

humankind, re-presenting it with both strength and weakness. That weakness reflects the degree of absorption of everything that is external to humanity.

In this way, manifold levels of image production are rendered explicit by Jeong in her exhibition: the display, the object within the display, and the object of the object (the micro-objects that make up the dismembered robots that are surgically arranged on the benches). Screens placed upon the colorful benches reveal the entire process of construction, as well as the artist who, with an obsessive care, already shows signs of establishing a relationship with the half-constructed robots. Finally, the "real" and nude body of the artist dances among the robots, activating their movement (indeed, the robots are programmed to "exist" in this way), generating and self-generating a continuous neurosis that never comes to pass.

12 THOMAS HIRSCHHORN  
"Robert Walser-Sculpture"

Place de la Gare, Biel/Bienne  
by Miriam Laura Leonardi

Thomas Hirschhorn calls his latest project in public space the "Robert Walser-Sculpture." It is located on one side of Biel's Bahnhofplatz train station, whose opposite exit faces a square marked with Robert Walser's name, and is structured around two platforms linked by a bridge and made from low-grade materials - plywood, cardboard, foil, plastic bags, and packing tape - materials the artist describes as "universal, economic, inclusive, and without any plus value." Unlike some of his former public works, Hirschhorn has designated this work a sculpture and not a monument. It is a participatory artwork for what he calls a "non-exclusive public," intended to engage people who don't usually enter art galleries or museums. During the twelve hours of daily access, Hirschhorn and a series of alternating guests invite visitors to hang out and encounter locals, artists, and writers-in-residence. For aficionados of the artist's work, the sculpture is immediately recognizable as another aesthetically perfect Hirschhorn, containing several eye-catching future relics of the so-called experience, such as partly wrapped parasols and

his signature couches covered in packing tape. For Hirschhorn, Robert Walser was a hero, a marginal writer at the edge of society and success. By involving people in his public projects who are themselves on the edge of society, for less glamorous or heroic reasons than Walser, he addresses the precarious as a condition rather than concept. Participants from Biel's local community, including many with immigrant backgrounds, are present as collaborators or guests of the on-site library, cantina, babysitter service, and open-mic stage. Subsequent to their participation, one wonders if they'd prefer to take away with them a Walser novel or Hirschhorn monograph.

13 GELITIN & LIAM GILLICK  
"Stinking Dawn"

Kunsthalle Wien  
by Max L. Feldman

Like anything else, "Stinking Dawn" affects the way you see things as much as it reflects them, but it is rare for an exhibition to make you feel anxiety so deeply, for better or worse. For one thing, even if the artists don't realize it, the very idea of the exhibition produces a kind of FOMO ("fear of missing out") effect. The way the exhibition looks and feels is, meanwhile, typical of what I have already started calling the "New Apocalyptic Mode."

"Stinking Dawn" is, in part, the production process for a film written by Liam Gillick and developed, staged, and enacted by the zany relational-aesthetics foursome Gelatin. Gillick's script, based on French philosopher Gilles Châtelet's *To Live and Think Like Pigs: The Incitement of Envy and Boredom in Market Democracies* (1998), is a kind of anti-bildungsroman, a morality tale for the present age.

The narrative, following a basic trajectory taken from the "counter-enlightenment," shows the descent of four privileged young men through various stages of enlightenment toward collapse and self-delusion in the face of oppression and political crisis. The problem is this: playing with reactionary thought is one thing, but flirting with political incorrectness by dressing up in grotesque "primitive" costumes, skirting the borders of blackface for the whole performance, is something

else. It isn't a good look.

During the shooting (from July 4 through 14), all visitors to "Stinking Dawn" were caught on camera as potential performers. The artists then moved to the studio for post-production, and the already-edited parts are now projected onto parts of the museum space. The film will eventually be premiered in autumn.

The problem is that if you did not take part in the initial process, you are left only with the "stage design." This consists of polystyrene representations of broken colonnades, ruined amphitheaters, shattered nightclub interiors, and prisons. Phrases like "We are all fascist worms" are scrawled on the walls. It is difficult to know what to make of this unless you were there in the first place; you are left to rely on the explanation from the press release, which doesn't tell you much.

