

Exhibition title: Planned City Cinema

Artists: Union Gaucha Productions, Karimah Ashadu Dora Budor & Noah Barker, Harun Farocki, Pilvi Takala

Curated by: Elisa R. Linn & Lennart Wolff

Duration: May 19 – 9 July, 2023

Venue: Simian

Photography: GRAYSC

Images courtesy: the artists, Simian

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Exhibition text:

Simian's second exhibition space is converted into a temporary cinema. The video and film program titled Planned City Cinema expands on Irma Hünerfauth's experimentations with sound, image, and movement and her interest in the interplay between natural and social systems in art and society at large vis-à-vis the dominant paradigm of extractive development. Works by Union Gaucha Productions, Karimah Ashadu, Noah Barker & Dora Budor, Harun Farocki, and Pilvi Takala document, dissect, and scrutinize the production, maintenance, and medialization of the built environment and the ideologies, economies, and power relations it materializes. Thereby, they prompt a reflection on Simian's urban surroundings in the "new town" Ørestad as well.

Planned City Cinema is accompanied by a talk with the curators of the exhibition, Elisa R. Linn and Lennart Wolff, a screening of a film by Black Audio Film Collective as well as a talk with Reinhold Martin.

Bio:

Union Gaucha Productions (UGP) was founded in New York in 1997 by artists Karin Schneider (*1970 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) and Nicolás Guagnini (*1966 in Buenos Aires, Argentina), and was active until 2010. Distinct from Schneider and Guagnini's individual practices, under the guise of a "film production company" they produced a diverse body of works, often collaborating with other artists, architects, musicians, performers, filmmakers and thinkers. Both Schneider and Guagnini moved to New York in the late 1990s, and the works produced under the moniker UGP map the artists' experiences of migration from South America to the US at the cusp of the millennium. Their films and videos bear heterogeneous influences, including those of political and artistic avant-gardes from Brazil and Argentina as well as American experimental cinema. Approaching the documentary tradition, the works of UGP sometimes depict particular individuals, as well as objects. But against the backdrop of the homogenizing processes of multiculturalism, which sought to re-inscribe differences as stable identities, they unfix subject and object as they manipulate, perform, and model them. Deploying the "machine" of film alongside and against the "machine" of art history, they privilege a mutual activation (in Ambasz's words, "an ensemble of inter-related processes"), demarcating an "infra-life" between gestures, images and forms of exchange: a fluid territory where identities, friendships, and ideological affinities are always in flux.

Karimah Ashadu (*1985 in London, UK) is a British-born Nigerian Artist living and working between Hamburg and Lagos. She has studied at institutes such as De Ateliers, Amsterdam and Chelsea College of Art and Design, London. Ashadu's practice is concerned with labour, patriarchy and notions of independence pertaining to the socio-economic and socio-cultural context of Nigeria and West Africa. Recent works include *Cowboy* (2022)—a video installation which deftly and poetically relates to aspects of colonial structures and black history, while captivating the viewer with its beauty and sensuality. Other works such as *Plateau* (2021-2022) explore tin-mining in Nigeria's Jos Plateau state. Ashadu is currently completing the screenplay for her first feature film *Salt Mine*, set in Dakar. Her films have been exhibited and screened at institutions internationally, including Kunsthalle Bremen; Tate, London; Secession, Vienna; Kunstverein in Hamburg; South London Gallery, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève. Her work is part of public collections such as MoMA and the Federal Collection of Contemporary Art, Germany. In 2020, Ashadu established her film production company *Golddust* by Ashadu, specializing in artists' films on black culture and African discourses. She was named Abigail R. Cohen 2021 Fellow at the Columbia Institute for Ideas and Imagination, Paris.

Noah Barker (*1991 in California) is an artist based in New York. Recent exhibitions include Galleria Raffaella Cortese, Albisola (2023), The Wig, Berlin (2023), Halle für Kunst Steiermark, Graz (2023), Capitain Petzel, Berlin (2022), Fluentum, Berlin (2022), Progetto, Lecce (2021), MACRO Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome (2021), Alienze, Vienna (2021), Löwengasse, Cologne (2021), Air de Paris, Paris (2019), Fanta- MLN, Milan, (2019), and Lodos, Mexico City, MX (2019).

