



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.

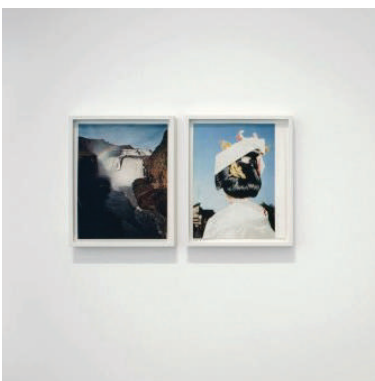


A Will Brown: Do you have any forthcoming projects or exhibitions that are particularly exciting, or dramatically different for you?

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.

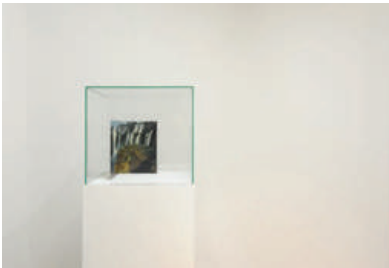
AWB: Can you tell me about the process of working on your four-channel video installation *Chapters*?

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?

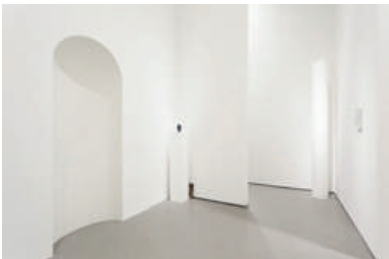
HE: It is dark. A man begins to dig a hole in what seems to be an empty, arid landscape. The sun rises and he continues till the sun sets, in the end forming a large sand heap right next to him. On another screen, the same figure walks across sandy ground, leaving footmarks. Somewhere else, a woman sits 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?

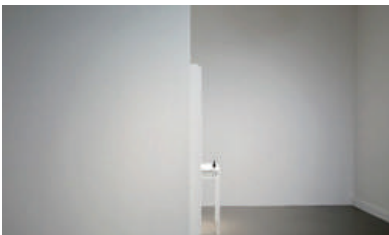
HE: It is rather a subconscious sense of a place, one that spreads invisibly over multiple aspects of different cultures and regions.

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?

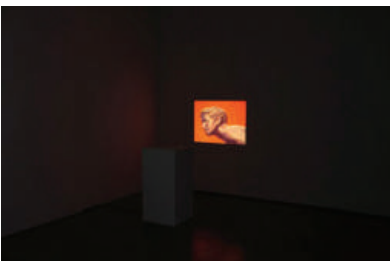
HE: I see film more as something that should be experienced solitarily and empirically in space. It can be quite a somatic experience.



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.

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ARTNEWS

ART BASEL 2015 — MARKET — PREVIEWS

PREVIEW ART BASEL 2015

BY *Maximiliano Durón* POSTED 06/12/15 10:02 AM

The 2015 edition of Art Basel opens Tuesday, June 16, to invited guests. This year's fair includes a reorganization of the gallery booth layout, with many of those presenting work that dates from 1900 to 1970 grouped together on the lower level of Hall 2.

The fair will include 284 galleries from 33 countries, showing work by more than 4,000 artists. Among the highlights are Carrie Mae Weems at New York's Jack Shainman, Danny McDonald at New York's Maccarone, Joris van de Moortel at Galerie Nathalie Obadia of Paris and Brussels, and video by Julieta Aranda, which will be shown in the film section by Mexico City's Galeria OMR.



Casey Kaplan, New York

Haris Epaminonda, Untitled #385,
2008, Polaroid.
COURTESY THE ARTIST AND
CASEY KAPLAN, NEW YORK

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Beauty Codes (order/disorder/chaos) ACT I



ACT I

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.

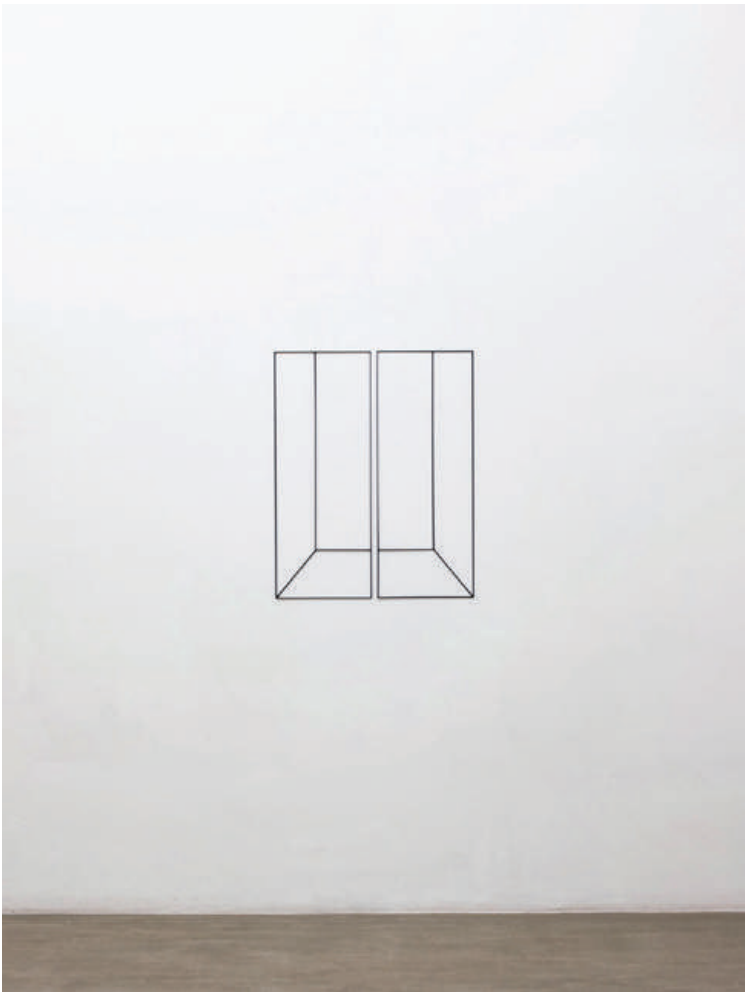
Daniel Steegmann Mangrané's / (- \ (2013) heralds the beginning of Act 1 at Fondazione Giuliani. Upon crossing the threshold into the Foundation's exhibition spaces, the viewer passes through four aluminium curtains, as if crossing the proscenium of a stage. This relational demarcation of space and movement 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.

