

26 MAY - 31 JULY 2022

ROMANTIC BULLETS POSITION EFFECTIVELY

Alex Reynolds

The work of Alex Reynolds (Bilbao, 1978) explores our modes of relationship and affection through multiple registers and formats, focusing on moving image and performance, but also working with installation, text or photography. Reynolds' practice, deeply affective while drawing on the legacy of experimental and conceptual cinema, generates reflections on intimacy, the gaze and communication, inviting the audience to actively question their role as spectators.

Alex Reynolds studied Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (London) and Chelsea College of Art and Design (London). She was awarded grants by Akademie Schloss Solitude (2013), Fundación Botín (2016) and Fundación "la Caixa" (2020). She has been nominated for the ACCA Awards (2021) and received the Loop / Ars Santa Monica / XAV Videocreation Award (2021). She is currently a visiting professor at KASK Ghent and a member of the research group Social Acoustics/Communities in Movement.

Cristina Spinelli

Cristina Spinelli (Madrid, 1993) lives and works in Madrid. Her pieces act as reminiscences but also as notes; the conjugation of diverse materials investigates the representational power of these, in the phantasmagoria.

Her work has recently been shown at Centro de Arte 2 de Mayo, Madrid; Conde Duque, Madrid; Sala de Arte Joven, Madrid; Can Felipa Arts Visuals, Barcelona; Salón, Madrid; ETOPIA Centro de Arte y Tecnología, Zaragoza; Tabacalera Promoción del Arte, Madrid; Injuve, Sala Amadís, Madrid; Archipiélago, Antigua Embajada Británica, Madrid; Las Cigarreras. Cultura Contemporánea, Alicante; Medialab-prado, Madrid.

Nora Aurrekoetxea

Graduated in Fine Arts at the University of the Basque Country in 2013. She developed her practice together with artist Laura Ruiz for 5 years (2012-2017), both working as a tandem. Her work was based on a biographical need to respond to a historical moment related to the Basque political context and its collective imaginary. During that period of time she founded and directed, together with two other artists OKELA (2014-2017), an artist run space located in Bilbao dedicated to contemporary art that proposes a formal and discursive dialogue between artists of different generations from the Basque Country. This project was and continues to be funded by the Basque Government, the Provincial Council of Bizkaia and the City Council of Bilbao.

In 2017, she received the Botín Foundation Scholarship with which she moved to London (2017) to pursue a Master's degree in Sculpture at the Royal College of Art (2017-2019). She has received numerous grants and awards and has carried out different residencies, national and international and will soon carry out one in Paradise Air (Tokyo, 2022). Her work is part of the permanent collection of the DKV Foundation, CA2M Museum, Botín Foundation and MonteMadrid Foundation.

Ran Zhang

Born in Tianjin, China, she lives in Rotterdam and Berlin. Ran Zhang graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. She attended the artist residency program at Rijksakademie van beeldende kunsten in Amsterdam from 2011 to 2013. She received the Danfoss Art Award gold and bronze prize in 2008; Amsterdam Fonds voor de Kunst Ontwikkelbudget and Mondriaan Fonds Werkbijdrage Jong Talent in 2014. Her work has been part of the permanent collection at the Hexiangning Museum since 2015 and in the Artothek Collection in N.B.K. since 2020. Some of Zhang's recent exhibitions include 'Trait Resolution' at L'ahah in Paris and 'Enantiomers and Traces' at Galerie Plan B in Berlin in 2020.

Ran Zhang
Cristina Spinelli
Alex Reynolds
Nora Aurrekoetxea

Curated by

Sonia Fernández Pan

The person who worked at the Civil Registry chose my name. I heard this during my childhood and I never tried to confirm it. It is more than probably that this was not so, that this is an invented memory, like so many others. But I like to think that it was that way, that the romanticism and hesitation of naming a life that is about to begin was replaced by the pragmatic impulse of having to fill out a form to move on to the next one, almost like an analogical prediction the algorithms make for us. I also like to think that it is because of this memory of uncertain authenticity that I never own the names of my projects. They are borrowings of ideas and words that are elsewhere. At best, they come from unexpected finds that we recognize as important and significant. This situation, called serendipity, often makes us find what we were looking for without knowing it. It also tells us that the path lies in detours and that decisions are never in a straight line.

One of the effects of serendipity is that it turns us into involuntary semioticians on the hunt for signs. It also transforms reality into a text full of hidden meanings and ambiguous directions. This is something that often happens to people that are in love. For them the whole of reality is a system of lurking signs referring again and again to their love story. As I write this I realize that *Romantic Bullets Position Effectively* seems to refer to this situation that Roland Barthes describes in a book I have not read: romantic bullets that position themselves effectively. But the intention of this unpremeditated title was different: allowing an algorithm to name an exhibition. To leave the author's position in the hands of a machine. But to write is to make sense of things that escape and resist to sense, to make reality occupy a form. Thinking is also the danger of making a straight line out of detours and twists. That is why it is so difficult to write in the form of a braid or a labyrinth, to see which makes us see, to make a round trip without transforming its own origin.

