

sensational and antigerative successions

Brandon Covington Sam-Sumana; Steffani Jemison; Ndayé Kouagou; Kengné Téguia
curated by Cédric Fauq

October 26 - December 22, 2019

It's a show that starts with a letter ("dear mother"), addressed to the now-gone powerful figure that was holding the score. After the yearning, you come up with a question: can I go back in time with music? and you find the key – the reinvention of the beat isn't serving progress ("go ahead"); it's a tool for horizontal time-travels. You're learning: if you have nothing left to lo(o)se(n), what about abolishing *legacy*? turning into the debtless. CF

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The exhibition will only be complete after Ndayé Kouagou's performance "I DON'T WANT ANY OF THIS TO BE PART OF ANY OF THAT" held at the gallery at 8pm on the night of the opening.

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This project stems out of my long-term commitment in using and manipulating the exhibition format to deal with and think through blackness beyond visual representation. Believing in the necessity to offer alternatives to the number of images circulating through media and now more than ever in exhibition venues (a recent phenomenon that, despite its urgency, should also be questioned and challenged), *sensational and antigerative successions* is the third exhibition in an ongoing and never-ending series of "exhibition-as-studies" tackling that issue (the first "Le Colt est Jeune et Haine" (The Colt is Young and Hatred) took place at DOC, Paris. The second "The Share of Opulence; Doubled; Fractional" at Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna. Both were held in 2018).

Invited by Nir to devise an exhibition in his space, I was compelled to think about my own relationship to Munich. Although tenuous, it had a rather special place in my heart and memory, as the first city I had travelled to specifically for an exhibition. That show was Matthew Barney's *River of Fundament*, curated by Okwui Enwezor (17.03.14 — 17.08.14). I remembered, after having visited the exhibition for the second time, sitting down to write a letter: addressed to the now late curator. I had noticed the door to his office and had planned on slipping the letter through. I then realised the slight creepiness of my gesture and went to the reception instead, asking the front of house staff to forward my letter.

Obviously, the recent passing of Enwezor this year made me even more adamant to, somehow, deal with this anecdote. You could see this exhibition as another letter. One that isn't meant to be answered. That is looking for an affiliation without asking for permission: an underclaimed legacy. As it stands, this letter is also a symphony of sorts. All the artists involved in *sensational and antigerative successions* have a deep relationship to music. They are musicians, DJs, composers, interpreters. More specifically, it is the musicality of language that forms the common thread of this project, through lyrics and melody (Kengné Téguia), coded messages and musical notation (Steffani Jemison), branding as score (Ndayé Kouagou) and appropriated synthesised voices (Brandon Covington Sam-Sumana).

After this text, you will find both biographies of the artists and quotes related to their work. CF

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Brandon Covington Sam-Sumana is a multimedia artist and producer whose work interrogate matters related to currency, transience, narratology and system metabolism. Their investigations have spawned music projects, objects of generative design, and forays into speculative finance, video, and visual art. They were born in the mid-1990s in Fayetteville, NC.

“*First Cotillion* presents an aggravation of the space between alien figures and the paternalisms classifying them. It acknowledges that embodiment is never limited to the immediate corpus: that everyone is *dividual* – with bodies and objects alike as follicles of events both past and present; that color is as physical as sound. It suggests conscious non-decision when it comes to the question of whether we will picnic with an apple, a peach, or something else altogether. Simultaneously, it reprimands. *First Cotillion* reminds us that we are not nesting dolls.” Brandon Covington Sam-Sumana

Steffani Jemison lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Recent and forthcoming solo exhibitions and commissioned performances include *Jeu de Paume* (2017), *CAPC Bordeaux* (2017), *MASS MoCA* (2017), *Nottingham Contemporary* (2017), *RISD Museum* (2015), and the *Museum of Modern Art* (2015). Solo screening programs include *Lincoln Center: Art of the Real* (2018) and *Gene Siskel Film Center: Conversations at the Edge* (2018). Jemison’s work is included in the *Whitney Biennial 2019* as well as in the touring group exhibition *Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem* (2019-2020).