Without seeing the film, "Stinking Dawn" is still visually striking, though. While many artists are making polite, small-scale renditions of "ruin porn" for commercial gallery spaces, this is a life-size approximation of a war-torn landscape where hope is not merely gone but can barely be recovered as a memory trace.

14 "Homeland"

Ordet, Milano  
by Vincenzo Di Rosa

If there is a narrative that dominates degenerate populist and sovereign rhetoric, it is that of the border. Whether based on gender, race, or territory, borders are reassuring liminal constructs that reaffirm centuries-old myths of identity and nation. At the same time, the resurgence of this reactionary trend has been accompanied by the increasingly evident establishment of a real state of surveillance, favored by strategic devices of control that not only govern and monitor but also direct tastes, tendencies, and desires.

"Control" and "boundary" are the two main conceptual poles around which the survey "Homeland," on view at the Milan-based nonprofit Ordet, is premised. The first environment of the exhibition, a ready-made installation by Hermann Pitz, *Berlin Light* (1994) - composed of seven original and still-functioning lights taken from

the Berlin Wall – introduces motifs that develop on different levels throughout the exhibition. Besides, the program of film and video screenings selected by Ordet's development committee members, not only reflect on the aforementioned issues but also mirror the attitude of this new curatorial platform to rethink the exhibition format. The selected works seem to question the principles that inform control infrastructures, denying their function or imagining new ways of using them.

For instance, the low-res documentary *18 Days* (2006) by Xu Zhen shows a group trip during which the artist, together with some friends, tries to invade China's neighboring countries using remote-controlled toys. In *On going* (2019), Mohammad Eltayyeb combines found footage and images shot in Los Angeles, Jordan, Egypt, New York, and London into a frenetic montage that never dwells on a single scene yet also never leaves room for confusion: the different locations seem to merge while retaining a specific and recognizable peculiarity. It is the sense of transit that is intensified – the incessant movement from one place to another – which reinforces the notion of a nomadic and post-identity subjectivity. If in *Prison Images* (2000) by Harun Farocki the surveillance images take on a purely indexical value, which aims to exacerbate the pervasiveness of the supervisory apparatus, in *You, the World and I* (2010) by Jon Rafman, the description of such systems suggests a more intimate register. The anonymous narrator of Rafman's film is desperately searching for an image of his recently deceased lover. Only after weeks does he manage to find one, thanks to Google Street View: the image found on the web shows a woman from behind, staring at the sea from a beach close to a small hotel on the Italian Adriatic coast.

The radical destabilization of concepts of border and control pursued by "Homeland" seems to emphasize an implicit tension – that these notions are not only ubiquitous but also already internalized within.

#### 15 ANDREAS ANGELIDAKIS

"A Submissive Acknowledgement of Powerlessness"

The Breeder, Athens  
by William Kherbek

On hundreds of walls in Athens one finds the same bit of stenciled graffiti: "Airbnb Tourists Fuck Off, Refugees Welcome." Another bit of graffiti is less ubiquitous but offers a glimpse of the realities behind the invective: "Live the real Greek experience: 500=salary, 400=rent." The politics of space in Athens played a central role in the extended economic crisis the country experienced, and in the ensuing European Central Bank-inflicted torments on Greece and its capital city. The commodification of Athens provides the cornerstone of Andreas Angelidakis's exhibition "A Submissive Acknowledgement of Powerlessness."

Angelidakis is concerned with the aesthetics of power in architecture. The works in the show reference architectural models, postcards, and the cheap tat that populates shops throughout the city, selling cartoonish images of ancient and contemporary Athens to tourists. Some works literally embody their subject matter, as with a piece composed of a halogen light facing two columnar structures made from the kind of interlocking yellow buckets often used to channel debris on building sites. These materials are everywhere in Athens; even if one were to visit the Acropolis, one would find a more-or-less permanent labyrinth of scaffolding in place to support it. Athens is always crumbling, being rebuilt, and then resold. While the buckets and lights drive Angelidakis's point home most declaratively, it is the artist's more playful works that seem to bear even more weight. In a group of wall-based works, Angelidakis superimposes the language of real estate agents on weathered, black-and-white images of Athens monuments. The Acropolis sits beneath pastel text reading, "On the inside this top-floor flat has been thoroughly modernized in a bright and efficient Scandinavian style." A picture of the so-called "Prison of Socrates" bears the following description: "Step-free access; Wide-open doorway; Well-lit path to entrance flat; Path to front door." In the downstairs room of the exhibition, a pile of soft cushions overlaid with slipcovers designed to mimic pink marble lie stacked, waiting for the visitor to undertake freelance building adventures with them. Whimsical it may seem, but Angelidakis

makes it clear that in a city (and a global economy) where everything is a commodity, the joke is on all of us.

