

“Fried Patterns” includes more than 60 contributions by 19 artists. The works were selected for their personality and the stories that are part of them. Stories about art in general and the conditions of artistic labor in particular, this relates to the fact that most of the invited artists work in Brussels and none of them have gallery representation. Ideally, the exhibition clicks repeatedly like the shutter of a camera, which opens long enough to let light enter to create an image. Like this, “Fried Patterns” attempts to put the finger on something that is essentially ungraspable. At any rate, an exhibition can never satisfyingly be a picture of a given time or map a particular place.

However, “Fried Patterns” suggests associations between artists that experience life in Brussels today, perhaps Europe’s most international small-town. From deep-fried photographs to fake university diplomas, the exhibition brings together an eclectic amount of art by a wide array of artists. Some of them are still pursuing their education, while others would never settle to abandon theirs. “Fried Patterns” reflects on how mundane experiences affect the way images are both consumed and produced. First and foremost, the artists investigate the image of the self as a source of social interaction: In which light does one show and see themselves? How is intimacy cultivated? And where do we act out the fetishization of images and anecdotes? How is the artist’s identity constructed and who gets to validate it?

How many legs does it take to screw in a light bulb? Fortunately, this joke doesn't have a punchline. Nonetheless, the art of Anastasia Bay (born 1988 in France) is ripe with humor. Her non-illusionistic painting style is both confident and joyful. Generally, she deals with the human figure by making use of its parts. She dissects the body into symbolic fragments and, in the process, pushes figuration into absurdity. It is unclear whether the legs that she painted are dancing or going to work. But they're definitely moving to the beat of some rhythm or another.

Clara Bretheau's drawings introduce a family of insect-like creatures. Together, they narrate the glorious story of everyday life: bouncing, chatting, hopping, floating and whatever else happens in a period of 24 hours. On closer inspection, the characters reveal to be happy, grouchy and, at times, even a little pompous. To enter the space inhabited by its enigmatic beings is like entering someone's thoughts. Typically, the artist (born 1996 in France) manifests her subjectivity on a relatively modest scale. Nevertheless, her works claim their right-sized space and, as such, manage to broaden a horizon.

Imagine the emperor put on new clothes but everyone thought he was naked. In a way, this describes the main effect of Hadrien Bruaux's work. Born in Belgium in 1991, the artist predominantly works on paper. He scribbles and makes drawings, collages, and, preferably, conjures a reversed

disappearance act. He is by no means an illusionist, there are no magic tricks here. Instead, he explores the sheer nature of appearance—and its counterpart. In essence, his work enforces the presence that reverberates when something is removed. It cherishes the traces that images leave behind, either in our mind or in the physical world.

Her installation *Workation* loops four self-portraits on individual devices. Programmatically titled, the work responds to post-industrial labor conditions and, consequently, underscores their underhanding tendency for exploitation. Sofia Caesar (born in 1989 in Brazil) filmed herself in a hammock, at the beach, in bed, and on an idyllic balcony. Instead of relaxing, the protagonist misuses these resting places as working sites. Between tragedy and satire, the installation acts as biting commentary on 24-hour work cycles and their constant demand for the availability that modern technology enables. The artist surrenders the image of the happy worker, celebrated by late capitalism, and, shruggingly, meditates on collective exhaustion.

Born in 1997 in France, Adeline Cros makes work that amplifies the tropes and clichés found in popular fiction. She lifts her images from obscurity and interweaves them with the perception of the real. She repeatedly involves her surroundings and, in turn, creates her own social environment. By doing so, she connects the audience to a level of her own intimacy. Here she repeats two photographic motifs—herself costumed like an elderly person and a topless woman pointing a gun—making use of the building's architecture. Toying with the notion of universality, the artist exposes the narrow-minded Western perspective, challenging how meaning is assigned to images.

In 2002, Laurent Dupont started building a collection of paintings by anonymous artists. Finding them in thrift stores or flea markets, he selected each for personal reasons. Over the years, he (born 1976 in Belgium) has lived privately with the paintings and presented different types of documentation of them. To this day, it never felt right to exhibit them on their own. In an act of blind courage, he decided to remake and enlarge them massively. This slightly awkward homage, each painted in one sitting, exposes the artist's vulnerable affinities and emphasizes his commitment to confront what is uncomfortable.

The artist (born 1988 in Belgium) is the protagonist of her own photography. Lien Hüwels regularly poses with a vacuous expression for the camera. As a result, the intimacy that she puts on display is considerably deadpan and immediate. This time she did something slightly different. She documented herself with her child. The resulting video and film stills exemplify the close proximity from which the relationship between mother and child departs over a lifetime. In another picture, the artist covers herself with a coat, referencing a historical painting.

Too much heat! The artist shows a series of deep-fried photographs that inspired the exhibition title “Fried Patterns.” In a way, Charlotte Flamand’s (born 1991 in France) process is a crude act of abstraction. The photographic image is melted down and its referentiality becomes obscure. The results are precious and humorous artifacts. Conversely, her painting embraces representation. She exhibits a depiction of a glaring eye. For some, the canvas itself represents an eye (or window) onto other worlds. In the loop between her painting and the burnt images, the artist both arrests and triggers our ways of seeing.

Dana Munro’s (born 1978 in Serbia) tongue-in-cheek commentary showcases the co-dependency and dubious outcomes of group exhibitions.

