

***Subversive Threads* – A festival of textile-based art**

With works by Goldendean, Nora Hansen, LRRH_ (by FRZTNE, Björn Schülke), Ernest Cedi Kankam, Emmanuel Ndefo, Bubu Ogisi, Charlotte Pohle, Hugo Holger Schneider

Woven by Miriam Bettin (curator), Katharina Fink (director Artist Residency Schloss Balmoral), Elmar Hermann (Neuer Kunstverein Mittelrhein)

Exhibition: June 22 – extended until September 7, 2024

Opening: June 21, 2024, 6 pm

Neuer Kunstverein Mittelrhein, Rasselsteingelände, Neuwied

Open by appointment: info@nkvm.de

Venues:

Neuer Kunstverein Mittelrhein, Neuwied
Artist Residency Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems
Arp Museum Rolandseck, Remagen

The festival interweaves several event formats at three exhibition venues. With a focus on the queer-feminist history(ies) of textiles, the festival presents contemporary artistic strategies of textile-based art and their subversive potential.

Generously supported by

ifa – Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

Ministerium für Familie, Frauen, Kultur und Integration Rheinland-Pfalz

Exhibition text:

Weaving, sewing, stitching, knitting, knotting, quilting, felting, braiding, looping, crocheting, dyeing – textile-based art comes in manifold facets. Since its emergence with the Arts and Crafts movement, pioneers of abstraction like Sophie Taeuber-Arp and Sonia Delaunay, and its peak in the feminist art of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, especially through groundbreaking artists like Faith Ringgold, Anni Albers, Miriam Shapiro, and Rosemary Mayer, the interest and visibility of textiles in contemporary art has increased again. Whereas the historic discourse was dominated by justification, de-valuation (ornament as a crime, Adolf Loos), and division within binary systems (art and craft, male and female), today there is the chance to revisit the medium and its qualities from different perspectives. The idea that textile craft is a female sphere is a concept that originates mainly from the global North. In West Africa, weaving, dyeing or sewing is often a male-dominated field. In ancient spirituality, gender is an entirely fluid perception.

“The art of embroidery has been the means of educating women into the feminine ideal, and of proving that they have attained it, but it has also provided a weapon of resistance to the constraints of femininity”, describes Rozsika Parker gendered labor and its subversion in *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London / New York / Dublin 2010, first published in 1984). In 2021, Joseph McBrinn published *Queering the Subversive*

Stitch – his update or extension of Parker’s groundbreaking writing. He argues that the social construction of masculinity only really exists in relation to femininity: “If men who took up needlework have often been seen as queer by queering (disrupting the normative readings of) needlework it is possible to reveal just how such cultural practices have been implicated in the making of the masculine (through exclusion, effacement and elision) as much as the feminine (through emphasis, enforcement and inculcation).”

In the sense of a cross-over medium, textile has the ability to "overcome social and visual boundaries" (Virginia Gardner Troy, *The Modernist Textile: Europe and America, 1890-1940*, London 2006.) and rigid structures. With its immediate presence in everyday life, inevitably linked to the body – as protection, as second skin, as identification, as transformation, as decoration – textile is as fluid not only in its materiality but also its quality. Textile hugs the body, it is soft, flexible, but still provides support. It carries memories of places, people, smells, it creates comfort and spaces for vulnerability and healing. Working with textiles contains cultural knowledge and builds communities. Layer over layer, thread by thread, textile has non-linear, associative stories to tell.

The exhibition and residency program *Subversive Threads* interweaves several event formats at three exhibition venues. With a focus on the queer-feminist history(ies) of textiles, the festival presents contemporary artistic strategies of textile-based art and their subversive potential.

