

DANCING
FORWARD

27.05 – 25.06.2023

A group show curated by the Curatorial Studies
class of 2022 – 23 at KASK & ConservatoriumLOOKING
BACKWARD

MENGFAN WANG

[01] 50/60—Dance Theatre with Dama 2015/16

50/60—Dance Theatre with Dama reveals how collective bodies are shaped by different ideologies and cultures by exploring the phenomenon of “Square Dancing” in China. “Square Dancing” is a collective activity heavily marked by Socialist ideas and performed by communities of women called Dama (middle-aged women in Chinese) born in the 1950s and 60s. Damas dance everyday, everywhere from public squares, plazas to parks. In this work, six Damas become protagonists to revisit their glorious memory of dancing from the days of the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) when modernised folk dance was widely performed as part of the national propaganda programme. This memory defines their understanding of “dance” and shapes their dance that is haunting the nation until today.

WANG MENGFAN (°1990, CN) is a theatre director and choreographer. Seeking to explore performative expressions of ordinary people, her dance theatre practice engages middle-aged women and children through a collaborative reworking of daily acts and recently focuses on ageing bodies by working with retired ballet dancers.

Her dance works have been invited to VIE Festival Bologna, Beijing Fringe Festival, Wuzhen Theater Festival, among others.

SHEIDA SOLEIMANI

[02]	1/8/2020	2020
[03]	Kill Zone	2021
[04]	Corruption on Earth	2020
[05]	Mahsa	2022
[06]	PS 752	2020

These photo collages challenge the viewer to decode the absurdity of the political world. Through the different layers, various stories come to life: unspoken truths are in this way rendered grotesque in confrontational and overtly patchworked scenes. Hands of world leaders and powerful figures are the central element in this series. These hands decide about wars, human lives and economical transactions. The gestures they make are powerful on their own in being connected to a tradition of authority. Without words, the meaning becomes ambiguous, varying between gentle and forceful gesticulations.

SHEIDA SOLEIMANI (°1990, US) is an artist-activist who works with photography, film, performance and

sculpture. By transforming source images from press and social media into staged sets, she sheds light on the coded way (political) messages are disseminated in a global context. Soleimani's work offers a poignant analysis of image-building in the contemporary media landscape as well as a critical view on international politics and its power relationships. She has exhibited in *Edel Assanti in London (2023)*, *Kunsthaus Photoforum Pasquart in Biel (2022)* or *Castello San Basilio in Basilicata (2022)*.

VINCENT FERRANÉ

[07] *Through the Night (from Milky Way)* 2017

The photography series titled *Through the Night* is a segment from Ferrané's larger project *Milky Way*. The work depicts the artist's wife breastfeeding their child through the night, and emphasises the protracted and to some extent transformed repetition of this act. These pictures contain recognisable echoes of traditional symbols such as breastfeeding scenes in classical paintings, yet they also show contemporary expressions that highlight childcare, empathy and connection, and thereby go beyond superficial imagery. The power of exchanges between two human beings develops from these daily moments of breastfeeding as an act of taking care, body to body. These moments are harshly and unrepentantly captured by the artist, and the milk, like in the Greek legend of the Milky Way, becomes the vector of a universe in flux.

VINCENT FERRANÉ (°1974, FR) is a self-taught photographer focusing on portraits and fashion editorials. Educated as a dental surgeon, he started with photography after his studies with a series on hospital units. His photographic work now centres around (human) relationships, the interpretability of images, and the openness photography can provide to a clear-cut reality. He exhibited at venues such as *Commanderie Sainte-Luce in Arles (2015)* and *Deichtorhallen in Hamburg (2021)*, works for French and international journals such as *Elle* and *Vanity Fair*, and published photobooks among which *Milky-Way (2017)* and most recently *Inner (2022)*.

JUAN PABLO ECHEVERRI

[08] *dóndestá _ a _ i e _* 2012
 [09] *Holigay* 2009
 [10] *monjarabiosa* 2012

At first glance, *Around the World in 80 Gays* appears to be a whimsical series of YouTube videos from the past. As we delve deeper, we learn about Echeverri's fantastical world that celebrates freedom and are introduced to a variety of characters and eccentric personas he performed. These videos often feature the artist lip-synching to popular songs related to the place he visits. He raises concerns about who we are and how we live out our true selves in this world. By using himself as the main characters, he was able to register the limitlessness of human diversity and portray numerous stories and lives.

JUAN PABLO ECHEVERRI (1978-2022, COL) was a visual artist focused on stereotypes and self-image. Working in photography and video, his extensive body of work developed from daily self-portraits begun as a teenager into an exploration of how 'other people' construct themselves and are constructed in the sight of others. Echeverri was interested in how stereotypes coalesce around uniquely individual people, continually experimenting with his own appearance to reject a flattened, essentialist reading of identity. His work was exhibited at *The Photographer's Gallery in London (2008)*, *The Havana Biennial in Cuba (2009)*, and *Galeria 12:00 in Bogotá (2012)*.

