

Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art
Lauri Ainala, Susan Cianciolo,
Keren Cytter, Catharine Czudej,
Jacob Dwyer, Manuela Gernedel
& Fiona Mackay, Hanna-Maria
Hammari, Niklas Taleb, Madelon
Vriesendorp

EVERY LOFT
NEEDS A SINK

curated by ROOT CANAL
July 14 - September 15, 2019

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The group exhibition 'Every Loft Needs a Sink' is curated by the artist initiative Root Canal, consisting of Anders Dickson, Frieder Haller, Henna Hyvärinen and Thomas Swinkels. They met in 2017 when they were all selected for a two years residency at De Ateliers and moved to the same apartment in Amsterdam. They started their exhibition practice in their attic. Upon leaving their apartment, the initiative has embraced a nomadic identity. In the past year they have curated exhibitions in various locations in Amsterdam.

For the exhibition at Vleeshal, Root Canal explores the weird terrain between varying systems of how information, objects and memories are categorized. This is elicited in the act of rebuilding the original Root Canal exhibition space: a group of life-sized attic spaces hover in the late Gothic architecture of Vleeshal. The indexing of objects and data is demonstrated in the way that individual artists and positions inhabit the attic space; thus illustrating these differing methods and characteristics.

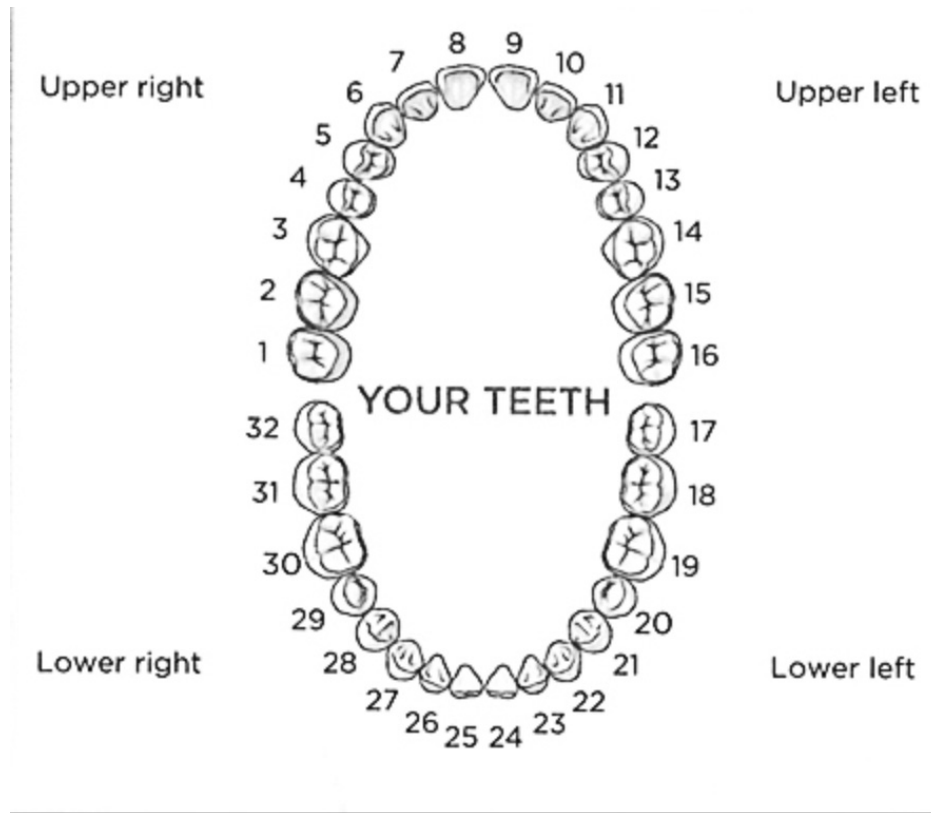
Over time the attic—or loft—has slipped into an interesting discourse for economic consideration. Originally used as storage, the attic was affordable and often rented by artists as studios and homes. Accompanying the gentrification and rising number of people moving to the city, the attic gradually transitioned from undesirable to luxurious. Today the idea of the studio loft is synonymous with what we envision as a fancy living situation in a busy city.