Text: Miriam Bettin

Program:

21.6.24, 6pm

Opening

Neuer Kunstverein Mittelrhein, Rasselsteingelände, Neuwied

29.6.24

from 1pm

Balmoral Lab: Immersion

Artist Residency Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems

from 8pm

The Opulence of Subversive Threads. A ballroom immersion with Adelle Nqeto, Trashure Marmorsaal, Bad Ems

2.7.24, 6pm

Lecture Conversation: Theo Eshetu

Kunsthochschule Mainz

9.7.24, 5pm

Artist talk: Emalohi Iruobe and Yassine Balbzioui moderated by Miriam Bettin, Katharina Fink and Julia Wallner

Arp Museum Rolandseck

12.7.24, 7pm
Opening & Talk
Yassine Balbzioui Balmoral
Artist Residency Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems

14.7.24, 2-7pm
Yay! Kids Party @ Balmoral
Come play, create, dress up, be With kids-disco-DJ eep (Nürnberg). Includes drinks for
aunties & others

List of works:

1

Goldendean

***Sisyphus*, 2024**

Video, sound, 10:00 min

In collaboration with Charlotte Pohle and Alix Brodeur

***Soft Vxnxs*, 2021**

Inflatable gold sculpture with air blower

2

Nora Hansen

***The Pleats of Matter and the Folds in the Soul*, 2024**

Digital Print auf U-circular Mesh

The Pleats of Matter and the Folds in the Soul (The Veil), 2024

The Pleats of Matter and the Folds in the Soul (Divination (Frame I)), 2024

The Pleats of Matter and the Folds in the Soul (Divination (Frame II)), 2024

The Pleats of Matter, and the Folds in the Soul (The Trouser), 2024

3

Emmanuel Ndefo

***Women's gate*, 2022**

Video, sound, 02:45 min

Concept: Emmanuel Ndefo

Filmed: Malik Afegbua

Edited by: Malik Afegbu and Emmanuel Ndefo

Dancers: Stanley Chukwuemeka and Godwin Iflex

Courtesy: Kofar mata dye pits association, Kano, Nigeria

4

Charlotte Pohle

Auslegungssache, 2021

Ceramics

5

Hugo Holger Schneider

SPEICHER = BÜHNE = DACHBODEN, 2024

3 channel video installation with sound

Video works:

WOKE IN BLUE, 2023, Landscape format, HD, Sound, 14:47 min im Loop

Performances: VORTEX Sagi Amir Gros and FRZNTÉ

Music: Nicolas De Zorzi, Georg Friedrich Händel, Born In Flamez

Art work: HIMMELBLAU Thomas Lohr

Costume: starstyling

Camera and editing: Hugo Holger Schneider

DEVENIR FEUILLAGE, 2023, Vertical sound, HD, Sound, 1:55 min, Loop

Art works:

Arda Asena GRIEF HAS BEEN FLOODING OUR SOULS, 2023

Amelie Bernard HUMAN HOUSE, 2023

Ernest Cedi Kankam THIS COMFORT, 2023

SCHWEISS, 2023

JETZT, 2023

Anouk Koch SELL THE KIDS FOR FOOD, 2023

Amalia Laurent LA FENÊTRE D'UN MUR, 2023

Joachim Perez OF BEEING SCULPTED I – V, 2023

STIMMUNGEN UND UMWÄLZUNGEN, 2023

ÜBER DIE KINDHEIT SPRECHEN, 2023

WEIT WEG VON DER WELT, 2023

Sound Design: Aniello Verolla

In collaboration with: POUISH Paris

Curated by: Hugo Holger Schneider für LRRH_

Camera and editing: Hugo Holger Schneider

SAY HELLO / WAVE GOODBYE, 2024, Landscape format, HD, Sound, 72:04 min, Loop

Performances:

Hugo Holger Schneider

LES ENFANTS MONTRENT LA FLEUR A LEUR PAPA

Sagí Amir Gros

YOUR SILENCE IS LOUD

Dancer: Viola Rango, Gaizka Morales Richard, Kaho Goto

in cooperation with WDTanztheater, supported by Kulturamt Düsseldorf

Music: Yehudit Ravitz, Nicolas De Zorzi, Olafur Arnalds & Alice Sarah Ott,
Khatia Buniatishvili

Joachim Perez
AN ELEGY OR ECCENTRICITY

Sound design by Antoine Mermet

Karisma Ekeh & Chimaobi Alaike
REDEFINE MY OWN DESIGN

Frznte
A POLE DANCE

Music: Apex Anima

Art works: HUMAIN HOUSE, 2023, Amelie Bernard
SELL THE KIDS FOR FOOD, 2023, Anouk Koch