ALMAGUL MENLIBAYEVA

[11] *The Eternal Bride* 2002

The Eternal Bride is a 10-minute film exploring the artist's journey beyond traditional gender roles. Inspired by a request to help sell a wedding dress of a friend, the artist finds herself grappling with the dress' weighty presence in her small room for almost a year. With each passing day, the dress' questions become louder, until one February day, the artist decides to wear the dress and take to the streets to answer them. Through the performance, the artist challenges the gender constraints that have impacted her family and society, dedicating it to her mother and others who have faced similar struggles. *The Eternal Bride* is a powerful call to break free from the limitations and stereotypes that hold us back.

ALMAGUL MENLIBAYEVA (°1969, KZ) is an artist who works mostly in multi-channel video, photography and mixed media installation. Her work addresses issues such as critical explorations of Soviet modernity; social, economic; and political transformations in post-Soviet Central Asia; decolonial reimagining of gender, environmental degradation, and Eurasian nomadic and indigenous cosmologies and mythologies. She has been exhibited at the *Sydney Biennale, Australia*; the *Venice Biennale*; the *Moscow Biennale, Russia*, among many others.

FELIPE ARTURO

[12] *Fibra Acelerada — Iraca Diablos Espejos* 2023

For this exhibition, Felipe Arturo produced a new sculpture made of dyed iraca leaves and an electric ceiling fan. As a strong versatile material, iraca palm leaves have traditionally been used in architecture, everyday utensils and ritual objects in Colombia. During colonial times, however, the palm leaves were re-appropriated for the production of European objects such as European-style hats, fans and mats as opposed to its initial use in Colombia. In collaboration with local artisan communities for the dyes and material, Arturo connects back to the rituals and domestic objects made with plant fibers. As a result, a kinetic sculpture is created combining the everyday with ritualistic elements, which dances in remembrance of the many cultures present in Latin America. As if a body dancing in a ritual, Arturo's work further expands the notion of the body beyond the human within the exhibition while revealing the complexities of colonial legacies.

FELIPE ARTURO (°1978, COL) is an architect and artist. His work is a fusion of urbanism, architecture, and art, examined through a lens of politics, history, geography, and economy. Through the mediums of sculpture, installation, photography, and video, he reflects on the constant tension between modern and traditional forms, and offers perspective on the complex relationship to colonial legacies. He exhibited at the MCAA in Marrakech (2020), La Biennale de Lyon (2019), or the Museum of Contemporary Art in Detroit (2015) and has recently published *Agua del Pacífico* (2021).

EVELYN TAOCHENG WANG

[13]	<i>Morning Scene</i>	2021
[14]	<i>Don't take painkiller</i>	2018
[16]	<i>I didn't want to take off my cloth for practicing massage skill</i>	2016

In her drawings and paintings, Evelyn Taocheng Wang combines a straightforward and at times confrontational tone with emotional, poetic and often autobiographical undercurrents. By reinterpreting the traditional Chinese painting techniques, she addresses ostensible fixed notions of identity, ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the past years, Wang's main interest has been in "image presentation", researching different (art) histories of the body from a personal perspective. Her work emerges from an interest in what constitutes identity and how one's own body is culturally relative to –and intertwined with– autobiographical structures. Autobiographical experiences –such as having worked in a massage parlour in order to finance her art education in the Netherlands– are mixed with fictional fabrications, appropriating texts from novels and thus weaving cultures together.

EVELYN TAOCHENG WANG's (°1981, CH) work spans various media, including painting, calligraphy, installation, video, fashion design and performance. Her work addresses as a medium for multiple themes: traditional Chinese art, modern and contemporary art, colonial history, queer theory, femininity and feminism. Through overlay and hybridization, the artist arrives at a vocabulary that integrates and interconnects these seemingly autonomous notions. She was artist-in-residence at De Ateliers, Amsterdam. Her work is in different collections such as Centre Pompidou, Paris; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and has broadly been exhibited in international galleries and institutions.

HWAYEON NAM

[15]	<i>Archive: The Night of Chilseok</i>	2020
[17]	<i>Ehera Noara</i>	2020

Hwayeon Nam presents an ongoing long-term research project on the dancer Seung-hee Choi (1911-1969). Choi was a pioneer of modern Korean dance whose life was marked by the Japanese colonisation of Korea and the Korean War. Despite the significance of Choi in the history of Korea, only fragmented reproductions have been made available on Choi's legacy. Finding personal resonances with Choi's life and work, Nam pre-

sents an alternative archive of Choi by "creating layers in the archive" rather than merely reproducing it. In this project, Nam reorganises the fragmented archive into a socio-historical choreography of the matter of women's bodies, dance, history and the present through the figure of Choi.

