

ANDREA BÜTTNER

born 1972, Stuttgart, Germany

lives and works in Kassel, London and Berlin

Corner 2011–12

woodcut on paper

121.0 x 148.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Curtain 2015

woodcut on paper

178.0 x 118.0 cm (each, diptych)

Courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Potato 2017

woodcut on paper

130.0 x 198.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Coins 2017

woodcut on paper

124.0 x 173.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Untitled 2017

woodcut on paper

200.0 x 140.0 cm (left)

200.0 x 130.0 cm (right)

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Untitled 2017

woodcut on paper

200.0 x 140.0 cm (left)

200.0 x 130.0 cm (right)

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Whilst Andrea Büttner's practice is characterised by a complex heterogeneity – encompassing sculpture and installation, video and performance, research and publishing – she has maintained a dedicated commitment to printmaking and its traditions, which have historically ranked lowly on the hierarchy of art-historical significance and value. Büttner's deployment of printmaking has a conceptual resonance, and a critical register in the minor key. She has spoken of her interest in Franciscan vows of poverty, and her woodcuts display a commitment to a *povera* aesthetic, both figuratively, in their iconography and an almost monastic restraint – the works *Corner* 2011–12 and *Potatoes* 2017 are exemplary in this regard – and materially, in the ways in which her woodcuts are carved, or ground out, from large sheets of plywood, itself a mundane, prosaic material.

ANDREA BÜTTNER

born 1972, Stuttgart, Germany

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Phone etching 2015

etching on paper

212.0 x 113.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Phone etching 2015

etching on paper

212.0 x 113.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Weave 2016

handwoven silk

220.0 x 170.2 cm

Courtesy the artist and David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles

Andrea Büttner's *Phone etchings* of 2015 are large-scale prints composed from the apparently abstract traces, marks and smudges that we habitually leave on the flat-screen surfaces of our smart phones. Büttner enlarges and transfers these smooth and spontaneous, intuitive and quotidian gestures onto the flatbed of the etching plate, elevating them to the heroic scale and symbolic status of abstract expressionist painting, albeit with a sense of abjection and otherness that such traces of bodily fluids and their materiality also provoke.

ANDREA BÜTTNER

born 1972, Stuttgart, Germany

lives and works in Kassel, London and Berlin

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

155.5 x 125.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

134.0 x 100.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

126.5 x 90.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

155.0 x 125.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

174.0 x 125.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

164.0 x 140.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

149.0 x 130.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

135.0 x 99.0 cm

***Beggar* 2016**

woodcut on paper

136.0 x 99.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Hollybush Gardens, London

Andrea Büttner's series *Beggars* 2016 presents a line-up of prone, cloaked figures, with outstretched arms, appealing to the viewer. Exploring discourses of poverty and shame, which recur throughout the artist's practice, Büttner's *Beggars* suggest ways in which the artist seeks to privilege that which might otherwise remain undervalued – endowing the figure of the beggar with dignity, and humble gestures with gravitas.

The series inevitably points to questions of social, economic and art-historical value, mindful that 'art collectors would likely never give a beggar the amount they might spend on the depiction of a beggar', as Büttner notes. This project is equally focussed on contradictions which appear in Christian theology and philosophy, and which return in contemporary politics and morality, in the divisive positioning of *us* and *them*, and in the denigration of the vulnerable, the outsider and the poor.

CHARLIE SOFO

born 1983, Melbourne

lives and works in Melbourne

Breath 2019

digital video

2:00 mins

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Reference points (16 photographs of a nipple) 2019

inkjet prints

49.6 x 40.7 cm (overall)

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Library 2019

digital video

0:53 mins

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Lost soccer balls (removed from circulation for the duration of the exhibition) 2019

found balls; timber shelf

180.0 x 215.0 x 43.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Undone 2019

digital video

1:09 mins

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Bread crusts 2016

gelatin silver prints

65.5 x 81.0 cm (overall)

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

CHARLIE SOFO

born 1983, Melbourne

lives and works in Melbourne

Various confectionary sucked to the smallest structural point 2019

mixed confectionary items

dimensions variable

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Chocks 2013–15

found wood, concrete, metal and stone

dimensions variable

Private collection, Sydney

Low notes 2019

digital video

3:00 mins

Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Observations and anxieties related to everyday life lie at the heart of Charlie Sofo's practice, ranging from a formal analysis of car wheel chocks to a more existential reflection regarding the gathering of dust on the top of his cupboards. With restraint and simplification, this selection of work is structured around single actions or materials.

