

## ***The way in***

With work by Leah Clements, Christian Friedrich, Aaron Ratajczyk and Iris Touliatou

Curated by Panos Fourtoulakis and Titus Nouwens

26/11/2021 – 08/01/2022

Thu-Sat 5-8pm, or by appointment

Haus N, Kairi 6, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Athens

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*Sometimes going to the grocery store makes me feel less alone. Sometimes I'm trying to tell someone about this new opening in my life, and I end up feeling closed. When I say opening, I mean the possibility that when I feel I won't feel like I shouldn't feel. My body in a room with other bodies feeling me feeling my body. When I say this room I mean you. When I say you I mean make room.*

*On a good day, I write in sentences. On a bad day I write in thoughts. You know when you're dreaming, and past and present blend together in a way that makes it feel like maybe you can imagine a future? And then you wake up. Dreaming is not quite escape, not quite thinking, not quite feeling, or is it? Because sometimes I feel so much more hopeful when I'm asleep, like this day when everything changes, I mean once I wake up, or maybe I'm already awake, but not quite, because it's that possibility of living in two times or experiences at once, but in the same body, the one that lets me down as soon as I get out of bed.*

– Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, *The Freezer Door*, 2020

*The way in* brings together new and existing works by Leah Clements, Christian Friedrich, Aaron Ratajczyk and Iris Touliatou. Video, sound and sculptural installations respond to the architecture of Haus N, proposing an existential exploration of being.

The starting point of this exhibition stems from the recent past - a time when our collective experience of time itself felt different, when the relationships between ourselves and our bodies, our surroundings and others were renegotiated, and when the exploration of interiority, embodied presence, and the desire to connect felt like shared concerns.

We have been working closely with each of the invited artists to develop a scenography that welcomes the viewer into an interior space of memory, feeling and desire. The presented installations make public and palpable elements that are highly intimate and intangible. It is through a specific organisation of space and time that the works move between introversion and entanglement, to convey a sense of containment and opening up.

About the artist contributions:

The continuous tension between the (interior) self and the (exterior) world, notions of control and overpowering, pleasure and pain, finds a bodily address in Christian Friedrich's silent film *Untitled*, 2010-11. Alternating shots of a billowing American flag and a man in a cage

being repeatedly electro-shocked create unlikely correspondences with the rhythmic insertion of all kinds of other imagery: a jetting fountain, a Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, jellyfish, birds, toes and foot fetishism and much more. As the film's fifteen minutes accumulate and the editing accelerates, images appear to superimpose, creating their own cryptic logic. What has seemed at first a statement about abuse of power, may be revealed as a formal structure of endlessly suspended oppositions. The more time passes, the more is revealed, the more is suggested, the more you seek to make sense of it and, finally, the less you know.

Leah Clements explores altered experiences of space and time through a light and sound sequence titled *Reprise/Relieve*. The work has grown out of Clements' text-based video installation *The Siren of the Deep* presented at Eastside Projects earlier this year, which takes its name from a term used by diving communities to describe an overwhelming pull to stay on the bottom of the ocean in a state of awe and never come back up. Developed through a more experiential and somatic approach, *Reprise/Relieve* uses deep bass sound, warm lights and an installation reminiscent of an abandoned medical experiment. The sequence causes a gradual build up and sudden release of tension at set intervals in the gallery.

Aaron Ratajczyk's installation is composed of two new works, *Home Ressemblances*, a tent-like structure made of semi-transparent plastic, and *Remote Ressemblances*, a floor made of flattened cardboard boxes connected to speakers through contact mics. Found on the streets of Athens and at local convenience stores, these materials served as packaging of products from around the world. Viewers are invited to enter Ratajczyk's open yet contained environment, generating sounds as they walk through. Associating *Home Ressemblances* with *Remote Ressemblances*, Ratajczyk explores notions of presence and its mediation, isolation and connection, intimacy and belonging. In this interactive work, togetherness becomes both intimate and alienating.

Iris Touliatou's contribution, *What we had expected and for how long*, is a new work developed through a relational exchange between herself and us (the curators). While being abroad, the artist entrusted us with the keys of her house/studio so we could extract items of our choosing. As a result, Haus N is punctuated with objects from the artist's home – shelves and drawers (support structures meant to hold personal items), a printer, a fan, all of her bedlinen and her 2016-piece, *Exhausted Lovers* – a carefully contained breakup, comprised of ink and paper extracts distilled from printed matter and kept in separate perspex tubes. Through continuous negotiations and the act of making public, the work engages proximity and distance, agency and co-dependence, control and letting go.

