

The exhibition *Unstallation* is about keeping the movement moving but also about uncovering the other side, mirroring perspectives and addressing the duality of all things. In this light we present *the unterview*. Artist **Niels Shoe Meulman** interviews renowned art critic **Carlo McCormick**.

THE L'UNTERVIEW

NSM In 2018 you (jokingly) told me I shouldn't make my pieces any more pleasing than I was at that time. Should art be unpleasant? Is every artist in danger of pleasing an audience?

CMcC There's an odd disjunction for me, that when I write I try to express myself with some precision but when I talk I enjoy the play of ambivalence and ambiguity more. This always comes back to bite me in the ass because artists will quote me saying something to them, sometimes from years before, which was probably a random comment and far more casual than insight or wisdom. Typically I don't remember these asides so then I have to decipher what I might have meant and try to imagine if it was a real critique or just some provocation because, well, it is fun to wind people up.

What I guess I meant, or would at least mean to say now, is that in a culture that invests so much of its energy and creative capital in the production of visual seduction, artists must be wary of such pursuits. We all love beauty,

and just because it can be more accessible or less challenging to appreciate doesn't mean it is easy or facile, but as an end to itself beauty can be reductive, repetitive and cloying.

Graffiti is at heart an act of vandalism, and of course graffiti art needs to meet a certain aesthetic criteria if it is to matter and be in dialogue with the rest of the fine art cannon, but it risks much if it abandons its disruptive, heretical voice. In Europe, and France in particular, where graffiti art has found far more market and institutional support than in the states, I've seen a lot of artists lose their edge and become rather more decorative, as if pandering to the tastes of interior decorators. So too with the rise of murals as a kind of inoffensive international style of urban beautification, the confrontational aspects of what it means to address the hegemony of public space as a creative outsider has been forfeited in favor of populist eye-candy. There is something so fluid and lyrical about your painting style I imagine you could easily just continue to fob off your signature work as the ideal hybrid of grace under pressure, which is a

perfect panacea for our times, but we both know art can manifest a lot more complexity. There is much in your new work here, your *unstallation*, which seems to take up these issues of complexity and nonconformity as a way to go forward.

NSM Do you think being an artist can be taught? In schools or with a master?

CMcC I firmly believe in education. Coming from a family of committed atheists for generations now, knowledge and questioning constitutes the secular humanism that allows us to escape the magical thinking and superstition of god and faith. There are many skills that can and should be imparted in an arts education, and while they may not make you a great artist they can make you a better one. Learning can be extremely rewarding, and when done right quite exciting, it can open up lots of possibilities in your mind, but ultimately a lot of it is simply giving you a set of tools and as well equipped as your tool kit may be you will need something else

S H O E A T G H O S T



The 'un' and its stylistic form (consisting of four calligraphic strokes) symbolizes the power of reversal. These thick brush strokes draw attention to themselves as much as to the space between them. Ink, and the absence of ink create black/white, on/off and positive/negative.

Just like all digital data is broken down to one's and zero's, everything in our material world can also be broken down to these basic opposites.

We can only be comfortable, if we were uncomfortable before. To be alive is only to be undead. And when science proudly presents its universal laws, artists will understand that they are ununiversal. If you don't understand this, ununderstand.

M A R S E I L L E 2 0 1 9



above: Futura and Dondi White (1982)
 right: Rammellzee and Fab 5 Freddy
 left: Niels Shoe Meulman (2017)
 © Janette Beckman

Janette Beckman is a British-born photographer who now lives and works in New York. She began her career at the dawn of punk rock working for music magazines *The Face* and *Melody Maker*. She shot bands from *The Clash* to *Boy George* as well as three *Police* album covers.

Moving to NYC in 1983 she was drawn to the underground hip-hop scene and photographed pioneers such as *Run DMC*, *Slick Rick*, *Salt'n'Pepa*, *Grand Master Flash* and *LL Cool J*.

Beckman has published five books: *Rap, Portraits & Lyrics of a Generation of Black Rockers*, *Made In The UK The Music of Attitude 1977-1983*, *The Breaks, Stylin' and Profilin 1982- 1990*, *El Hoyo Maravilla* and *The MashUp, Hip Hop Photos Remixed by Iconic Graffiti Artists*.

Her work has been shown in galleries worldwide and is in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, the Museum of the City of New York and the Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe. She is represented by the Fahey/Klein Gallery



to be more than merely a great craftsman. No school can teach you that last bit can they, but perhaps they can point you in the direction where you can discover it for yourself. I've visited a lot of art schools and taught in a few myself, and it seems to me the best teachers are those that are less concerned with telling you what art is than somehow imparting what it means to be an artist. You see, our educations neither begin nor end in school but are a lifetime process. Ultimately we are all autodidactic and most of what we know is self-taught, but that takes a degree of ongoing rigor and curiosity. Bad art, like bad ideas, comes from an intellectual laziness. What can be taught is how to learn, from the wisdom of others as much as the mistakes of oneself, how to research and question all things. For an artist there is no direct path, only an ever-shifting route that is utterly unruly, predicated on risk and open to the chance of failure.

