



## *Hunter of Worlds*

Nina Canell, Rochelle Feinstein, Louise Lawler, Marie Matusz,  
Josep Maynou, Alan Schmalz, John Smith and Niels Trannois  
Curated by Elise Lammer  
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*Hunter of Worlds* borrows its title from a 1977 science fiction novel by American writer C. J. Cherryh. A space invasion story, it's remarkable for its ability to tell the events from an alien viewpoint, but mainly for the thorough use of three complex invented languages, namely the *Kalliran*, *Amaut* and *Iduve*. Remarkably, according to Mark Bould in *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction* (2009), the *Iduve* language makes "no clear distinction between the concepts of noun and verb, between solid and action."

The exhibition *Hunter of Worlds* is a speculative experiment for which the viewer is kindly invited to imagine that all previous knowledge (as well as reading and understanding thereof) has been forgotten, as a result of an interruption or dramatic slow-down of our civilization, following an ice age, or a human-induced catastrophe. The works on display would therefore stand for the last signs and symbols for a now obliterated culture. The artworks are by Nina Canell, Rochelle Feinstein, Louise Lawler, Marie Matusz, Josep Maynou, Alan Schmalz, John Smith and Niels Trannois.

*Radioactive waste takes 100'000 years until it's safe. There is no doubt that the best of currently available human knowledge has been invested in making atomic waste underground repositories safe against events such as earthquakes, tsunamis, or even an ice age, which is likely to take place in about sixty thousand years. But there is also little to no doubt that the language we speak today will be forgotten in a couple of centuries, and that by then all digital archives will be lost or obsolete. To illustrate the impermanence of knowledge and language, I always think of Alexander the Great. Despite being crowned king of Egypt in 332 BC, and examples of recorded exchanges between Greece and Egypt for centuries before him, the civilisations that followed lost the ability to read hieroglyphs without much drama, while the Egyptian territory passed from Syrian to Greek to Pagan and then Christian Romans hands. This tale of contemporary diplomacy is not even 2,500 years old. In this context the main challenge is not only technological, it's mostly semantic!*

### SALTS Space

Building on an extensive painting lexicon, New York-based U. S. artist Rochelle Feinstein employs an array of styles and media, such as silkscreen, photography and assemblage and hard-edged graphic compositions. These combined manners and processes cross-reference the historical with the vernacular, the mythologies of the avant-garde as well as popular culture. At once social commentary and autobiographical incidents, her work offers a biting reflection on the role of an artist working in the arena that is painting in the U. S. today.

*Ear to the Ground* (2017) is a curtain printed with phrases and words originally painted by the artist. Composed from a group of what Feinstein calls 'flash cards', they include commonplace speech, colloquialisms and clichés that Feinstein has collected since the 1990s.

Swedish-born Berlin-based Nina Canell works at the very limit of the perceptible, exploring the relationship between the material and the immaterial. Her sculptural installations function as poetic, open experiences. She interrogates the physical proprieties of materials and objects, thus enabling us to perceive the imperceptible chains of events of certain realities. By turning electrical currents, atmospheric forces, socks or chewing gum into sculptural components, her works fuse matter, light and sound to create delicate and ephemeral arrangements. Nina Canell's fragile and elegiac sculptures also evoke the transient and shifting laws that rule over our existence.

*Brief Syllable (Tripled)*, (2018) is a portion of a sliced telecommunication and electricity cable mounted on a concrete pedestal.

The work of Swiss-born Marseille-based Alan Schmalz is articulated in various mediums, ranging from painting to sculpture as well as drawing. Often complementary, these mediums are combined with great precision to let emerge narratives mixing symbolism and socio-political reflections.

*Speed syndrom society and s\*\*\** (2018) are casts of four apples engraved with single words. Titled *Doors (Total Institution profiles)* (2018), the three collages hanging on the wall represent four doors, each of which is individually numbered.

<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from the essay "Merry Oblivion, Empathy vs. Curiosity" in *What is going to happen is not the future, but what we are going to do*, edited together with Chus Martínez and Rosa Lleo, published in Rome by NERO in February 2018.



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Inspired in his formative years at the Royal College of Art in the 1970s by conceptual art and structural film, but also fascinated by the immersive power of narrative and the spoken word, London-based British artist John Smith has developed an extensive body of work that subverts the perceived boundaries between documentary and fiction, representation and abstraction. Often rooted in everyday life, his meticulously crafted films playfully explore and expose the language of cinema.

Om (1986) is a short video in which we see a young man singing "om", the chant that monks usually use.

#### SALTS Cubes

Niels Trannois is a Basel and Geneva-based French artist working in the extended field of painting. His work can be understood as fragments of a scenario describing what could happen if reality were to absent itself. His artistic practice aims to suspend through his exploration of surface and materials, an irresolute opposition between language and sensation, narration and abstraction, emotions and representation.

La Mue (Singe est nu) (2017-18) is a site-specific wall installation consisting of approximately 120 painted porcelaine sheets arranged on the outer walls of the Cubes, and across the exhibition spaces.

Based between Berlin, Paris and Morocco, Spanish artist Josep Maynou mostly works with drawings, sculptural assemblages, textile works, videos, and performances. His multidisciplinary approach comes together as a form of contemporary storytelling that situates itself beyond the traditional art formats, often leading to installations in contexts such as TV repair shops, private apartments, abandoned spaces, laundromats or second-hand stores.

5 Carpets and Happy and Sad (both 2018) are hand-knit carpets Maynou has been producing in collaboration with a Berber community based in Morocco where he travels regularly.

Over the last several years, the work of Basel-based French artist Marie Matusz has focused on the concept of research as a leitmotiv into producing her installations and sculptures. Influenced by philosophy, linguistics, and phenomenology, her work traces its origins to the analysis of music's effects on the body (psychophony) and the mind. Treated as a space, the body has been challenged by installative external displays using the concept of *Mise en Abîme* as a tool to reflect a certain mental and psychological state.

The mound of dark powder is made of pure graphite and bears no title. Titled Self-fulfilling Prophecy (2018), the sharp spears going through the middle wall are made of hand-polished aluminum and can be packed in the polyester, leather and velvet case hanging on the adjacent wall.

#### In the garden

From the late 1970s onwards, U.S. artist and photographer Louise Lawler has focused on the presentation and marketing of art. Lawler has photographed pictures and objects in collectors' homes, in galleries, on the walls of auction houses, and off the walls, in museums storage. Along with photography, she has created conceptual and installation art. Lawler's work, in its diverse manifestations (installations, events, publications, souvenirs...) addresses or confronts prevailing systems of establishing art, taste and style.

Birdcalls (1972/2008) is an audio artwork that transforms the names of famous male artists into a bird song, parroting names such as Artschwager, Beuys, Ruscha and Warhol.



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