

# 角色中的自我 Self Staging

2012.8.12-9.2

策展人：玛璐

Curator: Manuela Lietti

艺术家：

希拉·本·哈莉 赛特法呢亚·步兰第内利 陈秀焯

沃宜特克·多罗族克 栾啸 杰列米·秀

Artists:

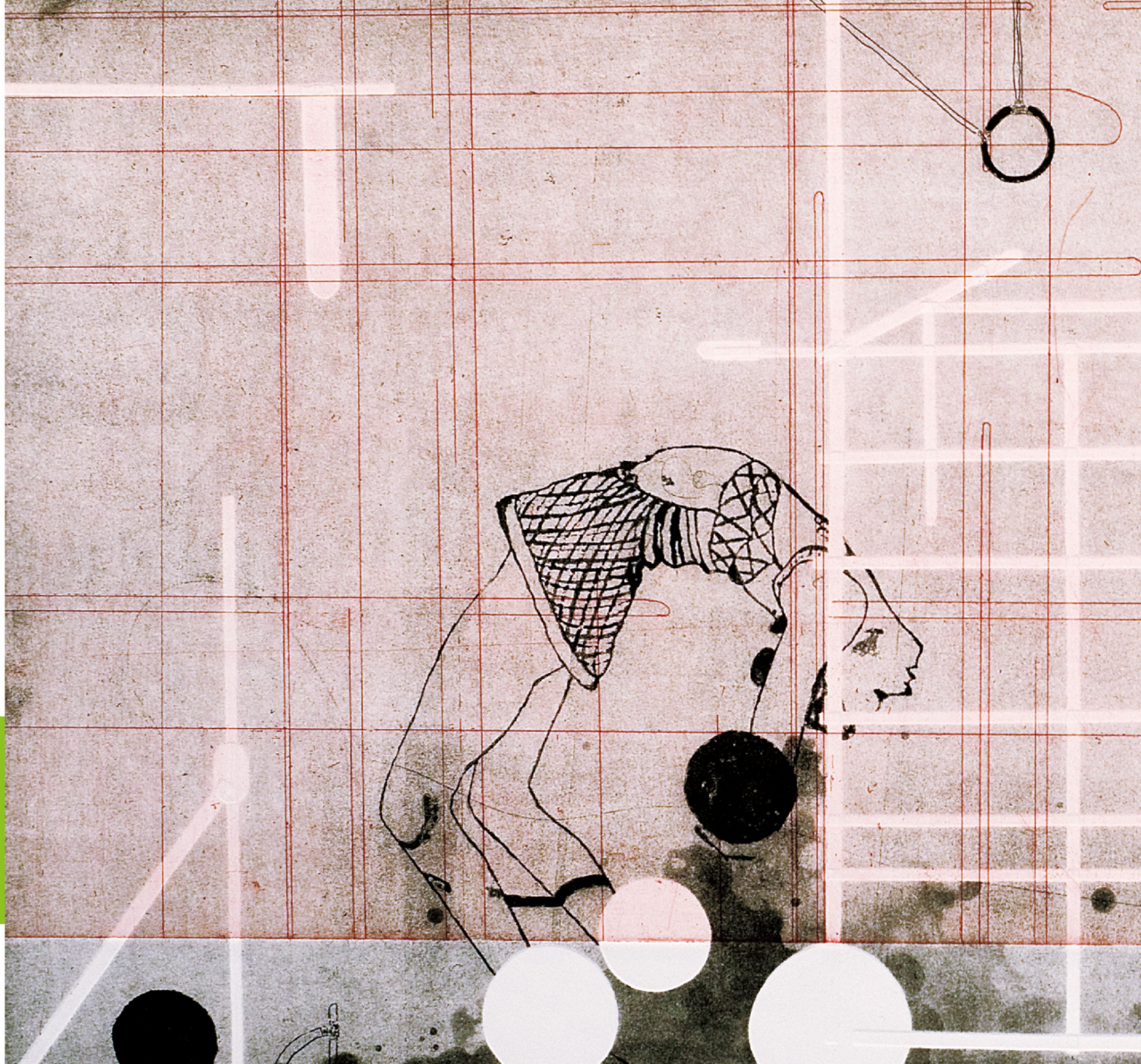
Hilla Ben Ari Stefania Brandinelli Ophelia Chan

