

# Contemporary Identities

International Art Magazine



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## EDITORS' NOTE

ContemporaryIdentities is an independent quarterly international online art magazine covering contemporary art worldwide. We

provide the opportunity to learn about the artists and their work. We have spent the past few months bringing together contemporary artists and art critics from around the world to be featured in our publication. For our first issue, we present pieces from ten artists and five art critics, writers, and scholars. In addition, we also had the chance to interview Tor Seidel regarding his recent show in Maraya Art Center in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates (see interview section on ContemporaryIdentities website).

These are just a few of the many insights you can gain by reading about the artists and their artwork in this issue.

The magazine offers a platform to meet these artists, even if you can't do so in person. We hope you enjoy getting to know these talented creators who add beauty—in all its forms—to our world.

Sara Berti & Elham Shafaei

## CONTRIBUTORS

### Art Critics:

Izmer Bin Ahmad

Johan Othman

Max Ryynänen

Anna Seaman

Zoltán Somhegyi

### Editors:

Sara Berti

Elham Shafaei

### Front Cover Photo:

Tor Seidel

(Sulphur & Tar, 2018

10 soap ingots on white soap plate, 50x50x15cm)

### Media Consultant:

Emad Pournasiri

## ARTISTS

3. Maria Agureeva

By: Max Ryynänen

7. Sebastian Bieniek

By: Johan Othman

11. Samira Eskandarfar

By: Anna Seaman

15. Elisa Giardina Papa

By: Max Ryynänen

19. Gary Hallman

By : Johan Othman

23. Matteo Lucca

By: Zoltán Somhegyi

27. Mehrdad Mohebali

By: Izmer Bin Ahmad

33. Stephanie Neville

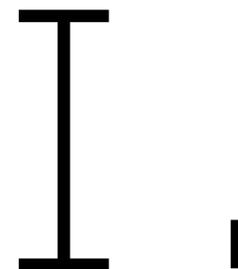
By: Anna Seaman

35. Michael Newton

By: Izmer Bin Ahmad

39. Sinisa Vlajkovic

By: Zoltán Somhegyi



M.

## MARIA AGUREEVA

(Russia, USA)

MAX RYYNÄNEN

The corniest colors, the somatically appealing and a bit disturbing visuals of Maria Agureeva *touch* me. Latex and plastic, unnatural yellow, unnatural blue – like in a state of melting... raising disgust, like any pile of trash does. Here are the visual echoes of cheap sport clothes, life vests and outdated plastic bags, all the contemporary rubbish that I thought I had left behind me. My remains, your remains, our remains. Agureeva analyses it with the cold eye of a surgeon. Her work is intelligent but sensual, bold enough to trust that the reflective audience will get the connection underneath the banality.



The outer covering is always empty, 2017, Latex, Plastic, Mixed media, 168x137x12 cm

A.



Untitled, Self emptiness series, 2016, Concrete, Plastic,  
Mixed media, 152x6x55 cm



Dust, Five channel video, 2018, a still of the video, 56  
min, <https://vimeo.com/259373983>

S.

## SEBASTIAN BIENIEK

(Germany)

JOHAN OTHMAN

Sebastian Bieniek's "Bieniek-Face" series can be seen as playing with the idea of doubling. The image of a face inscribed onto the face performs a doubling that disturbs the distinction between the object being doubled and the double itself. Is the marked face betraying one of its ideal specular can be considered as the realisation of an abstraction that is the drawn face? Or the inverse?



Small-Face-No-1, 2017, Photo

B.



Underface-No-4, 2017, Photo



Underface-No-5, 2017, Photo

S .

## SAMIRA ESKANDARFAR

(Iran)

ANNA SEAMAN

Using a stylised and graphic language, Samira Eskandarfar speaks upon the timeless theme of female identity, as pertinent in Iran as around the world. In her photographic series, “You Make Me Cry”, Eskandarfar chooses protagonists with exaggerated gestures and, in some cases, wearing chador and holding childlike objects. There is an assumed weakness, particularly from the lack of eye contact with the viewer, but what is not evident is also important. Indeed, these are self-portraits and whilst deeply personal, they also emit strength and power.



You are worried about me, 2010, Photo, 60x100 cm

E .



For all seasons, 2010, Photo, 100x70 cm



We three are the same, 2010, Photo, 100x70 cm

E .

## ELISA GIARDINA PAPA

(Italy-USA)

MAX RYYNÄNEN

“Breath...” The new hi-fi in professional sport is rest. I suppose working life will follow, as it becomes increasingly important to not go over the line in the midst of burn-outs and crashing colleagues. Elisa Giardina Papa’s pseudo-app Labor of Sleep tackles the growing efficiency hunt (of sleep) with sensual images and monotonous, manipulative speech. Shallow pink meets long hair, which for the artist echoes the app-world, but which I instinctively see as an echo of how people are gendered in offices. The ‘app’ asks: “Have you been able to change your habits?” Papa’s work is an ironical gourmet version of the human production of the well-being and self-improvement cultures of our age. It catches the disturbing spirit of today’s labor.