#### 16 TAWAN WATTUYA

"A Multitude of Possibilities"

Hatch Art Project, Singapore  
by Christine Han

In these ominous images we see the dark vision of humanity that has characterized Wattuya's work for much of his life. A uniformed firing squad – a faceless unit of automaton-like executioners – aims at a red-hooded captive kneeling in a corner. Islamic State fighters in black garb brandish rifles, bayonets, and pistols, in a gesture of defiance. A pristine row of M16 automatic assault rifles used by the Thai Army are on display.

Thai artist Tawan Wattuya's latest painting exhibition, titled "A Multitude of Possibilities," at Hatch Art Project gallery expresses disdain for Thailand's power-hungry military government and the periodic use of violence by the Thai Army against civilians.

Memories of traumatic historical events, such as the 2006 coup d'état and the Thai Army's deadly response to the Red Shirt demonstrations in Bangkok in 2010 and 2011, find embodied expression in Wattuya's paintings. The artist recalls the use of highly trained military snipers to shoot unarmed demonstrators with live rounds, and the indiscriminate discharge of military weapons, including M16s and other automatic weapons, directly into dense crowds.

As much as Wattuya tries to forget, the need to remember remains understandably urgent. The continuous interrogation of the past in light of present-day concerns remains a profound moral issue for the artist. "Thailand has too many soldiers; they are not used to fight the enemy, but its own people," says Wattuya. "Why have we become so dark and cold, so murderous and cruel?"

Taking center stage in the gallery is a series of overtly pornographic watercolors. All three works depict the parted thighs of a naked man and two naked women, inviting the audience to view their genitalia. There is little ambiguity here; this is the erotic orifice, surrounded by blurred pubic hair. Various titles include *Sinuous* (2019), *Painful* (2019), and *I Love You* (2019), Wattuya's paintings

feature poems and quotes from Thailand's best-known royal poet, Sunthorn Phu (1786-1855). Two of the three poems suggest that it's best not to trust humans because they are so terrible to each other; the third speaks of pain. By making the figures in his paintings the object of a voyeuristic gaze, Wattuya challenges viewers regarding how a society can recover from the devastation of its past. Can viewers look beyond the superficiality of civilized society to discover who they really are? Is it possible to understand the pain, loneliness, and anxiety of others?

In his watercolors, Wattuya often chooses subjects that mock the many follies of civil society – in particular contemporary Thai society. Elsewhere, a cheetah approaches in a threatening manner, then a lion, and finally a Brahman cow. "Every creature I paint has both human and animal attributes, which clearly symbolize the state of those human beings who have acted bestially," says Wattuya. One imagines the noise of hunting in the gallery, the Brahman cows running through the forest, chased by cheetahs and lions that catch and rend them. In another work, *Cabinet* (2016), he paints homeless street dogs in Bangkok, in a cleverly profane approach to questioning dominant constructions of Thai power and authority. Whether we label Wattuya a watercolorist or activist is not the key issue. The real question is whether Wattuya's antiestablishment spirit will continue to rebuke falsehood and speak out for truth and justice. Hopefully he will continue hammering away.

#### 17 TAKAHATA ISAO

"A Legend in Japanese Animation"

National Museum of Modern Art,  
Tokyo  
by Gianluca Pulsoni

Film buffs in Western countries are not always knowledgeable about the latest trends in Japanese animation. But mention Studio Ghibli and you will likely get effusive feedback from film and art lovers alike. Miyazaki and Takahata in particular are names that are synonymous with quality, and their pioneering aura has helped anime culture consolidate its authorial possibilities, making it, to quote Godard on cinema,

the real "childhood of art."

An exhibition celebrating the genius of Isao Takahata (1935-2018) – "Takahata Isao: A Legend in Japanese Animation" – is at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo. Planned and produced by Studio Ghibli, the show examines the entire filmography of the master from a historical viewpoint.