Wojtek Doroszuk Luan Xiao Jeremy Shaw

地点：魔金石空间

Venue: Magician Space

魔金石空间  
MAGICIAN SPACE





Self-Staging

By Manuela Lietti

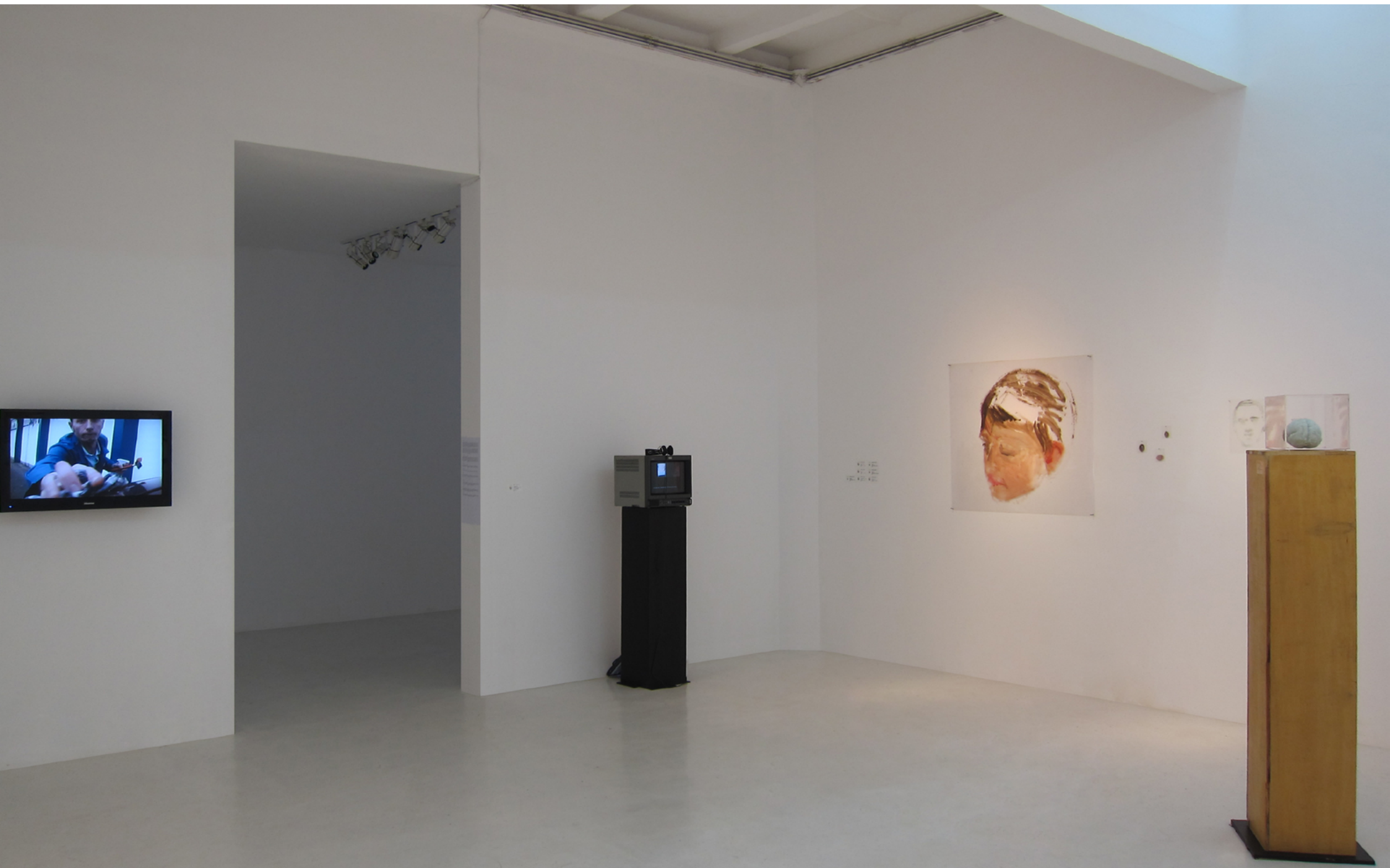
Although we may be more technologically sophisticated than our ancestors, we are just like them in that we are immersed in the perpetual and challenging quest for self-knowledge.