In homage to their first site, Root Canal looks to utilize the attic space through the reconstructed versions of it as a psychic substitute for the mind. In the spaces at Vleeshal the artists are partitioned into both solo and group presentations. Looking to Gaston Bachelard's writing on the appearance of the attic in dreams, it is recognized as the seat of enlightenment and perhaps also as a collective consciousness. By further consideration of its use again in the waken life as a recess or cavity in the house-body, it functions more as a niche for secrets, and a place to protect treasured items. Further still, could it not also be the location where manifestations of psychologically repressed experiences appear?

The Tooth Fairy

- “a normal adult mouth has 32 teeth, which (except for the wisdom teeth) have erupted by about the age of 13. Incisors (8 total): the Middel-most four teeth on the upper and lower jaws. Canines (4 total): the pointed teeth just outside the incisors. Premolars (8 total): teeth between the canines and molars.”

32 reasons for coming and 5 times thinking that same thought.



Drops of condensation continued to build and fall rhythmically from the side view mirror of the white car. Water collected at the bottom and was driven downwards to splatter upon the asphalt. Accompanying this was an aroma of something sweet which lingered in the air. Had it really been 6 weeks since the last rain? In all that time there hadn't been a moment for rest nor leisure. Fay had been desperately trying to recover from a financial blow by working over-time. Hence this meant a succession of all-nighters as she worked predominantly night shifts. For the past week she had found herself paroling the streets at dark, making the odd pickups and deliveries. Multiple injuries had occurred during this period. After having just been bitten by a West Highland Terrier she definitively made the choice to refuse all further jobs if it necessitated her going into homes with pets. Refusal wasn't one of her usual traits, but if it meant keeping her skin another day then so be it.

She awoke to the sound of her FM radio alarm clicking on at 12:30. In her exhausted state from the night prior, she had forgotten to turn it off before collapsing into bed and drifting to sleep. A man's voice accompanied her into the day as he described the oncoming thunderstorm patterns which ought to hit the metro area in the evening. Above the voice of the talkshow host the static drone of rain pitter-pattering on the window next to her was audible. Grey cloud unfurled upon grey cloud, each sagging plumper overhead than the last as if they beckoned warnings to find shelter before exploding from the weight. Sitting up she grabbed for her phone to check for messages and then made her way downstairs to the kitchen where she thought she already could smell fresh coffee brewing.

The kitchen was furnished in dark pre-fab wood panelling and gave the impression of a rustic hobbit home. Actually it was a rambler built in the 20's and had been the home of 4 others before her. The mill on the river employed the majority of the local community since nearly a century. Consequently many homes sprang up around this area. It was a good community. People were friendly with each other: they were left to themselves and their vices. Rarely would someone knock or disturb without an appropriately placed call beforehand. Black liquid adrenaline secreted from the dregs of Arabica grounds.

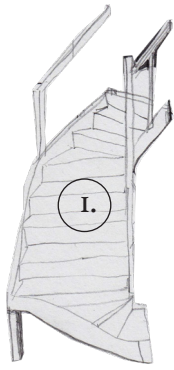
Drip. Drip. Drip. Drip.

Slipping down past her tongue and through her throat it accelerated via the bloodstream highway to her feet and upwards again to her thoughts. As she sat sipping from her mug she continued to watch the rain falling outside. Suddenly a knock at the door broke her from trance. It had been so long since she'd been able to have a calm morning, and it certainly was much longer since the last guest had paid a visit. Correcting the red fabric belt lining her robe, she approached the door and opened it. Sadly, there wasn't anybody there to be let in. In the place where this absent guest should stand lay a white envelope on the top step. The wind drove rain drops under the porch awning and into her hair and eyes. She wiped them from her face, grabbed for the envelope and quickly turned back in to her home.

-5 miles away from here the post man dropped his bag next to his desk, and lighting a cigarette, fell into his swivel chair. Piles of paper greeted him upon his return. For the third time he had been contacted by participants of a new religious denomination in his local community requesting a meeting. With home visits, phone calls and flyers to his mail box he had been attacked on all fronts. What good would it be for him to switch now anyways. Biting down slightly on the yellowing butt of his cigarette he began to sort the mess of papers. Not heeding so much their contents he formed a stack neatly on the corner of his desk. "By arranging and appropriately storing this shit, I won't be confronted by the sight of them asking for my attention". There were still a few hours left to go before he could clock out and leave. The previous night had been particularly tiring. For the 3 time he met a woman who recently had begun working for the company. Each of these meetings had been nothing short of vexing. Was it her erratic and fidgety behavior? When he had passed her the letter she stared at it with such a strange impression drawn on her face. Her brow pursed and eyes bulged with alarm as if they saw something unnatural. Perhaps it was the state of her clothing though. They always seemed a bit too large on her. Also he had noticed that her fingers were often crusted with the remnants of dried blood around the cuticles and nails. "I can't much surmise as to what she's up to but I've got a feeling it's not good", he thought to himself. In these moments of misunderstanding and lost agency he would forget the cigarette between his clenched teeth and reach for the next in the pack. Grey hands, calloused by the many letters and packages passing through them, showed dexterity in freeing one of the cigarettes from its brethren. The elongated fingers held the cigarette in balance before nimbly passing them from one bony knuckle to the next until being fashioned securely to the index finger and thumb. Breaching the lips and giving smoke to the old lungs, the cigarette proposed yet another moment in which his contemplation would be allowed to linger on this peculiar colleague.

