

Me, Myself, I Dance Too

Amor mundi – why is it so difficult to love the world?

– Hannah Arendt, *Thought Diary*, 1953

As the wave morphs into a *new horizon*, the prelude unfolds as an invitation and introduction, a foreplay and a dream: *Is a poem real? Is an artwork real? Or is it all in the head, precisely the place that we must mistrust to protect our peace?*

The collection of nearly one hundred poems by Ugo Rondinone embraces the monumental room in a tight sublime gesture; this is the artist's act of *amor mundi*, his *Denktagebuch*, consisting of hand-written poetic notes, irregular and clumsy marks of pencil on paper, letters and confessions, elemental passions of a love to the world in disarray, haiku-like exercises of silence in an ordinary chaos of the every day. The poems like persons, standing up in a vertical posture, morph into the animal masks for the tribunal scene, an actualised version of a theatre of cruelty. Iman Issa's is a ritual of sorts, an assembly of surrogates and doubles, at the confluence of thinking, judging and willing, Arendt's fabric of the life of mind. Humbled words and invisible faces recall souls in the void and suspense, both solid and vulnerable, unstable and enclosing, liberating like El Hadji Sy's kites, floating in the galaxy of a future universe, dancing in and out of painting in a frenzy of a gestural abstraction, *chimes of freedom*. *Ich selbst, auch ich tanze...* Love is the "weight of the soul," its law of gravitation, that which brings the soul's movement to its rest, Arendt echoes Saint Augustine. For nothing else do bodies desire by their weight than what souls desire by their love. We are the poems, says the artist, we are inter-esse, completes the thinker, with precision and irony, with resistance and resilience. Her voice resonates with certainty and strength; her face obscured by a cloud of smoke, is a surface of clarity and sense. *Ich muss verstehen*, Arendt chants stubbornly, challenging her confidence, a source of thoughtfulness and emancipation, like the tender yet firmly defined lines of her portrait in Gabrielle Goliath's series *Beloved* (or as Christina Sharpe phrases it—with characteristic poise—be loved). *Beloved* is an ode, a work of the heart—a labour of recognition, gratitude and love-celebrating a chorus of both radical and quotidian femme presences: poets, priestesses, activists, artists, parents and prodigies. Goliath's drawing opens up a choreographic space of self: *Ich kenne die Leere, Ich kenne die Schwere, Ich tanze, Ich tanze...* Iman Issa's *Self-Portrait (Self as Hannah Arendt)* expands this space, building up a volume of an elongated white oblong, accompanied by a caption which reads:



CLAIRE FONTAINE, *On Fire*, 2023

was a bricklayer, and his mother was a seamstress. Combining bricks, sewing and paint, this work can be seen to unite the professions of father, mother and son.

We are in a cubicle of tradition and the past, surrounded by Angela Bulloch's monuments of legacy, totems of art historical identity, symbols of endurance and continuity, closely observed by *theatrum mundi* of Iman Issa's humanoid protagonists of her series *Doubles: Photograph—(Un)Like (M)Any Other(s)*, silent witnesses of paradoxical simultaneity of events, affects and identities, the epitomes of Arendt's pluralities, their longing and trauma, potential allies of a visitor, lost within the meanders of *vita activa*. Yet another possible guidance appears on the horizon: Laima Leyton's *I am here, and as you are here, you make me free*, a kaleidoscopic assemblage of moving images, accompanied by musical and vocal commentaries in response to Hannah

Arendt's exercises in political thought.

Fatigue and alert, state of exception and emergency, a sadness of excitement, wasteland of energy: Claire Fontaine's light-box *On Fire*, appropriating the banality of today's communication—an emoji of a flame—indicating an ambiguous feeling of both, a positivity, joy and passion, and simultaneously a warning, reminiscent of atrocities and dangers of wars, and fires, caused by the climate change and other ecological disasters. A new, contemporary icon is born: both spiritual and trivial, a flame of *amor mundi*, incandescent sign of protest and disobedience, as powerful as a brickbat, a projectile wrapped within a threatening message, to be launched through a window in the guise of a warning.