Organized by:
Hugo Holger Schneider für LRRH_

Camera:
Nikolai Meierjohann, Hugo Holger Schneider

Editing:
Hugo Holger Schneider

6
LRRH_ by FRZNTÉ
A pole dancer, 2023
Engraved silver pole
Courtesy: the artist and LRRH_

7
LRRH_ by Björn Schülke
Solar Mesh Machine # 1 – 3, 2021
Brass, metal, mirror, engine, solar module, electronics, 2K paint
Courtesy: the artist and LRRH_

8
LRRH_ by Ernest Cedi Kankam
SCHWEISS, 2023
FLECKEN, 2024
Vehicle engine oil and paint on collaged textiles
Courtesy: the artist and LRRH_

9
Bubu Ogisi
I am not myself / celestial beings, 2024

Altar 1: Dyed Sisal on recycled plastic and sheet metal „Osano-
buu the Creator, the Supreme energy“ (burgundy) – the transcen-
dent energy rather than an immanent deity

Altar 2: Dyed Barkcloth with raffia stitching „gods of èrínmwìn“

Altar 3: Natural Sisal on recycled plastic and sheet metal „our
ancestors“

All Courtesy: the artists

Artist texts:

As a “Fat Queer White Trans body” in the context of South Africa, **Goldendean** questions who or what is entitled to take up space. In doing so, they address the personal and political of hypervisibility: being visible (as a fat, queer, trans body) and invisible, unimportant at the same time (as a fat, queer, trans body). Their Tenderqueer sculptures “soft-radicals” – are round, soft, flexible and inviting. Our society expects fat and messy bodies to turn up traumatized and out of breath and never cheerful, horny, or beaming with a political speech. *Soft Vxnxs* creates comfort and space for vulnerability.

*The dead rest under the asphalt
Wordless messengers under the asphalt
Under the asphalt with their wisdom
They lie silent under the asphalt
Under the asphalt beyond life
They stare in vain under the asphalt
Under the asphalt*

*Sand in your eyes under the asphalt
They crawl blindly under the asphalt
So deep under the asphalt
There's no customer under the asphalt
The dead hear under the asphalt
Only yourself under the asphalt*

*The handful of years I live
Are too precious for me to forgive
I believe my eyes and take you at your word /
And defend myself before my hand withers
And I'll never be done with the world
As long as I am on the live*

Text: Goldendean

The Pleats of Matter and the Folds in the Soul, 2024, is the second chapter from the series *Subconscious. Subconscious* (2020 -) by **Nora Hansen** is a site-specific and participatory installation only complete with the metamorphosis its visitors undergo. The installation features drawings and objects, fragments echoing legends, tales and myths from the past and the present. The characters, creatures, beings and objects intersect and overlap in a collage-like manner, opening up space for symbolic reproductions, codes and fictions emanating from a subjective contemplation. *The folds of matter and the folds in the soul* explore the secrets that lie in the abundant fabric of the fold. What can we find when peering between the ruffle or loosening the tie? What stories do we find, carry within us or invent about ourselves for others? Is there a memory that always gives strength? Is there one that is surrounded by uncertainty and shame, and why? Is there a memory that is so concise, as if it were pricked into the skin and interlaced with it? And what would it be like if the thread were to slowly unravel...? The visitors are invited to fill the installation with their cognitive volume and memories, to immerse themselves in a process, to empathize with their own conscious and subconscious associations and preconceptions and to challenge them.

Text: Lisa Oord

The video work *Women's gate* by artist and choreographer **Emmanuel Ndefo** is an excerpt of an ongoing research, reflecting on the history and practice of indigo textile dyeing in Kano through various lenses.