After changing out of his work garb and clad again in street attire, he passed through the door and out into the humid night. His way home brought him through an array of parks and neighborhoods. Longfellow was his favorite. In Longfellow the people all left their lights on at night. If one were to walk by these homes, the view from the sidewalk lent a private gaze upwards into the domestic spaces of the inhabitants. It wasn't invasive but just enough to create the feeling of being invited inside. From this vantage point, each window became a picture. Sometimes the pictures were harsh and he would try to walk by without allowing his eyes to rest on the frame. However he would feel himself pulled back as if something invisible sank its teeth into his shoulders and held him there: pinned to the ground and forced to watch what happened inside. In other homes people sat alone in bleak rooms with their eyes immobile and directed forwards. Sedentary folk. Yet and yet again, there were those other places where the pictures in the windows came alive in other ways. He struggled to decipher the contour of the persons because the light refracted on the window pane. The play of the warm glowing light bounced in the infernal homes and distorted the characters by diminishing their clarity. They danced merrily about their ways and he would watch from outside. It's an odd thing to lose sense of where something ends and the space around it begins. One can attribute it either to the glare of light, or an inadequacy of the eye. However, as he had encountered this already so often, he began to acquaint himself with the special event. He watched these blurred images in the windows and then closed his eyes. Focusing intently upon the point where skin and air meet, he could begin to feel his body swelling. Suddenly he felt as if there were hot air pulsing upwards through his veins, surging towards the head and gathering there. The rhythmic beat of the pulsing blood coursing through his mind overtook all external noise and left him elated.

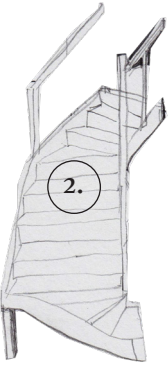
*Each of the exhibitions hosted by Root Canal is accompanied by a narrative text which builds upon the previous. This is the 7th installment chronicling the comings and goings of the beloved tooth fairy.



Manuela Gernedel & Fiona Mackay

'Upstairs', paint, 2019

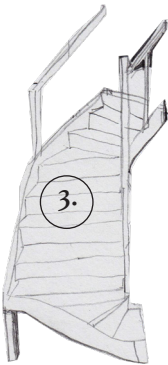
For this first attic, we invited the artist duo Fiona Mackay & Manuela Gernedel, because we were interested in seeing how they would make this structure their own. We saw their show 'Coma' at VIS in Hamburg in 2018 and were impressed by their energetic and immersive way of taking over spaces. Fiona and Manuela always have a unique approach to what they paint and to how they alter a space referring to the surroundings of the space they're exhibiting in. Manuela and Fiona met at Glasgow School of Art. Since 2007 they have been collaborating and since 2009 painting together. For the 'MG & FM European Painting Tour' they spread themselves over walls, ceilings, windows and floors, merging separate individual ideas into one, for one moment of time. The four-handed tour had stop overs in Cologne, Marseille, Perpignan, Vienna, Hamburg, London, Antwerp, and Frankfurt. Now it finally arrived in Middelburg.



Lauri Ainala

'Unien Savonlinna', film, colour, sound, 52 mins, 2010

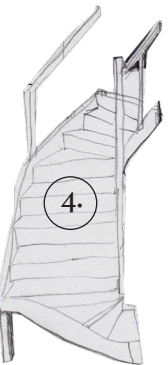
One of the ideas for these lofts was to show a work that could function as a documentary; something that lives outside of the visual arts. We chose a work by Lauri Ainala, who is a musician and artist. What we are showing here is a documentary of the band 'Paavoharju', in which Lauri played. It records the life of the band members and their friends in a small town in the Eastern part of Finland. They were inhabiting abandoned spaces and making music, building their own infrastructure there. For us this work reflects our idea of building these lofts within the architecture of the Vleeshal. It's an ambient, dreamy documentary. It can be seen from many different angles; you can approach it as a documentary, a video work or as a visual musical piece. It's a film about a life and environment that doesn't exist anymore. For Lauri it was a way to document these places before they disappear. The work resonates our own practice in a way, in how we adapt to different spaces and how we create spaces for ourselves.