Sensitive to nuances of language and the layering of meaning, Sofo's titles also home in on terms that hint at the logic underpinning a material choice, or the reasoning behind a particular inventory of objects and thoughts. The title of *Low notes* 2019, for example, conceptually underscores the artist's interest in 'low theory' – with reference both to the theorisation of popular culture and to the context of contemporary identity politics – but also acts as a connective thread between many of the companion works on exhibition, with 'low' as a term making literal reference to the environmental terrain from which many of the materials are drawn, and to the beliefs attributed to things that are dirty, abject, or not worthy.

Sofo's works often possess a self-effacing humour, and weighted towards considerations of emotion and the affective capacities of objects in semi-suggestive (yet ultimately chaste) relation to the human body – from cloth over the nipple, to sucked lollies – as well as the idea of 'thinking about art, life and politics through feeling'.

TALA MADANI
born 1981, Tehran
lives and works in Los Angeles

Mr. Time 2018
single-channel animation
7:04 mins

The crowd 2017
single-channel animation
0:47 mins

Overhead projection (crowd) 2018
single-channel animation
1:08 mins
Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London

Tala Madani's luminous paintings and animations of figures going about absurdist social rituals shine a spotlight on conventions of masculinity and authority, and our collective failures and shortcomings more generally. A graduate of political science and painting, Madani's works build upon a rich history of satirical cartoons, from Honoré Daumier to American newspapers, and the lively comic histories of Iran.

Engaged in a constant slippage between humour and tragedy, as writer Julie Ewington notes in the publication accompanying this exhibition, 'Tala Madani's quasi-feminist comedy cuts both ways. (She is what cartoonist and writer James Thurber always feared: an intelligent woman with a pen). Provoking equally laughter and apprehension, Madani's work speaks to the precariousness of the grip we all hold on civility, and, coupled with that, to our hopes for the possibility of life lived with dignity. It is a theme satirists have explored since antiquity; it is a timely alert for these dark times'.

TALA MADANI

born 1981, Tehran

lives and works in Los Angeles

Shit mother (leisure) 2019

oil on linen

249.0 x 203.0 cm

Shit mother (goalpost) 2019

oil on linen

183.0 x 183.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Pilar Corrias Gallery, London

LINDA MARRINON

born 1959 Melbourne

lives and works Melbourne

The four cruelties 1982

synthetic polymer paint on cardboard

101.8 x 75.8 cm (each, four panels)

Collection of the artist

Hey waitress 1986

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

213.0 x 167.0 cm

Private collection, Sydney

Linda Marrinon first came to prominence in the 1980s with idiosyncratic paintings and drawings that reflected the art-historical parody and feminist wit of the time. Eliciting empathy while calling attention to human inadequacies, *The four cruelties* 1982, as Amelia Winata has noted in the exhibition publication, nods to the engravings of the eighteenth century English moralist artist William Hogarth, *The four stages of cruelty* 1751: 'Like Hogarth's cruelties, Marrinon makes reference to the torture of animals and the beating of women, but also seems to humorously trivialise questions of morality itself – not spaying your cat and embodying the 'ignorant' yobo – [arguably] a critique on the notion of educating people upon hierarchies of class'.

