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TIMEOUT

6th July to 19th September 2020

Most of us had some kind of timeout over the past months, which have been unprecedented and challenging. A timeout forced upon us by a pandemic, a timeout that constrained us to live our lives in different ways, a timeout to reflect upon the essence of our human existence, whose equilibrium seems to shift out of sync.

In an e-mail exchange with a gallery artist we discussed how the perception of times changes in extreme scenarios like the current one – if time expands or condenses. I assume it does both. On the one hand, it feels like we are living a moment of densification and concentration. Of immense inner and outer tension with all the lives, jobs and opportunities lost. On the other hand, time diffuses and becomes more available. It gives us the chance to do things calmer, maybe more measured and considerate, which also opens up opportunities.

It is certainly a period when many aspects of our life, and possibly our future, are put to test. A time of change, and hopefully a time of renewal. It was difficult at times, and still is, to imagine what role art would play in these testing times. After all, change and renewal is what art is about.

We have all witnessed a lot of the online activity during the lockdown. Some of it good, a lot of it was too predictable or in the grain of “now is the time we need art for inspiration and comfort”. We always need art for that purpose. At the moment other needs are more important, family, friends. Jobs, conversations, nature, love, equality – you name it.

Nonetheless, what we do best as a gallery is show art. That’s why we joined the sea of online activity to keep the gallery and its message on the radar. Every week we featured an art work that circled around the theme of above mentioned change and renewal. All works were chosen from our stock, to be united physically in an exhibition at the gallery once it reopens.

So here it is – a short yet multifaceted story about change and renewal told by twelve art works posted during the lockdown. Essentially a summary of the gallery’s *TIMEOUT*.

Downstairs



Minjung Kim
Timeless
Mixed media on mulberry Hanji paper
135 x 114 cm
2019

Achieving equilibrium has been the all-compassing force in Minjung Kim's oeuvre, invariably mediating between Eastern tradition and Western modernity, blending the mystical spirituality of Taoism with the conceptual approach of Western art.

Kim's collages are made of delicately layered sheets of thin, finely textured Korean Mulberry Hanji paper, always burnt at the edges, essentially allowing to draw the lines with fire.

In *Timeless* horizontal burnt lines accumulate to pause just short of the upper edge. An ink drawing, reminiscent of Kim's *Mountain* series, is laid on top of the linear composition, the colour fading while rising, again ceasing below the upper edge. The calm composition leaves us with two voids to consider and two horizons to contemplate.

The oscillation between creation and destruction, the repeated, almost meditative movements unite Kim's works to convey an almost visible transience of time. *Timeless* imbues great tranquillity and inner balance - a state of mind and heart much needed and desired in times of uncertainty and change.



Susan Stockwell
Fast Fashion
Cotton bobbins, shopping trolley
100 x 89 x 49 cm
2019

Susan Stockwell's site-specific installations and sculptures are calm and powerful gestures, deeply researched and often subtly socio-political. Recurring themes evolve around identity, global histories, migration and humanity's social condition.

The materials in Stockwell's sculptural installations are often found objects, domestic or manufacturing products. Their inherent and past content, their transformation and appropriation, always reinforce and intelligently reflect Stockwell's topical approach.

Hundreds of cotton bobbins from a working mill near Manchester relate *Fast Fashion* to industrial histories and colonial trade; piled into a shopping cart it poignantly comments on the collateral damage of our consumer society.

At a point in history when trade, consumption and pollution have momentarily slowed down due to a pandemic, the message of *Fast Fashion*, linked to the destructive behaviours we seem to perpetuate, resounds even stronger, silently expressing a desire for change and regeneration.



Martin Assig
St. Paul #181 (*Alles noch vor mir*)
Ink, pastel & wax on paper
39.3 x 30.5 cm
2012

Martin Assig translates his inner most universe of thoughts and feelings into compositions of abstract organic renderings and patterns or images circling around the human body, both often full of colour. Usually Assig combines his drawings with words and sentences that comment, reinforce or expand the meaning of the visual message.