Dora Budor (*1984 in Croatia) is a New York-based artist and writer. Her recent solo exhibitions include Galerie Molitor, Berlin (2023), Kunsthau Bregenz (2022), GAMeC, Bergamo (2022), Progetto, Lecce (2021), Kunsthalle Basel (2019), 80WSE, New York (2018), and Swiss Institute, New York (2015). Her work has been presented in numerous group exhibitions including 59th Venice Biennale (2022), CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux (2023), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2022), Tabakalera, San Sebastián (2022), 58th October Salon I Belgrade Biennale (2021), Tbilisi Biennale 2021 (2021), Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2021), Migros Museum, Zürich (2021), Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2021), Kunstmuseum Winterthur (2021), 2nd Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art (2020), Geneva Sculpture Biennale (2020), MoMA Warsaw (2020), MO.CO Panacée, Montpellier (2020; 2018), 16th Istanbul Biennial (2019), Kunstverein Nürnberg (2019), 13th Baltic Triennial (2018),

Kunsthalle Biel (2018), Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk(2017), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2017), Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2016). Budor was a recipient of Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Arts in 2019, Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant in 2018, and the Rema Hort Mann Foundation's Emerging Artist Prize in 2014.

Harun Farocki's (1944 in today's Czech Republic - 2014 in Germany) over 120 films address practices of labor and the production of images – analyzing the power of the image in remarkable and prescient ways. His work demonstrates the powerful role of visual media in shaping our understanding of ourselves and others, as well as the social and political systems that send images into the world. Solo exhibitions of Harun Farocki's work have been staged at Tate Modern, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; National Museum of Modern Contemporary Art, Seoul; among others.

Pilvi Takala's (*1981 in Helsinki, Finland) video works are based on performative interventions in which she researches specific communities in order to process social structures and question the normative rules and truths of our behaviour in different contexts. Her works show that it is often possible to learn about the implicit rules of a social situation simply through its disruption. Takala represented Finland at the 59th Venice Biennial 2022. Her work has also been shown at Mediacity Biennale, Seoul (2021), Moscow Museum of Modern Art (2021), Künstlerhaus Bremen (2019), Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki (2018), CCA Glasgow (2016), Manifesta 11, Zurich (2016), Centre Pompidou, Paris (2015), MoMA PS1, New York (2014), Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013), New Museum, NYC (2012), Kunsthalle Basel (2011), Witte de With, Rotterdam (2010) and 9th Istanbul Biennial (2005). Takala won the Dutch Prix de Rome in 2011, the Emdash Award in 2013, and the Finnish State Prize for Visual Arts in 2013. The artist divides her time between Berlin and Helsinki.

Elisa R. Linn is a writer, curator, and educator based in Berlin. She is the co-director of the Halle für Kunst Lüneburg, and teaches at Leuphana University. Linn is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study Curatorial Program and pursuing a PhD in Philosophy under the supervision of Marina Gržinić at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. Her writing appears in publications and magazines such as Starship, artforum, Texte zur Kunst, BOMB, Jacobin, and the Journal for the History of Knowledge, among others.

Lennart Wolff is an architect, curator, and educator based in Berlin and a graduate of the Architectural Association, London. His work encompasses curated exhibitions, public art projects, architecture commissions, and exhibition architectures, such as recently for a show by LaToya Ruby Frazier at Kunstverein Hamburg. With Klaus Platzgummer, he co-directs the AA Visiting School Zurich "Exhibiting Architecture," which since 2021 has been hosted by Kunsthalle Zurich.

Since 2012, Linn and Wolff have run the curatorial and artistic project **km temporaer**. Recent exhibitions, performances, film screenings, and lectures have taken place at Petzel Gallery and Maxwell Graham Gallery, New York (2023), Architecture Museum at the Technical University of Berlin (2022), Barnard College/ Columbia University, New York (2022), Museo Nivola, Sardinia (2020), National Gallery Prague (2018), Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York (2018), South London Gallery (2018), and Royal Academy of Arts, London (2018).

