

## Chance Meeting on a Drawing Table of a Zebra and a Meteorite Margarida Gouveia, Tina Isabella Hild, Martin Karlsson

The exhibition's title alludes to the famous sentence uttered by the French poet Isidor Ducasse aka Comte de Lautréamont concerning the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella from *Chants de Maldoror* («Songs of Maldoror»), which were first published in 1874. Ducasse's metaphor on the idea of unparalleled beauty exerted a great fascination for the Surrealists during the 1930s, precisely because of the arbitrary confrontation between unconnected objects. In this way Man Ray's sculpture *L'Enigme d'Isidor Ducasse* («The Enigma of Isidor Ducasse» – Tate Collection) from 1920 can be regarded as a kind of homage to the author. The allusion in the exhibition's title is indicative of the (curatorial and artistic) potential deriving from chance meetings between and with the three artists – on no account should it posit a thematic connection between their respective positions and Surrealism. Margarida Gouveia, Tina Isabella Hild and Martin Karlsson all spent a year in London and adopted new impulses into their work. They have developed site-specific works (Karlsson), extended large installations (Hild) and investigated new working methods and media experimentally (Gouveia) during this period. Their simultaneous sojourn, the communal idea of the exhibition project as well as the resulting collaboration and discussions have all had palpable implications for their individual artistic positions. The exhibition focuses upon the aspect of a chance meeting and presents it in a manner that not only manifests the independence of each artistic position, but also accentuates those interstitial areas, in which unsuspected connections and communal (artistic) interests are expressed in the form of a latent dialogue.

Martin Karlsson describes himself as a «travelling artist, timewise and spatially». His artistic projects are frequently site-specific, they are concerned with the social, cultural, and historical contexts and frames of reference connected to the locations. The project *London, An Imagery* is based on a critical engagement with *London, A Pilgrimage* (1872) by the French artist Gustave Doré and the playwright Blanchard Jerrold. Karlsson visits the localities depicted in the latter and, to a certain extent, appropriates them. His peregrinations around the city have resulted in a series of 123 drawings. Although the artist adopts the titles and format of the Doré illustrations (wood engravings) for his drawings, he nevertheless presents these locations from his contemporary viewpoint, in their current condition. By opting for pencil drawings, Karlsson is reverting to a medium that has, to a large extent, handed over its status as a means of documentation to technical methods and media. The objective pictorial language that apportions an equal measure of attention to all components, in which the «individually» motivated line is subordinate, nevertheless conveys the claim and aspiration to a certain objectivity that, for its part, reintroduces the documentary aspect into the drawings. In this way, they express an evocative discrepancy between a medially determined «timelessness» and those specific aspects typical of the time and inherent in these snapshots of people and places. Alongside the complex of themes comprising documentation and fiction, and the mediatization of history/histories etched into the fabric of the city, Karlsson also investigates the possibilities of temporary accentuation by means of specific forms of presentation. 22 framed drawings are presented in the installational arrangement, in the form of a reframing dependent on context, whereas all the others are displayed as reproductions. This selection, based on personal preference, that is to say, upon the subjective, aesthetic criteria employed by the artist and curator, on the one hand releases a small group from the overall mass of works, suggesting significance and context; on the other hand, this gesture underlines the difference between the immediacy of the «original» and the distancing surface of the original.

Tina Isabella Hild's method of working is characterised by the generation and development of larger installations. The artist devises the conceptual, formal, and material overall form of a work as a kind of «work in progress», out of which she periodically excerpts individual «fragments». *Unexhaustible Presence – Excerpt (Meteorite)* and *Excerpts (Fragments of a statue 1–3)* embody, as it were, partial aspects of the eponymous installation (2007 ff.), yet they still function as autonomous sculptures. The glittering «meteorite form» and the fragments of an equestrian statue spread out over three tables exert a singular fascination. The apparent familiarity of the objects, their seductive materiality, and the composition of the surfaces exude a certain empathy. By «imitating» particular aesthetic features, for example, the patina of the statue fragments or the metallic shimmering of the porous rock, the artist is activating a form of emotional receptivity in the viewer. Hild's thematic starting point is the perusal of collective metaphors, both reflecting and highlighting the fundamental questions of human existence, such as primordial stirrings of emotional, mental dispositions and social behaviour. The formal reduction of the sculptures and the simplification into memorable object forms increase the recognisability of these topoi, so that their concentrated associative potential can be released in a kind of domino effect. The veritable interplay of sensuous qualities that speaks directly to us on a «universal wavelength» as it were, and the multilayered, thematically motivated references engender an insistent presence in the sculptures, predicated upon antagonistic principles: thus, from a thematic point of view, organic form collides with «cultural» formation or monumentality and fragility, whereas on the perceptive level, ambivalent (bodily) emotions, such as attraction and repulsion, desire and disgust, are duly invoked. Categories, such as the ephemeral and the unsayable, the instable and latently threatening, have been condensed into «pictures» that actually encounter the viewer as physical, corporeal opposite numbers.

