

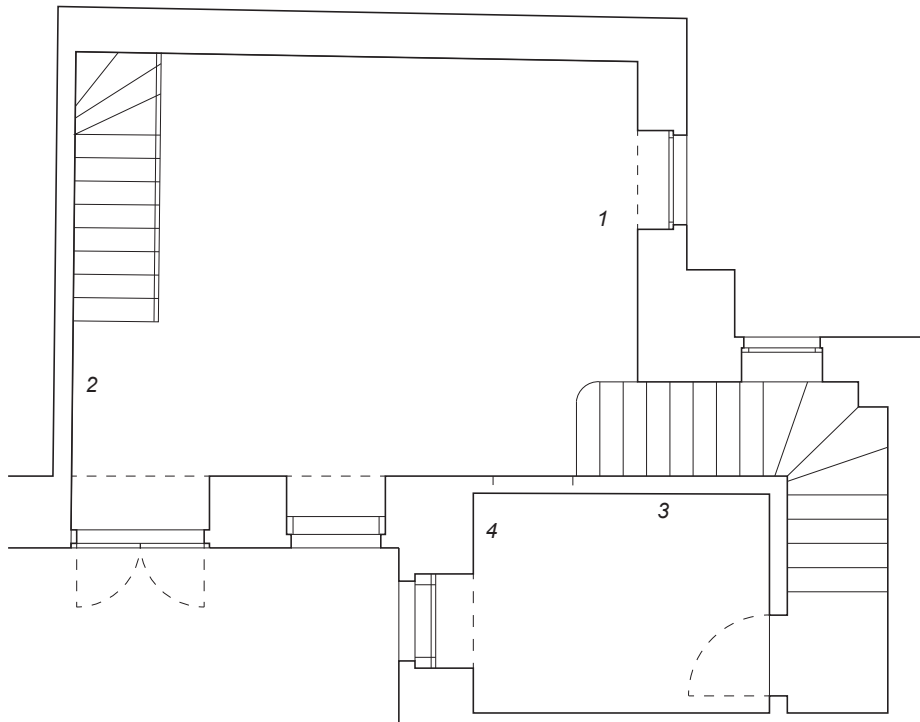
- 1 Mike Kelley
The Banana Man, 1983
28:15 min, color, sound; *Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York and the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, Los Angeles.*
- 2 Marlie Mul
Unnamed Charm, 2024
Silicone, synthetic hair, stainless steel hardware
Unique. 8 x 7.5 x 3.5 inches
- 3 Marlie Mul
Unnamed Charm, 2024
Silicone, pin with glass head, synthetic hair,
stainless steel hardware
Unique. 9 x 8 x 3.4 inches
- 4 Marlie Mul
Unnamed Charm, 2024
Silicone, stainless steel hardware
Unique. 5 x 6 x 2.4 inches

Mike Kelley & Marlie Mul

Opening: 30 May, 2025, 14h–21h
Location: Linke Wienzeile 36/1c, 1060 Wien

Exhibition: 31 May – 30 July, 2025
Opening hours from 2 June – 30 July:
Saturday, 13h–17h and by appointment

Opening hours during Independent Space Index festival (30 May – 1 June, 2025): 14h–18h



Stable
Port
Charm
Persona
Role Play
Hair
Fold

With our shared interest in getting to know the artworks in the exhibition, Laurenz (Vienna) and Shimmer (Rotterdam) begin our collaboration by curating Mike Kelley's *The Banana Man* (1983) together with Marlie Mul's *Unnamed Charm* (2024). The materiality of the artists' respective works – silicone, plastic, synthetic hair, candles, potatoes, and a yellow sailor's suit with many pockets – forms a counterpoint to the historic architecture of Laurenz and its natural patina. Both artists are known for creating personas in their work – think *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstruction* (2000-11) by Kelley, and *You Look Great For Your Age* (2021) by Mul, their works are visceral, humorous, and precise.

Shot in 1982 with the assistance of a performance/installation class he was instructing at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, *The Banana Man* (1983) was Kelley's first completed solo video work. Drawing upon his memories of childhood friends regaling him with their synopses of the antics of *The Banana Man*, a vaudeville act that appeared on *Captain Kangaroo*, Kelley uses his scant recollections—the *Banana Man*'s habit of pulling out bananas from his pocket, and his accompanying high-pitched squeal—to build out an intricate psychology of the character. *

In the *Unnamed Charm* series, folded and curled colored silicone sheets—in black, silver, yellow and reds—are held together with steel hardware, creating small bijou-like, tense objects that might fit in one's hand. Installed throughout the room, each one has its own persona. Some are sprouting synthetic hair, adding a soft-edged aura to the hard edges of the boldly colored silicone. Others have small plastic bones protruding from their crevices, or red-tipped pins stuck into the material. The lines of the parallel folds form vague question marks. **

Through the course of the exhibition, Laurenz and Shimmer will write a collective text on the works and what the artworks tell us about the other.