NSM How (well) do you know Janette Beckman? And did you see the 'mash up' I did of her Fab5/Freddy/Rammellzee photo? For *Unstallation* I did another version of it, as well as the shot with Futura and Dondi. She snapped both shots in London in 1982. Where/what were you back then?

CMcC I love the project Janette did with Cey Adams, remixing her classic photos through the hands of contemporary artists. I've known Janette since shortly after she came to New York City, at first because we both worked for a magazine called Paper that was in its dysfunctional way very much like family, but then more as a fan and now undeniably as a friend. It is very interesting that you have chosen these two photos of hers to work on because they come from a pivotal moment in her life and career. Janette was an important and successful photographer for the British music press during the Punk era, but in 1982 when the first European tour of Hip Hop culture was organized –that included Fab 5 Freddy and Rammellzee as

well as Futura and Dondi, along with many others including Afrika Bambaataa and the Rock Steady Crew– she went to photograph it and was so blown away by what she saw she packed up and moved to New York City. To me this represents a subtle but significant cultural shift because England had a long history of taking the sensibilities we were growing in America, making them so much more stylish and sexy, and then selling them back to us generation after generation from the Beatles and the Stones to the Sex Pistols and the Clash. Janette took all those visual tropes that made the British scene just way better dressed, packaged and commercially successful than the American acts, who often were the less acknowledged originators, with her to the still nascent Hip Hop scene here and well, the rest is history. Funny thing too in that I have two shows up at the moment; *Punk Lust* at the Museum of Sex in New York City, about the sexual politics and provocations of Punk, and *Elements of Style* about the early years of Hip Hop in Seoul, Korea, and Janette is unique in being central to both.

NSM Can you name a few major differences between New York City in the 1980s and now? Obviously gentrification, but do any specific things come to mind? And do you also see that happening everywhere?

CMcC Nostalgia is dangerous and toxic, especially for us old folk. What I can say beyond the general tendency to be grumpy about things is that my kid is a teen still in New York City and far as I can tell he and his friends are having just as much fun and adventure as I did here at that age. Cities everywhere have changed. No longer are they deemed loathsome places of depravity and destitution to be escaped, they now are considered desirable destinations of luxury, so we have to share them with a lot of other people who would not have been here during those decades of abandonment. However, they still seem to offer a degree of engagement, of con-

tact between different classes, races and cultures and a kind of cooperative ingenuity that you don't get anywhere else. Now sites of constant and conspicuous consumption, they better suit the lifestyles of affluence than the kind of low-budget bohemianism and personal freedom that my generation enjoyed, but even if this is a matter of personal alienation that kind of disconnect from the mainstream has been a constant for me and core to the kind of resistance we look for in others.

NSM I heard you've been arrested many times. Something with peyote?

CMcC Yes, I have been incarcerated on a number of occasions, done federal, state, county and civic time. This is probably not so obvious about me or apparent in my dealings with the world, but it is fundamental to who I am- how I understand freedom perhaps differently from many others, distrust authority to my core, do better at understanding but fare worse at empathy, and find an identification with criminality that is perhaps just as perverse as Jean Genet's. The details of my peyote bust in Mexico are too long and complicated a story, but in fighting my sentence, which was for 25 years, we helped to change the laws so that others will hopefully not be similarly persecuted. I was down there to write a story for Artforum about the yarn paintings of the Huichol's, an indigenous people who have long taken peyote as a spiritual sacrament. Their paintings remain to me a paradigm of psychedelic art and the visionary experience, which is something I have long championed. In no way a recreational drug, something that will no doubt remain far more esoteric than popular, peyote is not the kind of stuff one would ever traffic in for profit, so it was pretty absurd that they would try to claim what was in fact the harvest for an entire village belonged to me as some international drug trafficker, but hardly the only casualty of truth and freedom in the drug wars, nor the only example systemic

intolerance towards the liberty of native peoples.

NSM What is your view on art and drugs, especially the combination? Are they just 'sunshine in a bag', or a welcome tool for any free-thinking person?

CMcC I have been asked to give an academic seminar this coming June on *Art and Intoxication* which is a subject I have returned to frequently over the years. These things are sure safer to talk about in an institutional context than on a street corner, but it is perhaps a more honest conversation to have on the streets. I cannot celebrate drugs with the same gusto as I once did since I have lost too many friends, but I understand most of this has a lot more to do with the pathology of how we criminalize and stigmatize such behavior than the behavior itself. I may not like religion but I recognize that every society all over the globe and through all of time has felt the need to make up some sort of nonsense to explain what we cannot fathom and act as comfort for what we cannot control. To me it is something hard-wired into the human condition, and I see our pursuit of intoxication (which research shows is shared among most animals) as something equally endemic to who we are. It would be surely be better if we all could understand this but it is hard to be rational about the irrational, especially in a culture that distrusts pleasure and rejects ecstatic experience.