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THE ART NEWSPAPER

ART MARKET NEWS

Artist moves

by RICHELLE SIMON | 1 May 2015

Two Berlin-based artists are moving to New York galleries: Casey Kaplan now represents Haris Epaminonda (who is also represented by Galleria Massimo Minini in Italy and Rodeo Gallery in Istanbul and London) and Davidson Contemporary is now working with Nicky Broekhuysen, who will have a solo show with the gallery in 2016. In Berlin, Galerie Eigen + Art has taken on two new artists: Lada Nakonechna and Kai Schiemenz. The conceptual artist Susan Hiller has joined Lisson Gallery, where she will have a solo exhibition this November in London. The French writer and photographer Jean-Baptiste Huynh has joined Galerie Lelong in Paris and will have a solo show in March 2016.

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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 risograph print artist's book, 20 × 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 trac-

ing the cross-cultural tensions – and the politics of post-colonialism in particular – by Mathieu Kleyebe Abon-nenc, 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*

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**Haris Epaminonda
(Rode- Istanbul)**

A La Champ Magazine, June, 2014.

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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

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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 Kunsthaus 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*

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Wall Street International

Haris Epaminondas. 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 Mas-
simo 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.

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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

“The Time Machine (The Survivors)”

12.20.13

AUTHOR: PIER PAOLO PANCOTTO
01.21.13-01.04.14 Frutta

Imagining the future by thinking of the past is the common denominator uniting the thirteen artists in “The Time Machine (The Survivors),” curated by Rome-based CURA, a magazine, publishing house, and exhibition space. Their interpretations of the future have the feeling of archeological recycling, which is achieved by drawing upon an iconographic and iconological repertoire that is broadly historicized and then translated through the most advanced technological systems. As a title, “Time Machine” acts as a framing device, symbolically representing the means needed to create the selected works. Though marked by considerably varied linguistic expressions, these artworks do share a common orientation.

Take Andrea Kvas’s deconstructed painting *Untitled*, 2013, Torben Ribe’s two-dimensional painting *Untitled (No Signal)*, 2012, and Nicolas Deshayes’s tactile impasto *Flints in Gluten*, 2013, all of which evoke the syntax of art informel. In contrast, Mark Barrow’s geometric surfaces in *HNO*, 2013, suggest the syntax of abstraction. A Dada echo reverberates in Billy Rennekamp’s neo-Pop three-dimensional assemblage *Houston in the Blind*, 2013, as well as in Jimmy Limit’s neo-Minimal works. The influence of the absurd can also be seen in the two environmental installations on view: Margaret Lee’s *Chaise, Table with Fruit and Pillow* and David Douard’s *Glory Hole*, both works 2013.

A revival of neo-Conceptual processes is evident in Gundam Air’s virtual project *There is Something You Will Like to Know About*, 2012, and in the enumerative, bibliographic ongoing work *The Infinite Library* that Haris Epaminonda and Daniel Gustav Cramer began in 2007. See also Timur Si-Qin’s museum-like, ethnographic project, *TM1517 (ParanthropusRobustus): Dressed in Pool Water*, 2013. Finally, there are two video and sound installations: Ian Cheng’s *Entropy Wrangler Siluria*, 2012–13 and *Letter & Spirit*, 2013, by the Dexter Sinister collective (David Reinfurt and Stuart Bailey). Both symbolically recall the concept summarized by the name of the show through using dated technological systems, as each includes texts, images, and sounds belonging to various traditions. It is precisely these past movements that act as the real time machine, pushing the contemporary into the past.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

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Art in America

Haris Epaminonda

at Modern Art Oxford

by Katherine Rundell



Still from Haris Epaminonda's *Chapters*, 2012, four-screen 16mm film transferred to digital, approx. 60 minutes; at Modern Art Oxford.

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. On closer inspection, the field is uneven and barren, 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 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.

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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.

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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

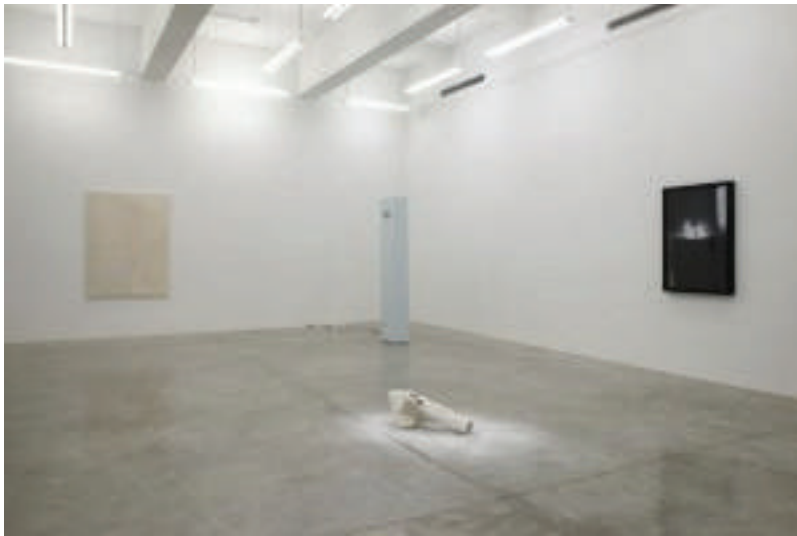
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GalleristNY

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 trans

lucent 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)

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.