“I am thinking about writing from and in the margins, on the floors and on the walls, as a way to generate energy. I am wondering how a tree is a margin, how a field is a margin, how a wall is a margin. I am thinking about how walls can be the most public and also the most private places. In a recent movement workshop, the choreographer André M. Zachery asked me to assume the position of a graffiti writer who was hiding in plain sight. *How would we move?* he asked us. And maybe the answer is: How we always move. I am looking for a route to drawing, and a route to writing, that does not pass through any masters at all, old or otherwise. I am looking for—no, I am looking at—a path to drawing that is a labor and performance of freedom. I am thinking about the relationship between freedom and withdrawal. What do drawing and withdrawal have in common?” Steffani Jemison, “Draft: On the Stroke, the Glyph, and the Mark” in *Artforum*, April 2019

Ndayé Kouagou (born in 1992, France) is an artist based in Paris, his practice always start from texts of which he is the author. Voluntarily or involuntarily confused, he tries as best as he can to bring a reflection on these 3 subjects; legitimacy, freedom and love. The result is... what it is. He describes his work as "quite interesting, but not that interesting or maybe not interesting at all". He has presented his work among other places at *Auto Italia South East* (London), *Centrale Fies (Dro/Italy)* and *Lafayette Anticipation* (Paris) where he also launched his *YBR** publishing project (*Young Black Romantics*).

“The most I think about it, the less I know what this is about. That’s a really cheesy thing to say, well if this is cheesy, wait to see the piece. The title “I don’t want any of this to be part of any of that” (if this is not a good title I don’t know what a good title is). Well, now the feeling is even stronger than before, I really don’t want any of this to be part of any of that anymore. This and that are moving a lot, this can be that and one day later this can become something else, and it’s the same for that. Confusing? Ok, try to think as this and that as the sky, you’re always looking at the same sky, but at the same time you’re never looking at the same sky. I cannot be more clear than that, so this is my statement. I promise you I’m not trying to confuse you right now, if I’m being honest I am as confused as you.” Ndayé Kouagou

Kengné Téguia (born in 1987, France) is an artist based in Paris. First self-taught, he joined the School of Fine Arts in Nantes in 2014, then the National School of Art of Paris-Cergy in 2017. He also studied computer science and worked in this field as a network administrator. Performer and videographer, his practice - passed to the filter of queer aesthetics, experimental cinema and pop music - reinvested the figure and condition of the cyborg. Kengné Téguia exploits in this double space his body and his deafness. He has collaborated with the collectives, The Cheapest University, Black(s) to the Future, The Community. His writings have been published in the magazine *The Funambulist*, his works presented in spaces such as Palais de Tokyo, Bétonsalon, Gaité Lyrique, Galerie Treize, BFI Southbank, Wexner Center for the Arts, Mix NYC. His work is represented by Light Cone (by Caroline Honorien).

"Time goes by so slowly: I'm covering Madonna's song "Hung Up". Being under the influence of Patrick Bokanowski's film "The Angel", I play the different effects that are possible for me on a body that you can only guess by its shadow. Attention is focused on gestures that are repeated over and over again so that they may finally be printed by our retinas one day, "waiting for your call baby nights & days". "I'm caught up, I don't know what to do... ", the headscarf seems somewhere to point out the impossibility of the link, of empathy or at least of understanding with the hearing majority as to my deafness and its consequences. Repetitions can also refer to this, both in gestures and in the voice, which at the end ends up being strident as tired of this constantly imposed pedagogy. Time goes by so slowly or the time of waiting and disappointment.

Blanche-Neige is my Bitch: Cover of the song, « Don't let Go » by the emblematic (black) female R&B group of the '90s, En Vogue, « I often tell myself that we could be more than just friends... ». This is the wish addressed to Snow White, through its two protagonists The Queen and the Hunter. Love making, heart breaking, soul shaking, isn't that the love/hate cycle that the symbol of Snow White would represent, coming from my place? BLANCHE-NEIGE IS MY BITCH or perhaps the desire to impose myself in a universe where my body is invisible, while offering an impossible love story between Snow White and the Queen, despite a palpable sexual tension between them, but also with the Hunter. Would she be bi, pan-sexual or just not interested? Or the very symbol of that impossible empathy between the figure of Snow White and me?

Soul Sista x Kameugné: It is one of my first works where the experimentation of sound matter and video will meet, the influence is carried here by the opening of James Bond's films, in a personal space, my room is being transformed into an elsewhere where my ears, while deaf, wear a headset, where my body becomes more difficult to define, etc..... It is also the first time I will cover Bilal's song "Soul Sista", which will follow me in my work." Kengné Téguia

Cédric Fauq (b. 1992) is a French curator and writer currently based in Nottingham (UK), working as Curator of Exhibitions at Nottingham Contemporary, where he has been working since September 2017 (first as Assistant Curator). Previously, he was involved in the co-running of a project space in London (clearview.ltd); the co-curating of a Triennial (Baltic Triennial XIII). In 2018, he devised projects for DOC, Paris and Sophie Tappeiner, Vienna. In 2019/20, he will be curating exhibitions at Nir Altman Gallery, Munich and Cordova, Barcelona. He published in *Mousse Magazine* and spoke at Tate Modern, amongst others.