My interest however remains more in drug culture than drugs themselves. An easy way to describe this difference is how in America we now have hundreds of thousands of people dying from opiate addictions that are quite different from how and why artists take drugs. They have no cultural reason, ideological identification or creative strategy to their drug use, they simply nod off to ultra-conservative news with its Make America Great Again palaver of grievances and use drugs

to prop up their ignorance rather than use them as a tool to query reality. What people fail to comprehend is that artists do seek various modes of intoxication as some decadent delinquency but to help them work. When the drugs stop working for them creatively and personally they all generally try to stop, which of course is really hard because they have come to function as both a muse and process while shifting from a force of liberation to a pattern of addiction, but most of the great artists who I have lost from my life over the years did not die from heedless self-indulgence so much as trying to get away from these shackles and slipping up along the way. Inveterate junkies like Burroughs do not die of overdoses, those who traumatize the body with cycles of rehabilitation and relapse do. Even with that said, I try not to be hierarchical in my assessment of drugs. Even if I would personally prefer if people chose cannabis over alcohol or psychedelics over opiates, and chose to ingest them as a shamanic or visional practice rather than jump to them as another brand of commodities available to our rampant consumerism, all drugs offer a utility that is valuable despite all the misuse and misunderstanding.

NSM How hard is it to write about art? You know, not really wanting to explain things but also without resulting in ununderstandable blabla. What percentage of people, who have this publication, actually read this text, do you think? Here's a message to anyone who's actually reading this: thanks for you genuine interest, *you're all right!*

CMcC Writing about art is only hard for me in that I constantly battle with writer's block, otherwise it is a great gift to me to be able to dive into the ways an artist sees and reflects upon the world around them and then try to articulate these things that, as you say, are not served well by too much explanation. I like that it is imprecise and subjective, a useless task better suited to amateurs than

professionals. I'm fortunate in that I've been at this confidence game for a number of decades now so I was able to establish a career before it became so professionalized and expensive and develop along the way a knowledge, confidence and what artists like you might call style. I'm continuously shocked by how little people in the arts actually know, and I suppose I will always be something of an intellectual snob, but I appreciate too how knowledge can only go so far when contending with the great unknowing that the unexpected continues to present.

And yes, of course people do not read this stuff. I can hardly blame them for enjoying the visual language of art more than the laborious language of its explication, but I savor the limitations of my craft as I do the equally limited number of people who might care. I came of age at that time when art critics had lost their power and authority to the forces of the market, so I am quite comfortable with the more modest mandate we now have. It is not uncommon for me to see a book I have written in on someone's shelf or coffee table when I visit, so it no longer distresses me when I say they have my book and they ask which one. I spent so many years writing for magazines that no one read but kept out in their homes as a kind of signifier of what they cared about. Now that few buy magazines anymore, books and catalogues have come to serve this purpose. Be it a book on classic motorcycles, Victorian antiques, contemporary art or just a vase of flowers, these are cultural accessories, a form of display, a way of expressing ourselves without revealing too much. I've never suffered a deluded sense of my influence, and generally write for an audience of one: the person I am writing about.

NSM Writing about paintings is what you do, I'm painting writings. I've always found the realm between image and word very attractive. Like I need to research it. Can you see



Untrue Blue, 2019, acrylic, plastic plants and confetti on linen with wooden frame, ±140 x 140 cm



On the piece *Shoe's Cloak (Manteau de Shoe)* Niels Shoe Meulman collaborated with a fashion designer and a sound artist. It is a hooded wearable made of his old paint-clothes.

The cloak is designed and created by **Koen Tossijn** (1981, Amsterdam), who is a designer who reshapes what already exists. He continuously investigates how to improve the classic rather than hunting down the new. By researching the highest quality materials and finest craftsman he aims to make products that become greater than the sum of its parts.

An important part of the cloak as installation is the sound, which was composed by **Natalia Domínguez Rangel** (Bogotá). She lives and works in Amsterdam and Vienna, has a master's degree in composition at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam (2010) and is winner of the music composition prize *Tera de Marez Oyensprijs* (Amsterdam 2009). Domínguez Rangel's music and sound work offers a varied mix of contemporary classical composition alongside electronic synthesis, ambisonics, installation, film and performance. The versatility of her compositions is exhibited by recent works across formats ranging from ensemble pieces, to sound installations. Natalia's work *Ruins in Reverse* collaboration with artist duo Broersen & Lukács was acquired by the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2014).

The video in *Unstallation* showing Shoe wearing the cloak on his symbolic journey from street to gallery is filmed and edited by Zane Meyer of **Chop 'em Down Films**, which is a collective of cinematographers dedicated to highlighting culture, art, and exploring different environments around the world. Their goal is to act as a catalyst for cerebral growth and to outgrow the cultural noise that holds back humanity's new zeitgeist.

The photos on this page are done by **Menno Kok**, who earned his educational stripes at the Pratt Institute in New York and at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. Since then he has influenced the editorial frontline and made his mark in portrait photography around the world.