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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.”

Epaminonda

Dietrich Roeschmann



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 German 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. 13

The Kunsthaus 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.

Kunsthaus 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.

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



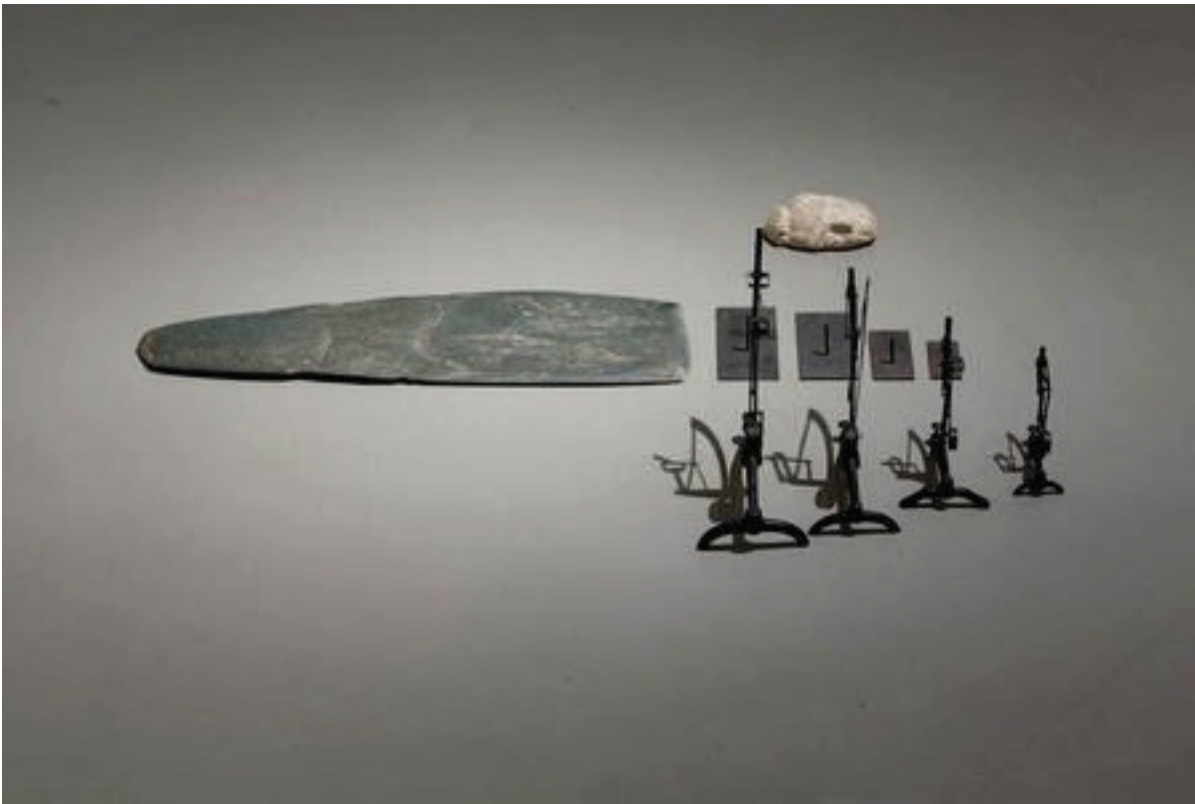
Haris Epaminonda, 'Untitled #03 o/g', framed found image, 32 x 25.6cm, 2012 as part of 'The End of Summer', with Daniel Gustav Cramer, dOCUMENTA(13), Kassel, 2012

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. 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 Aude'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.



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

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 'Velo-fahrer (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 museum is a fragment of memory from Soane's life. Similar to the way Aude'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.

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frieze

Issue 149 September 2012

Bucharest Biennale 5

VARIOUS VENUES, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

'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. Some-

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

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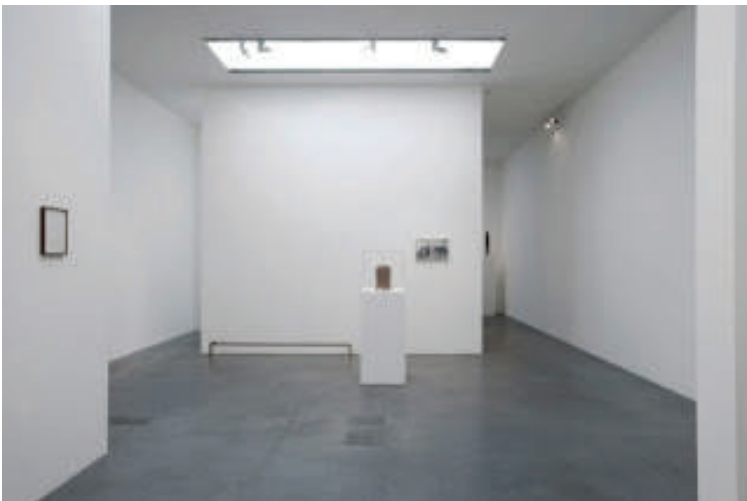
Open File - blog

Haris Epaminonda - VOL. VI



Haris Epami-
nonda 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.