Susan Cianciolo

'Costumes from Scene 10, The Celebration and Games', mixed media, 2019

With this exhibition we want to show that the attic can be read as a metaphor of the mind. In one loft we wanted to shed light on the action of arranging: the more logical part of the mind. It refers to the attic as a place where things are being kept and found. We already follow Susan Cianciolo's work for a long time and now finally had the chance to invite her to work with us. The fabric works are fascinating. Upon further research it was exciting for us to learn how Susan sources the fabrics, handling them through various methods: commissioning them from seed to cloth, receiving them as gifts, or coming across them as recycled finds. We were intrigued by the way that the dresses seem to display means of collaging. Simultaneously they seem to function within the painterly discourse and also in the realm of arranging and collecting of specific materials. Her work is often inspired by her own memories. Each piece is separate and distinct, but the overarching structure of how the work is arranged becomes almost as important as the works themselves. The costumes are intended to be used. At the opening performers wore them while being in a meditation session with the artist in the center of the Vleeshal.



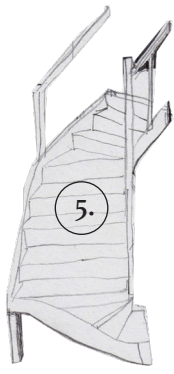
Jacob Dwyer

'Goin' mad', audio piece, 15 mins, 2019

Jacob Dwyer was the first artist we agreed upon to invite for this show. Earlier this year in an exhibition in Amsterdam we discovered that Jacob is not only a great video artist, but also makes stunning audio pieces. His audio piece 'Goin' Mad', that he made specifically for this show at Vleeshal, progresses through the anxious and never ending mantra:

"I think I'm going mad mate.
I think I'm losing my mind.
And I've got so much on my plate.
I'm sure I'm going mad mate."

The words come from a song of the same name. 'Goin' Mad' was the fifth track of Wiley's debut album, 'Treddin' On Thin Ice' (2004), in which he flows over a timeless grime beat, produced by himself. In combining the recordings made on the site in which they will be heard, Dwyer creates a sonic space in which the voices (and lyrics) come to life, merging with the fabric of the building. The old wooden doors flanking the hall, that were once used to keep the meat inside cool, become a surface for a crazed character to thump and provide metronome for these vague internal anxieties, from the world outside the attic (brain). 'Goin' Mad' was recorded using binaural microphones. These mirror the acoustic shadowing that our head provides, thus when listened to from the same position in which they were recorded, we can align with that perspective. It becomes extremely personal. We thought it would be nice to have this intense work that activates the attic space differently. You can really feel the space. It's getting closer to a claustrophobic feeling.