Claire Fontaine's sculptures, *Boire la mer à Gaza brickbat* and *The Punishment of Gaza brickbat*, are composed of bricks enveloped in book jackets. The size of the books' spines have been modified to accommodate the thickness of a brick, giving the impression that all the books have a uniform dimension. This gesture of petrification underlines the illegibility of these objects, their inaccessibility to the majority of the population, as well as the difficulty of attributing a use value to written texts in the actual context.

Love is the "weight of the soul," its law of gravitation, that which brings the soul's movement to its rest, a refrain for the precarious times and for a grievable life bounces back in unison, a diary of mourning and a necessary healing. Love is both, a challenge and a compromise in our life as as process: Arendt's cycle of the development of the appearance, the development of the disappearance. *Mother of Kites*—a heroin of freedom—is a welcome and a farewell, proudly floating over the *new horizon* which is a wave (Ewa Partum). Conclusion is the beginning, and vice versa, of *vita activa* which is a call for action, an agent of the frailty of human affairs, communal affairs, a call for *who* and *with*: an uprising of *inter-est*.

Indicating a line at which the earth's surface and the sky appear to meet, the horizon marks the limit of knowledge and experience – a border where the known and the unknown coalesce, where what we can see and traverse, encounters what is unseen, yet unexplored, and possibly impenetrable. Obscured on a foggy day, or crystal clear when the sky is blue, the horizon is the beginning of a new frontier, a zone of challenge and promise. For Ewa Partum, (a) new horizon is a wave: never still, often unpredictable, always evolving current, a revolutionary force which brings progress and rejuvenation, beyond dreams and desires, an embrace of the vastness of life and the interconnectedness of all things, ultimately, a tender indication of hope and belief in the infinite possibilities of the uncharted territories that stretch out before and beyond us.



IMAN ISSA, *Self-Portrait (Self as Hannah Arendt)*, 2020

Summer-Dream-Prélude to Hannah Arendt

Kestner Gesellschaft is pleased to present a new project for its building's facade: a neon work *new horizon is a wave* by Polish artist Ewa Partum.

Visual poetess and pioneer of the Eastern European feminist and conceptual art, Ewa Partum created a poetic manifesto *new horizon is a wave* in 1972 while contemplating the shore of the Baltic Sea and reflecting upon the constraints of the sociopolitical life under the Communist regime. Originally conceived as a stamp within Partum's iconic series poem by ewa and distributed world-wide by the artist via her own home-based, now legendary Gallery Adres in Łódź (soon to become a centre of the Polish mail-art), *new horizon is a wave* has been perceived as a bold announcement of the new to come, carrying a prophetic message of a necessity for a better future to arrive, a new perspective built upon change, constant movement and plurality.

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new horizon is a wave

EWA PARTUM, *new horizon is a wave*, 1972/2024

Monica Bonvicini was born in 1965 in Venice, Italy. She lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the Berlin University of the Arts and at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California. She has been Professor of Sculpture at the University of the Arts Berlin since 2017. In her work, Bonvicini refers to socio-political, power-related and gender-conditioned issues and investigates their impact on society.

Angela Bulloch was born in 1966 in Rainy River, Ontario, Canada. She lives and works in Berlin. Bulloch studied at Goldsmiths, University of London. She has been Professor for Time-based Media at the HFBK Hamburg since 2018. Her work spans many media, manifesting her interest in systems, patterns and rules, as well as her preoccupation with the history of shapes and human interaction.

Gabrielle Goliath was born in 1983 in Kimberley, South Africa. She lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa. Goliath is currently PHD candidate (Live, Interdisciplinary & Public Art), Institute for Creative Arts, University of Cape Town. Her artistic practice lies at the intersection of art and activism, challenging the paradigms of racialised and sexualised violence that underpin postcolonial and post-apartheid societies.

