

F o r I m m e d i a t e R e l e a s e

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**MIT List Visual Arts Center**

***9 Artists***

**May 9–July 13, 2014**

**Exhibition Opening Reception: Thursday, May 15, 5-8pm**

**Artist talk by Liam Gillick followed by a conversation with exhibition curators  
Bartholomew Ryan and Alise Upitis, 6pm, Bartos Theater**

**February, 2014 (Cambridge, MA)**—The MIT List Visual Arts Center presents *9 Artists*, an international, multigenerational group exhibition that considers the changing role of the artist in contemporary culture. Bringing together the expansive practices of some of the most provocative and engaged artists working today—Yael Bartana, Liam Gillick, Natascha Sadr Haghigian, Renzo Martens, Bjarne Melgaard, Nástio Mosquito, Hito Steyerl, and Danh Vo—the show examines ways that they negotiate the complexities and contradictions of living in an ever more complex and networked world. Featuring some 40 works, both past and new, *9 Artists* includes a range of sculpture, drawing, installation, and video. The exhibition is organized by the Walker Art Center and curated by Bartholomew Ryan; Alise Upitis is the organizing curator for the List. The exhibition recently closed at the Walker Art Center and opens at the List on May 9, 2014.

**About the Artists**

**Yael Bartana** (b. 1970) is an Israeli artist who lives and works in Berlin. A key theme in Bartana's work is the investigation and then intervention in the processes by which communities convene, subjects are formed, national mythologies maintained, gendered behaviors enforced. The exhibition will feature her dynamic video trilogy, *and Europe will be stunned*, which has received considerable international attention since it debuted at the 54<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, where the artist represented the Polish Pavilion. *and Europe will be stunned* tells the story of the rise of the Jewish Renaissance Movement in Poland, a quasi-fictional political group that calls for the return to that country of 3.3 million Jews. Ultimately, in a European context that has seen a resurgence in nationalism in recent years, the group becomes home to all who feel that citizenship should be organized around more than national, ethnic, or religious identity.

Intimately invested in the legacy of modernism, **Liam Gillick** (b. 1964) makes sculptures, text-based works, and publications that owe much to a working through of the failure of its Utopian promise to design a more egalitarian society. The exhibition will present a series of projects from the last 20 years of the artist's production—from graphic vinyl wall texts, to giant Bloody Mary's, to glitter carpets. What aligns the work is a concern for organization, how communities exist and are transformed in an era of ever increasing privatization.

**Natascha Sadr Haghigian** abjures biography altogether, for instance she sees the artist résumé as a shorthand simplification that rates the individual according to past institutional affiliations, or regulates them according to conventional markers of identity (age, nationality, and so on). In 2004 she created bioswop.net for the free exchange and sharing of résumés and biographies. The exhibition will feature key works from the last several years that explore the precariousness of work and life today.

Dutch artist **Renzo Martens** (b. 1973), who lives and works in Brussels and Kinshasa, is known for his satirical and disturbing video documentaries in which he travels to war-torn countries and places himself narcissistically at the center of the action, demonstrating how Western spectators consume distant trauma. For the List, he will present the work of the Institute for Human Activities, an organization he has founded dedicated to the transformation through artist-propelled gentrification of a former Unilever plantation 800 miles north of Kinshasa on the Congo River.

New York-based artist **Bjarne Melgaard** (Norwegian, b. Australia, 1967) has produced a newly commissioned work that dispenses with his usual immersive and expressionistic installations in favor of a photographic memoir of his movements in the work. Disturbing and illuminating, they capture both the figure of the artist in seemingly candid documentation and also many of his works and installations. The cinematic quality of the presentation is accompanied by a new video and soundtrack developed with New York-based artist Marie Karlberg.

Artist **Nástio Mosquito's** approach (b. 1981 in Angola, lives and works in Luanda) finds form in his music, performances, and videos, and the exhibition will present a range of moving image works (including a newly commissioned piece) by one of the artists' alter egos Nástia, a Russian accented prognosticator, who discourses about the world with a mixture of crude cliché, insight, and satirical self-help dogma. In a recent work, Mosquito declared, "I do represent, if you are willing, the army of the individuals." This statement could serve as a guiding motto for every artist included in the exhibition. Their loyalty is to the individual, but not the individual who exists in isolation, rather one who acts within a community, even if this community has yet to be invented. The exhibition features Mosquito's new video essay, *Nástio Mosquito Answers Ryan Bartholomew* produced in association with Vic Pereiró and leading out of the artist's recent performance at the Walker.

Since the 1990s, **Hito Steyerl** (b. 1966) has become one of the leading voices among artists who play with conventional formats of the documentary genre, borrowing from its reputation for objectivity while acknowledging its ongoing history as a means of propaganda and indoctrination. *9 Artists* features her latest work *How not to be seen. A fucking didactic educational .MOV file*, which debuted at the Venice Biennale. The work continues her long meditation on the nature of the image in the digital age. Additionally, the exhibition includes Steyerl's famous *Red Alert* (2007), which is composed of three computer monitors with monochromatic red glowing fields with which the artist claims to have reached the logical end of the documentary genre.

