

# LIFE IS THE ONLY WAY

23.08.-27.10.13

**Bokja: Hoda Baroudi & Maria Hibri (LIB), Judy Chicago (USA), A K Dolven (NOR), Gardar Eide Einarsson (NOR), Roza Ilgen (NOR/KUR), Humberto Junca Casas (COL), Šejla Kameric (BOS-HERZ), Nalini Malani (IND), Lars Morell (NOR), Cajsa von Zeipel (SWE)**

- The exhibition *Life Is the Only Way* is an amalgamation of independent strong voices by ten international artists. Its aim is to make clear the sustaining connection between contemporary art and contemporary life. The artists are juxtaposed together, creating new points of view, and proposes new interpretations of the existing world and social relations. Art has the power to surpass geopolitical divisions transforming global community into a collective narrative web made by different personal stories that complete or overturn official narrations.

## 1- Judy Chicago

*Birth Hood (1965/2011)*

*Bigamy Hood (1965/2011)*

*Flight Hood (1965/2011)*

Sprayed automotive Lacquer on Car Hood

*On Fire (1969-2012)*

Videos: *Atmosphères 14:21* and *Los Angeles Pyrotechnic Performances 12:04 (1967-74)*

Prints: 50.8 x 61 cm. Edition 1/10 (1969-2012)

Judy Chicago has since late 1960s made works combining commercial fireworks and road flares in ephemeral "paintings" of colored smoke. They manifest themselves as expressive, temporal light, space and earth works meaning to soften and feminize the environment. These works can also be analyzed and placed in relation to her earliest conceptual minimalist work, as well as to her later socio-political figurative work. *On Fire* demonstrate her persistent exploration of issues surrounding gender issues. The *On Fire* series exhibited has its world premiere in Bergen.

The Chevy Corvair car hoods exist as canvas for a small series of paintings with abstracted sexual orifices and phalluses. Chicago has used her signature palette of blazing pastels, in the super charged and alluring work, which summarize still the position of the sexes. Judy Chicago is renowned for her level of technical training in an array of techniques. In relation to this exhibition it is worth mentioning that she went to auto-body school to learn how to spray paint car hoods, and she went to pyrotechnics classes to handle fireworks professionally. Judy Chicago has been instrumental and a major contributor to establish Los Angeles art scene and its reputation for art. She is and has been a true inspiration for generations of artists.

*Courtesy of the artist, Marianne Hultman and gallery Nyehaus, NY. Some works in the exhibition was previous this Summer featured in the exhibition Deflowerd at Oslo Kunstforening.*

## 2- Lars Morell

*"Fraud Medium # 5", 2012*

*"Fraud Medium # 13", 2012*

*"Fraud Medium # 15", 2012*

Gelatin silver print, 150 x 100 cm. Framed: 164 x 114 cm. Ed: Unik + 1 AP

Lars Morell explores an imaginary world and raises question about the truth projected in our information society. He stages the principles of an illusion. The illusion becomes fundamental in relation to the amount of information, images and symbols we on a daily basis get exposed to. In our society today the creation, distribution, use, integration and manipulation of information is a significant economic, political, and cultural activity. How do we proceed and interact in society in regards to the manipulated truth?

The title of the series "Fraud Medium" refers to the duality reflected

in the images and our perception of any given medium. The text are collected from different posters announcing illusionistic performances, and then cut and pasted together before projected in smoke.

*Courtesy of the artist.*

## 3- Šejla Kameric

*DREAM HOUSE (2002)*

Video

One may deem Kameric's work as an interrogation of collective identity. But it is certainly also a quest into individual idiosyncrasies. It is conscious of local traditions, but aware of the global inevitabilities. If it is alienating, it is also adamant on coming to terms with one's position. *DREAM HOUSE* can with today's eyes be view also in relation to Europe's ongoing financial crises and its implications on the individual.

Kameric's work is concerned with the past. After all, many of her works address traumas and memories. Yet one cannot but feel it is equally preoccupied with the future. In other work like *Red*, Kameric seeks to trace what is lost. And in *Green* she tries to find expressions of what cannot be expressed. For it is in the act of the artist's expressing that we can find something we had not found before: a trace of a past and a hint of a future.

*Courtesy of Rolf Hoff.*

## 4- Cajsa von Zeipel

*Snake (2013)*

Sculpture in polystyrene and plaster.

Cajsa von Zeipels work have focused on issues related to contemporary expressions in popular culture, questions of gender and explorations of female sexuality. By using the teenage girl and the fact that popular culture is critical to the construction of identity, von Zeipel has captured a world that is elusive, sometimes self-destructive, but also rebellious.

Cajsa von Zeipel works with large format sculptures that carry references to both fashion and teen culture, the Renaissance masters and the classical tradition of sculpture. The white surface, the unclothed figures and the realistic depiction of the tall and thin characters have an aesthetic that is simultaneously appealing and scary. Her figures seamlessly move from the attractive to the repulsive, grotesque and studied. Their associated attributes serve as indications of a sub-cultural affiliation. *The Snake* was produced for the exhibition *Life is the only way*.