The German artist's subject matters are at times light-hearted, at times heavily charged. Themes of love and loss, life and death, human pain, existential search and redemption run as common threads through his oeuvre – all states of mind and emotion that are very much felt today.

Drawing after drawing evolves out of a patient working process plunging the viewer into an inner narrative blending psychological insight and wonder, similar to illuminated manuscripts or book illustrations. Assig works with a variety of media that he always combines with a layer of wax, which, like skin, make his images more physical and sensitive.

In his drawings Assig creates intimate worlds touching and revealing the soul of human existence, a place where sensuality and spirituality meet and merge.



Andy Harper
Time Sickness
Oil on linen, two panels
190 x 300 cm
2007

Andy Harper's painting *Time Sickness* is part of a series of paintings inspired by the 1962 science fiction novel *The Drowned World* by British writer J.G. Ballard. The story portrays a post-apocalyptic and unrecognisable London submerged by water and tropical temperatures. The few characters in the book are isolated in the city, while the rest of humanity has chosen refuge at the cooler poles.

"Time Sickness" is a term the writer uses to describe the character's loss of a sense of time and ultimately reality. Ballard's vision of isolation and its psychological undercurrents during a world in crisis hauntingly fits into our current times.

Harper's paintings are full of detail, crafted with thousands of precisely executed brush strokes that are technically accomplished and versatile, to result in hugely complex compositions of often unexpected clarity and luminosity. Already the sheer size of *Time Sickness* (190 x 300 cm) combined with the abundance of visual information are overwhelming. Its seemingly uncontrolled undulating thick jungle of plants is spirally sucked into an abyss, where it seems to disappear.

To engage with Harper's paintings means to enter a whole new world on its own terms. In *Time Sickness*, flora and fauna are taking over our world, menacing and at the same time beautiful. An existing reality is absorbed, while a new one is in creation.



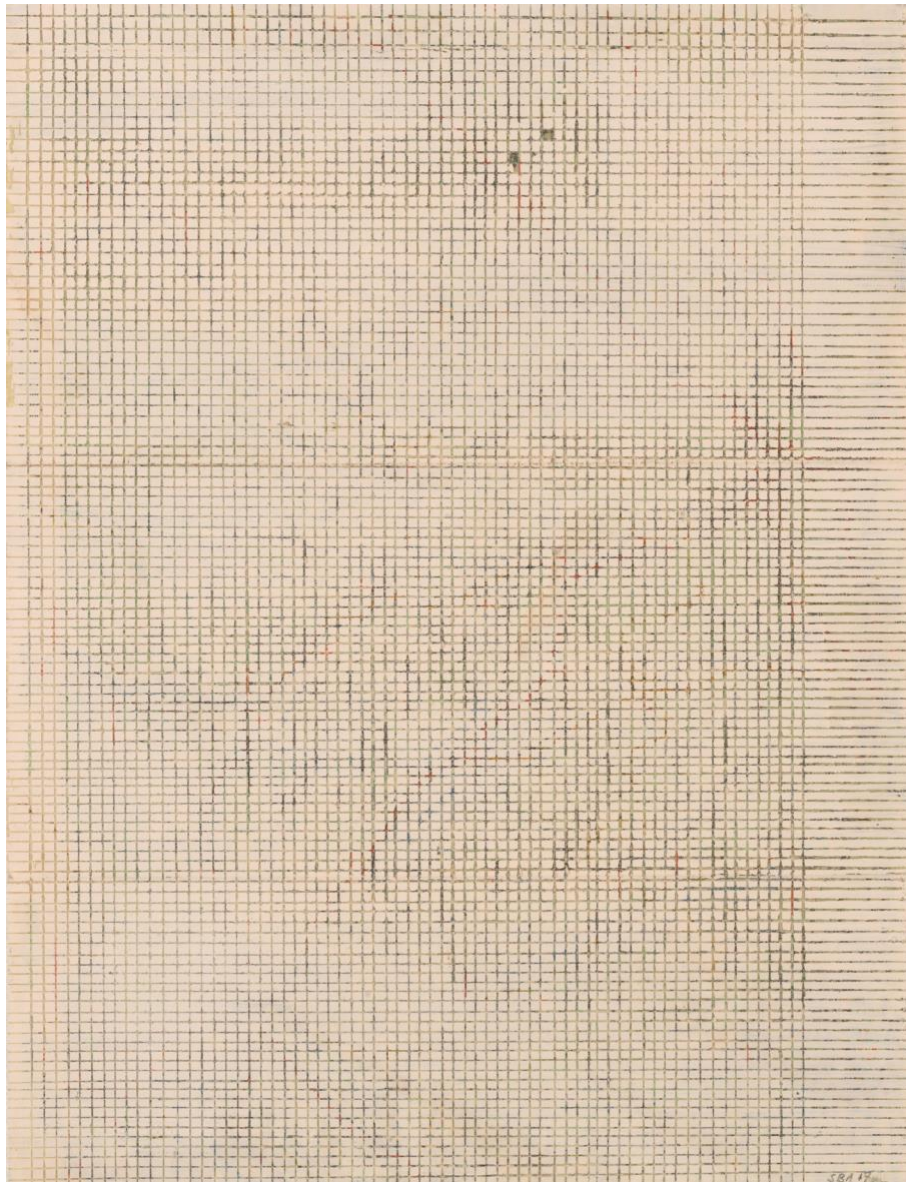
Francesco Pessina
Totem 323
Marble, travertine, stone
H 121 cm
2013

