

Psychosculptural Aesthetics

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Rianne Groen
25 November 2017 • 6 January 2018

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Brendan Michal Heshka
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Curated by
Niekolaas Johannes Lekkerkerk

Found near the intersection of literary fiction and visual art, this exhibition is made for idealists. An exhibition for those wholeheartedly believing in the mind dependency of matter. In times where alternative facts and post-truths are dripping from the ceiling, you—an idealist—may increasingly recognize a desire to willfully retreat into a richly decorated, ornate interior space inhabited by hybrid figures. To accordingly reshape this overstimulating external world fraught with informational glut into private and otherworldly experiences, thoughts and recollections. Being continuously haunted by your Odradek,¹ you decide to dive into and explore a mental expanse inhabited by characters found on the distorted conjunction of a mirror and an encyclopedia.²

Following in Jarry's pataphysical footsteps,³ this exhibition is sought to maximize a poetic resourcefulness by assembling different works that rely on their continuation and complementation, sometimes even their completion through the active mental expansions and additions made on behalf of the idealist, the daydreamer, the visitor, and so on, and so forth. Here we may employ a language that corresponds to a real object, its givenness in the exhibition space, but that relation is purely fortuitous. Instead, *Psychosculptural Aesthetics* can only wish to emphasize the secretive, often tactic movement of things, the private languages we attach to them in our psychosculptural continuation of thought, elsewhere, lodged in the central neural vat until the thing's

contours start to erode, its image slowly morphing into, again, something different, or disappearing entirely by forgetfulness and the slippages of memory. You can only think of something if you think of something else.⁴

As a site of sculptural production, the exhibition *Psychosculptural Aesthetics* is concerned with the extra work, the mental additions we put in place to shape a world that isn't necessarily there, but is felt and mighty real nonetheless. From a gradual loss of the documentary and the givenness of things, to their joyous recovery in the key of fictional, ideal and poetic objects-turned-subjects. Something wholly speculative, open-ended and substantively immaterial, like a mental receipt,⁵ a department of abandoned futures,⁶ a telepathic sculpture,⁷ a peculiar sculpture made by carving clouds,⁸ a text so close to heart it becomes embodied,⁹ consuming an aspirine as a sculptural maneuver,¹⁰ a book of rumors,¹¹ a psychosculpture.¹²

1 • FRANZ KAFKA, "The Worries of a Head of Household," in *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, trans. Michael Hofmann (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 211:

One's first impression of it [the Odradek] is of a flat, star-shaped reel of thread, and indeed it appears to have thread entwined in it; admittedly only broken old pieces of thread, in all sorts of colours and thicknesses, knotted or even tangled together. But it's not a reel, since a little rod emerges from the centre of the star, and this rod has another rod going off it at right angles. With this rod on one side, and one of the points of the star on the other, the whole thing is able to stand upright as on two feet.

ENRIQUE VILA-MATAS, *A Brief History of Portable Literature*, trans. Anne McLean and Thomas Bunstead (New York: New Directions, 2015), 36:

[...] Smiling, Duchamp says this cork is my Odradek. It's the first time I've heard the word, and I ask what it means. In a tone of strict confidence, Duchamp introduces me to one of Shandyism's most enigmatic aspects: the existence of certain dark occupants lodged within reach of the portables' inner labyrinths.

Apparently, it was in the infinite labyrinth of the city of Prague that the darks occupants, also known as Odradeks, began to show themselves. Due to their fraught coexistence with doppelgängers, each of the Shandies had one of these dark occupants lodged within them—up until that point they'd been discreet companions for the most part, but in Prague they began to turn demanding and take assorted forms, sometimes human.

2 • Quoted from: JORGE LUIS BORGES, "Tiön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," in *Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (London: Penguin Books, 2000), 7.

3 • Pataphysics is defined by its inventor ALFRED JARRY as "the science of imaginary solutions, which symbolically attributes the properties of objects, described by their virtuality, to their lineaments".

4 • Quoted from the protagonist in JEAN-LUC GODARD's film *In Praise of Love* (2001).

5 • RALUCA CROITORU will present her *Institute for Receipt Research and Experimentation*, through a performance and a short film. Alternating between representation and abstraction, the experimental short film, en-

titled *The Virtual Tour of the IIRRE* (2016), follows a narrative at the border between fact and fiction. Through its structure, use of gestures and the presence of the voice, the film tackles concepts such as history-making, extreme digitalization, immateriality and interactivity in the digital world, utopic bureaucracy and financial transactions.

6 • *Department of Abandoned Futures* (2015) is JOACHIM KOESTER's first audio work made in collaboration with artist STEFAN A. PEDERSEN. With a soundtrack of white noise and a hypnotic voiceover, the listener is guided through an imaginary city to a basement containing the archive of abandoned futures. Here the visitor is set free to roam in an enormous space stacked with inventions, visions and lost voices.

7 • ROBERT FILLIOU, *Telepathic Sculpture*, 1975, ink, paper, cardboard, courtesy: Robert Filliou Estate, Paris.



8 • J.G. BALLARD, "The Cloud-Sculptors of Coral D," in *Vermillion Sands* (London: Vintage Classics, 2016), 11:

All summer the cloud-sculptors would come from Vermillion Sands and sail their painted gliders above the coral towers that rose like white pagodas beside the highway to Lagoon West. The tallest of the towers was Coral D, and here the rising air above the sandreefs was topped by swan-like clumps of fair-weather cumulus. Lifted on the shoulders of the air above the crown of Coral D, we would carve seahorses and unicorns, the portraits of presidents and film stars, lizards and exotic birds. As the crowd watched from their cars, a cool rain would fall on to the dusty roofs, weeping from the sculptured clouds as they sailed across the desert floor towards the sun.

9 • *Fahrenheit 451* is a dystopian novel by American writer RAY BRADBURY, first published in 1953. The novel presents a future American society where books are outlawed and “firemen” burn any that are found. Towards the end of the novel the main protagonist, Guy Montag, is lead to the peripheral outskirts of the city, where the so called “book people” live. These exiled drifters have each memorized books by heart, should the day come that society comes to an end, then rebuilds itself anew; this time, with the survivors learning to embrace the literature of the past.

10 • CHARBEL-JOSEPH H. BOUTROS, *Inside Sculpture* (2011):

Yesterday I took an Aspirine, not for healing any kind of sickness, but merely for a sculptural manoeuvre: to thin my blood for a period of four hours.

11 • *The Book of Rumours* (2017) is an ongoing site specific project conceived by SIMON ASENCIO. *The Book of Rumours* plots living stories, parasitizing human psyche to persist in time. These stories slumber in bodies, and, at times, surface to communicate with us—or perhaps through us. They morph into new shapes like dead languages slip into living ones.

12 • *Psychosculpture* (2016) is a long term therapeutic art practice—conceived by BRENDAN MICHAL HESHKA — that appropriates the form of the ninety-minute talk session from its clinical psychoanalytic setting, and brings it into an art context to produce works of art. The general aim of the work is to engage with participants into looking at events, dreams, goals and failures from their lives as possible artworks, working with the artist to see the symbolic poetry contained in everyday life. In effect turning the viewers into the *producers* of art.

Colophon

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