Despite the fact that its time and place of origin is still shrouded in mystery, the adage “know thyself” is universal, placed at the foundation of knowledge and regarded as the cornerstone on which an entire philosophical system has been erected. The Greek philosopher Plato claimed, “The essence of knowledge is self-knowledge.” Centuries before him, the Hindu Upanishads confirmed that “enquiry into the truth of the Self is knowledge.” Reflecting the social, political, and cultural complexity shaping modern man centuries later, Nietzsche declared, “One's own self is well hidden from one's own self; of all mines of treasure, one's own is the last to be dug up.” In contrast, André Gide cynically noted, “Any caterpillar who tried to ‘know himself’ would never become a butterfly.” Famous opinions on this matter would make a long and multi-faceted list, but regardless of which of the above viewpoints we embrace, self-knowledge is an all-encompassing journey. It is a crucial step on the path that determines an individual's humanity and leads him to the full awareness of his being.

Self-Staging is a group exhibition presenting six artists from five countries (Canada, China, Israel, Italy, and Poland) who work in video, painting, installation, and printing to explore the self from both micro and macro perspectives. Far from being an exhaustive compendium on the topic, which would be a challenging and anachronistic task in an increasingly fragmented, decentralized reality, Self-Staging analyzes different approaches to the idea of identity through case studies. Even though the Self is no longer a monolithic entity, from certain points of view it remains unfathomable and unpredictable. The exhibited pieces declare the loss of the traditional notion of identity and react to this loss. The works investigate and question the cognitive, social, and cultural processes that shape identity; they reflect on the subtle boundary between the individual and the outside world, the private self and the public persona. As suggested by the title of the exhibition, identity is more performative than predetermined; it is related to *mise-en-scène* (placing on stage), combining strong theatrical elements and documenting the artist's diverse strategies for dealing with (auto) biographical material. Artists rely on their selves and bodies in the same way that actors rely on props to become their characters. No absolute lies, but many multi-layered truths, are displayed before our eyes to assist in the ongoing epiphany of “self-editing” carried out by the artists exhibited.

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Exhibition View





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Art Works



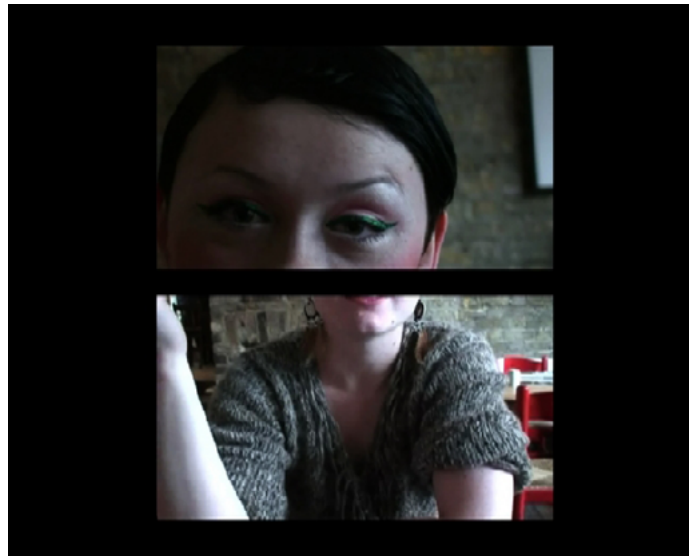
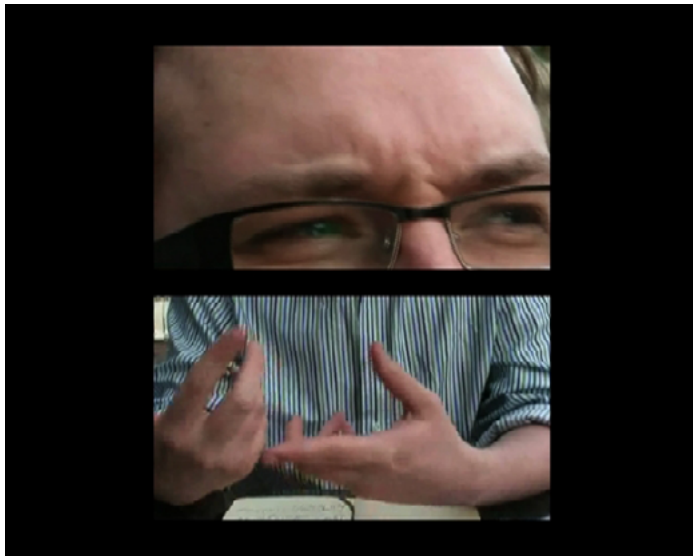
The work of **Stefania Brandinelli (b. 1963 in Milan, Italy; lives and works in Pietrasanta, Italy)** ranges from oil (self-)portraits on transparent PET sheets and used packages to (self-)portraits on delicate tree leaves. Fascinated since the beginning of her career by atypical materials, her pieces are the extremely intimate yet universal visual transposition of the artist's inner world. In this world, the protagonists, often the artist herself or people from her circle, emerge from, float in, and are enveloped by the pure transparency of the void. Presented without any objects of affection, the protagonists of Brandinelli's works are fragments of stories we may not be fully able to grasp. They come from the unknown and recede back to it; they are painted with fast and energetic brushstrokes, which are acts of resistance against the inexorability of time. It is no chance occurrence that Brandinelli's chosen materials are in some way ephemeral or transient; human life itself, and not just her expressive means, swings between being and not being, the perceivable and the illusory. (M.L.)