Francesco Pessina's almost philosophical approach to art is exceptional – within the program of the gallery as well as the broader field of contemporary art. Best known for his sculptures made of elementary materials such as stone, wood and iron, Pessina's oeuvre reveals something deeply natural, metaphysical and primordial.

Having moved to the Aeolian island of Filicudi north of Sicily, the archaic beauty and spiritual energy of this surrounding have in many ways influenced his entire art practice. Living on a volcanic island he chose to dedicate himself mainly to sculpture as a means of expression. And he intensified his quest into the fundamental thoughts about humanity and the roots of human existence through periods of intensive research in anthropology, astrology, ethnic studies and dream reading.

Pessina's Totem series is exemplary for the artist's vision. Composed of six sculptural elements representing the five continents and the sea, Australianus, Africanus, Europaeus, Asiaticus, Oceanicus and Americanus, the Totem unites to a diary of all human populations on earth.

Equilibrium in life as a human endeavour, at times fragile and at times indestructible, is the principal concern for the Italian artist and a quintessential meaning of the *Totem*.



Sophie Bouvier Ausländer
Avalanche (SBA20170636)
Gouache on waxed map
32 x 24.5 cm
2017

A staggering bang, shaking you to the core, followed by eerie silence. Within seconds the masses are set into motion. With incredible speed and impetuous force. Burying everything under a layer of snow. A spectacle of outstanding beauty and cruelty.

Sophie Bouvier Ausländer's point of departure for her artistic practice is nothing less than our planet, which can be considered as the sculpture par excellence.