This project is supported by **Patta**, which is an internationally known streetwear and sneaker boutique based in Amsterdam, founded in 2004. It started out as a platform, which sold exclusive items. After increasing their online presence, Patta began to collaborate with brands and the Patta brand took off.



that in my work? Maybe it's just sloppy researching, experiments gone wrong. Is there a beauty in trying to make sense of it all, and failing?

CMcC So glad at last to talk about you, so much less self-indulgent. Absolutely, you are painting words. It's a synthesis of linguistic and visual expression, what you and others have rightly called the calligraphic nature of your art. For me it is a kind of synaesthesia where thinking and seeing converge in expression and style, albeit of a vernacular nature that is very different from the word art of say Kosuth or the reactionary diatribe of Wolfe's *The Painted Word*. I'm trying to figure this out still, and it comes up for me now because I am writing a text for a book to accompany a big show of Basquiat and Rammellzee next year at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, so perhaps by the end of that I might be a little clearer in my thinking. What we can say at least from the start is that both those artists, though quite different and characterized more by their later antagonisms towards one another than their brief period of friendship and collaboration, were both motivated and inspired by the power of the language. Each of them went to some effort distinguishing themselves from graffiti, often in somewhat adversarial terms, and of course it is convenient for the art market to disassociate their work from such a degenerate art form, but the truth is they were both profoundly inspired by graffiti, considered many of those artists to be their friends and peer group, and modeled their use of language on the kinds of word-play and linguistic mutability then emerging in the MC culture that has subsequently been called Rap music.

NSM In the piece you wrote for my book *Shoe is my middle name*, there is a line that stuck, it's about sense and sensitivity. Of all my 'oppositions' this could be my favorite. You know about the opposites and reversal theme in most of my work, right? Maybe you could

say something poetic about it?

CMcC Regrettably I rarely remember well what I have written before, it is usually what makes sense to me at the time, and I never reread my work so it is possible that if I have not been writing the same thing for the past four decades I have been constantly contradicting myself. What I guess I might have meant is to reference *Sense and Sensibility*, as in the early 19th century novel by Jane Austin. That of course is the contrast, between characters in the book but also the contradiction within all of us, between what is logical and what is emotional or even irrational. This is inherent in your work, quite formally within your pictures where a highly skilled technique allows still a rather more rambunctious and unpredictable element of chance, even in the way that you foster the painterly taboo of drips and irregularities within a prevailing compositional integrity. You're dangerously loose, but you somehow keep it tight, and I recognize how you do this with language as well, an imprecision that is nonetheless determinate and decisive. It is not easy for artists or comfortable for artists to embrace contradiction and failure, but you've found a way to be sloppy yet keep everything in its proper place, to enjoy the joy with rigor, founder in the excesses of expressionism within an impeccable sense of design, remain personal while striving for something more universal. But I suppose this is natural for you because you are after all a man of tremendous simplicity and directness belied by a lot of complexity and turmoil. Impossibly you maintain your chaotic world of oppositions in a remarkable balance.

NSM How old are you? And do you remember when the feeling started to sink in that you probably weren't going to live forever? I might actually still not be there.

CMcC I'm 58, not so old but my lifestyle was never suitable to longevity and physically I am much older than my years. Certainly in

youth there is a great expanse of life's possibilities ahead that gives us a certain sense of immortality, but I was disabused of this rather early. My generation, which was formed and informed by Punk had a particularly nihilist outlook where expressions like 'no future' or 'please kill me' became the mantras we lived and died by. While those might constitute an early ideology and ethos, far more consequential to me was the fact that by my mid twenties I lost the better half of my friends to AIDS, so the hedonistic revelries turned into a far grimmer regimen of endless memorial services. My wife and I have memories of our apartment filled with love ones when we are the only two alive from that room.

As well because I was an enfant terrible so young on the scene most of my friends were older than me, so I return again and again to this heartbreaking business of loss and grief. And it is harder in the cumulative effect because each new death represents another link of memory being severed, one more person who we cannot share this broken history with such that the weight of all that collective disappearance is measured with the subsequent absence of each individual. So yes, I have been thinking of death far too much for far too long, but at the heart of ancient philosophy, and even a lot of theology as we can see evident in the long history the Memento Mori, there is a deep contemplation of mortality so it is worthy and wise for us to keep the many thoughts on death and its meaning in our heart and mind.

NSM Okay, enough about the bad old days. Where is our culture headed, do you think? Will the rift between street art and graffiti completely dissolve? And eventually become part of art history? How will people look back on this period?

CMcC I'm not happy with the separations that are made between street art and graffiti, for

all their differences they have a lot more in common than not. I will continue to argue that the reasons people address public space, wherever they are coming from, be it street or graffiti artists, the studio practices of the avant-garde or the radicalisms of activists, have an equivalence we ignore through ignorant tribalism at our own risk. That said I'm even more uncomfortable with these distinctions because to me artists are artists, so to me you are not so unlike my pals who show in posh fine art galleries or museums. We would be a stronger culture if we all recognized this, but alas that is not how the ratifications of society and the art market work.