Labor of Sleep, 2017, Still frame from video, Courtesy of the Whitney Museum of American Art

G .



Labor of Sleep, 2017, Still frame from video, Courtesy of the Whitney Museum of American Art



Labor of Sleep, 2017, Still frame from video, Courtesy of the Whitney Museum of American Art

G.

## GARY HALLMAN

(USA)

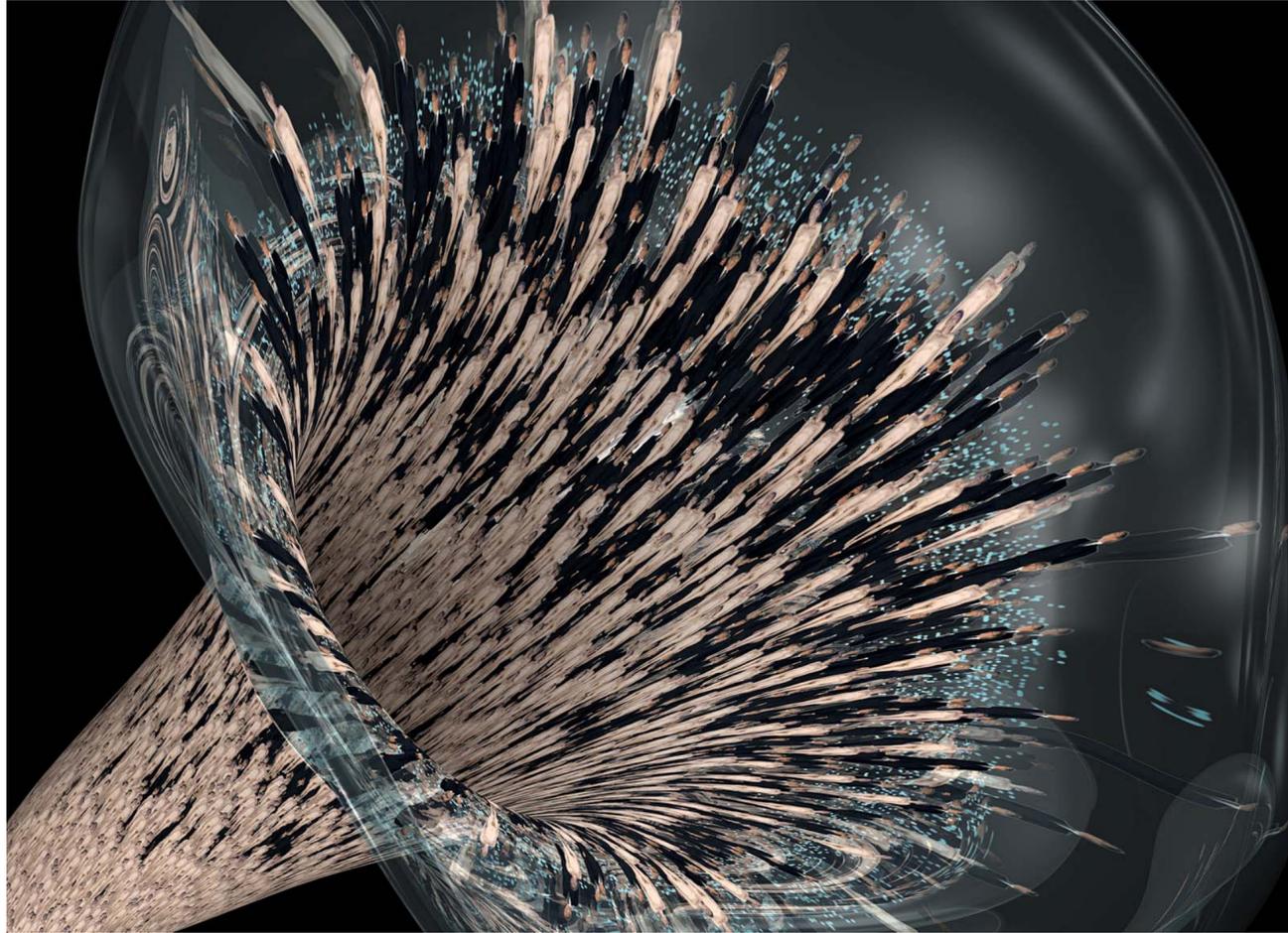
### JOHAN OTHMAN

Gary Hallman's "Premium Glassware: 2003 - 2005" association with premium drinking glasses fifty years earlier can be seen as a movement of a double bind - the movement of tracking back by way of using similar material and the idea of mapping of an image, and simultaneously rupturing from the very same trace - artist's use of the term "contrarian" in relation to the ordinary object/image. Hence, this double movement implies both tracking and dissimulation of the origin. In line with this kind of reading, the artist's self-portraits open the possibility of reading these "premium glasses" as a double movement of producing a self-portrait in "contrarian" to the self - of self-dissociation.