Margarida Gouveia's work is situated between the poles of photography and figuration, whereby the artist has shifted the accent, in recent times, increasingly in the direction of temporally and spatially articulated settings. The thematic focus of her works is directed towards media-specific questions, such as the significance of the presence and absence of signs within the photographic image. In addition, she investigates the relationship between corporeality and space, that is to say, between the image and the spatial setting, and furthermore explores forms of self-representation. Gouveia develops so-called «cut outs» in connection with this, in which she literally cuts figures out from enlargements, duly integrating them into new pictorial contexts. The group of works entitled *It doesn't move* (2007 ff.) is geared towards a performance medium. Devised as a series spanning a comprehensive range of media, it comprises, alongside photographs, the video work shown here. In this piece, the artist deploys the cut out «self-portrait» as a pictorial figure, which is set in motion by invisible forces that float weightlessly between the landscape and the sky. The «real» pictorial space mutates into a hybrid illusion of space, the unreality and artificiality of which is further intensified by the reduction of the images to black and white. Sheets with detached stickers form the subject of the series *Freeing images*. By means of the bold enlargement of the ink jet print, Gouveia is accentuating not merely the materiality, the texture of the subject. The pragmatic arrangement of the picture labels on the support suddenly becomes an aesthetic criterion, the formal exaggeration congeals into overdawing. The concomitant impression of absurdity is sustained further by the fact that Gouveia directs her sights at the «leftovers» of these sticker albums that she presents as a conglomeration of «blind marks». In her most recent work *Zebra*, which belongs to the series *Suspension of disbelief*, she embarks upon a multilayered translation process, which might be characterised as a set course through a range of media: from the «playground sculpture» of a zebra via enlarged photographs of the same zebra, mounted and then cut out along the silhouette of the body, all the way to a flat spatial figure. The artist has then drawn the initial process of production of the «original» image of the zebra and led it back to its «origin». With this parallel movement, as it were, Gouveia demonstrates the impossibility of reversing this process, this transfer of media. In this way, the original image, the living zebra that posed as a model for the *objet trouvé*, has duly transformed itself into a pictorial figure by means of the layers and individual steps of the mediating process, ultimately becoming a sign in a random pictorial space.

# acme project space

## Margarida Gouveia

\*1977 Torres Vedras, Portugal, lives and works in Lisbon and London ([www.margaridagouveia.com](http://www.margaridagouveia.com))  
 2008 Gulbenkian Creativity and Artistic Creation Photography Program, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon // 2000 – 2004 Advanced Degree in Photography, Ar.Co, Art and Visual Communication Center, Lisbon // 1996 – 2000 BA Visual Design, Art and Design Institute, Lisbon  
**Solo Exhibitions**  
 2007 *It doesn't move*, Sala do Veados, MNHN, Museum of Natural History, Lisbon // 2006 *Lisboa 20*, Arte contemporânea Gallery, Lisbon / Arte Contempo Gallery, curated by Filipa Oliveira and Miguel Amado, Lisbon // 2004 *Arte por Companhia II*, PAHLDATA Room, Lisbon / *Lugar Comum*, Sala do Risco, Lisbon

## Group Exhibitions (Selection)

2009 11<sup>ème</sup> *Festival International Bandits-Mages*, Brouges, France // 2008 *Portugal Agora, à propos des lieux d'origine*, MUDAM Luxemburg // 2007 *Instantes de Memoria*, Electricity Museum, Lisbon / 4<sup>th</sup> *annual international video shorts screening - Women's Caucus for Art*, New York // 2006 *Opções e Futuros*, PLMJ Collection, Arte Contempo Gallery Lisbon // 2005 *25 Pieces - Europart, Contemporary Art from Europe*, Public Art Projects, Austria's presidency in the European Union, Vienna

## Tina Isabella Hild

\*1977 Marburg, Germany, lives and works in London and Berlin ([www.tinaisabellahild.de](http://www.tinaisabellahild.de))  
 1998 – 2004 Academy of Fine Arts Münster with Reiner Ruthenbeck and Katharina Fritsch