I think only fools predict the future, so I resist that temptation, but I am still foolish enough to think that history has its own way of sorting things out and that most really great work will someday find its proper audience. Sadly, the problem with such retrospective or retroactive corrections as are made, for instance now towards women and artists of color, these financial rewards and historical recognitions typically come after the artist is dead, so these things are not much use to you then are they?

NSM What's the difference between aesthetic and making things beautiful? I'm getting less interested in making beautiful things, but I want to keep a certain aesthetic. Or is it just semantics?

CMcC Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with beauty in art, but solely as it contends with lots of other things like nature or the sublime which I instinctively find more compelling to think about. I'm a product of late modernism as it slipped into post-modernism, that's my generation and I can't escape it, and beauty was held in low esteem for us. I can thank Dave Hickey, an irascibly lovely man, and his book *The Invisible Dragon* which was a slim but monumental collection of essays, for reconsidering artists

like Warhol and Mapplethorpe to reposition beauty as something that can be subversive rather than banal, but I am still wary of it. This gets to the heart of your first question about what is pleasing or unpleasant and it seems very much on your mind with this new work. What can I say, each has its place and sometimes when they sit next to one another they can be quite complimentary. When I was a little kid my father told me this great old French expression that had a great impact on me as things at that age can. It's sheer folly for me to repeat this to a French audience here, for surely I will get it somewhat wrong but at least in writing I will not have to face the scorn of my bad pronunciation if I said it out loud, but the phrase is "belle laide" which is a delicious compound of beautiful woman and ugliness. I suppose it just means a kind of unconventional beauty, but to my young mind it constituted the flaw that divines beauty, like the delightful birthmark that saves the face from the tyranny of symmetry and makes a predictably pretty woman gorgeous. In this way I love your new work, warts and all- the all still containing its own undue beauty, the warts revealing the virus of life today, the discomfort of we live with and learn from.

NSM What do you think of my use of plastic plants? For a short while I painted with ink and plants. But the plants keep disintegrating and falling apart, making a bigger mess than I bargained for. So I reverted to the saddest product of humankind; fake plants.

CMcC Because they have a presence and sculptural dynamic it is hard to properly read by the pictures you sent me, so I will have to seem them in all the glory of their fake flesh to see how well they really work, but I am kind of a sucker for artifice in nature, particularly in the arts. It does seem to suit the world we live in. Fake flowers go back quite a way, centuries if you think of Italian flower arrangements as early as the 12th century or

silk flowers in China, but it really takes hold in the Victorian Era and attains a new kind of vulgarity in the 20th century with plastic. Florists used to call them "permanent botanicals", which is a great way to describe their psychological function as well. Nature dies and in this way reminds us of our own mortality, plastic offers an illusion of immortality that is quite literally care-free. It's all a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide now, so perhaps some of the many struggling galleries should consider expanding their inventory a bit. It sure rubs up nicely against that delicate line where beauty becomes kitsch. The Germans were early masters of kitsch, particularly in understanding how mass production replaced artisan craft and in doing so created something fake or inauthentic- which is pretty much the etymology of the word- so of course they were the popularity of the artificial Christmas tree back in the 19th century. However I trust that it will not be confused with nationalism for me to admit that America does indeed have the rest of the world beat when it comes to the production of the fake, and I always loved that the modern (and far less flammable) Christmas tree was born in America by a company that made toilet brushes- talk about the corruptive convergence of utility and decoration and the corrosive combination of beauty and ugliness.

