

artesmundi



Learning Resource

National Museum Cardiff,
Chapter and Ffotogallery

www.artesmundi.org
www.museumwales.ac.uk

www.chapter.org
www.fffotogallery.org



CHAPTER

ffotogallery



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Introduction

This Learning Resource Pack is designed to provide you with the basic information you need to engage with the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition. This pack can be used by many different types of audience whether you're an artist, teacher, lecturer, community worker, mum, dad, grandparent. You will find here artist information, an exploration of themes, and a number of key questions to ask yourself or your learners when visiting museum and gallery spaces.

Artes Mundi 6 is an exciting and thought-provoking exhibition and its themes can inspire a wide range of project work suitable for community groups, primary and secondary school curriculum's including (but not limited to) Art & Design studies, SEN groups, adult learners and families. In addition to this basic pack, you can find tools to help support engagement on our website, in the form of downloadable activity sheets and opportunities to join in with our wider conversations.

www.artesmundi.org/en/artes-mundi-6/learning

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About Artes Mundi

Artes Mundi is an internationally focused arts charity based in Wales, and a landmark programme of international contemporary visual art that enriches the cultural and educational life of Wales and its people, develops and inspires new audiences, and builds cultural bridges between Wales and the wider world.

Artes Mundi is Latin for 'arts of the world'. One of our main aims is to bring international contemporary art to a wider audience, choosing work that is accessible and relevant to people's lives. We identify, recognise and support contemporary visual artists who engage with social reality and lived experience. Through this theme Artes Mundi gathers work that highlights how artists comment on society from very different cultural perspectives. Topics explored through the work of Artes Mundi include:

- identity and citizenship
- globalisation and consumerism
- democracy and power
- architecture and space
- activism
- belief and spirituality
- war and conflict
- ecology and environment
- social engagement and participation

Every two years our cycle of activity culminates in the Artes Mundi Exhibition and the awarding of the Artes Mundi Prize to one of the shortlisted artists. For Artes Mundi 6 (24 October 2014 – 22 February 2015) this includes a multi-site exhibition presented at the National Museum Cardiff, Chapter and Ffotogallery. The exhibition shows some of the world's finest and most stimulating contemporary art, including installation, sculpture, performance, action, photography, and film. Behind the scenes, we operate extensive learning and interpretation programmes that engage a wide range of communities and introduce thousands of people to contemporary art.

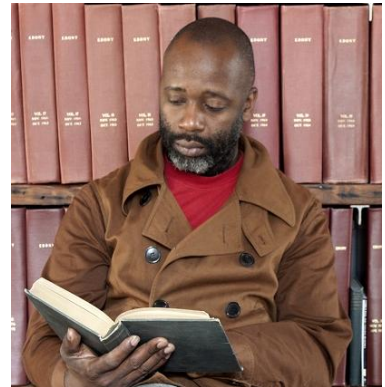
The Artes Mundi 6 shortlisted artists:



Carlos Bunga



Omer Fast



Theaster Gates



Sanja Iveković



Ragnar Kjartansson



Sharon Lockhart



Renata Lucas



Renzo Martens



Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

Places to visit

Artes Mundi 6 is the most expansive project in the organisation's history as we are working for the first time in partnership with three host venues – National Museum Cardiff, Chapter and Ffotogallery in Penarth. Here's some information about what you can expect to find at each site:

National Museum Cardiff

We continue to work in partnership with the National Museum Cardiff where the work of six shortlisted artists will be exhibited. Here, the practices of Theaster Gates, Carlos Bunga, Renata Lucas, Omer Fast, Renzo Martens and Sanja Iveković span installation, sculpture, film, social action and architectural intervention. Narratives and themes that emerge include: architecture and space, migration, spirituality, conflict, poverty and social change.

Chapter

At Chapter three practices from our shortlisted artists will be exhibited: those of artist-duo Karen Mirza and Brad Butler, alongside Sharon Lockhart and Renzo Martens. The exhibition includes the main gallery spaces, Art in the Bar and a new Lightbox commission. Narratives and themes that emerge include; power and democracy, poverty and social change, labour and social class.

Ffotogallery

Working with Ffotogallery at Turner House, Penarth, for the first time, we are delighted to present work by Ragnar Kjartansson and Sanja Iveković. Drawing upon this institution's commitment to the photographic image, this exhibition explores femininity, performance, feminism and activism.