It kicks off at the beginning of his career, when, in 1959, he joined Toei Doga – currently Toei Animation. There, he started working on various projects, including *The Orphan Brother* (1961) and the TV series *Ken, the Wild Boy* (1963-65). His first feature film, *Little Norse Prince Valiant* (1968), directly comes from that experience, marking the birth of a new author.

The second section of the exhibition, called "Everyday Pleasures," presents material from Takahata's famous TV series: the iconic *Heidi, Girl of the Alps* (1974); *From the Apennines to the Andes (Marco)* (1976); and *Anne of Green Gables* (1979). There are cells, storyboards, notes, and lots more, including a scale model of Heidi's village.

Then there is the third section, which richly documents those works that signal a shift in Takahata's attention toward Japan and its culture. The list is a long one: *Downtown Story* (1981); *Gauche the Cellist* (1982); *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988); *Only Yesterday* (1991); and *Pom Poko* (1994). There is also room for a documentary, *The Story of Yanagawa's Canals* (1987), made shortly after he founded Studio Ghibli with Toshio Suzuki, Yasuyoshi Tokuma, and longtime friend Hayao Miyazaki.

The last section of the exhibition highlights the late Takahata's stylistic challenges. It features materials from *My Neighbors the Yamadas* (1999) and the sublime and partially misunderstood *The Tale of Princess Kaguya* (2013), his last effort.

But what does it mean to dedicate a museum exhibition to animation, as if it were painting or sculpture? For one thing, it paves the way for establishing a more direct link between Takahata's imagery and a particular tradition of visual representation in Japan from the twelfth century onward, namely that of depicting "stories" on handscrolls called *emakimono*. This comparison reveals an attempt to overcome classic cell-based animation, highlighting the importance of hand-drawn line as

well as the merging of foreground and background.

It also helps us see his animation in the context of art-historical tendencies and aesthetics in both the East and the West. For example, an intentional sense of unfinishedness; the watercolor-like impressionism of *My Neighbors the Yamadas* and *The Tale of The Princess Kaguya* includes many backgrounds that are merely sketched out if not incomplete. By doing so, the scenes foster visual empathy and engage the imagination.

Ryusuke Hikiwa's essay for the exhibition catalogue connects Takahata's late formalism to the Brechtian "alienation effect." Surprisingly or not, it seems to have been something that informed the Japanese director's meditations on reality and realism to some degree. In this regard, another contribution to the catalogue, by curator Katsuo Suzuki, sheds additional light:

What Takahata pursued through the "moving paintings" of animation was "realistic" expression that made it possible to interpret reality from new vantage points. Takahata notes two divergent approaches to realism in animation. One is "rendering something so realistically that viewers believe impossible things are possible," and the other is "rendering familiar objects in a crisp yet stylized form that strikes viewers in a new way." While the former refers to fantasy, which uses the power of realism to draw the audience into a fictional world, Takahata clearly states he is engaged in the latter.

Through this exhibition, the "crisp yet stylized form" emerges and stands out as the pinnacle of his poetic and anti-rhetorical cinema.

#### 18 TRACEY MOFFATT "Portals"

Roslyn Oxley9, Sydney  
by John Buckley

Made up of twelve C-type photographic prints, "Portals" at Roslyn Oxley9 in Sydney is Tracey Moffatt's first solo exhibition since representing Australia in the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017. As with "My Horizon" at the Australian Pavilion in 2017, and her critically acclaimed short film *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* (1990) that came much earlier, "Portals" emerges as



13 Gelitin & Liam Gillick, "Stinking Dawn." Exhibition view at Kunsthalle Wien, 2019. Photography by Marlene Rosenthal. Courtesy of the artists and Kunsthalle Wien.



16 Tawan Wattuya, *Dirty Girl*, 2017. Watercolour on paper. 35x54in. Courtesy of the artist and Hatch Art Project, Singapore.



14 Surveillance Camera Players, Documentation of the performance *George Orwell's 1984*, 1998. Installation view at Ordet, Milano, 2019. Courtesy of CCA - Canadian Center for Architecture, Montreal and Ordet, Milano.



15 Andreas Angelidakis, *DEMOS Pink*, 2018. Foam and vinyl searing modules: 8. Dimensions variable. Installation view at The Breeder, Athens, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and The Breeder, Athens.