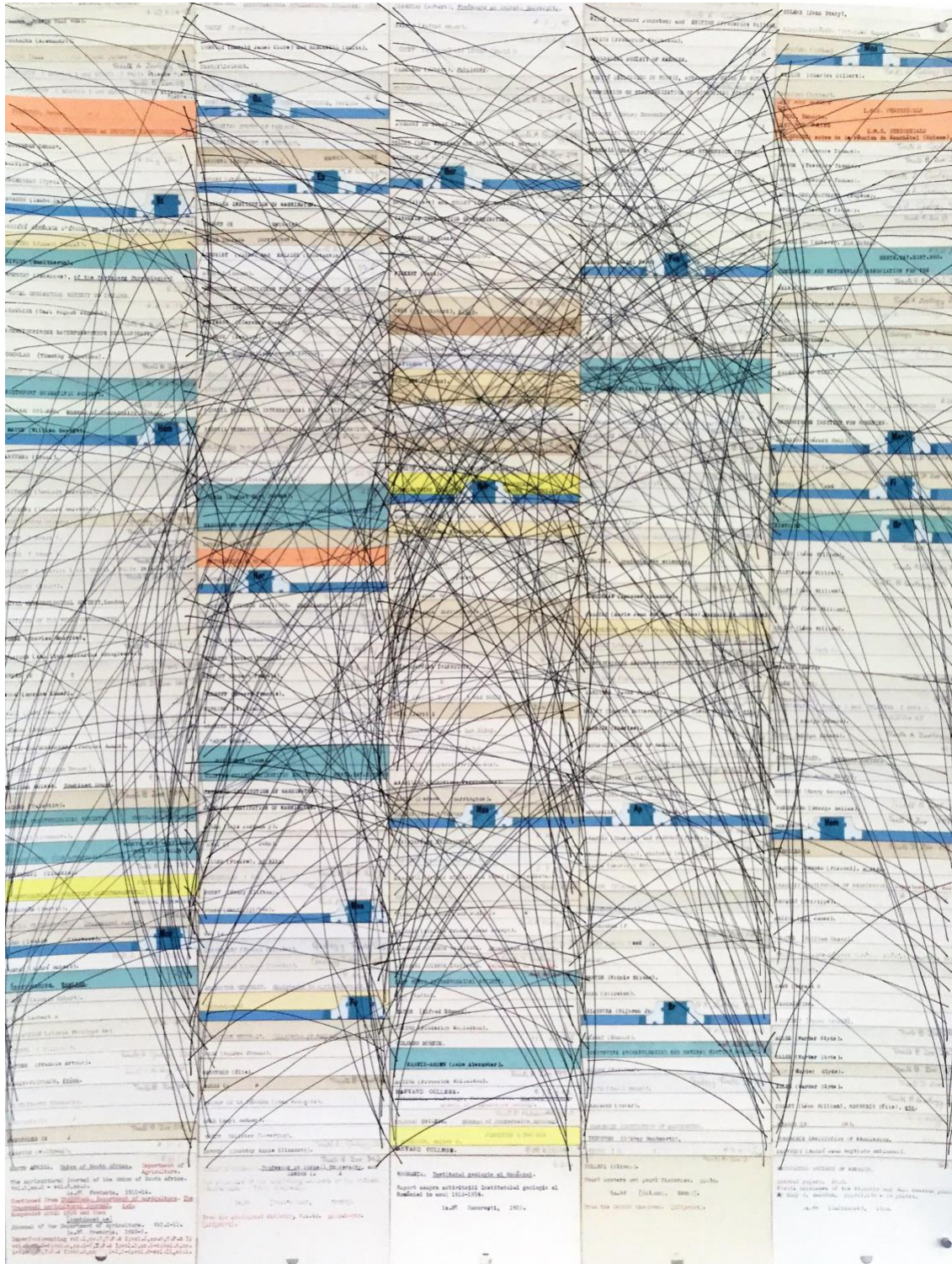
Her small and large-scale waxed maps from the Avalanche series are covered with paint and then scratched and scribbled into and sometimes re-covered with paint.

The "avalanche", the covering in colour, erases the map's territories and borders, alienates its function and eliminates the reality of our earth. Bouvier Ausländer then reverses course and starts to dig out the signs from under the cover. She retakes control of the lost ground, searching through the surface and furrowing the crust. She brings to light fragments of the vanished terrain in an attempt to reconstruct an extinguished world.

Yet Bouvier Ausländer also brings to light a new vision, a maybe bruised but modified and freshly charged version of the earth -- a version that we are currently beginning to experience, one that will accompany us for times to come.

(Text in parts by Marie Fabienne Aimon)

Staircase



Katherine Murphy
Arkwright Work Task: Filing (by No. of consonants in first line)
Pen on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag
83 x 63 cm
2016

Katherine Murphy investigates aspects of labour and the conditions under which specific acts of labour are carried out: from the uniformity of daily routines to the monotonous activities of factory or minimum wage workers.

Murphy's oeuvre is physically and topically tough, yet formally stringent and visually appealing. Her works often possess a discreet and elegant beauty that clashes with the task she sets herself. In her ongoing series entitled *Arkwright Work Tasks*, Murphy employs the type-writer aesthetic of old-fashioned library cards in nostalgically fading colour tones, which the artist re-sorts for days and weeks according to ever changing categories.