*Eyes*  
2012  
oil on plastic  
18.7x13.8x0.5cm

*Portrait on leaf*  
2012  
oil on leaf  
3.3x4.9cm

*She's More Like My Humbert Humbert* by **Ophelia Chan (b. 1985 in Hong Kong; lives and works in Beijing, China)** is a sort of collective portrait, in which the artist invited a group of common people to narrate, or rather, stage, a story about a fictional character that actually represents them. Real-life expectations and imaginary fulfillments mingle and thus shape identities suspended between fact and fiction. Chan's love of and involvement in theatrical practice is visible in a piece that creates visual tension and pathos by combining still and moving images and juxtaposing the spontaneity and deceit of the artist and the protagonists in front of the unaware viewer. In the continuous overlapping of lies and truth, in the end truth is revealed through a process of staged lying. The artistic gesture is thus the lie par excellence that paradoxically facilitates self-knowledge and the exposure of one's candid feelings. (M.L.)



*She's more like my Humbert Humbert*  
2009  
video  
16 min 30 sec loop



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*DMT*, the video installation by **Jeremy Shaw, (b. 1977 in Vancouver, Canada; lives and works in Berlin, Germany and Vancouver, Canada)** is the transposition of the effects of DMT, a naturally-occurring psychedelic compound of the tryptamine family present throughout the plant kingdom and in trace amounts in mammals, including humans. The hallucinatory experience lies at the center of the work, acting as both the signifier and signified, the means and aim of the protagonists' journey towards the ultimate high. Despite this fact, the hallucinatory experience and the resulting core of the protagonists' minds are merely implied, remaining unknown to the viewers of the video as well as to each of the eight protagonists, invisible yet imaginable. The sensory derailment evoked by the protagonists' expressions is paired in a paradoxical and ironic way with texts and subtitles arranged by the artist, representing an attempt to decipher the "Other" dimension that the viewers are actively invited to enter. Thus, language and logic must surrender to the uncontrollable forces of the mind. (M.L.)



DMT  
2004  
Video, 20min loop

*Reisefieber* is a massive video project dating back to 2007, composed of five different films that blur the border between **Wojtek Doroszuk's life and artistic practice (b. 1981 in Krakow, Poland; lives and works in Krakow, Poland and Rouen, France)**. The work reflects on the notion of self-identity in an increasingly globalized world that is still fascinated by and subject to stereotypes. In the course of a year, the artist performed different jobs, from washing cars to waiting tables, literally interpreting characters that correspond to potential emigrants from Central Europe. Doroszuk uses camouflage to transfer to the screen humble yet irrelevant actions performed by types that act as modern doppelgängers, whose estrangement has become a *conditio sine qua non* for their floating status. Doroszuk explores the burden of one's roots, the true meaning of belonging, the illusion of fitting into a multiethnic Europe, and the search for one's inner self despite restrictions. (M.L.)