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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 Gorgon 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 Rodeo, 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."

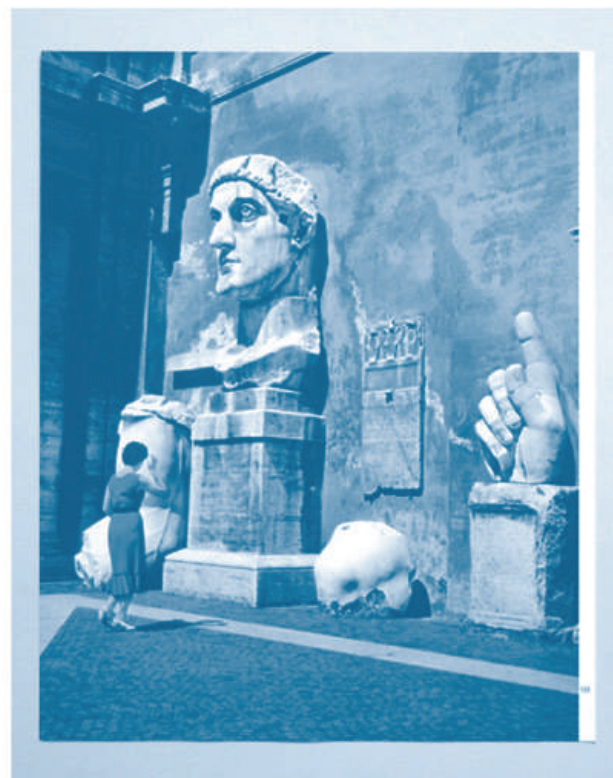
I enter the big dark room where there are three screens: one shows palm trees, the

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

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EARLY SUMMER. Daniel Gustav Cramer and Haris Epaminonda







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 Yasujirō Ozu, also includes the publication of an artist's book.

June 21 – August 18

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Haris Epaminonda @ The Museum of Modern Art
February 2012

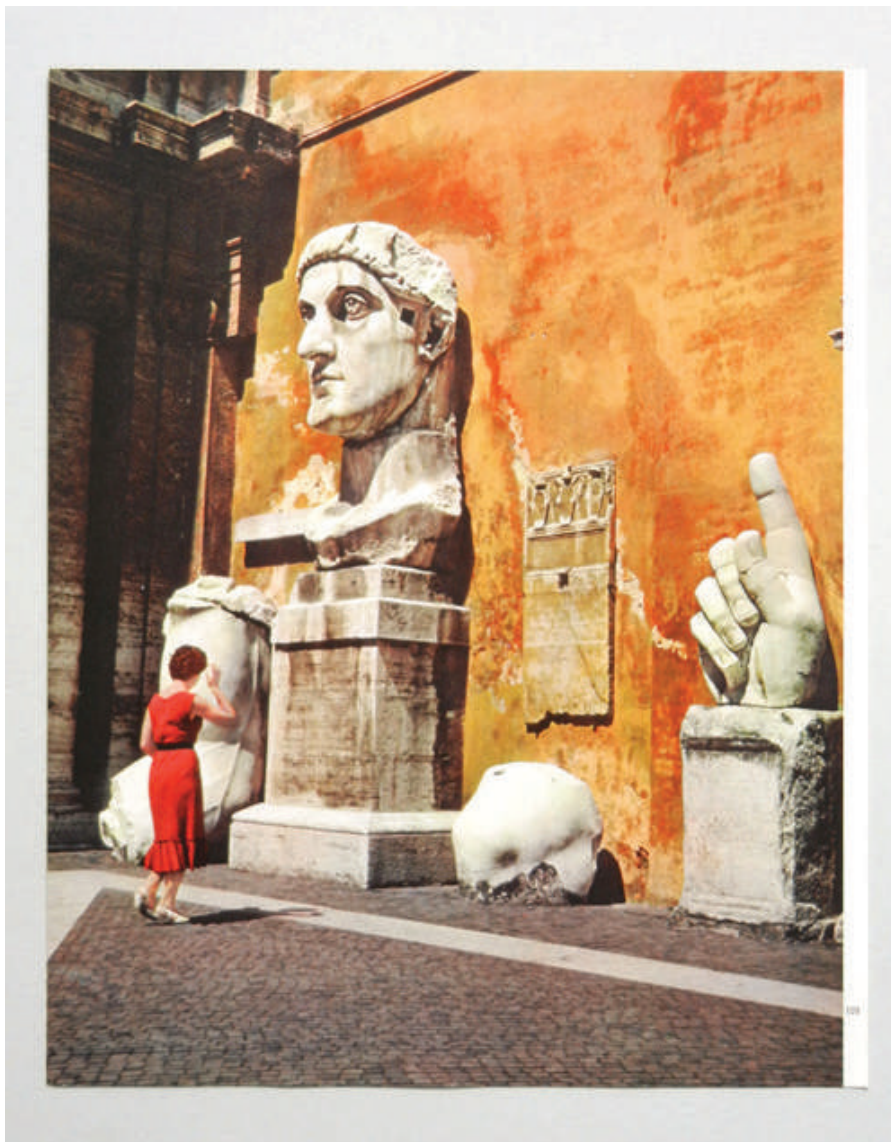


Installation view of the exhibition Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda. November 17, 2011 through February 20, 2012. Photographer: Jonathan Muzikar. Image courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art

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.



*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.*

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.



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

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HARIS EPAMINONDA @MOMA

by KATY DIAMOND HAMER



Haris Epaminonda. Still from *Chronicles*. 2010.