The city of Kano is renowned across West and North Africa as a center of export trade in prestigious textiles, and high quality indigo-dyed cloth produced exclusively by men. These male dyers who work at communal dye pits have become part of the backbone which sustains the wealth of this ancient city. Kofar-Mata Dye Pits is one of the oldest in West Africa, located in the heart of Kano city in Nigeria. For over 500 years, the artisans have been able to preserve their age-old tradition of indigo dye, cotton weaving, tailoring and embroidery making. The practice is transmitted through a system of apprenticeship from one generation to another within a network of families who continue to run the business. Kofar-Mata loosely translated as "*women's gate*", is one of the gates of the ancient Kano kingdom, believed to have been constructed during the reign of Emir Muhammadu Rumfa (1443-1449). Conflicting narratives exist about how the gate came to acquire this name, all of which points to the historical presence of women and their control of commercial activities within the vicinity of today's Kofar-Mata. Yet given this historical and anecdotal evidence, not a single woman can be seen working the dye pits in Kofar-mata today.

In her essay titled *WOMEN: ROYALTY, AND INDIGO DYEING IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, CIRCA 1500-1807*, Heidi J. Nast presents preliminary historical and geographical evidence from sites discovered in and near the ancient city state of Kano in northern Nigeria, stating that as early as 1500 royal and non-royal women in Kano held exclusive rights over the production of indigo dyed cloth; due to the indigo blues's association with human and earthly fertility in pre-islamic Hausa traditions. Further research also points to the fact that the textile dyeing skills, technology and enterprises run by women in Kano, would later be appropriated by men in the 1800s. Following the increased importance and participation of Kano in the sub Saharan trade, as well as the gendered reforms enacted across Hausaland as a result of the

Fulani Islamic Jihad in the 1800, which expelled women from their pre-Islamic political leadership roles and restricted their participation in commercial work.

Text: Emmanuel Ndefo

In her artistic work, **Charlotte Pohle** locates her own story in a triangular relationship between public triangular relationship of publicity, intimacy and privacy, which she examines for its iconographic content. She dissects the results in order to understand and penetrate them in order to reassemble them. Fragments and breaks remain, they generate space for humor, melancholy and self-assertion. The focus on oneself is linked to the hope that this will create communicative added value, Pohle often perceives the general as a game of hide-and-seek or a detour, which she repeatedly decides against. This act of de-privatization is her access to the archetypes of the collective unconscious according to C.G. Jung. In this way, the artist attempts to connect her own culture of memory with the narratives of the viewer.

Text: Charlotte Pohle

SPEICHER = BÜHNE = DACHBODEN is a 3-channel video work by **Hugo Holger Schneider**. The three monitors show video works documenting various events that have all taken place in the ATTIC of the LRRH_ AERIAL in Düsseldorf and which were partly curated and organized, filmed and edited by Schneider. Schneider calls them artificial documentations.

Inspired by the attic as an event space, in which Schneider filmed the performances VORTEX by Sagi Amir Gros and FRZNTÉ in 2023, two further events were subsequently created. In November 2023, the group exhibition DEVENIR FEUILLAGE, in cooperation with POUISH Paris and curated by Schneider for LRRH_, and in April 2024 SAY HELLO / WAVE GOODBYE, a performance program organized by Schneider for LRRH_.

SPEICHER = BÜHNE = DACHBODEN is part of the exhibition SUBVERSIVE THREADS at the NKVM Neuer Kunstverein Mittelrhein in Neuwied, curated by Miriam Bettin, and will also be shown there in an attic. Expanded by a dance pole by LRRH_ & FRZNTÉ and a fog machine, the work in Neuwied becomes a site-specific video installation.

Text: Hugo Holger Schneider

The **LRRH_ ART EDITION BY** are limited editions of contemporary art by renowned and promising international artists alike. Each of the predominantly textile works is under careful curatorship and intentionally represents the diversity of modern artistic expression. The ART EDITION BY project encourages collaborating artists to explore their creative process in new and innovative ways through the medium of textile.

High-quality and unusual materials, modern techniques of textile processing, as well as traditional and progressive methods of refined hand work are skillfully applied to materialize works of textile art. When presented as framed tapestry or as sculpture to be worn or staged, the serial works become unique embodiments of contemporary fine art.