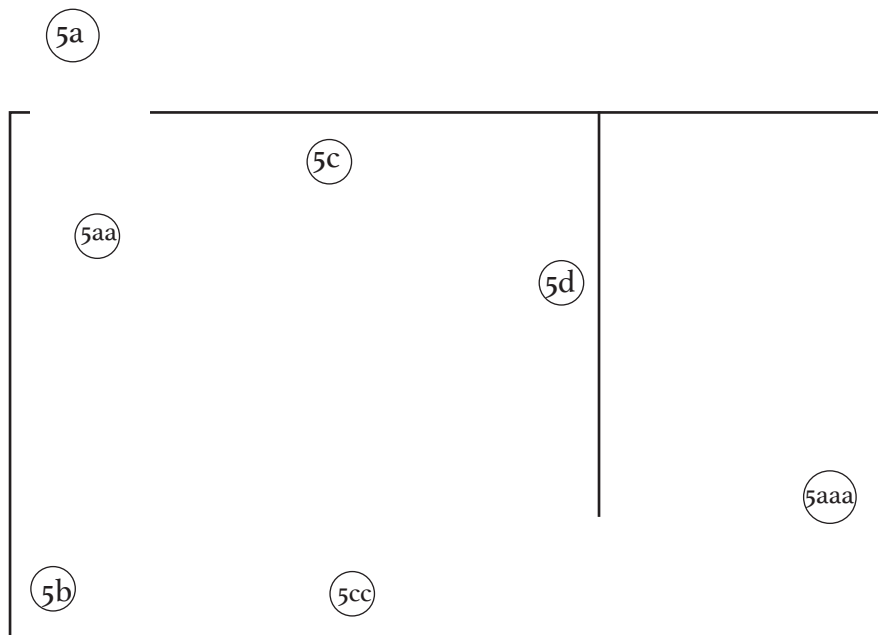


Keren Cytter, Catharine Czudej, Hanna-Maria Hammari, Niklas Taleb, Madelon Vriesendorp

In the last loft we decided to curate a group show, for which we selected specific works. We have always made group and duo shows so far. Of course the whole show at Vleeshal is a group show, but the last loft is like a group show within the group show, with the first four lofts behaving like solo shows. What we were always interested in is staging exhibitions. We have always had a theatrical approach to curating. We set up some kind of scenario that brings the works together.

For the last loft, we came up with the idea of mimicking a fancy loft apartment. We thought it would be interesting to dive into the meaning of the 'loft' and 'attic' and to think about its different connotations; gentrification, class, functionality, domesticity. Keren Cytter's video is about a group of friends you can place in a more bohemian milieu. The way they speak is disturbing and super artificial. It creates a rather uncomfortable feeling watching their dynamics with each other. The other video work in this loft is an animation by Madelon Vriesendorp. It shows the events before, during and after sexual intercourse between two anthropomorphized buildings, in the form of a torrid melodrama. The lamp of Catharine Czudej raises in a humorous way questions about representations of classes by design.

Niklas Taleb's works let themselves be integrated into the framework of the loft. One of the photographs offers a generic and rather interchangeable space. Perhaps it could be an Airbnb apartment. The slick surfaces and polished presentation reveal contrasting moments in domestic settings. In one we glimpse a formal composition of surfaces and textures which all seem choreographed in order to bring our attention to the lone glass and hat on the table. In the other piece a much more intimate or personal glimpse exposes a bedroom scenario and seems in contrast more candid. Hanna-Maria Hammari's dogs intrigue us by being grotesque and hilarious at the same time. You are encouraged to approach them as they are pets but upon a closer encounter you realize that there is something more abject and repellent about them.



- 5a Hanna-Maria Hammari, 'Blonde Poodle', artificial hair, human hair, steel, chickenwire, inkjet print, 2019
- 5aa Hanna-Maria Hammari, 'Black Doodle', artificial hair, human hair, steel, chickenwire, inkjet print, 2019
- 5aaa Hanna-Maria Hammari, 'The Afghan (Puppy Don't Go)', artificial hair, steel, chickenwire, inkjet print, 2017
- 5b Catharine Czudej, 'Pretzel Lamp', concrete, wire, aquaresin, acrylic, salt, 61 x 61 x 119,5 cm, 2016
- 5c Niklas Taleb, 'Untitled', C-Print photography, 104 x 70 cm with frame, 2018
- 5cc Niklas Taleb, 'Chairman', Inkjet Print, 60 x 43,5 cm with frame, 2018
- 5d Madelon Vriesendorp, 'Flagrant Délit', animated film, sound, 10 mins, 1979
- 5e Keren Cytter, 'GAME', film, colour, sound, 9 mins, 2015



Opening

13.07.2019, 17:00 – 19:00

Public program

14.09.2019, 19:00 – 20:30

Free guided tours

04.08.2019, 12:00

01.09.2019, 12:00

Education

For children there is a playful assignment available at the desk.

Workshops for schools, which take up the exhibition's themes, will be organised from 02.09. – 13.09.2019.

For more information, please contact: educatie@vleeshal.nl.

Open

Wed-Fri: 13:00–17:00

Sat-Sun: 11:00–17:00

02.08 – 08.08.2019 closed due to Middelburg's fun fair except from 04.08.2019 when open from 11:00 - 13:00

Entrance*: 4€

Museumkaart: Free

Kids (0-18): Free

Students: Free

*Free entrance every first Wednesday and Sunday of the month

Press

For press requests, please contact:

office@vleeshal.nl or +31 (0) 118 652200.

Contact

Vleeshal

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Suzan van de Ven, Dana Zoutman (Hosts).

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Graphic Design Root Canal