Three Super 8 films transferred to video (color, sound), 16:33, 26:55, and 2:11 min. loops.

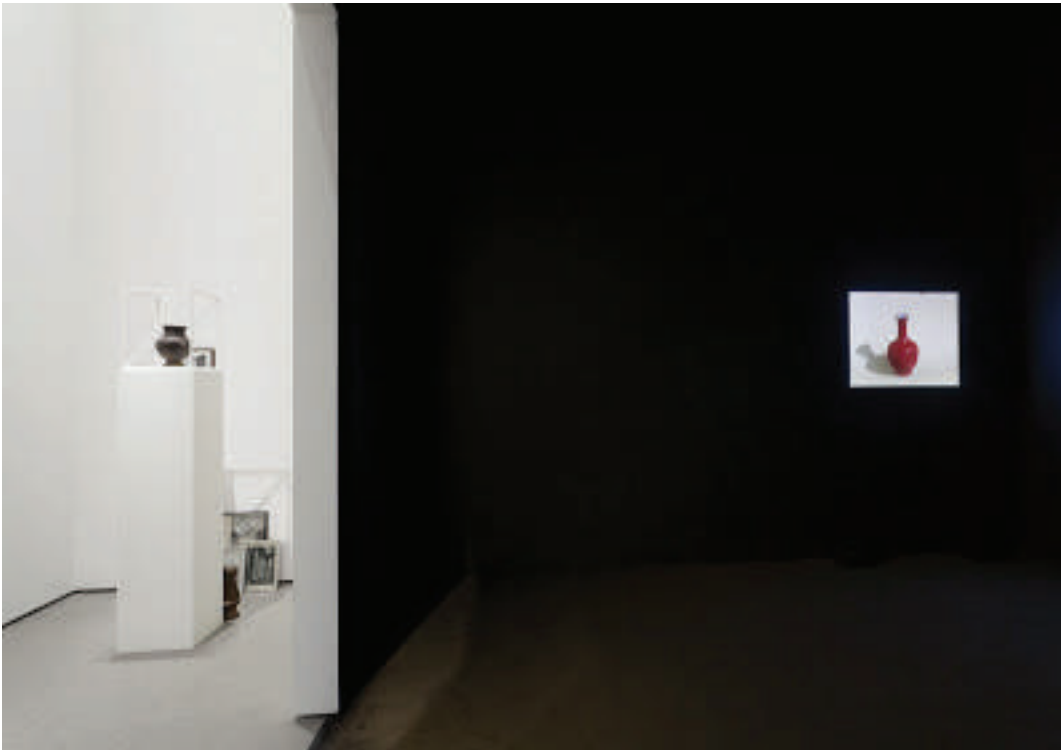
Courtesy the artist, Site Gallery, Sheffield, and Rodeo, Istanbul. © 2011 Haris Epaminonda

Currently on view at the Museum of Modern Art, as part of the Projects series organized by Roxana Marcoci, Curator in the Department of Photography, is Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda. The Project Series is currently in its fortieth year at the Museum and has played a vital role in the contemporary art programs. Haris Epaminonda is based in Berlin, and this is her first exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. For Projects 96 the artist has constructed an installation that occupies several small, connected rooms within the Contemporary Galleries on the 2nd floor. Within the context of the installation, the artist has utilized video projection, found objects, appropriated images and architectural intervention. White columns, plinths, and a niche in one of the walls, provide a quietly subtle transformation of the gallery and along with her choice of revealing and hiding objects, the viewer is temporarily transported into a place with historical resonance however an unclear reference to time.



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

Each object in the installation carries with it a strong sense of specificity. The walls and columns are white, so any hint of color whether in a photograph or sculpture, seems to vibrate with a certain kind of raw energy. At the basis of the exhibition is *Chronicles* (2010) a three-channel video projection. The room where *Chronicles* is being shown is completely black, in contrast to the whitewash of the other rooms. The layout of the projection in space invites the viewer to move around, looking and comparing one screen to the next. The movement is slow and precise. Each short segment has been transferred from Super 8 film to video and features assorted content. One is a documentation of sorts of various ancient artifacts from different cultures shown in front of a color blocked space, or appropriated directly from the pages of a book. Another film shows views of the Acropolis while the third presents superimposed palm trees in a desert. The mirage is a metaphor, a visual notation referencing isolation of cultures and civilizations that have faded away long ago.



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

Epaminonda, born in Cyprus, 1980, earned her undergraduate degree along with her Master of Arts (2003) in England, the latter at the Royal College of Art. It was while living in London that she became fascinated with archives and cartographies. In 2007, she commenced upon a project called The Infinite Library along with German artist Daniel Gustav that includes books that are deconstructed, reassembled and reconfigured from their original format resulting in a new kind of content that doesn't necessarily provide cohesive information or narrative. For her exhibition at MoMA, the video content is from her own archive and shot during research based excursions. Similar to The Infinite Library she approaches Chronicles as visual documentation and in eliminating naturalistic sequences assembles a catalogue of collage.



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

The only relevant information that the viewer has been given to attempt at establishing context before approaching the room containing the video are the found objects and appropriated images installed in the first two rooms of the gallery. As if given the chance to erect an imaginary architectural space the viewer collects visual building blocks in order to establish his/her own assumptions of time, place and physical presence. Epaminonda's installation is quite formal in its approach. The most successful element in Projects 96 is her technique of revealing and obscuring information. Several objects have been placed on the gallery floor and behind white rectangular columns. In this action and choice, the artist removes a certain level of clarity, function and power from a particular item, repositioning the object and granting purpose solely through composition.