My love for reading the dictionary as if it were just another book made me quickly realize that words had several uses, literal and symbolic. Jumping between definitions and examples made me perceive and understand how ideology infiltrates the meaning of words, twisting their presumed impartiality. Everything that has to do with deviation, with twisting and torsion, with involuntary turns suggest something negative. When things get twisted it is because they are not going well; when things are not going well is because they get twisted. When we complicate them unnecessarily, but we could avoid it, we are making the matter worse. The moral value of the straight lines is greater than that of the curve. Straight routes prevail over bifurcations, detours, dead ends, interruptions, nonsense journeys. The main thing does not want to be disturbed by the secondary. The body of language concentrates to the letter. Even what was born to be rebellious or disobedient ends up becoming discipline. The unreasonable is welcome, as long as it is reasonable.

The tacit norm is that most exhibitions have a concept, something that holds them in language: a word, a term, a notion, a story that tells the story of the babbling process. I recognize that in *Romantic Bullets Position Effectively*, when it was still a desire that did not have a name, the notion of "twist" appeared before the image that would end up relieving this word. The memory of one of my favorite childhood ice creams was part of the first conversations with each of the artists to fill a space that is normally given over the discourse. It is a twisted ice cream, with strong colors that swirl at the same time with the promise of getting to mix and disappear in the mouth. I especially like that this image has flavors and temperature changes, properties of reality that are not easy to invite and include in an exhibition and yet exist in their processes and in their works. I also like that it is an image with (somewhat) bad taste, that deviates from the seriousness and distinction of the theories. Trying to make a discourse out of it is a forced move, a deformation disagrees with the spontaneity of the image itself. I still do not know why this image appeared to help me express a desire that has moved like a curved direction. And I think maybe it is not so important to know so, because it is still active, changing direction and meaning, making any position as effective as it is insecure.

Romantic Bullets Position Effectively is an exhibition that emerges from the confluence of desire and intuition. A succession of elastic gestures imprecisely connect one twist to another from the works and artists that are part of the exhibition. The notion of "twist" appeared early in the process, remaining present and acquiring body over time by paying attention to an anecdotal image: the memory of a twisted ice cream that still exists but has disappeared. As a fleeting object, this ice cream brings forth a material torsion that melts but cannot be satisfactorily untangled. This material paradox includes the twisted within the twist, enveloping a concept with a transitory image.

Thanks to a methodology based on connections and sensitive findings *Romantic Bullets Position Effectively* begins to come to life with Ran Zhang's *Resolution of Traits 3*, where the artist builds fictitious objects around a protein structure to show a molecular reality that cannot be seen but needs a visual experience to be understood. Ran is interested in the motor proteins that are responsible for converting chemical energy into mechanical work within many organisms, allowing us not only to move, but also to see. From this work I invite Cristina Spinelli with her piece *Untitled*, which proposes a material journey back and forth through the corn plant. It is detached from its "original" body to become bioplastic and acquire again aesthetic qualities and vegetal patterns. The continuous serialization and reproducibility, characteristic of industrial processes, are also part of what we call nature, making use of the planet as a great laboratory of "the artificial". *Palais*, by Alex Reynolds, unfolds the project towards the endless and alienating material dimension of bureaucracy. Through a series of clandestine forays into the enormous and disturbing *Palais de Justice* in Brussels, Alex documents in first person the intricacies, the ruins, the elevators, corridors and different floors of a building as labyrinthine as it is spectral. It both contains and conceals the ordinary reality of bureaucracy within the imposing symbolic and effective power of institutional architecture. Nora Aurrekoetxea's *Besoa*, *Klit*, *Lepokoa* and *Trentza* come together in *Romantic Bullets Position Effectively* to stop without concluding an intuitive drift of gestures and twists connected through the presence and constituent materiality of the works. Nora's four braided pieces produce stable forms for the intimacy of gestures that arise from the habit of the provisional and perishable. Creating a system of relationships that also includes the continuous exchanges between the natural and the artificial — both in their form and material qualities — *Besoa*, *Klit*, *Lepokoa* and *Trentza* return to the initial impulse of this intuitive curatorial process of gestures and indirect organic links that suggests a circular structure for other possible directions.

Sonia Fernández Pan

(in)dependent curator, writer, speaker and podcast editor.

*Sonia Fernández Pan is an (in)dependent curator and writer. The desire and impulse to "think with" has made conversation one of her main research methodologies. She is particularly interested in the possibility of an encounter that allows to be in relation, whatever its temporality. The exchange of experiences, sensations and ideas, as well as the importance of memory and oral stories, are a fundamental part of her activity as a host and editor of podcasts. She understands artistic projects as propositions and oscillations of a much larger conversation, enabling moments of shared life where the friendly impulse can also be part of the working methodology. Guided by intuition and the visceral dimension of thought, she has been trying for years to relate to artistic practices, writing and theory through synesthesia, intermediaries and shared gestures. Her most recent projects include *Mirror becomes a razor when it's broken* (CentroCentro, Madrid), *Les escenes. 25 years later* (La Capella, Barcelona), *You Got To Get In To Get Out* (La Casa Encendida, Madrid), *Corona Under the Ocean* (TBA21 Academy & Institut Kunst), *Feminism Under Corona*, *The Tale and The Tongue* (Institut Kunst, Basel), *Feminisms in the Caribbean* (Institut Kunst & Caribbean Art Initiative) and *Aliens are temporary* (Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin). She writes erratically but continuously thanks to other people.*