Murphy's oeuvre successfully merges the dry and politically charged subject of low wage labour with a minimal language without weakening the one or the other. Her message is revealed moderately yet powerfully – the contradictory “disguises” her works appear in develop even more punch in times of rising unemployment and changing work environments.

Upstairs

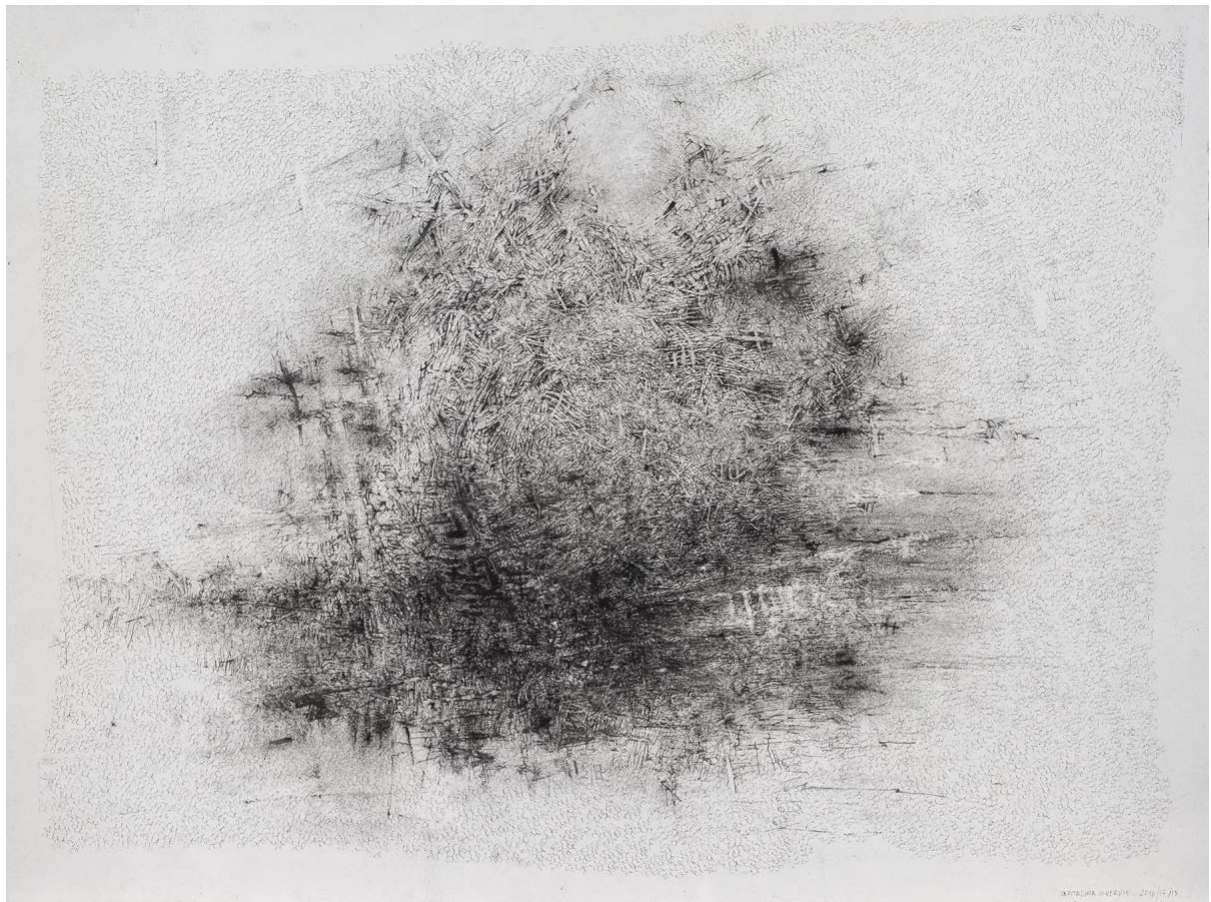


Dan Maciuca
Sunset before rain
Oil on canvas
130 x 150 cm
2016-2017

Dan Maciuca's expressive and dynamic compositions oscillate between figuration and abstraction. The Romanian artist's central theme is the deconstruction of past and present realities through the force of pictorial gestures, originating from a reaction to 20th-century political and social ideologies, in particular Communism.