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

Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda will be on view at the Museum of Modern Art, New York until February 20th, 2012.

Projects 96: Haris Epaminonda

BLOGINITY

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.

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.

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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 jetset from one international art hub to the next.



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

At MoMA through Feb. 20.

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ARTFORUM

NOVEMBER 2011

1000 WORDS

HARIS EPAMINONDA

TALKS ABOUT “PROJECTS 96”

INTRODUCTION BY KATHY NOBLE



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

GROWING UP IN GREEK CYPRUS in the 1980s, Berlin-based artist Haris Epaminonda thought of the Turkish side of that divided island as an unimaginable world. But, she recalls, “I somehow believed I could connect to this other world through books and the ancient ruins and relics found everywhere on the island—things that existed long before the country was to be separated.” Epaminonda could be described as a time traveler, one who roves among eras collecting such artifacts. The elements in this ever-growing trove of found images (both still and moving) and objects are recycled and reassimilated into her work in various ways. In her work in various ways. In her precise

installations, items from her archive—whether presented in groupings of found curios or images, or incorporated into collages or films—are arrayed on, in, or among plinths, frames, and other display structures of the artist's own design. The architecture, too, is designed by Epaminonda. Typically, she will build a museum within a museum, squashing or elongating the proportions of the host institution'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 III, 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 de-contextualized 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



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

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 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.

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Cura No. 8
Spring Summer 2011
Cover by Haris Epaminonda

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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 mo-

tion 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.

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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 sequinned 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 Panayiotou'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

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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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This week's new exhibitions

Haris Epaminonda, Sheffield

A show of specially commissioned video pieces by the Cypriot-born artist, to coincide with her installation at Tate Modern. Epaminonda adapts collage painting to video editing. Mixing filmed footage with found old flicks, mostly from the 1950s and 60s, she builds up free associational reveries. Circus elephants and palm tree jungles combine surreally. There's something of a cold war air of dread half suppressed beneath utopian conceits. Epaminonda lives and works in Berlin and it shows. There's the enigmatic mix-up of multiple scraps, the sudden shifts of cultural codes, the serendipitous surprises behind every corner and the artistic thrill of being in a space like no other.

Site Gallery, to 21 Aug

Robert Clark

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This week's new exhibitions

ART

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Site Gallery, to 21 Aug

Robert Clark

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 l/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 coily 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 l/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 l/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.

ARTFORUM

Haris Epaminonda

AUTHOR: NOVEMBER PAYNTER

10.10.09-12.05.09 Rodeo | Istanbul

To the right of the entrance hangs a small, framed book page that depicts a man looking up at a towering termite mound. The unusual scale and perspective of this landscape with figure sets the tone for the formation and play of space experienced in Epaminonda's "VOL. IV." The exhibition follows Epaminonda's solo presentation "VOL. I, II & III," which took place at the Malmö Konsthall earlier this year, and here the mazelike reorganization of the space contains a series of three-dimensional collages that Epaminonda describes as "sentences." While the first is made up of just one found folio—the image of the man and termite mound—subsequent collages mix bought sculptures placed on pedestals with both black-and-white and colorful secondhand bookplates framed and hung or, in the densest composition, stacked against the wall. Her desire to play with traditional museum hierarchies and the usual formats of display is evident in each scene, but also in the way the presentation feels like an illustrated encyclopedia from which different images or shapes are allowed to haunt the memory, the relationships among them left open to interpretation.

What is striking is that the only objects made to measure by Epaminonda are the beautifully crafted pedestals, each one handpainted in a shade of white or eggshell gray, alongside carefully chosen palettes for the numerous frames. This attention to certain details shifts focus onto the pieces whose job it is to support the objects of display, pieces that in this exhibition also take on the more prominent role of masking and hiding selected iconography. A final statement locates the entire exhibition: A delicate wooden sculpture ensquares the gallery's central column in a tense embrace, framing it as an implied image that ironically can never be captured in publication.

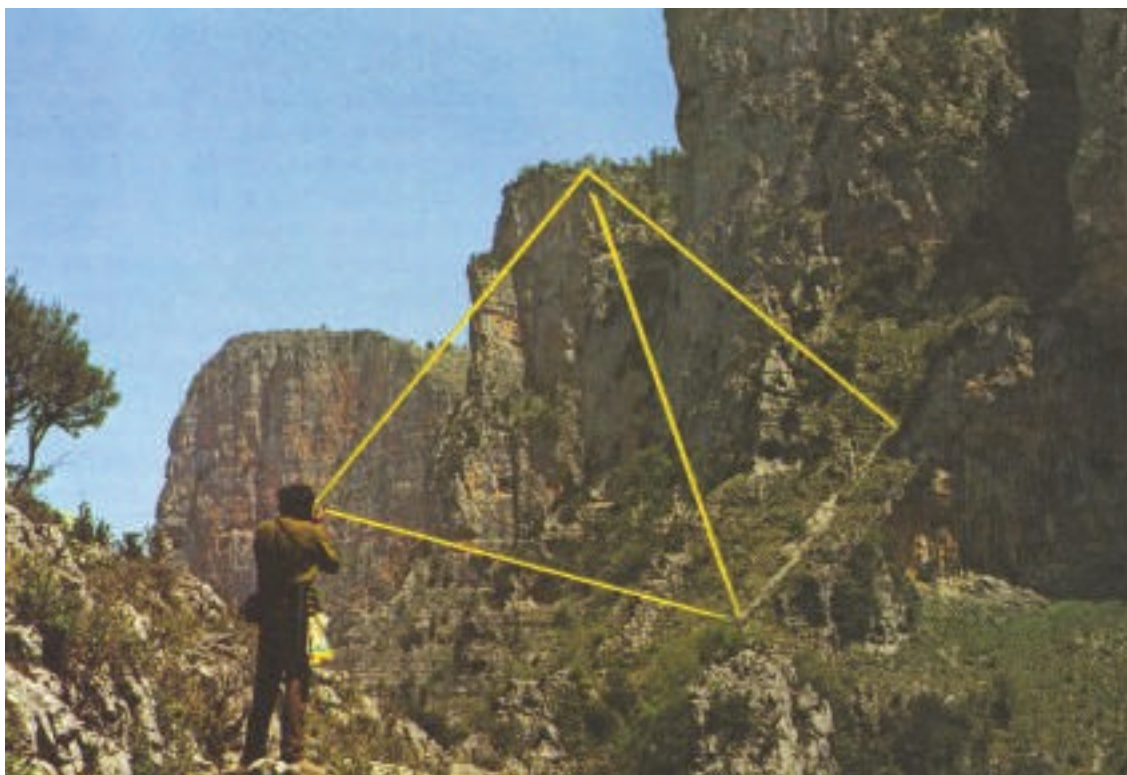
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frieze

