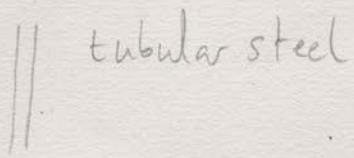


KEY



Volume - cones and ellipses made from felt or other steam moulded material



tubular steel



netting

mobile InValide 1 #

Worker uniform

the tragedy Machine
factory



Villa Design Group: Tragedy Machine

May 20 – July 17, 2016



Villa Design Group: Tragedy Machine

Villa Design Group employs writing, performance, sculpture, and film to create a hybrid “theater of design” that supports the group’s interest in queer histories, the cultural value of aesthetics, and the radical potential of viewing contemporary society through the lens of historically conservative political regimes. Their work draws inspiration from a variety of literary, fashion, and decorative arts sources, ranging from the early twentieth-century Ballet Russes dance company to the 1980s Italian design and architecture group, Memphis. Villa Design Group seeks to create “queer objects”—objects “coded with narrative possibilities, which...can perhaps smuggle in a kind of radical moment that does not depend on visualization of a radical body.”

Tragedy Machine, Villa Design Group’s new body of work realized for the List Visual Arts Center, comprises sculptures and a four-act theatrical production speculating on the potential of an automated machine or software with the ability to compose tragic and dramatic scripts. The exhibition is centered around three large-scale architectural installations that consider this potential and also reflect the group’s interest in theatrical structures and staging. *Miriam Ruth as Architect (Exterior Façade: Deltress Holding)* (2016) is a 25-foot wall with drawings of nineteenth-century actresses. *Theater or Cruelty (Cometh, Cometh, Cometh)* (2016) presents a modular stage that draws inspiration from the Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater (REDCAT) in Los Angeles and the interior of Escape, a recently closed gay bar in London. The hand-painted *Bait and Glitch (Cancancancancancan Smash)* (2016) functions as the stage’s background. It features a scene from Roland Emmerich’s 2015 film *Stonewall*, in which a white male protagonist replaces the historical Marsha P. Johnson in throwing the first brick of the eponymous 1969 riots.

Two hybrid sculptures (or costumes) of tubular metal and millinery felt, *Invalid Suit (The Danish Girl Ascending)* (2016) and *Invalid Suit (The Savage Theory of Grace)* (2016), flank either side of the stage. Screens displaying selections from British actor Eddie Redmayne’s films are integrated into these structures, turning them each into a kind of tragedy machine. The installation’s capstone is *For All Mediocre Students the Olive Tree Bears the Fruits of Competition* (2016), a chandelier of steel and blown glass which hangs from the ceiling above the stage.

The exhibition also serves as the premiere of *This Is It or Dawn at Bar Bazuhka* (2016), the group’s most recent theatrical production, an adaptation of Eugene O’Neill’s play *The Iceman Cometh* (1939), transposing the story from New York’s Greenwich Village to a gay nightclub on the Greek Island of Skiathos.

Reference Gallery May 20 – July 17, 2016

ABOUT VILLA DESIGN GROUP

Villa Design Group (founded 2011) is Than Hussein Clark, James Connick, and William Joys. Villa Design Group is based in London.

Villa Design Group: Tragedy Machine is curated by Alise Uptis, Assistant Curator, Public Art and Exhibitions, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Public Reception
Thursday, May 19, 6–8 PM

Performance
Saturday, May 21, 4–8 PM

This Is It or Dawn at Bar Bazuhka (2016)

Premiere performance of the group’s most recent theatrical production, featuring Laura Schuller, Ruth Connick, Josef Mohadmed, Valerie Mccann, Markus Bernhard, Mohamed Farsi, Catherine Luedtke, and Luis Odrizola. Advanced registration is required for this performance and tickets are limited.

For more information and to register visit: listart.mit.edu/events-programs

SUPPORT

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SPONSORS

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Cambridge, MA 02139
listart.mit.edu

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FRONT AND BACK COVER *The Holderin Seminars (The Cyanide Apple in Translation)*, 2016, black and white Polaroid
Courtesy of the artists and Mathew Gallery

INTERIOR *Invalid Suit (The Savage Theory of Grace)*, 2016, tracing paper
Courtesy of the artists and Mathew Gallery



MIT List Visual Arts Center