„The use of textiles to create interactions and relationships between people and a space as a form of relational art is where I find myself (...)" . The dominance of weeds, dust, decay, and rust on things and in spaces also motivate **Ernest Cedi Kankam** to contrast how various human activities contaminate the environment. His work's base is a virtual collage that will be developed with layered techniques such as printing, painting, quilting, and embroidery.

Ernest Cedi Kankam addresses the complexity of urban spaces and their connection to social structures as well as cultural and traditional awareness. Kankam examines how the built environment not only creates physical structures, but also places of encounter and exchange of cultural identities. Kankam's works thus reflect the architecture and dynamics of modern living spaces. They thematise the interactions and connections between people within these areas and show how social relationships and communities are influenced by spatial conditions. The artworks invite us to reflect on the individual and collective perception of shared spaces and to question the extent to which these experiences shape people's identities. With a particular emphasis on colour and texture, Kankam creates compositions that capture the visual and tactile quality of urban landscapes. His works are characterised by vibrant colours, complex textures and dynamic forms. In doing so, Kankam blurs the boundaries between painting, sculpture and installation to open up new perspectives on familiar scenes and the everyday.

Text: LRRH_ and Galerie Konstanze Wolter

Björn Schülke pursues a creative style that is equally influenced by modern abstraction and instruments of scientific measurement. Many of his larger kinetic sculptures combine elements of surveillance technologies, robotics, interactive video and sound. Precision plays an important role in Schülke's practice as a sculptor, especially in terms of how aesthetics and engineering are handled. Often he is working with carbon fiber, aluminum, 2K-paint, cameras, screens, motors, solar cells, motion sensors. The visual language he use is part futuristic commercial product, part clinical research equipment and also part curiosity cabinet. Fragile constructions, organic form and technology are all part of the vocabulary in his aesthetic. Clean objects that reference the cold precision of industrial machines and science fiction. However Schülke like contrasting this with a warmth and gesture of a comic, fun or even embarrassing human relationship to form. They are in a world of inventions that function in an unexpected way. Evoking the tools of modern observation and precision, his work suggests artificial intelligence as well as absurdity. Schuelke's active sculptures question the way in which we interact with modern technology.

Text: LRRH_

Artist **Bubu Ogisi** presents pieces from 2 previous bodies of work *I am not myself and celestial beings*, exploring the spirituality of masquerading. Drawing on the ritual use of adornments in various sacred African masquerading institutions, including the Nwantantay of Burkina Faso, the Bedu of Ivory Coast and the Ogbodo Enyi of Nigeria, Ogisi's works respond to complex symbolism represented by these practices.

With a focus on using and reusing natural and non-natural materials, including agave sisalana, barkcloth, raffia, sheet metal and plastic, the exhibition explores mask making as a decolonial process of healing disorder through experimentation with traditional and innovative techniques.

Ogisi invites you into an imagined 'sacred grove', a secret space where objects used in masquerading are stored outside of their use in rituals. The family of objects used in these ceremonies offers the possibility of spiritual transfiguration of the body and soul. The wearer, temporarily released from their own sense of 'self', is free to be guided by supernatural forces.

Masquerading is presented as a tool for connecting with a mythic tradition that challenges present ideas of the self and our relationship to our bodies, environment and spiritual world.

These mediums offer us not only a respite from present day sensory bombardments, but also a space to examine who we are. These shrine objects symbolize the worshipper's desire for social mobility.

Every object or icon has a specific meaning and contributes to the success of the entire process. In every pattern in these objects, a message is conveyed. To understand the craft process, one must translate the artist's messages in terms of physical and cultural environment. Reverence from the past, combined with a constant need to communicate with the spirit world through tangible objects inspires every part of this work.

We serve 3 altars, God - the supreme energy, Earth and Ancestors. They say we come in through from the spirit world (àgbòn) from God, and we come to Earth(èrínmwìn), the Earth is sacred you can talk to God through Earth, earth is thus the mirror, through it all prayers reach the gods. The altar also instructs. It teaches servitors how to capture effectiveness, how to recognize and call upon ancestors, how to visualize imperatives, how to effect a certain kind of mystic healing, how to master destiny, all in all, it challenges the viewer in a fundamental way.

Text: Bubu Ogisi