Issue 120 January-February 2009

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.

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Issue 124 June-August 2009

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 Du-jourie'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 austere 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

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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.



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

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 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.



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

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.



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

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.'

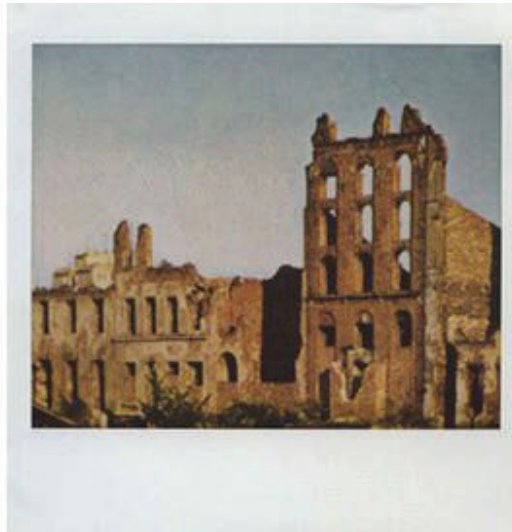
The very material of Epaminonda's series, however, presents a paradox in the project's relationship to renewal. In 2008, when she began the project, the Polaroid Corporation had recently ceased production of its instantly developing photographic papers. And while Fujifilm is one of the few remaining producers of instant film, the medium edges closer into the site of its own obsolescence and,



Left to Right: 'Untitled #37', polaroid, 2009, and 'Untitled #61', polaroid, 2009

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.

The Polaroids series is not an isolated investigation of the archived or near-fogotten 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.



Left to Right: 'Untitled #66', polaroid, 2009, and 'Untitled #70', polaroid, 2009

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



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

Both The Infinite Library and the Polaroid series are contingent on seriality and association for the construction their other-worldliness—both play on the traits of the traveller’s picture album. Yet the photograph-of-a-photograph format presents different territory for Epaminonda. It overtly plays with the idea of vision and its memorialisation, as well as the space in which a moment becomes an image. ‘With the Polaroids, I am revisiting and recapturing a world that seems to be full of fragmented moments and instances,’ she says. ‘But I am doing so from a future perspective.’ Thus, for the artist, time folds in on itself. ‘What is in the image is the past caught in the present, which is the future.’

If shared memory of civilisation is not only represented by the memorials it chooses to erect, but also by those it chooses to photograph, then Epaminonda’s work interrogates this mobile memorialisation to her own ends. It prises open the static immobility of photographed objects to reveal the plausibility of other worlds. ‘Images have no bones or flesh,’ says the artist. They are more like air, having the capacity to “resurrect”.

Isla Leaver-Yap is MAP’s editor-at-large

Haris Epaminonda: VOL. I, II & III, Malmö Konsthall, 2 April–10 May



Awkward Installation at Younger Than Jesus

by Paddy Johnson | 04/29/2009

“Please don’t review the same five artists everyone else wrote about,” a friend recently asked me at an opening. He was referring to the New Museum’s triennial Younger Than Jesus, which many writers reviewed by its second week. Despite nearly universal disapproval of the exhibition’s title, at least four major critics in New York give artists Chu Yun, Cory Arcangel, Ryan Trecartin, Cyprien Gaillard and Liz Glynn mention in their commentary.

I’m probably the only professional in the city who doesn’t find fault in the tongue-in-cheek name. Sure — it identifies an impossible task of finding “God-like talent” under age 33, but its irreverence matches the youth culture it represents (even if the absence of religion in the show is confusing to some). Certainly, that ambiguity hasn’t been enough to thwart visitors; the title and show’s concept have been remarkably effective in drawing new audiences to the museum. What’s more, curating generationally makes a lot more sense to museumgoers, rather than trying to draw themes among artists working so diversely that any emerging thread is easily stitched.

While an artist’s profile predictably influences critical response, until the museum’s staff figures out how to hang a show in their new SANAA-designed galleries, only the work that literally sticks out will be reviewed. Not to state the obvious, but that’s a very serious problem. Poor exhibition design inevitably results in the spatial privileging of certain artists and creates the necessity for repeated viewer visits. Considering the strong grouping of work that curators Lauren Cornell, Massimiliano Gioni and Laura Hoptman put together, it’s a real shame. Not only do parts of the show disappear, but people consistently respond to the same work.