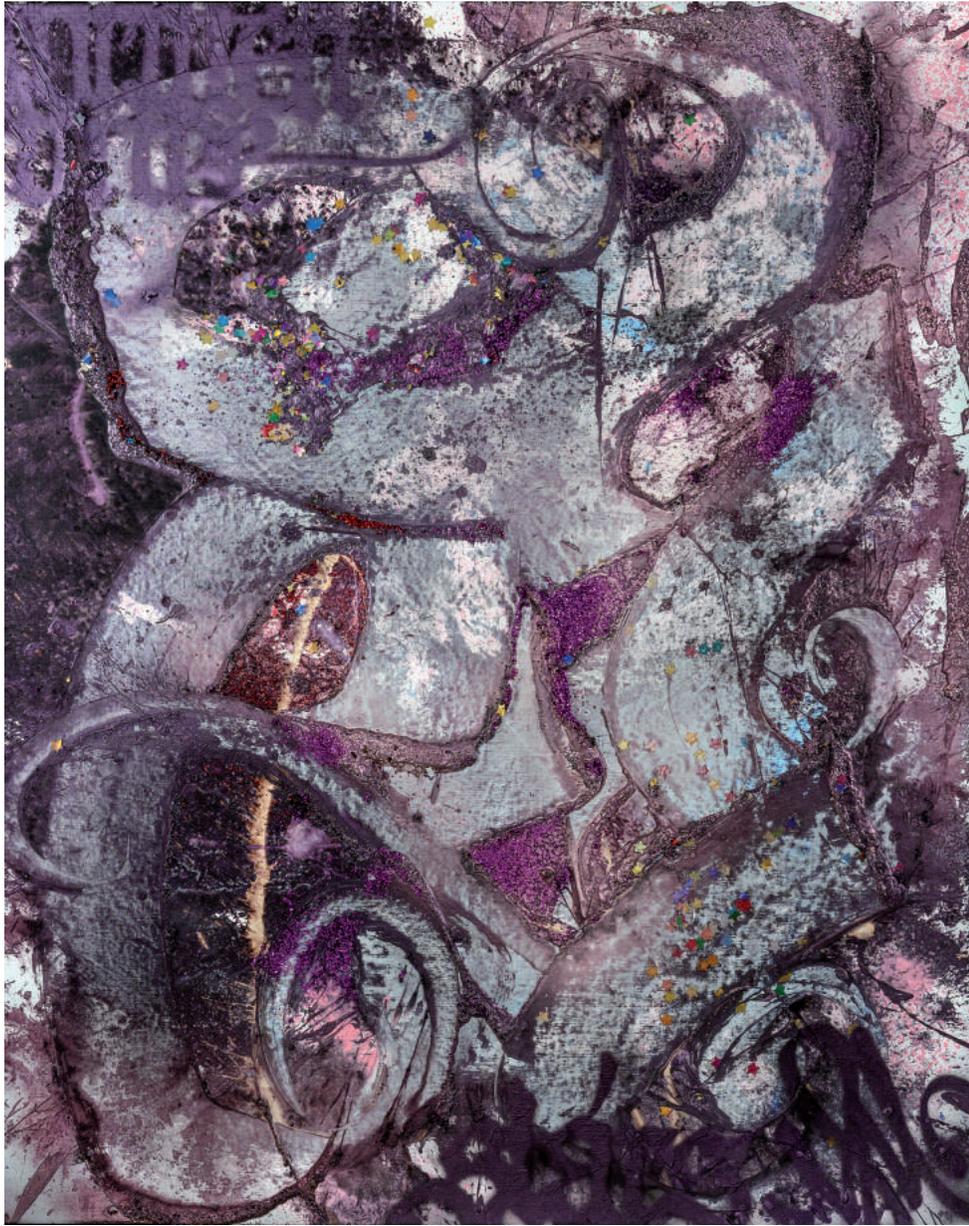
NSM I might have found the definite description of what art is, and I now follow the hashtag #artisanalcheese. Are you on online a lot and social media at all?

CMcC I'm sorry but I do not follow or participate in social media of any kind. It is the one thing I do (or in this case not do) purely for the sake of my own happiness.

NSM Another definition I came up with is about what separates graffiti and street art; "Street Art makes property value go up, and graffiti makes it go down." Do you agree, and