Maciuca examines this dichotomy through the transformation of utopian sceneries. Depictions of brutalist architecture are stirred up and set into motion by sweeping brushstrokes, interspersed with swirls and outbursts of colour.

Maciuca's canvases bear references to his home country's twisted and problematic history, swept aside by a desire for movement and change. While many of the artist's compositions are drenched with the invigorating energy of potential renewal, his urban landscapes possess the ambivalent beauty of post-apocalyptic settings, subliminally chiming with the feeling we get looking at our towns and cities at the moment.



Catalina Chervin
Untitled
Charcoal, pencil & ink on paper
46 x 61.5 cm
2016-18

“The main point of interest in Chervin’s drawings lies in their amazing synthesis of traditional drawing technique and a metaphorical quality which is absolutely contemporary. Human experience of self-consciousness as awareness of the human body and mind is visualized purely through her drawing techniques. ... Chervin uses it skilfully to reflect a physical type of experience through arising, lasting and disappearing forms.”

(Dr. Marietta Mautner-Markhof – Curator for Contemporary Art, Albertina, Vienna)

“It is (Chervin’s) simplicity of vision that can only happen through an extraordinary complexity of mind, an exuberance of compassion that touches humanity on all levels – both material and spiritual – and finally transcends elements that we understand as the basis of all civilization.”

(Robert C. Morgan – American art critic and poet)



Francesco Pessina
Totem 215
Wood, travertine, terracotta
H 119 cm
1998

Pessina's Totem series is always composed of six sculptural elements representing the five continents and the sea: Australianus, Africanus, Europaeus, Asiaticus, Oceanicus and Americanus.

The superimposable and exchangeable forms of the *Totem* unite to a diary of all populations on earth, not of one single group or clan. The materials and sizes of the forms, as well as the traces on its surfaces always differ, one *Totem* is never like another.

Historically the totem links to the great variety of cultural identities on earth. Socially it represents a set of norms to follow. Metaphysically it symbolises the transcendence between life and death in ancient and modern societies. In a contemporary reading, Pessina's Totems are metaphors of a global society, whose basic form remains the same, while its structure is flexible and constantly in flux.

Pessina's art conveys a timeless message, which nevertheless addresses essential and pressing questions of today, even more so in the current challenging climate. Pessina's quest for finding equilibrium in our human existence imbues his sculptural oeuvre with spiritual force and great tranquillity.