Photos are named in numerical order according to list below:

1. Installation view

2. Noah Barker & Dora Budor
Orange Film I, 2023
HD video, color, sound
6:42 min

In Dora Budor and Noah Barker's most recent collaborative videos Orange Film I & II (2023), distorted, filtered images and sound are captured using a camera rig equipped with a glass of orange wine, at the Highline and Domino Park, two large-scale adaptive reuse projects in New York, and in front of Anish Kapoor's metallic bean at the foot of Herzog & de Meuron's luxury high-rise tower. Nostalgia and disorientation create synthetic portals to a phantom past that is instrumental to the way recent urbanism constructs its mirage.

3. Harun Farocki
A New Product (Ein neues Produkt), 2012
Video, color, sound
37 min

Harun Farocki's A New Product (2012) presents a deadpan documentation of a planning meeting for a new office complex in Düsseldorf. Cybernetic thought reverberates in the paradigms of feedback and flexibility in these new work environments that the filmed consultants sell via a language that is not just a tool but an object of speculation.

4. Union Gaucha Productions
Primary Green, 2002
Digital video, color, sound
Music by Paulo Vivacqua
32 min

Primary Green (2002) begins with the lens rotating in the landscape of the South American Pampas, a region synonymous with Gaucho culture. Viewed through incessant gyration, this space of deterritorialization forms a powerful vector in an essay-film that mobilizes the ideas of the visionary architect, curator and theorist Emilio Ambasz.

Ambasz's buildings are seen in architectural models and photographs, and in footage shot by Schneider and Guagnini at his "Valley of the Moon" house in Montana. These are paired with a promotional film for Ambasz's 1972 exhibition "Italy: The New Domestic Landscape", and images of the accompanying catalog, from his celebrated period as curator of design at MoMA; while a voiceover of one of his texts accompanies images of Times Square.

An assemblage of Ambasz's idiosyncratic presence and diverse ideas, Primary Green surpasses dichotomies between architecture and nature, practice and theory, the individual and the collective. A social and environmental approach is instead located in a conception of objects, their producers, and users in "an ensemble of inter-related processes." (Description by the artists)

5. Pilvi Takala
The Committee, 2014
Video, color, sound
15 min

Pilvi Takala was the winner of the 2013 Emdash Award, aimed towards the production of a new artwork for Frieze Art Fair. The artist invited a group of children aged 8 to 12 who were regulars at a youth centre in Bow, London to spend her award. They were free to spend the money any way they wanted, as well as to choose how they would formulate decisions as a group. In *The Committee* (2014), the children explain how they decided to spend the £7,000 prize money, they discuss the process of decision making, and the values guiding their decisions. (Description by the artist)

6. Karimah Ashadu Lagos Sand Merchants, 2013
HD digital film, color, sound
9:21 min

Lagos Sand Merchants (2013) is led by the 'Rotate Mechanism'—a dynamic revolving device that challenges spatial perception. *Lagos Sand Merchants* focuses on a group of 'Sand Merchants' on the outskirts of Lagos, arduously trawling the Lagos State Lagoon to unearth sand deep from the river bed, which will later be offered to the construction industry for sale. Paused by the lagoon's edge, the sand merchants employ modest straw baskets to retrieve the heavy wet sand from river bed to boat, and then to the shore where they cluster in heavy heaped mounds.

The repetitious and systematic character of this task is reflected in the mechanism's rotary nature. As the mechanism is actioned, it rolls the camera forward. Subsequently, the moving image lurches towards the ground and comes back up again, as if surfacing for air. The mechanism becomes a mirror for the task— producing a rhythmic quality that reflects the monotonous yet poetic relationship between the merchants and the lagoon. (Description by the artist)

7. Noah Barker & Dora Budor
Orange Film II, 2023
HD video, color, sound
4:07 min

In Dora Budor and Noah Barker's most recent collaborative videos *Orange Film I & II* (2023), distorted, filtered images and sound are captured using a camera rig equipped with a glass of orange wine, at the Highline and Domino Park, two large-scale adaptive reuse projects in New York, and in front of Anish Kapoor's metallic bean at the foot of Herzog & de Meuron's luxury high-rise tower. Nostalgia and disorientation create synthetic portals to a phantom past that is instrumental to the way recent urbanism constructs its mirage.