LINDA MARRINON

born 1959 Melbourne

lives and works Melbourne

Sheet 1993

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

165.0 x 244.0 cm (overall, diptych)

Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Rock with underpants 1992

bluestone and cotton

31.5 x 22.5 x 13.0 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

LINDA MARRINON
born 1959 Melbourne
lives and works Melbourne

Gainsborough's daughters 2016

tinted plaster

71.0 x 28.0 x 11.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Rhesus Monkey 2016

synthetic polymer paint on tinted plaster

25.0 x 15.0 x 11.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Figure with tumbleweed 2019

silver leaf and synthetic polymer paint on plaster

60.0 x 20.0 x 15.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Weeping woman 2015

synthetic polymer paint, cotton fabric and twine on plaster

29.9 x 19.5 x 12.0 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

Linda Marrinon turned her attention from painting to sculptural works in clay, plaster, terracotta and bronze following the completion of a Master of Fine Art degree at the Victorian College of the Arts in 1999. Drawing upon images and figures from cultural and historical narratives, Marrinon's beguiling sculptures are filled with wry observations on behaviour and manners, fashion and costume, rendered with sentiment and art-historical wit.

Gainsborough's daughters 2016 depicts Mary and Margaret, daughters of eighteenth-century painter Thomas Gainsborough, who appear repeatedly in his paintings. In Marrinon's sculptural rendition they appear self-consciously on display, as stoic yet melancholic subjects, symbolic of the sorrow and vulnerability that came to characterise their adult life.

The idea of frailty and vulnerability is also suggested in the modesty of scale and the fragile, humble materiality of Marrinon's sculptures. Her use of plaster aligns Marrinon's sculptural work with the tradition of the maquette, academy model, or preliminary study, rather than the grand sculptural masterpiece. Whilst they are fabricated with great technical skill and attention to detail, Marrinon resists the idea of mastery with an apparently off-handed and deceptively casual approach to materials that appear, at times, on the verge of collapse.

CHERINE FAHD

born 1974, Sydney

lives and works in Sydney

never happy from the series ***Fear of*** 2011/2019

archival pigment print

58.0 x 87.0 cm

no job from the series ***Fear of*** 2011/2019

archival pigment print

58.0 x 87.0 cm

bad mother from the series ***Fear of*** 2011/2019

archival pigment print

58.0 x 87.0 cm

meeting new people from the series ***Fear of*** 2011/2019

archival pigment print

58.0 x 87.0 cm

failing from the series ***Fear of*** 2011/2019

archival pigment print

58.0 x 87.0 cm

getting old from the series ***Fear of*** 2011/2019

archival pigment print

58.0 x 87.0 cm

wasting time from the series ***Fear of*** 2011/2019

archival pigment print

58.0 x 87.0 cm

Courtesy the artist

Working between documentary and performative traditions, Cherine Fahd's photographic practice is underpinned by considerations of the everyday, and the role of photography in the politics of appearance; particularly related to issues of selfhood and othering in relation to constructions of identity.

Fahd's 2011 *Fear of* series can be considered a self-portrait of sorts. Fahd developed a series of personal written disclosures that she pasted up as street posters, projecting the artist's private fears into public space. While the scale of the paper sheets and texts reflect 'how loud or how quiet' Fahd's fears were at the time, she also notes that the words are typed rather than handwritten so as not to appear diaristic, and thus tap into both the personal and collective.

As an articulation of the generalised anxieties that we carry as individuals and the relations of the individual to the body politic, Fahd's project reflects on the cultivation of fear and shame in social space and public discourse. Whilst her posters were only temporary public interventions into the public sphere, her project is a carefully crafted provocation to empathy that makes clear the ways in which attitudes such towards fear and shame, for better and worse, can so easily become socially entrenched.

BRENT HARRIS

born 1956, Palmerston North, New Zealand

arrived Australia 1981

lives and works in Melbourne

Borrowed plumage #3 (noli me tangere) 2007

oil on linen

244.0 x 136.0 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

Borrowed plumage #7 (touch) 2007

oil on linen

244.0 x 136.0 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

The question of faith and doubt is addressed centrally in Brent Harris' series of *Borrowed plumage* paintings from 2007, a number of which present the probing fingers of Saint Thomas the Apostle – Doubting Thomas – plunging his fingers into the body of Christ, suggestively penetrating Christ's wounds; and Mary Magdalene reaching towards the newly risen Christ.