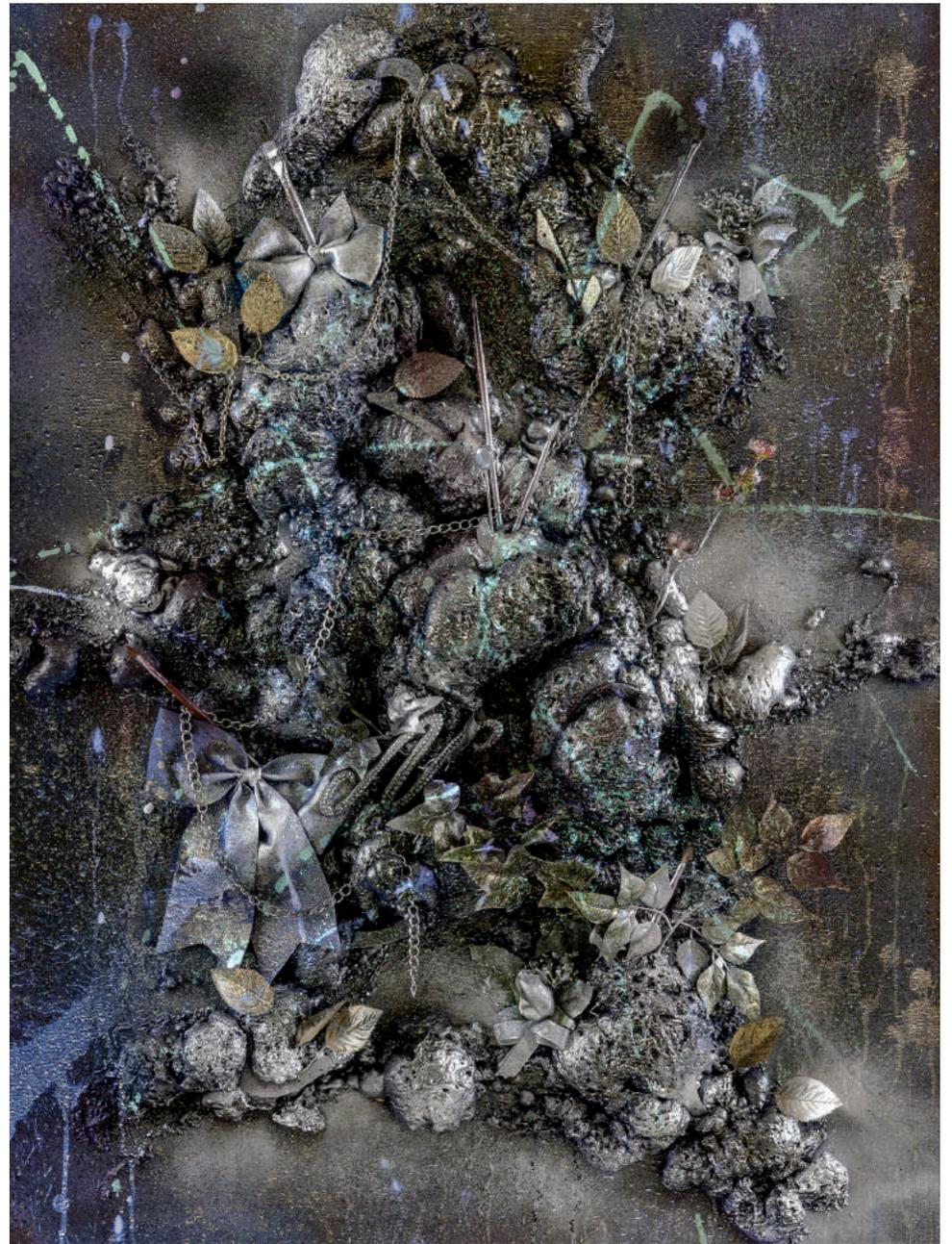


Unreal (detail), 2019, neon light, spray paint and acrylic on wood, ± 250 x 110 x 15 cm



Written in the stars
2018
acrylic, spray paint and confetti on linen
± 145 x 180 cm

Into the wild style
2019
mixed media on cotton
± 77 x 102 cm



Graffoliage; a shoe tag done with a Montana ultra wide chrome spray can on a canal in Amsterdam in 2017. It disappears every spring when the overgrowth overgrows, only to reappear in fall.

can you give some personal insights to the relation of property value, art and gentrification in general?

CMcC I wouldn't lay all of that on street art, which still has a lot of subversive and political practitioners, but of course they have been drowned out at the moment due to the immense popularity of contemporary muralists, some of whom who have perhaps gotten a bit too complicit with real estate and tourist interests in what is now called place-making, which is a step beyond gentrification as it involves land-use and development. Of course the commercial aspects of this are quite repugnant to me, but it is important to assess art outside its patronage and purpose or you start hating Michelangelo for the Sistine Chapel, and it is not in my temperament to judge artists for finding ways to get paid. I've had friends who were great musicians and ended up playing cruise ships and tacky cocktail lounges. Have I worried about what this might do to their personal vision? Yes, but I can only have admiration for any artist who can find a sustainable way to do what they love. I don't disagree with your definition, but what is worth remembering is that street art is inherently more generous and accessible towards its public audience than graffiti ever was so as a consequence its rules of engagement are very different.

NSM I see this show *Unstallation* as a personal milestone; an ending of something and a beginning of something else. It has been like that with some of my other solo exhibitions as well; *Throw Ups* (Los Angeles), *Abstract Vandalism, Uncontrolled Substances, Calligrafitti* (Amsterdam), *Unism* (San Francisco). Do you see that happening with other artists too?

CMcC Yes, it is an adventurous turn for you, and yes the artists I tend to care about continue to push themselves out of their comfort zones. For graffiti and street art it seems to be a natural consequence for those who

move from the act of vandalism to the art of making. This very smart English critic Rafael Schacter just did a very good book on the subject called *Street to Studio* which you should read as he should know about your new work.

NSM For this show I'm playing around a lot with new materials like confetti, plastic plants, glitter, beads. Paintings are become more tactile. Not quite three-dimensional sculptures, but 2½D, as I call it. Does that make sense to you?

CMcC As I remember you told me that you were a b-boy as a little kid. Perhaps I'm mistaken in that (yes) but break dancing was also about the language of graffiti, the inventive possibilities of free form communication and the evolution of letterforms into the baroque of wild style. Whether you danced or not your painting has always been about a choreography, a sense of movement and gesture I immediately recognized the first time I actually saw you paint when I took a cigarette break before a talk I had to give for Nuart in Norway when you were also there. To me you have always been mapping your own negotiation of space, dancing without a net along some invisible wire and exploring the physical dynamics of action painting. That you would move beyond the planar into the sculptural makes total sense to me.

NSM The video by Zane Meyer and installation –with a cloak, made of my old painting-clothes and eighty pairs of my worn sneakers (*Shoe's Shoes*)– both symbolize the journey I made from the street to the gallery, which kinda goes for many other artists. Do any come to mind?

CMcC My friend Irvine Welsh, who wrote *Trainspotting* and is an amazing writer from Scotland now living in Miami, recently told me this funny story about our pal Iggy Pop, who also lives in Miami, and how they came

across this homeless guy who had no shoes so Iggy took his off and gave them to the guy. Iggy has really small feet and a sense of style that is not particularly practical or comfortable to begin with, so his kicks did not fit this man in any way possible, but I understand the recipient of this dubious gift hobbled down the street with more pride, happiness and disabled dignity than other any steps he had taken in a long time. Maybe it is true that we can never walk in the shoes of another, but if we give them our shoes perhaps we may learn to walk together.