Anticipation, waiting for the next "shoe to drop", 2003,  
Digital-Photo

H.



Flute, The dialectic of vulnerabilities, 2004, Digital-Photo



Camouflage, To the art of blending in, 2004, Digital-Photo

M.

## MATTEO LUCCA

(Italy)

ZOLTÁN SOMHEGYI

**M**atteo Lucca's large-size sculptures are made of bread. When an artist decides to use uncommon materials as medium for his artworks, it obviously influences the ways of interpretation of his creations, in Matteo Lucca's case for example by investigating what special further layers of meaning the use of one of the most commonly used, popular and basic type of food can bring in the reading of the art piece. Bread is nourishing but also fragile, vulnerable and subject of decay, just like the human body that the bread itself nourishes.



Gold wears down, 2017, Group of bread man at the Magazzeno Art Gallery, Ravenna (RA) Italy

L.



Bread-men, 2016, Arte in Natura project, Installation in San Paolo in Alpe, National Park of the Casentinesi Forests, Santa Sofia (FC), Italy



Where the donkey eats becomes gold, 2017, Installation in a farm. Faenza. Italy

M.

## MEHRDAD MOHEBALI

(Iran)

### IZMER BIN AHMAD

There is an unmistakable reference to voyeurism within *We are Playing* and *To Be Playing* where individuals secretly gaze onto another from behind trees or from the edge of the composition towards a group of seniors at play and swinging among themselves. The ultimate voyeur is indeed the artist himself, the figurative painter, must train to mindfully engaged with the body of the model and navigate one's desire for knowledge and aestheticism which constitute the pleasure and violence of looking at the body of another. In turn, by placing ourselves as the voyeurs and witnesses to these society of bodies in action *We are Playing* and *To Be Playing* offer important notes for us to consider on the pleasure and injury of today's game of surveillance embedded in social media that routinely encourages us to confess ourselves through images where we would be liked, disliked, commented and narrated upon.



We are playing 1, 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 260x330 cm

M.



To be playing 3, 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 260x400 cm

S.

## STEPHANIE NEVILLE

(South Africa-UAE)

ANNA SEAMAN

Whilst at once delicate and feminine, the handcraft of needlework, crochet and thread is present throughout Stephanie Neville's practice. By scrutinizing her own place within the transient society of the UAE, where she lives and works, Neville reclaims the craft making it bold and almost defiant. Her works, mostly made from synthetic material and rendered in bright colours are subversive and comedic, provoking her viewer to consider identity and form. There is also an undercurrent of melancholy, pointing to the epidemic of urban isolation, which underlines human existence across the planet.



Nectar, Soft sculpture, 2015, wire, linen, chiffon, 160x 100cm

N.



Confessions of a Bored Housewife, 2013,  
Soft sculptures of fantasy furniture, with silk satin,  
velvet, peacock feathers

M.

## MICHAEL NEWTON

(UK)

IZMER BIN AHMAD

The Caravans series by Mike Newton are intimate in dimension; they are vital in execution, with skilful handling of paint to produce a range of mark-making placed strategically to enhance the construction and physicality of the image. The simplicity of composition is commanding, with the caravan centrally placed, giving it a certain iconographic aura. Emerging during our age of migration, displacement and dispossession, the notions of family getaways, travel, territoriality and the underprivileged evoked by Newton through the figure of the caravan emit a rather mournful echo that aptly supplement the sombre mood of these paintings.



Brain Damage, 2010, Oil on Canvas 100x140 cm

N.



Caravan #338, 2015, Oil on Paper, 15x20cm



Caravan #351, 2017, Oil on Paper 15x20cm

S I

## SINISA VLAJKOVIC

(Serbia)

ZOLTÁN SOMHEGYI

In the latest series of Sinisa Vlajkovic titled “Balkan Jazz” the Serbian artist continues his investigations of intertwining temporal layers, of personal memory, of location and re-location. While living and working in the Middle East in the early 2000s, he focused on the similarities between his left homeland and the new territories he discovered for himself. Upon returning to Serbia after 14 years and the physical distance of his nostalgia vanished remaining only the inevitable temporal component, he now focuses on ways of how to describe the changing region where he feels both at home and as a stranger.



Noah's Ark, Žabljak, Montenegro, 2014, Photo

V I



Coverup I, Ljuta, Montenegro, 2016, Photo



The Turks are coming I, 2013, Mali Požarevac, Serbia, Photo



**WEBSITE:** [www.contemporaryidentities.com](http://www.contemporaryidentities.com)

**EMAIL:** [info@contemporaryidentities.com](mailto:info@contemporaryidentities.com)

**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/ContemporaryIdentities>

**INSTAGRAM:** [contemporary\\_id](https://www.instagram.com/contemporary_id)