer's consciousness yet short enough to assume the qualities of a vision: they come and go fleetingly, but linger in the head like an afterimage. Reality is kept at arm's length, its absence not particularly noticed, while the present is lost in a fictionalized past.



Most of Epaminonda's recent video works are based on re-shot excerpts of film and television footage

-- principally the Greek soap operas and kitsch romantic films from the 1960s that used to fill up Sunday afternoons in the artist's Cypriot childhood -- which she then subtly reworks. Sometimes local celebrities appear in her films, but, in contrast to the early works of Francesco Vezzoli or T.J. Wilcox, they don't do so in order to emphasize a phantasmal communion with their constructed identities. The scenes that she chooses to work with are not instantly recognizable from the original narrative, so the culled images are effectively stripped of their initial meaning and context. These out-takes are then edited and adapted in a variety of ways: the film's speed and direction are changed, sections are distorted, its colour is intensified, or a poignant soundtrack, such as a piano composition by Alexander Scriabin, is added. Most significantly, she also superimposes footage to make surreal composites: an indoor scene, say, might also have traces of fireworks glimmering through it.

While these are all common manipulation techniques of digital video, Epaminonda uses them with captivating sensibility. In *Tarahi V* (*Turmoil V*, 2007), for example, in a scene that recalls elements of the work of both René Magritte and Alfred Hitchcock, we see the back of a well-dressed, motionless couple staring out into a blue sky where a pair of coffee cup-ring shaped clouds appear.

Recently, in the attic space of *Rodeo* -- a new gallery housed in a restored tobacco warehouse in Istanbul, in the sort of inner-city neighbourhood that might have inspired Pier Paolo Pasolini -- Epaminonda beamed onto a wall the apparition-like video *Tarahi II* (*Turmoil II*, 2006). The work consists of footage shot from a hotel-room television by the artist when she was in Egypt. It shows a regal, middle-aged woman with an ebony bouffant in a series of close-ups in which she turns to look at the camera with incredible pathos, her glittering eyes seemingly having subsumed the bitter tears of a thousand disappointments. Epaminonda has compiled all the scenes in which the unnamed actor appears alone, effectively putting the character in conversation with herself. Partway through the film, which is underscored by a lyrical piano soundtrack, something odd and unexpected happens. Twin boys, with long noses, big ears and hair carefully parted to one side, make a sudden appearance. Standing side by side, they look at each other and then at the camera as if to say: what on earth is this woman going on about? It's a highly effective

There is a particular flow, and a certain colour and light, to be found in nearly all of Epaminonda's works. Her videos look lush and delicious, like highly saturated Technicolor films exuding the vivid hues of melodrama favoured by Douglas Sirk: pulsing red, oceanic-sky blue, yellows, browns and greens facilitating between the tonal factions. Light and movement, however delicate, are treated as adequate subjects. Epaminonda's work first came to the attention of a wider audience at this year's Venice Biennale with her installation in the Cyprus Pavilion. (This two-person exhibition with Mustafa Hulusi, curated by Denise Robinson, was notable for being the first time the Greek-Cypriot funding body had allowed a Turkish-Cypriot artist to participate.) Epaminonda combined a room of videos with works from an ongoing series of untitled black and white collages, assembled using cuttings from her collection of found photography books about countries and cities. For the artist, the processes of editing videos and composing collages are fundamentally related, in that both entail making decisive cuts. Her collages distinguish themselves from the reams of others that have been produced by emerging artists in recent years. Take Untitled *13 (2005–6), for instance, in which a child in a cradle is claustrophobically loomed over by multiple, well-meaning families; or those depicting Gothic cathedrals whose windows, walls or towers have become mirrors of altered skies. Typically these collages work through cut-aways, layers or visual revelation rather than a juxtaposition or synthesis of disparate images. Epaminonda told me that she is not nostalgic for the pasts she mines, but rather her work attempts to merge different realities – mediated yesteryear, everyday life and the future – onto a single plane.

- *Dominic Eichler*