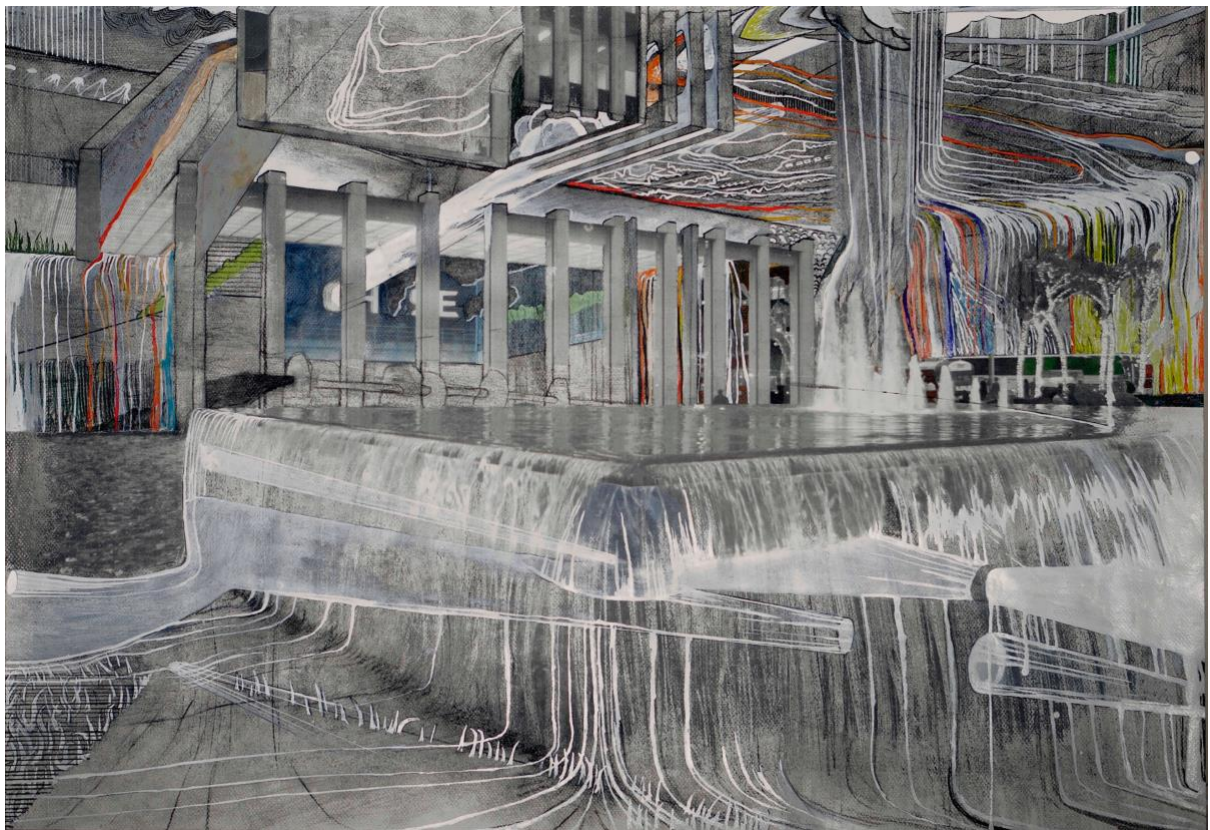
Mohammed Sami
23 Years of Night
Acrylic on linen
104 x 135 cm
2018

Mohammed Sami's paintings explore the stratifications of memory and trauma triggered by common everyday objects and environments ever since he immigrated to Sweden as a refugee from his native Iraq.

Rather than directly relating to the Iraq conflict, which he witnessed first-hand, Sami's paintings articulate its recollection remotely and obliquely – usually through traditional painting subjects such as still-life, interiors and landscapes, pervaded by a sense of unease, absence and metaphorical allusion.

23 Years of Night shows a boarded-up interior, mirrored and fragmented. The impossibility to enter or to look in from the outside alludes to a safe domestic space while a war or other danger rages beyond its limits. A place of inner warmth amongst external turmoil.

Mohammed Sami's first gallery exhibition will take place in November 2020.



Alex Hamilton
Chase Fountain Manhattan 1
Pen, ink, Pitt pen, gouache, charcoal pencil & airbrush on photocopy on Canson watercolour paper,
62.7 x 88.1 cm
2017

As New York Streets are starting to look deserted, Alex Hamilton's artistic vision is coming back to haunt us. As if the artist knew of the distortion our reality would face and the invisible force of destruction getting hold of our cities.

Lines in white and colour are meandering and spreading like weird waves through the air, sneakily taking over familiar squares and plazas. The flowing lines lead our eye into an ambivalent architectural landscape that constantly shifts between recognisable structure and dissolution.

Urban space is reinvented and reinterpreted through Hamilton's trademark technique of photocopying photographs onto watercolour paper to then erase parts of the image while developing the composition with a variety of drawing techniques. The artist asks us to re-orientate ourselves amidst the ordered chaos of the familiar and the imagined. His dense and layered drawings open our tired eyes to our alienated reality with the promise of ultimate renewal.

In Alex Hamilton's mind, and in his ever-expanding drawing universe, fragmented realities and seemingly contradictory associations somehow make sense. The disruption, chaos and ongoing renewal threaten and accuse us, yet deep down they also fascinate us, as we get a condensed glimpse of our far too complex world.