About the artists:

Leah Clements' (b. 1989, based in London) practice spans film, photography, performance, writing, installation, and other media. Her work is concerned with the relationship between the psychological, emotional, and physical, often through personal accounts of unusual or

hard-to-articulate experiences. Her practice also focuses on sickness/crippness/disability in art, in critical and practical ways. Clements is currently artist in residence at Serpentine Galleries and has previously been artist in residence at Wysing Arts Centre and Rupert. She has presented her work at Chisenhale Gallery, Somerset House Studios, Science Gallery, Institute of Contemporary Art, Jupiter Woods and Wellcome Collection, London; Baltic39, Newcastle; Vermilion Sands, Copenhagen; The National Gallery of Art, Vilnius; Eastside Projects, Birmingham; La Casa Encendida, Madrid. [www.leahclements.com](http://www.leahclements.com)

Iris Touliatou (b. 1981, based in Athens) engages in a conceptual practice, which transposes the political, environmental and affective, and employs various mediums necessary for each intervention. Manifesting in sculpture, photography, sound, scent and text, her work creates open forms and shared experiences, to comment on time, intimacy, transience, mortality, economies and states of being. Iris Touliatou has exhibited work at 2021 New Museum Triennial, New York; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; The 7th Athens Biennale, DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art and Radio Athènes, Athens, among others. [www.irstouliatou.com](http://www.irstouliatou.com)

Christian Friedrich (b. 1977, based in Amsterdam and Berlin) investigates the condition, structure and manipulation of subject-object relationships through a variety of media, including video, sculpture, audio and scent. His work frequently employs elements of the sexually outré, played against formalism, aestheticism, and structural contradiction. Friedrich's work has been shown, among others, at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, PS120, Berlin; Cabinet Gallery, London; NYU, New York; Cobra Museum of Modern Art, Amstelveen; Grazer Kunstverein, Graz; De Hallen, Haarlem; Goethe-Institut, De Appel, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Städtische Galerie am ZKM, Karlsruhe. In 2017, Friedrich was the recipient of the Cobra Art Prize, in 2013 he was nominated for the Prix de Rome.

Aaron Ratajczyk's (b. 1989, based in London and Berlin) practice explores modes of intimacy and dis-identification, treating the body as a malleable interface. Often expressed through non-verbal affects – mood, atmosphere and poetics – his work takes the form of video, performance, text and installation. His work has been presented at Museum of Modern Art and KEM, Warsaw; Tree Art Museum, Beijing; RCA CCA in partnership with Nottingham Contemporary; Yvonne Lambert, Berlin; Forum for Live Art Amsterdam. Forthcoming projects include group exhibitions at Goldsmiths CCA and South London Gallery (as part of New Contemporaries) and a solo commission by Institute of Contemporary Art, London. [www.aaronratajczyk.com](http://www.aaronratajczyk.com)

About the curators:

Panos Fourtoulakis' (b. 1990, based in Athens) projects tend to explore the affective, affecting, and contingent possibilities of time-based media. In 2020 he co-curated Sets and Scenarios for Nottingham Contemporary, an online programme of film, text and performance exploring our heightened proximity to moving images and what it means to live under their influence. Prior to that, he developed a series of live projects for a variety of art institutions

and non-art spaces in London such as the Barbican Centre, Goldsmiths CCA, Cubitt, and Queen Adelaide. He commissioned artists Adam Christensen, Eva Gold, Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi and Aaron Ratajczyk to produce new works, and has worked with AA Bronson, Pauline Boudry/ Renate Lorenz, Christian Friedrich, Sidsel Meineche Hansen, James Richards and Prem Sahib, among others. He holds an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from the Royal College of Art, studied Art History and Contemporary Art Theory at Goldsmiths and holds a BA in Media and Cultural Studies from London College of Communication. He has been awarded the 2021 Stavros Niarchos Foundation Artist Fellowship by ARTWORKS.

Titus Nouwens' (b. 1992, based in Amsterdam and Athens) practice is governed by a strong interest in the conditions, structures and formats of artmaking and viewing. Nouwens has worked for galleries and festivals internationally, including Chisenhale Gallery London, De Appel, Juliette Jongma Gallery, Spring Performance Festival (organised by Kunstverein, De Ateliers, Stedelijk Museum i.a.) and Forum of Live Art Amsterdam. He commissioned artists including Josefin Arnell, Pauline Curnier Jardin, Astrit Ismaili, Paul Maheke, Naïme Perrette and Sam Keogh to produce new work, and has worked with Mehraneh Atashi, Mercedes Azpilicueta, Ivan Cheng, keyon gaskin, Philipp Gufler, HellFun, Harold Offeh, Aaron Ratajczyk and Geo Wyeth. Nouwens holds a BA in Art History from University of Amsterdam and an MA in Curating Contemporary Art from Royal College of Art, where he was selected for NEON Curatorial Exchange 2020. In 2019 he received a Young Talent Award from Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds.

About the gallery:

Haus N is a private non-profit space located in a former clothing factory in the Monastiraki area in central Athens. Initiated by contemporary art collectors Peter and Gunda Niemann and run by Amalia Vekri, Haus N opened in 2018 and has since hosted exhibitions by invited curators. <https://www.haus-n.com>

Access: The space is up two flights of stairs and is not wheelchair accessible. Leah Clements has made a short film of her work *Reprise/Reprieve*, for anyone who is unable to attend the exhibition *The way in* for disability, economic, or other access reasons. Please find the video [here](#), a version with audio descriptions [here](#), and a version with captions describing the audio [here](#). For other access info at the show itself contact [info@haus-n.gr](mailto:info@haus-n.gr)