Titled after an original performance by Choi in 1931, *Ehera Noara* is a video footage of a performance choreographed by Nam as a reinterpretation of the dance. *Ehera Noara* is considered the first achievement of combining the strategies of traditional and modern Korean dance by Choi.

The second part of the project is *The Night of Chilseok* which is the title of a dance originally performed by Choi in 1941 –a controversial piece as it was danced for the Japanese army. In *The Night of Chilseok*, Nam presents a fictional approach to the performance in the format of a video based on a Japanese writer's text on Choi's performance.

HWAYEON NAM's (°1979, KOR) practice employs an artistic language that investigates the movement and phenomenon of objects operating in sync with social systems, as well as the nature of time. She demonstrates her archival epistemology through exploration of cultural diasporic products such as song and dance; colonial acquisitions and stories of imperialistic treasure collecting. Hwayeon Nam represented Korea at the 58th Venice Biennale's Korean Pavilion with siren eun young jung and Jane Jin Kaisen in 2019. She has participated in group exhibitions *Reenacting History* (National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, 2017), *wellknown unknown* (Kukje Gallery, 2016), *All the World's Future* (56th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, 2015), and *Nouvelle Vague— Memorial Park* (Palais de Tokyo, 2013).

JULIETH MORALES

[18]	<i>La Señorita</i>	2019
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As part of the Misak community in Colombia, artist Julieth Morales brings out the indigenous tradition stored within her body in *La Señorita*. This series of prints on textile shows fragments of the artist performing the Mojiganga dance, conventionally only reserved for men. The dance scenes, printed on traditional Misak female shawls, reveal Julieth as the character that transits between the traditions of her indigenous community and a contemporary female artist. *La Señorita* represents the artist as the result of the processes of colonization and synthesis of two cultures.

JULIETH MORALES (°1992, Popayán, COL) is an artist who draws on her experience of the intersection of gender and ethnicity as a Misak indigenous woman. She investigates notions of identity and self-knowledge through performance, video, photography, painting and drawing. Morales also reformulates traditional rites of her community in a critical way, with the body as a denouncing medium, and seeks to reclaim her own existence as an indigenous woman in challenging and rethinking tradition. Morales has been exhibited at *Espacio el Dorado in Bogotá* (2019) or *Museo La Tertulia in Cali* (2019).

XIYADIE

[19]	<i>Flying</i>	1998
[20]	<i>Flying</i>	2016
[21]	<i>Flying</i>	1990

The unique artistic language of Xiyadie's work merges traditional iconography and folklore with personal narratives of transformation. With these paper cuts, the artist delves into homoerotic themes and queer desire. This way, Xiyadie celebrates the traditional art form while also undermining it with joyful and idiosyncratic affirmations. This echoes the artist's name itself: Xiyadie means "Siberian Butterfly". As a butterfly who survives in the toughest circumstances, he maintains his quest of liberation in a setting where queer people lack political representation or agency.

XIYADIE (°1963, CH) is a self-taught traditional Chinese papercut artist. He primarily works with Chinese rice paper, newspaper and silk. Xiyadie (or "Siberian Butterfly") subverts the historical form of papercutting, which originated in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 CE), by depicting scenes of queer eroticism, where human beings are fused with nature and gay virility combined with the fertility of gardens and animal life. He first exhibited at the Beijing LGBT Center (2010), and more recently in Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam (2015) 5, Taipei MOCA (2017), and The Drawing Center (2023).

TAREK LAKHRISSE

[22]	<i>Spiraling</i>	2021
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Created as a seductive poem on power relations, *Spiraling* is a video work by Tarek Lakhrissi inspired by Félix González-Torres's "*Untitled*" (*Go-Go Dancing Platform*) from 1991. But where the latter features the hyper-masculine body and movements of muscled club dancers, Lakhrissi intentionally invites us to observe a more ambiguous body. Performed and shot in Haus der Kunst, *Spiraling* juxtaposes the authoritarian architecture of the building with the powerful metaphor of the spiral. The sensuous and almost hypnotic movements of dancer Mila Furie, a queer rights activist and night performer, meet with Lakhrissi's voice poetically reciting a coming-of-age story.

TAREK LAKHRISSE (°1993, FR) is an artist and poet with a background in literature who explores sociopolitical narratives and speculative situations of transformation and magic through text, film, installation, and performance. Lakhrissi has been exhibited internationally at galleries and institutions including Palais de Tokyo (Paris), 22nd Biennale of Sydney (Sydney), WIELS (Brussels), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Haus der Kunst (Munich), HKW (Berlin), ICA (Londres). His works are part of different private and public collections like Defares, Sandretto Foundation and CNAP.

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