This is not, however, to place all the blame on the exhibition layout — some of the lower quality work fails to make any lasting impression. Josh Smith received only a descriptive mention for his work in the show this year in the Times, despite the prominent placement of his large messy painting on panel grids (pictured at right). Supposedly, his ugly mass-produced originals act like prints and purposely appear impoverished, but that’s just another uninteresting discussion in support of empty

investigations. Similarly, The Times gave Ryan Gander, an expository nod for his performance of a gallery attendant wearing a track suit with embroidered blood stains. Careful construction of the accidental isn't funny or poignant, though; it's just dumb.

Some of the more easily missed art in the show hangs in the dimly lit video hall in the second floor gallery. Haris Epaminonda's wry collages (pictured at right) stand out, emanating blue and gold paper rays around cut magazine images of Egyptian sculptures. Epaminonda elegantly presents a layered history of documentation, reproduction and manipulation without feeling overly familiar or contrived. At the other end of the gallery, Mark Essen's Flywrench, a videogame subject to a lot of early press, fell off the radar once in the museum. Pumping its catchy soundtrack through speakers would, I imagine, avoid this oversight. The frenetic energy produced by the videogame and overhead soundtrack engages game players and audiences alike. However, Chu Yun's neighboring performance of a sleeping woman likely influenced the museum's unfortunate decision to slap a set of headphones on Flywrench.

One floor above, curators grant press magnet Cyprien Gaillard the good fortune of doing without earplugs. The moving three-part video Desniasky Raion (pictured at right) shows footage of urban housing, demolition projects and acts of violence. In a particularly emotive scene, Koudlan's accompanying soundtrack reflects the movement of the fighting crowd. Those five minutes of Raion are also among the loudest, overshadowing any of the nearby art, most specifically Mariechen Danz's. I can't say I'm a fan of her Fossilizing the Body Border Disorder — a haphazardly arranged mess of mannequins and plexiglass — but it houses Complain the Explanation, an extremely entertaining video featuring a singer in a fat costume.

Not surprisingly, art installation problems such as this create challenges for all exhibitions this size — the New Museum just feels them more acutely due to their newness and shape. But the same optimism and energy that emerges in the triennial should also apply to its future permutations. Critics might then agree on the following point as well; that in three years, Younger Than Jesus (Part Two) will have left its inexperience at home, opting for a mature and visually resolved install.

“YOUNGER THAN JESUS”

August 8, 2009

That's the subtitle of the New Museum's latest show – an international showcase of artists aged 33 or younger. As a 32-year old creative person, it makes me want to leap into the air and stick a giant “HELL YEAH!” magnet above the entrance to the museum>>> I totally appreciate shows like this though, that make clean-cut identity distinctions. If you've got a curatorial thesis, telegraph it – that's the point! Museum going isn't a game of “Clue” – it's fantasia, spectacle, an array of jewels laid out in the creative spirit bazaar. And “The Generational: Younger Than Jesus” promises all the freshest wares, splendors no one has seen, the thrill of brilliant new dreamers whose dreams we'll be analyzing for years.

...



Of the artists keeping their cool, I was particularly taken with two of the collagists. One of the instructive tactics in the displays of work by Haris Epaminonda and Elad Lassry was that they were given multi-wall space, as though works of collage need the context of other collages to focus their effects. It begs a very real question: Can a collage stand alone? Looking at the work of Haris Epaminonda, my first impression was no. But what unveils in experiencing the variety of her work is her knack for teasing maximum effect out of minimal alteration. To see just one of her vintage photographs of idols of antiquity that have been surgically opened with the precision of her scissors to reveal bright

swaths of colored paper is to glimpse a lark. But to see a series of them? Now you're looking at all the different ways she's approached her cuts, the placement of her eye, and, from fine-line to diamond “POW!”, the careful digging she does to unearth connections. Taken together, they reveal a vision that's only sketched singled-out. The power of her work winds up being its balance of audacity and subtlety, the way she re-enlivens artifacts with calm, gentle breaths. And they breathe back – tingling, playing, glowing in their frames like old spirits that have woken up young again. The windows she cuts into them become their windows back into the world.



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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.

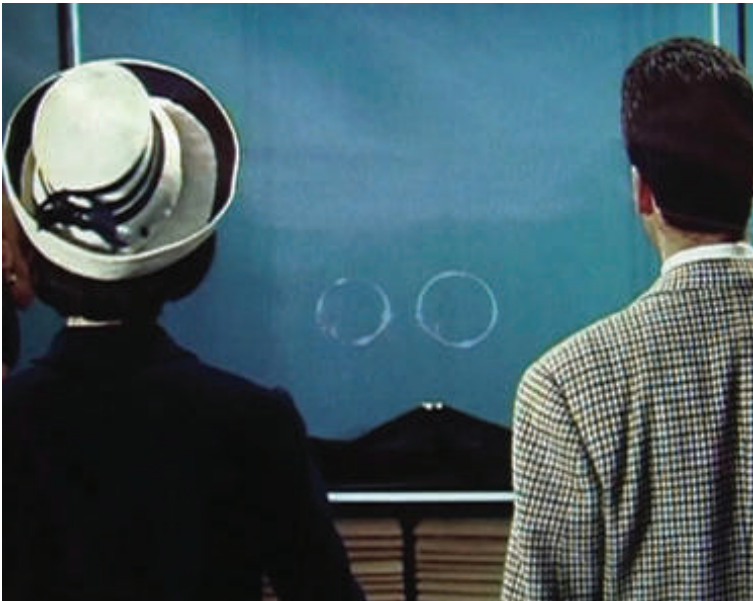
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IN FOCUS

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 break – one that stops the work from wallowing, and that deals the viewer yet another serving of displaced emotion.

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.