In these and other invocations to doubt, touch and *noli me tangere* (touch-me-not), Harris sets up philosophical and erotically charged compositional conundrums – targets and orifices which are at once gaping holes projecting deep into the recessive space of the painting, or modernist black circles which sit flat and matter-of-factly on the surface of the picture plane – which, in the face of doubt, seek to test the very ability of painting, and by extension art itself, to compel conviction.

BRENT HARRIS

born 1956, Palmerston North, New Zealand

arrived Australia 1981

lives and works in Melbourne

Borrowed plumage #4 (doubt) 2007

oil on linen

120.0 x 89.0 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

Borrowed plumage #6 (doubt) 2007

oil on linen

198.0 x 147.5 cm

Collection of Dr Terry Wu, Melbourne

Listener 2018

oil on linen

152.0 x 110.0 cm

Collection of Paul Walker and Patricia Mason, Melbourne

ARCHIE MOORE

Kamilaroi, born 1970, Toowoomba, Queensland
lives and works in Brisbane

My Skin 2019

digitally printed polyester T-shirt

size large

Courtesy the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Under my skin 2019

photograph

180.0 x 150.0 cm

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Archie Moore's photographic work, *Under my skin* 2019 presents an image of the bare-chested artist in the company of others wearing T-shirts, from the series *Shirtfront* 2019, adorned with the image of Moore's torso. The image initially presents a charming awkwardness related to intimacy and modesty – of one's body on display and wearing on the outside what is usually covered and hidden from view.

The idea of getting under someone's skin is both a provocation, however, and a call for empathy. Moore's photograph takes as its starting point what the artist has described as 'the perceived impossibility of knowing and understanding another's experience', a metaphor for the failure of reconciliation in Australia.

Under my skin also carries a more sinister undertone connected to expressions of doubt and distrust concerning the legitimacy of cultural identity and Aboriginality, in relation to European modes of signification – skin colour and 'blood fraction' (also the title of an earlier work by Moore from 2015) – and the pernicious politics of othering language employed to classify and quantify people, and to assign meaning.

AMBERA WELLMANN

born 1982, Lunenburg, Canada

lives and works in Berlin

The subject 2019

oil on linen

52.0 x 52.0 cm

Private collection, Hong Kong

Pastoral 2019

oil on linen

56.0 x 51.0 cm

Private collection, Belgium

Autoscopy 2019

oil on linen

49.0 x 52.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin

Limbal 2019

oil on linen

49.0 x 52.0 cm

Courtesy the artist and Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin

Mutual provender 2018

oil on linen

52.0 x 49.0 cm

The Groeninghe VII Collection, Belgium

It's difficult to tell where one body ends and another begins in the polymorphous, painterly confusion of intimate, copulating figures that populate Ambera Wellmann's recent paintings. A productive sense of ambiguity abounds, as entangled body parts and flesh tones fluidly blend, rush and merge into one another, giving themselves over to one another, and their surrounds. A key question underpinning Wellmann's approach in these works is 'how to streamline eroticism and structure desire', and, taking sexuality directly as a subject, how to register pleasure in the painterly field.

In each of these recent works, Wellmann sets her figures within an ambiguous proscenium space – aligned, more often than not, to the psychological space and scale of the domestic – so that there is a sense of the figures performing for the viewer. These figures are subject to the scrutiny of the spectator, and yet, as Canadian author Meeka Walsh has elsewhere observed, 'we see the solipsistic self-sufficiency of lovers, unmindful of any scopophilic gaze'.

While Wellmann is interested in exploring the potential of, and pleasure in, a female gaze, she notes this is also rooted in something more complex, ambiguous and difficult – impossible perhaps – which might be to register bodily experience, desire and sensation itself, whilst resisting the singularity of binary, gendered experience.