* Mike Kelley Foundation For The Arts, <https://mikekelleyfoundation.org>; *Electronic Arts Intermix: At Home with Mike Kelley: The Banana Man*, <https://www.eai.org/public-programs/294>

** Marina Caron on Marlie Mul's exhibition *Dream Within a Dream* at Gaylord Fine Arts, Los Angeles (2024)

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Mike Kelley (b. Detroit, 1954, d. Los Angeles, 2012) is widely considered one of the most influential artists of our time. Irreverent but deeply informed, topical yet visionary, Kelley worked in a startling array of genres and styles, including performance, installation, drawing, painting, video, photography, sound works, text, and sculpture. He also worked on curatorial projects; collaborated with many other artists and musicians; and left a formidable body of critical and creative writing. Starting out in the late 1970s with solo performances, image/text paintings, and gallery and site-specific installations, Kelley came to prominence in the 1980s with a series of sculptures composed of common craft materials. Featuring repurposed thrift store toys, blankets, and worn stuffed animals, the *Half a Man* series focused Kelley's career-long investigation of memory, trauma, and repression, predicated on what the artist described as a "shared culture of abuse."

Throughout his career Kelley sought to understand the cultures around him from the bottom up, scouring yard sales and yearbooks for their cast-offs and leftovers. He mined popular culture and both modernist and alternative traditions, which he set in relation to relentless self- and social examinations, by turns dark and delirious. With an inimitable mix of caustic skepticism and temporizing respect, he engaged the languages and assumptions of education, adolescence, crafts and DIY, holidays, pop psychology, parades and rituals, fandom, newspaper reportage, and modes of public address—producing a uniquely sustained address to the conditions and implications of the American vernacular. In more recent years, Kelley's ambitions widened in conceptual scope and physical scale with *Educational Complex* (1995), the epic *Day Is Done* (2005), his *Kandors* series (2007-2012), and the posthumously completed public work *Mobile Homestead* (2006-2013), as he addressed architecture, institutions, and "projective reconstruction" using the theory of repressed memory syndrome coupled with (pseudo-) biographic inquiry into his own aesthetic and various social formations.

The Banana Man, Mike Kelley, 1983, 28:15 min, color, sound; Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York and the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts, Los Angeles

Marlie Mul's (b. Utrecht, 1980) artistic practice manifests somewhere in between sculpture, painting, print, fashion, distribution, writing, experiments in branding, the social, the flimsy, and the virtual. References to the flowing, the liquid, the oozing, recur in Marlie Mul's work on a formal level and metaphoric themes – from her folded paintings, to flaccid silicone works planted with thinning (synthetic) hairs, to facsimile sculptures of rain puddles and enquiries into the history of tobacco smoke. Her work is intricately fabricated while keeping a strong DIY character.

In May 2017 Marlie Mul publicly cancelled a solo exhibition at the Gallery of Modern Art (GoMA) in Glasgow, due to impassable working circumstances, which lead to an advertisement of said cancellation inside the galleries of the museum itself. In the aftermath of that situation, she co-initiated the counter-institutional fanzine ground together with writer and poet Harry Burke, and published the book *CANCELLED* in 2018. With the project PMS she takes on a form of 'branding-drag' that employs the accessible format of the t-shirt as a tool for image circulation and the visualising of community, the brand itself taking as theme the human body's hormonal ups and downs. She runs HERMANY, a nomadic project space that sets out to blur the specificity of exhibition audiences by continuously changing its content, medium, and location. Hermany has hosted the work of various artists and performers, and was also the project name under which she initiated the collective projects *Fashion Café* (2019) and *Fashion Time* (2022) wherein the spectacle of fashion was taken as a starting point for the making and presentation of art works. Since 2021 she works on various series of sculptures intricately made from silicone and (synthetic) hair.

ABOUT THE SPACES

LAURENZ

The projects we realize under Laurenz are often concerned with expanding the classical understanding of exhibition making and look for inspiration in different disciplines. Hosting and working with the existing conditions, often thematizing them and allowing them to take the main role rather than just being a context, is an important part of our collective practice and the way we communicate with artists and cultural practitioners. By focusing on a more discourse-based collective work, we seek to create new and nurture existing relationships within the cultural field. Laurenz, founded in 2020 by Aaron Amar Bhamra & Monika Georgieva

SHIMMER

Located in the Port of Rotterdam, noted for its beautiful sunsets, caused by industrial pollution, SHIMMER is a curatorial studio set within the contradiction of oil-riggers and wind-turbine installing ships. The contradiction of a changing industrial environment informs our adaptive and transformative outlook. Our curatorial style coalesces, collaborates and redefines the methods of making, showing, and disseminating contemporary art. From exhibitions to events, and playlists to publications, we create an intimate space that operates with a 'studio-like mentality' where knowledge surfaces from participation and experimentation. We see art as inherently shared, public, and social, and so too are structures like Shimmer, allowing for research and conversations to spark the beginnings (and endings) of artworks and exhibitions. Established in 2018, Shimmer was founded by Eloise Sweetman and Jason Hendrik Hansma.