*Courtesy of the artist and Gallerist Andréhn-Schiptjenko.*

## 5- Gardar Eide Einarsson

*5 Words (I, Have, Nothing, To, Say) (2004)*

Acrylic on canvas (Ed:2/3)

In Einarsson's works, graffiti, skate culture, hardcore typography and street life collide with Modern art's simplicity and strictness. *5 Words (I, Have, Nothing, To, Say)* consists of five black monochrome canvases. The canvases seem to mimic the favourite device of monochrome modernists. Two vastly different visual worlds collide when Einarsson's defiant title and careless mounting are juxtaposed with a minimalist monochrome aesthetic. Rebellion, he artist seems to say, can be a protest against suppression of the individual's freedom. The work was produced in immediate response to the American political changes shortly after 9.11 and the implementation of the Patriot Act by then president George W. Bush. The work is equal poignant today after this Summer's event related to Edward Snowden.

*Courtesy of Rolf Hoff and Sørlandets Art Museum.*

## 6- Roza Ilgen

*16670 (2007)*

Hair.

Roza Ilgen's sculptural work *16670* uses human hair as the prominent medium. With a weight close to half a ton and an almost perfect geometrical shape it stands as a play on the masculine and hard edge minimalism.

Roza Ilgen's work is based on our time and reality. As an artist that comes from a Muslim country and has experienced half her life as a refugee in Norway, she has a strong understanding and sympathy that puts her in this unique position called the 'third space'. This position offers a dual vantage point from which she reflects and informs her research. Through her work she wants to draw out new ways of viewing and understanding the discourse of culture and identity. Her work is about being female, the role and status of a woman within the Kurdish/ Islamic society and living with Islamic traditions within western culture. In her work she has created an awareness of her position and new ways of looking at feminism, culture and identity. Being in between two cultures is like being between past and present and belonging in both places and in neither.

*Courtesy of the artist.*

## 7- AK Dolven

*Madonna with Man and Fruit (2005)*

*Madonna with Man and Fig (2005)*

*Madonna with Man and Bread (2005)*

*Madonna with Man and Iris (2005)*

*Madonna with Man and Lily (2005)*

Lightboxes.

These works revisit the image of Madonna and child, so central to the history of painting. As one of the earliest depictions of a relationship between two people, this image transcends its status as a religious icon. In this coupling the Madonna is at once, mother, whore and saint; the child is at once dependent on the Madonna, bestows gifts upon her and seduces her. The work explores the ambiguities manifest in what is essentially a relationship of power. In this work Madonna is a business woman, the child is a man. They are tied together in similar Madonna and child pose, but within the setting of a contemporary office. At first glance we see the slick office interior with a clear view of its exterior landscapes and streetscapes. Echoing renaissance images of Madonna and Child, each work as well features a flower, fruit or bread.

*Courtesy of the artist.*

## 8- Bokja: Hoda Boudin and Maria Hibri

*And Then There Were None (2011-2013)*

Text.

*And Then There Were None* series deals with imagery of historical fallen dictators. A creative response to the Arab Spring, the revolu-

tionary wave of demonstrations, protests and wars occurring in Arab countries since December 2010, it memorializes the struggles of the past as well as the strength of the people.

Created by Beirut-based duo Hoda Baroudi and Maria Hibri, the work revolves around such leading figures Colonel Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein, Kim Jong-Il. The *And Then There Were None* series span over different cultures and is injected with a twist of dark humor they present a re-written version of the popular nursery rhyme, *Ten Little Indians*. Hoda Boudin and Maria Hibri warn of the timeless phenomena of dictatorship and playful questions a day when there will be none.

*Courtesy of Bokja.*

## 9- Nallini Malani

*In Search of Vanished Blood Videoinstallasjon (2012).*

Video

Nalini Malani's multimedia works take a stand on the politics of gender, the destruction of ecology, the abuse of power and spread of injustice. Her multilayered theatrical installations are characterized by a distinctly poetic approach, and originate in narratives drawn from international zones of conflict. Her intense and committed art reveals her search for the profound certainties of life, of society, encountered and felt. Nalini Malani's work is influenced by her experiences as a refugee of the Partition of India. She places inherited iconographies and cherished cultural stereotypes under pressure. She is with her work very actual today as India this year experience the biggest Women's Rights moments so far in its history. Characteristics of her work have been the gradual movement towards new media, and expanding dimensions of the pictorial surface into the surrounding space as ephemeral wall drawing, installation, shadow play, multi projection works.

*Courtesy of the artist.*

## 10- Humberto Junca Casas

- *Damn right! Norwegian Wood? (2012)*

9 engraved school children's desks.

- *Blackeros (2013)*

Video.

The work of Humberto Junca Casas is characterized by its technical excellence combined with significant socio-political remarks. In *Damn Right! Norwegian Wood?* the artist employs the use of typical Colombian school desks in a way that discusses and criticizes the country's educational system. Most people can relate to as well as remember being bored and restless at school which ultimately has led some of us to intensive scribbling on school desks. Junca's work has taken scribble to a whole new level: Nine school desks have been tampered by artist's meticulous pen strokes, depicting logos of Norwegian black metal bands set against visual descriptions of various violent events in Colombia's recent history. Both elements possess and share a kind of symbolic, though simultaneously real evil or violent history. By setting the two cultures and histories against each other the work creates not only a direct dialogue between them, but it also questions the ramification between the two countries and the embracement of the evil.

*Norwegian black metal bands:* Mayhem, Burzum, Darkthrone, Emperor, Taake, Thorns, Enslaved, Combat, Tyrant

*Blackeros* was commissioned for *Life Is The Only Way* at Bontelabo, produced by Stiftelsen 3,14 and Bergen Kjøtt.

*Damn right! Norwegian Wood?* was produced for the exhibition COLOMBORAMA at Tegnerforbundet, produced by TRAP, curated by Marius Wang.

*Courtesy of the artist and TRAP.*