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HAPPY MECHANICS

KNUT HENRIK HENRIKSEN, LUBAINA HIMID, THOMAS LANIGAN-SCHMIDT, ELLEN LESPERANCE, NANCY LUPO, MANFRED PERNICE, STUART SHERMAN, HAYLEY TOMPKINS, AMELIE VON WULFFEN, B. WURTZ

Exhibition: 18 November 2021 - 29 January 2022

Hollybush Gardens presents *Happy Mechanics*, a group exhibition featuring work by Knut Henrik Henriksen, Lubaina Himid, Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt, Ellen Lesperance, Nancy Lupo, Manfred Pernice, Stuart Sherman, Hayley Tompkins, Amelie von Wulffen and B. Wurtz. *Happy Mechanics* concerns the vitalistic qualities and affective power of the object as it fuses symbolism, substance and systems of construction. These are objects which bear their materialities, excitations and executions on their sleeve, retaining the integrity of respective source material while coalescing subjective expression, intimacy and exuberance. Specifically, *Happy Mechanics* shares in the object's affective potential as it integrates the substance and materiality of the everyday: sweet wrappers, magic marker and glitter; wooden carts, lasagna pans and store-bought wallpaper; plastic bins, shirt sleeves, foodstuffs and trinkets.

Though *Happy Mechanics* is peppered with the instinct for miniaturisation and the carnivalesque, several works on view offer a darkened interiority to the object. The paintings of Amelie von Wulffen, which stretch across numerous surfaces, represent the meeting of memory and fantasy, deep dreams and base desires. The economic and social conditions of the medium are met with pathos, folklore and Romanticism, blending reflections on production as much as the subconscious. Knut Henrik Henriksen's doubtful paper monuments conjure decidedly subjective projections: insecure and unstable, their imagined architectures are domestically scaled in precarious pillars of wallpaper. Lubaina Himid's painted wooden carts and makeshift wagons carry species of insects, arachnids, and aquatic life – organisms which tell tales of ecosystems, migrations and commodifying extractions. The rickety, movable object and its painted elements become both conveyor and code.

The sensuous ornaments of Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt are studded with debris and dollar store items. Creating homespun objects which blend the sacred and profane, Lanigan-Schmidt's glittery treasures saturate the formalism of the decorative with gay sexuality, transgression and the spiritually-transformative. Ellen Lesperance's ceramic conjures relations across time in crafted effigies informed by ancient Tanagra figurines – votive objects or funerary offerings for female deities. While Lesperance's work encourages transference through the object, Hayley Tompkins uses paint as its own event. Tompkins' application of paint encourages the medium to assume space – across shirts, chairs and cutlery – as well as its own logic between the pictorial and physical. The video performances of Stuart Sherman choreograph engagements with everyday objects. These miniature 'spectacles' become 'animated drawings', as Sherman says, dislocating the object through playful inversions of purpose.

The works in *Happy Mechanics* also frequently return to the body, namely its porosity and mutability. Nancy Lupo's involvement of industrial material, digestible substances and expendable commodities establish unstable relations between the body and objects. Debased and durable materialities conjure pre-lingual states. Here, banal, industrial bins are conjoined as one vertebrae, decorated with toilet paper, cherries, cheese, chocolate and quails eggs. Expressing efficiencies, industries and sexualities, Lupo's work entangles the repressed absurdity and metaphoric potential of our surrounding matter. Using standardised materials, Manfred Pernice dismantles the impulse to organise and contain. Creating columnar structures that teeter between absurd prop or backdrop, Pernice's work insists on the architectural ambivalence of spatial boundaries. Using grocery bags, plastic cups, buttons and drinking straws among numerous other items, B. Wurtz's assemblages celebrate the quotidian. With humour, care and formal enquiry, B. Wurtz's sculptures advocate for an elegant, modest art-making. Collectively, the works of *Happy Mechanics* propose that the elusive identities of objects, and people, can be considered through life's excess.

For press enquiries and further information, please contact: alex@hollybushgardens.co.uk

Gallery Hours: Wednesday - Saturday, 11am - 6pm; or by appointment.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Knut Henrik Henriksen (b. 1970, Oslo, Norway; lives and works in Berlin, Germany) has participated in institutional exhibitions and produced permanent public works internationally. Solo exhibition is forthcoming at Vigeland-museet, Oslo. Selected solo exhibitions include *The Irrational Curve*, Kristiansand Kunsthall, Norway (2018); *Gone With the Wind*, Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Norway, (2017); *Architectural Doubts*, Atelier Felix, Kunstneres Hus, Oslo, Norway (2016); *Auf der Walz*, Kunstverein Arnsberg, Germany, (2015); *Notes to Stones*, Bergen Kunsthall, Norway, (2014); *Villa Savoye redrawn with an Opel Astra 2006 and other works from now and then*, Opelvillen, Rüsselsheim, Germany, (2013); and *Echoes*, Bergen Kunsthall, Norway, (2012). He has produced significant permanent public sculptures, including *Full Circle* at King's Cross St. Pancras Station, London. In 2017 Henriksen was nominated for the Lorch Schives Art Prize.

Lubaina Himid (b. 1954, Zanzibar; lives and works in Preston, UK) is the winner of the 2017 Turner Prize. Himid has exhibited extensively in the UK and abroad. In November 2021, Himid presents a major monographic exhibition at Tate Modern. Solo exhibitions include: *Spotlights*, Tate Britain, London (2019); *The Grab Test*, Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, The Netherlands (2019); *Lubaina Himid*, CAPC Bordeaux, France (2019); *Work From Underneath*, New Museum, New York (2019); *Gifts to Kings*, MRAC Languedoc Roussillon Midi-Pyrénées, Sérignan (2018); *Our Kisses are Petals*, BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2018); *The Truth Is Never Watertight*, Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe (2017); *Navigation Charts*, Spike Island, Bristol (2017); and *Invisible Strategies*, Modern Art Oxford (2017).

Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt (b. 1948, Elizabeth, NY; lives and works in New York, NY) was the subject of the critically acclaimed 2012 retrospective *Tender Love Among the Junk* at MoMA PS1. He has exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Europe, including the 1980 and 1984 Venice Biennales, the 1991 Whitney Biennial, and the 1999 exhibition *The American Century: Art and Culture, 1950-2000*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Recent solo exhibitions include *Tenemental: With Sighs Too Deep for Words*, Howl! Happening, New York (2018); *Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt: Mysterium Tremendum*, Rockland Art Center, NY (2013); and *Ecce Homo: Thomas Lanigan-Schmidt & The Art of Rebellion*, Pavel Zoubok Gallery, NY (2013).

Ellen Lesperance (b. 1971, Minneapolis, MN; lives and works in Portland, OR) has exhibited widely in the United States and internationally. In 2021, Lesperance presents a solo exhibition, *Amazonknights*, at ICA Miami. Solo exhibitions of her work have been presented at Hollybush Gardens, London (2021); Derek Eller Gallery, New York, (2020); Baltimore Art Museum, USA, (2020); Portland Art Museum, USA, (2017); Galerie Anne de Villepoix, Paris, (2016); and Seattle Art Museum, USA, (2010).

Nancy Lupo (b. 1983, Flagstaff, AZ; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) has exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions at Jan Kaps, Cologne, (2021); Antenna Space, Shanghai (2018); Kristina Kite Gallery, Los Angeles (2017); Musée d'art contemporain de Lyon, France (2017); Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2016); Swiss Institute, New York (2016); 1857, Oslo (2015); WALLSPACE, New York (2015); and LAXART, Los Angeles (2014).

Manfred Pernice (b. 1963, Hildesheim, Germany; lives and works in Berlin, Germany) has exhibited internationally, with selected solo exhibitions including: Kunstmuseum St.Gallen, St Gallen (2016); *Manfred Pernice: To the Public*, Haus der Kunst, Munich (2013); *Fiat (Lux)*, Institute d'Art contemporain, Villeurbanne, France (2013); *<anexos>LOCAL*, The Modern Institute, Osborne Street, Glasgow (2013); *blubber(t)*, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Dusseldorf (2012); *brei*, SMAK, Ghent (2011); NBK Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin; *liquidation 2.2*, MD 72, Berlin; *Déjà vu*, DCA, Dundee (2011); *sculpturama*, Secession, Vienna (2010); *baldt1*, Modern Art, Oxford (2010); Regen Projects, Los Angeles (2009); *Que-Sah*, Neues Museum, Nürnberg (2008); and *Werkraum 2*, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2002).

Stuart Sherman (b. 1945, Providence, RI; d. 2001, San Francisco, CA) attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. His work has been performed and exhibited at venues such as the Performing Garage, The Museum of Modern Art, Mudd Club, The Kitchen, Franklin Furnace, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Theater for the New City, all in New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Kunstmuseum Berne, Kunstmuseum Zürich, and Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. In 2009 Sherman was honoured with two exhibitions in New York, *Beginningless Thought/ Endless Seeing: The Works of Stuart Sherman*, at 80WSE, and *Stuart Sherman: Nothing Up My Sleeve*, at PARTICIPANT, INC.

Hayley Tompkins (b. 1971 Leighton Buzzard, UK; lives and works in Glasgow, UK) has exhibited internationally, with selected solo exhibitions including: *Think I wanna drive your Benz (I don't)*, The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane (2018); *Stick crystals to paintings*, Bonner Kunstverein (2018); *Myth Cart*, Jupiter Artland (2016); Lulu, Mexico City (2016); *Electric Magnetic Installation*, The Modern Institute, Aird's Lane, Glasgow (2015); *The Common Guild*, Glasgow (2014); *Space Kitchen*, Aspen Art Museum, Aspen

(2013); *Currents*, Studio Voltaire, London (2011); *A Piece of Eight*, The Modern Institute, Osborne Street, Glasgow (2011); *Autobuilding*, Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (2009); *Re*, The Drawing Room, London (2008); and *Transfer* (with Sue Tompkins) Spike Island, Bristol (2007). Tompkins represented Scotland at The 55th Venice Biennale in 2013.

Amelie von Wulffen (b. 1966, Breitenbrunn/Oberpfalz, Germany; lives and works in Berlin, Germany) has had solo exhibitions at Radio Athènes (2019); Kunsthalle Bern, Bern (2019); Gio Marconi, Milan (2018); Reena Spaulings, NY (2018); Studio Voltaire, London (2017); Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin (2016); Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2015); Freedman Fitzpatrick, Los Angeles (2015); Galerie Meyer Kainer, Vienna (2015); Kunstforum Baloise, Basel (2014); and Gio Marconi, Milan (2014).

B. Wurtz (b. 1948, Pasadena, CA; lives and works in New York, NY) opened a major solo exhibition *This Has No Name* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in 2018 while simultaneously presenting his first public commission, *Kitchen Trees*, through the New York City Public Art Fund. In 2015 he was the subject of a retrospective exhibition at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, United Kingdom. In 2016 the exhibition traveled to La Casa Encendida, Madrid. He has had additional solo exhibitions at Kunstverein Freiburg; White Flag Projects, St. Louis; and Gallery 400, University of Illinois at Chicago.