(SELECTION) SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2017: Unidenticals and Reverse Paintings, Galerie Droste, Wuppertal, DE - 2016 / Uncontrolled Substances, Galerie Gabriel Rolt, Amsterdam, NL ; Nissa la Bella, GCA gallery, Nice, FR - 2014 Shoe at Flow, Make Your Mark gallery, Helsinki, FI; Shoegazing, A4LW gallery, Soest, DE; The Uneathly Paintings, White Walls gallery, San Francisco, US; The Shoe Must Go On, Amsterdam, NL - 2013 Unbelieve, Unit 44 gallery, Newcastle, UK; Unism, White Walls gallery, San Francisco, US; Directors Lounge 43, Ewerk, Berlin, DE - 2012 Justified Scriptures, 941 Geary gallery, San Francisco, CA ; Oesh, Black Rainbow gallery, Paris, FR; Upside Down, Saatchi & Saatchi gallery, Auckland, NZ - 2011 Calligrafitti, Arty Farty Gallery, Cologne, DE - 2010 Throw-Ups, Arkitip project space, Los Angeles, US - 2009 Le Miroir Vivant, Tenue de Nîmes, Amsterdam, NL - 2008 Different Strokes, Rush Hour, Amsterdam, NL - 2007 Calligrafitti, Post BG, Amsterdam, NL.

(SELECTION) GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2018 art is where the heart is, Galerie Droste, Paris, FR - 2016 Brick to Canvas, Tinney Gallery, Nashville, US; Work in Progress, St+Art, New Delhi, IN - 2015 New York Meets The Dam, The Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam, NL; Abstract Vandalism, Galerie Gabriel Rolt, Amsterdam, NL - Surface 2014 Wu Tang is for children, Londonnewcastle Project Space, Shoreditch, UK - 2013 Caleidoscoop, Dutch pavilion in Wynwood, Miami, US; Bloom art fair, Cologne, DE TEDxBrussels: 'Ex Nihilo' painting performance on stage, Bruxelles, BE Adobe XD: talk and workshop, San Francisco, US; Trimachri, international design conference: lecture and mural, Mar del Plata, AR; Graff-ik'Art festiva I: live painting with Mode2, Prat One, Jay One and others, Lyon, FR; Bricks & Pieces – The New Politics of Imagination, Able & Baker gallery, Cologne, DE; Calligrafitti 1984/2013, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, US Live broom painting on Spui Square, Amercian Book Center, Amsterdam, NL; Unit 44: exhibition, Newcastle, UK Lyrics, Galerie Hélène Bailly, Paris, FR; MESS, Paris, FR; Repeatclub 02, Witzgenhausen Gallery, Amsterdam, NL; White Walls 10 years anniversary exhibition, White Walls Gallery, San Francisco, US - 2012 Miami Art Basel, Miami, US Pop – Up, Musée de design et d'arts appliqués contemporains, Lausanne, FR - The Name Game, Hotel De Goudfazant, Amsterdam, NL - Moniker art fair, London, UK Nuart festival : in/outdoor installation, Stavanger, NO - Team Rex, London, UK & friends; Galerie Le Feuvre, Paris, FR; Shoe/United Nude collaboration, Selfridges & Co, London, UK Pop – Up, Graphic Design Museum, Breda, NL Comma, Pallazo della Penna, Perugia, IT - 2011 Le Lieu Unique, Nantes, FR; Off Canvas, Beijing, CN - 2009 Where On Earth Have You Been, Bright trade show, Frankfurt, DE; Imagining Mozambique, Maxalot Gallery, Amsterdam, NL; Group Show, Salamatina Gallery, Manhasset, US 2009 Imagining Mozambique, Mass Market, Gallery space, New York, US; Flying Eyeball, London, UK.

COLLECTIONS PERMANENTES

Musée Stedelijk à Amsterdam; Musée de San Francisco

EXPOSITIONS MUSÉALES

Do Normal, 1998, Dutch Design in San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Mooi Maar Goed, 1999, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Roam is my home, 2006, Centraal Museum Utrecht; Le Tag, 2009, group exhibition at Le Grand Palais, Paris; Palais de Tokyo, Paris, 2009; Pop-Up, 2012, Musée de design et d'arts appliqués contemporains, Lausanne; Urbanism City in my Head, 2014, Group exhibition, Museum of Moscow, Russia; New York meets the dam, 2015, The Amsterdam Museum, Amsterdam

(SELECTION) BRANDS

Louis Vuitton; Mercedes-Benz (support for the Pink Ribbon breast cancer campaign); United Nude; Converse; Umbro International; Patta; Bols Genever; Heineken

LIVRES D'ART / MONOGRAPHIES

Calligrafitti; Painter; Abstract Vandalism; Shoe is my middle name

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