The work of artist **Danh Vo** (Danish, b. 1975, Vietnam, lives and works in Basel) can be seen as a philosophy of practice that runs through his many projects, exhibitions, and relationships—a keen attention to art-historical precedence as well as geopolitics and the implications of living in a world that is more imbricated than ever before. People, objects, history, and various identity formations all become material in his expanding and accumulating oeuvre, producing a profound portrait, not necessarily of himself, but of the complicities and complexities of life today. The exhibition will feature a new presentation of Vo's recent Guggenheim Museum/Hugo Boss Prize exhibition, *I M U U R 2*, based on the personal archive of deceased Lower East Side painter (and founder of the Museum of American Graffiti) Martin Wong that he developed over many years in collaboration with his mother Florence Wong.

### **Catalogue**

Each artist has contributed a 16-page artist section exploring some aspect of their broad practice in relation to the exhibition, ranging from meditations on the Trayvon Martin social media campaign, to manifesto-like artist statements, and ghost-written letters between an artist and a dead anti-semitic philosopher. The book has been produced in collaboration with other artists, writers, and designers, such as Karl Holmqvist, Phùng Vo, Galit Eilat, Vic Pereiró, Brendan Dugan of An Art Service, Federica Buetti, and others. The contributions are accompanied by a 32-page compendium of works, and a text by curator Bartholomew Ryan that weaves together their various approaches, placing them in the context of broader contemporary art practice. Designed and published by the Walker's award winning design studio, the catalogue is available through Distributed Art Publishers.

## **Support**

*9 Artists* is organized by the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Major support for the exhibition is provided by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional support is generously provided by Lisa and Pat Denzer and Audrey and Zygi Wilf. The exhibition catalogue is made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in support of Walker Art Center publications. Additional support is provided by Isabella Bortolozzi Galerie, Gavin Brown's enterprise, Galerie Buchholz, and Marian Goodman Gallery.

The List Center's presentation is generously supported as part of the Dutch Culture USA program by the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York; the Netherland-America Foundation; and the Goethe-Institut Boston; with generous annual support by the Council for the Arts at MIT; the Office of the Associate Provost at MIT; the Massachusetts Cultural Council; TOKY; the MIT List Visual Arts Center Advisory Committee; and the Friends of the List.

## **About the MIT List Visual Arts Center**

In 1950 MIT established the Hayden Gallery that was located in the Charles Hayden Memorial Library. The gallery served as a venue for a program of changing exhibitions. In 1985 the Hayden Gallery was renamed the List Visual Arts Center in recognition of a gift from Vera and Albert List that relocated the gallery to its current location on the ground floor of the Wiesner Building which was designed by MIT alumnus I.M. Pei (B.S. Architecture, 1940), and Partners Architects.

Over the years the MIT List Visual Arts Center has become highly respected as one of the most significant university art galleries in the country for its innovative, provocative, and scholarly exhibitions and publications. Just as MIT pushes at the frontiers of scientific inquiry, it is the mission of the List Visual Arts Center to explore challenging, intellectually inquisitive, contemporary art making in all media. In addition to presenting 6-9 exhibitions annually, the List Center presents a broad range of education programs in conjunction with its exhibition programming. The Center maintains and adds to MIT's permanent collection of over 3,500 artworks that includes dozens of publicly sited sculptures and hundreds of paintings, prints, photographs, drawings, and sculptures located throughout MIT's campus. The List Center is also responsible for commissioning new works for the MIT Public Art Collection through the MIT Percent-for-Art program, and organizing and administering the Student Loan Art Program, which lends over 500 works of art annually to MIT undergraduate and graduate students.

**Directions:** The MIT List Visual Arts Center is located in the Wiesner Building, 20 Ames Street, at the eastern edge of the MIT campus. It is in close proximity to Kendall Square, Memorial Drive, and the Longfellow Bridge.

By T, take the Red Line to the Kendall/MIT stop, follow Main Street west to Ames Street, turn left, and walk one block to the crosswalk. The MIT List Visual Arts Center, housed in a building identifiable by its white gridded exterior, will be on your left. Signage is on the building.

By car, coming from Memorial Drive, follow signs for Kendall Square. Limited metered parking is available on Ames Street. A parking garage is located at the Cambridge Center complex (entrance on Ames between Main and Broadway). Paid public parking is also available at the Marriott Hotel on Broadway.

**Gallery Hours:** Tues-Wed: 12-6PM; Thurs: 12-8PM; Fri-Sun: 12-6PM; closed Mondays and major holidays.

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**Additional Information:** 617.253.4680 or <http://listart.mit.edu>

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