## Solo Exhibitions

2009 *Unexhaustible Presence, Excerpts 1–6*, Trübenbach Galerie, Cologne // 2005 *Sonntagnachmittag bei Fremden*, KC07 Münster // 2004 *Der Hoffnung Glanz und der Freiheit Licht*, Galerie 149 & BIK Bremerhaven (with Sven Stuckenschmidt)

## Group Exhibitions (Selection)

2008 *believe me!*, KiT, Düsseldorf // 2007 *Ein Überblick*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Berlin // 2006 *The electric chair by andy warhol didn't sell very well*, montanaberlin, Berlin // 2004 *Freundschaftsspiel*, Dolmabahçe Sarayı, Istanbul

## Martin Karlsson

\*1976 Uppsala, Sweden, lives and works in Stockholm ([www.martinkarlsson.net](http://www.martinkarlsson.net))  
 2001 – 2006 BFA and MFA Royal University College of Fine Arts, Stockholm

## Solo Exhibitions (Selection)

2009 *Tumba*, Botkyrka konsthall, Sweden / *Living History*, E:vent Gallery, London // 2007 *Home and Market*, Jönköping Match Museum, Sweden // 2006 *Old Stockholm*, Index & Stockholm City Museum // 2005 *Arcadia*, Brändström & Stene Gallery, Stockholm

## Group Exhibitions (Selection)

2009 *It's not for reading. It's for making*, FormContent, London // 2007 *Exteriors*, Center for Contemporary Art, Kiev / *Against Time*, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm / *Une histoire à soi*, La galerie-Centre d'art contemporain, Noisy-le-Sec // 2005 *Raid Projects*, Los Angeles // 2004 *8 x 8 – An Alternative for Stockholm*, The Swedish Museum of Architecture, Stockholm / *Urban City Park*, Den Haag // 2003 *Invasion*, Dunkers Kulturhus, Helsingborg / *Against the Public*, Kulturhuset, Stockholm

## Irene Müller

\*1969 Vienna, Austria, lives and works as freelance curator and author in Zurich  
 1987 – 1997 Studied art history, archaeology and German literature in Vienna and Zurich

## Curatorial Projects (Selection)

2010 *landpartie en route*, on visit to: CAN Neuchâtel (Susanne Hofer) // 2009 *landpartie en route*, on visit to: Kunstraum Kreuzlingen (Solvej Dufour Anderson) // 2008 Basle, Ausstellungsraum Klingental, *Backdraft*, May 25 – June 6 / *landpartie en route*, on visit to: exex, St. Gallen (Klodin Erb / Eliane Rutishauser); o. T., Lucerne (Barbara Mühlefluh); Kaskadenkondensator, Basle (Maya Prachoinig) // 2005 – 2008 *landpartie*, exhibition series in the eponymous project space, Zurich [the name «landpartie» means journey out of the city, a short trip to the countryside] ([www.landpartie.ch](http://www.landpartie.ch)) // 2003 Altdorf, Haus für Kunst Uri, *Spiel noch 1x*, November 9 – December 14 / Schaffhausen, Forum Vebikus, *anyway*. *Maya Bringolf, Franziska Furter, Martin Heldstab, Edit Oderbolz*, August 23 – September 21 / Liestal, Kunsthalle Palazzo, *go far go. Franziska Furter, Maya Rikli*, January 25 – March 7 // 2002 Wohlen, Altes Strohmanufakturgebäude Isler & Cie., *Panama*, June 8 – July 7 (in cooperation with Susann Wintsch)

## Publication Projects

*Pascale Grau. Rollenwechsel*, ed. by Irene Müller, Nuremberg: Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2009  
*landpartie no. 8 – 12 and landpartie no. 13 – 17*, ed. by Irene Müller, 2007 [exhibition catalogue]  
*Andrea Wolfensberger. Zeit-Lupen*, ed. by Irene Müller and Karen van den Berg, Lucerne / Poschiavo, Edizioni Periferia, 2007  
*RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co). we save what you give*, ed. by Irene Müller et al., Zurich / Nuremberg: a project by edition fink through Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2006

Exhibition curated by Irene Müller

Acme Project Space, 44 Bonner Rd, London E2 9JS, Thu – Sun 12 – 6pm, October 2 – October 18, 2009

Text: Irene Müller, translation: Tim Connell

Special thanks to: Tim Connell, Lea O'Loughlin, Bruno Ramos, Valerie Sparks and Thomas Zirlewagen

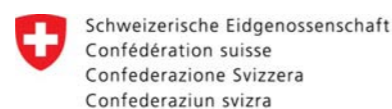


iaspis

The Swedish Arts Grants Committee's International Programme for Visual Artists



CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION



Embassy of Switzerland in the United Kingdom

hessische kultur stiftung