Claire Fontaine is an artist collective, founded in 2004 in Paris. She is currently based in Palermo (Italy). With a name borrowed from the famous notebook brand, which also pays homage to Marcel Duchamp's Fountain from 1917, Claire Fontaine declared herself a "ready-made artist". She developed a form of neo-conceptual art, questioning the problems and paradoxes of capitalism in their works (neon, video, sculpture, painting and text). In particular, Claire Fontaine takes a critical look at the political and aesthetic norms of the art world.

Iman Issa was born in 1979 in Cairo, Egypt. She lives and works in Berlin. She received MFA at Columbia University, New York. Issa is Professor for Performative Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Her work interweaves post-conceptual perspectives of contemporary art with political contexts that have their origins beyond the North Atlantic dominant space and thus enable universalist narratives to be both continued and challenged. She uses a variety of forms and strategies to investigate the political and personal associations of history, language and the object.

Laima Leyton was born in 1977 in Brazil. She lives and works in London, UK. Rooted in the São Paulo contemporary art scene, Leyton is producer, musician, activist, artist, mother and teacher whose credentials in the world of music are firmly established as one-half of Mixhell alongside her husband Iggor Cavaleira (Sepultura, Cavaleira Conspiracy) and for her work with Soulwax. In her debut album 'Home' released in 2019 via DEEWEE and The Vinyl Factory, Leyton explored the tension between the dual drivers of her life: domesticity and creativity. Inspired by Alejandro Jodorowsky, Bill Viola and Laurie Anderson, her recordings express her daily routine. Rather than stage the live show in the usual performance spaces she decided to manifest the theme and intimacy of the record by bringing it directly into people's homes (the Guardian heralded this as "Domestic Disco").

Ewa Partum was born in 1945 in Grodzisk Mazowiecki, Poland. She lives and works in Berlin. Partum belongs to the first generation of Polish conceptual artists, who paved the way for feminist performance and body art, testifying to the political activism of the former Eastern Europe. Affirming that "any act of thought is an act of art", Partum focuses on the political economy of signs and the materialisation of language in her actions and installations in public space, as well as in her mail-art or visual or "active" poetry.

Ugo Rondinone was born in 1964 in Brunnen, Switzerland. He graduated the Academy of Applied Arts in Vienna. He lives and works in New York City. Described as romantic minimalist, Rondinone creates haunting reflections on nature and the human condition, developing an organic formal vocabulary that combines various sculptural and painterly traditions. His comprehensive vision of human nature has resulted in a diverse range of two- and three-dimensional objects, installations, videos and performances. Rondinone's central themes include the exploration of spatial aspects, as well as the visualisation of time and transience, drawing inspiration from both ancient and modern cultural sources.

El Hadji Sy was born in 1954 in Dakar, Senegal. He studied at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Dakar from 1973–1977. He lives and works in Dakar. Sy belongs to the second generation of Senegalese artists who came after the renowned École de Dakar. Together with filmmaker Djibril Diop Mambéty, dramaturg Youssoufa Dione, and philosopher Issa Samb, Sy founded the trans-disciplinary art collective Laboratoire Agit-Art, where he was responsible for the spatial environments and visual language of their performances. As a curator, artist, and activist, Sy has been central to the development of a number of artists' collectives including Tenq and the interventionist group Huit Facettes, that was presented at Documenta 11. Mystical and compelling, Sy's paintings predate the current interest in Black figuration. Connected to gestural abstraction, his paintings reveal an indexical trace of the artist's body as if he actually entered the substance of the work.

This mere existence, that is, all that which is mysteriously given us by birth and which includes the shape of our bodies and the talents of our minds, can be adequately dealt with only by the unpredictable hazards of friendship and sympathy, or by 'the great incalculable grace of love, which says with Augustine, Volo ut sis (I want you to be) without being able to give any particular reason for such supreme and unsurpassable affirmation'.