Painting on pocketbooks and canvas, Victoria Palacios (born in 1992 in France) builds a rich lexicon of styles and patterns. Engaged in the interrelationship of autonomous images, she tests the affinity her individual works have for another. “I have to play with them,” she states, “otherwise they get bored.” By covering up book covers and in the process rendering them illegible, she insists on the immersiveness of the painted material. The stories she makes her own are swallowed up entirely.

There lies glamour in separation. In his artistic practice, Claudio Pantó (born 1991 in Italy) distills various threads by weaving material narratives. From fur to leather, his art addresses the intensity of sensual experiences. On a formal level, he invests in the fragmentation of the visible and, consequently, points toward the problem of visibility itself. The shape of a lantern becomes a set of holes in another place. Showing pairs of sculptures, he picks up on Felix Gonzalez-Torres credo that two things echoing one another are intimate.

The artist was invited to present multiple generations of his work. In a fast-paced survey, the project anchors the core theme of “Fried Patterns.” By looking at the correlation between the experience of oneself and the image others create, the exhibition explores the problems and opportunities of the self. In society, ambitions, fears, and oppositions are driving and complicating one’s own subjectivity. The resulting personalities have to manage and negotiate with their environment continuously. Faced with institutions, the market, and personal predicaments, artists continually confront the validation of their identity, either affirming or resisting it. With a certain unease, George Rippon (born in 1983 in the USA) addresses these issues with brutal honesty. His works act as a guideline and a testing ground for the ideas that informed this exhibition.

Lecterns are places of authority. Whoever stands behind one, speaks, dictates or preaches. Returning

to this ambivalent motif—something simultaneously intimidating and reassuring—Batsheva Ross (born in 1977 in Israel) takes on the problem of authority itself. The works themselves are not dogmatic. Instead, they are often a composition of malleable elements. The artist repeatedly negotiates the hierarchies between her components. She examines the value of each piece in relationship to its wholeness. In the process, she introduces conditions, materials, and ideas, ready to overthrow them at any point. The results are distinctive drawings, paintings, sculptures, and inclusive environments that attest to her commitment to review the influence of anything or anyone.

Éléonore Saintagnan (born in 1979 in France) exhibits potted plants. Known as a prolific filmmaker, the artist contributes two works that memorialize growth and stillness. She has explored related subjects in her many films and video projects. Her ceramic pots are anthropomorphic on several levels. The sculptures' fronts resemble faces with blank expressions. The lack of emotionality counters the energy of the organisms that the ceramics are sheltering. By giving them human names—Kim Gyeongbok and Marie-Françoise respectively—the artist makes reference to personal anecdotes, diverging cultural knowledge, and actual persons.

When Peter Simpson (born in 1989 in the UK) started his series of paintings, he faced the never-quite-dead medium's essential conundrum head-on: the predicament of the subject matter. While reviewing Barnett Newman's writings, he decided to "grab and take him by the hand." In the first work he depicts himself eating soup with the abstract painter. In the subsequent works, he used the motif of the table both as a starting point and catalyst. Including portrayals of artist himself, the works reveal the presence and disappearance of a whole ensemble of characters. Between humor and melancholy, a story about communality, solitude and making art unfolds.

The artist goes beyond representation. Sarah Smolders (born in 1988 in Belgium) tends to push the subject over its boundaries. By creating 2-dimensional trompe l'oeil environments, she messes with our perception of reality. She typically mirrors a pattern or repeated motif with the means of painting and, more recently, photography. Like augmented reality techniques, her works sneak into our perception and redefine our understanding of the real. Her proposals highlight the building blocks that surround us. Here she presents a series of photographs taken from the exterior through a set of windows. The result is a meditative and yet confusing depiction of something that is simultaneously inside and outside.

The artist received a carte blanche. The risk and investment of building her works in situ motivate her artistic practice at the core. The basis for this is mutual trust, which becomes an indispensable element of her art. She made a floor sculpture with linoleum. From the flat material, a crustacean-

like shape arose. Through a folding technique, her sculpture mimics the animal's carapace. The unholy creature—embellished with fluorescent glitter—conjures beauty out of detritus. In another piece, Zinaïda Tchelidze (born 1982 in Georgia) presents a gallery of faces.

Again and again, David Tobón (born in 1987 in Colombia) investigates the phenomenon of something—the Alicangaro—that doesn't exist. His search for the enigmatic creature manifests in an absurd set of objects and instructions. Like a dead-end, the obscure puzzles are lacking a solution. The artist's material choice suggests the only possible clue. Making his artworks predominantly with graphite, he sculpts, draws and invents a dense aesthetic experience. The resulting works commemorate brittleness and relentless mark making. In another series of graphite drawings, he examines trash cans and further reflects on visibility and non-existence.

In her work, Charlotte vander Borcht (born in 1988 in Belgium) addresses the flux of bodies and commodities. From the migration of birds to daily urban experiences, she observes the crossing of time and space. Moreover, she recognizes a visible aftertaste in the habits of consumption—something she investigates as part of collective memory. Cutting and dividing space, her sculptures themselves embody a sense of overcoming spatial boundaries and territorial passage. Consequently, the works guide the viewer's path and gaze. Despite a reminiscence of industrial production, her works are predominantly handmade, imbued with a stillness. The artist engages critically with an era of high-speed, constant mutation and planned obsolescence.

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