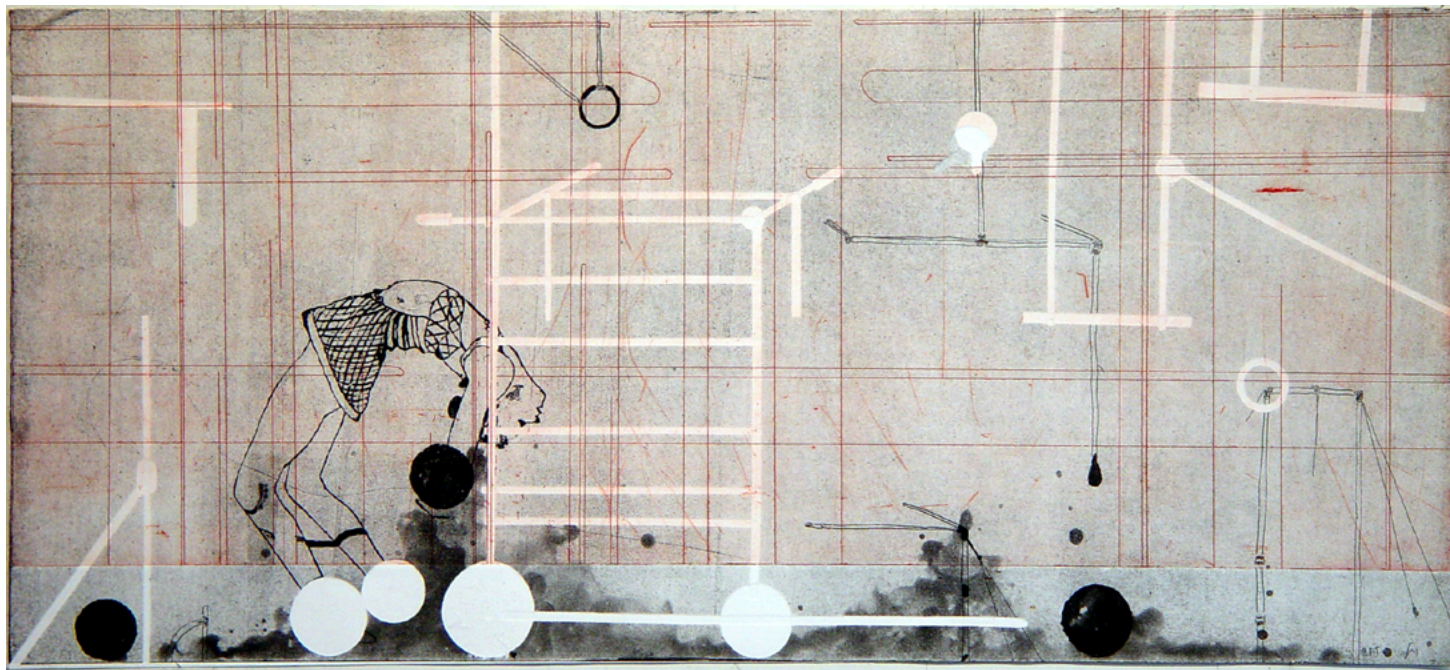


*Reisefieber: Sümela Restaurant*, 2007, video, 6min25sec loop



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The work of **Hilla Ben Ari (b. 1972 in Kibbutz Yagur, Israel; lives and works in Tel-Aviv, Israel)** is often related to the metaphorical or physical human body, the space it occupies and activates, and the energy it releases and conveys to the surroundings. Often forced into unnatural postures, the bodies portrayed in Hilla Ben Ari's *oeuvre* endure fatigue, challenge the status quo, and overcome paradoxes. These hardly bearable unnatural poses are the core of *Dusk and Dawn*, two video pieces whose emotion lies in the balance that the female protagonist must find in absurd movements. In *Eight Exhalations*, a series of handmade prints, delicate yet strong female bodies fluctuate in the air, in some ways free but always needing to find the right balance amidst the obstacles in the composition that certainly represent barriers in life. (M.L.)



*From the Series Eight Exhalations*  
etching, soft-ground, sugar-lift, spit-bite  
and embossing  
34x74cm  
2011

**Luan Xiao's (b. 1981 in Ji'nan, China; lives and works in Beijing, China)** *Mirror* departs from the intrinsic qualities of ephemeral, fragmented, mundane materials, such as fragments of glass, thus reflecting on the notion of self-perception and self-affirmation. Humble glass fragments are condensed into a specific body part, in this case the brain, a metonymy for excellence and the infinite range of human potential, which is neither fully explored nor explorable. Despite its accuracy, *Mirror* is devoid of any explicit mimetic purpose; it visualizes the invisible, reflects what normally is hidden, and evokes memories, feelings, and states of being that, although past and fragmented, shape who we are. By bridging the gap between emotion and reason and the physical and spiritual in this piece, impalpable feelings condense into pure matter, while pure matter transcends its physical limitations to reach the realm of evocation. (M.L.)



*Our time's Lion*  
2012  
Resin, Cast stone  
98x35x45cm



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