– Hannah Arendt,

The Origins of Totalitarianism, 1951

With the exhibition *Me, Myself, I Dance Too. Summer-Dream-Prélude to Hannah Arendt*, Kestner Gesellschaft continues its exploration of the paramount importance and relevance of the groundbreaking oeuvre of the outstanding political theorist and philosopher, Hannah Arendt who was born in Hannover on October 14th, 1906.

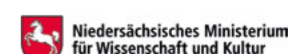
As an introduction to our Autumn exhibition *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought*, the exhibition *Me, Myself, I Dance Too. Summer-Dream-Prélude to Hannah Arendt* elaborates Arendt's concept of *amor mundi*—love of the world.

In her 1958 treatise *The Human Condition*, Arendt writes: "Love, by its very nature, is unworlly, and it is for this reason rather than its rarity that it is not only apolitical but anti-political, perhaps the most powerful of all anti-political forces."

Arendt's *amor mundi*—love of the world—is a relational form of love, based upon understanding and critical thinking rather than sentiment or affect; a promise of continued existence, a way of not resigning from the world when the world seems too unbearable to live in. What is most difficult, Arendt continues, is to love the world as it is. Loving the world means neither uncritical acceptance nor contemptuous rejection, but the unwavering facing up to and comprehension of that which is.

<p>Wed July 17, 2024, 6.00 p.m. Prof. (ret.) Irmela von der Lühe <i>Narration as Preservation, Hannah Arendt and Poetry</i></p> <p>Thu July 25, 2024, 6 p.m. Film Screening Ada Ushpiz, <i>Vita Activa: The Spirit of Hannah Arendt</i>, 2015</p> <p>Tue Aug. 6, 2024, 6 p.m. Prof. Dr. Thomas Meyer <i>The Strange Time In Biography. On Hannah Arendt's Biography</i></p> <p>Sun Aug. 11, 2024, 3 p.m. Reading of the Correspondence Between Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger with Sonja Beibwenger and Philippe Goos</p>	<p>Fri Aug. 16, 2024, 7 p.m. <i>I Can't Imagine How I Should Live Without You One Day</i> Reading from letters by Hannah Arendt to and from her friends with Dr. Beate Kasper, Christiane Claßen, Regine Balk and musical accompaniment by Joël Besmehn</p> <p>Thu Aug. 22, 2024, 6.30 p.m. Georg Hartmann <i>The 'Hannah Book' by Karl Jaspers: On Independent Thinking, Hannah Arendt and Her Critics</i></p> <p>Thu Sept. 12, 2024, 6.30 p.m. Prof. Dr. Juliane Rebentisch <i>The Crisis of Plurality</i></p> <p>Wed Oct. 2, 2024, 6 p.m. Film Screening Margarethe von Trotta, <i>Hannah Arendt</i>, 2012</p>
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<p>Curator Adam Budak</p> <p>with Robert Knoke and Dr. Julia Meier</p> <p>Graphic Design ITyT, Melanie Rosenauer und Kiriakoula Kremantzouli</p> <p>Special Thank You goes to all artists and to Patrick Nassogne, Luxemburg</p> <p>Thank you for your support:</p>	<p>Front Page Gabrielle Goliath, <i>Beloved (Hannah)</i>, 2024</p> <p>Back Page Claire Fontaine, <i>On Fire</i>, 2023</p> <p>Monica Bonvicini, <i>SO IT IS A LOVER WHO SPEAKS</i>, 2020</p> <p>Iman Issa, <i>Self-Portrait (Self as Hannah Arendt)</i>, 2020</p> <p>Ewa Partum, <i>new horizon is a wave</i>, 1972/2024</p>
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carlier | gebauer

Esther Jürgens

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER

GALERIE MATHIAS GÜNTNER
HAMBURG | BERLIN

RICHARD
DALTON

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