In addition

Around these three core venues and ten artists Artes Mundi presents a series of events to complement the exhibition, including; a programme of guided tours and educational workshops led by Artes Mundi's Live Guides, lunchtime talks during November, a seminar series, and an exciting line-up of Thursday lunchtime events spanning live performance, poetry and music.

For more information check our website www.artesmundi.org

How to talk about art

Talking about art is easier than it sounds and you don't need to know all the right answers; in fact there are often no 'right' answers!

If you are thinking about bringing a group to visit the exhibition it's a good idea to have some simple questions in mind that can encourage learners to look, describe and make sense of the artwork for themselves. By posing open-ended questions learners will naturally become engaged, developing personal responses often based on their own experiences of life. Remember there is not just one correct reading of the artwork, there are many.

What do you see?

Can you see how many different shapes, colours, textures, objects you can find?

How does this artwork make you feel?

How do you think the artist has made their artwork? What skills do you think they have used?

Can you think of 3 words to describe this artwork?

Can you imagine what the story behind the artwork might be?

How do artists change spaces?

If the artist walked into the gallery right now, what one question would you like to ask them?

Starter activities

Working in pairs

Ask your group to work in pairs to look at the artwork and to discuss their initial reactions. They might think about what the artwork is made of, what colours and shapes they can see, what sounds they can hear or what they think the story behind the work is.

Ask each pair to describe their responses to the rest of your group.

‘What’s in a name?’

Ask your group to imagine, if they were the artist who created this artwork what title would they give it?

Talk about the titles they have chosen – what are the reasons for their choices?

How do these differ from the original titles? Why do you think the artist made their choice?

‘Lost for words’

Use our downloadable word sheets, available for each exhibition venue, to collect a glossary of words that can be used for creating;

- Questions and discussions
- Creative writing and poetry

Remember

Throughout the course of the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition our website will be updated with tools for engagement, from key questions and interactive debates, to resource activities that you can print and take to the gallery with you.

You can find everything you need here: www.artesmundi.org/en/artes-mundi-6/learning



Carlos Bunga

Originally trained as a painter, Portuguese artist Carlos Bunga has been experimenting with the crossover between painting and sculpture for more than a decade. Creating large, site-specific installations often made from mass-produced materials such as cardboard, packing tape and household paint, his work considers the fragility of contemporary city life.

Working across installation, sculpture, painting, performance, video and drawing, Carlos' practice challenges the very idea of what it means to make permanent things. His use of precarious materials to construct new architectures inside museum spaces leads us to think about monumentality, history, the building of society and sustainability.

“cardboard is a material that usually defines itself according to its use as well as re-use: it packages, protects, constructs, deconstructs, bends and unbends; an all-purpose box, also to be lived in, a box-turned sheet, a shield, a wall, a sheet-turned-box, between volume and its erasure, between the plane and the construction of a whole world of possibility...”

João Fernandes, *Cardboard Architectures: Carlos Bunga and the Museum of our Time*

Carlos' installations grow in response to his chosen site – living 'paintings' which emerge from a process of construction and deconstruction. These extraordinary temporary structures are located somewhere between architecture and sculpture, drawing on the idea of the museum as something under constant construction. Through them he explores the interrelationship between doing and undoing, transience and permanence, unmaking and making.

Carlos often thinks about the idea of the laboratory; that space where experience is made. Changes in texture, colour, plane, volume, form and space offer viewers new and playful possibilities for understanding the monumental architecture that surrounds them – a poetic transformation of institutional space.

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

For Artes Mundi 6 Carlos Bunga presents *Exodus* 2014, a new site-specific installation within the National Museum Cardiff.

'Exodus' refers to the act or action of crossing, going out, the journey to escape from a hostile environment to another place. *Exodus* is a large-scale structure made out of cardboard and packing tape, which mimics the architectural features of the gallery space. Carlos utilizes these materials to suggest impermanence, crisis, and decay.

A procession of freestanding columns leads viewers through the gallery. Shifting scales and surface details play with the audiences' understanding of space and encourages us to think of ways that we might re-imagine the environments that surround us.

Alongside this new installation Carlos is also displaying a collection of small scale sculptural works, drawings and a film. These artworks, whilst appearing like maquettes, are not preliminary plans for larger scale installations. Rather, they are pivotal objects in themselves which offer valuable insight and articulate the artists' processes of thinking.

The relationship between drawing, painting and sculpture is very important to Carlos' practice, which blurs the boundaries between them to create new possibilities for objects and architectural forms.

Think...

you have to build a temporary shelter – what materials will you use?

Keywords

Drawing / painting / installation / material / conscience / fragility / instability / time / temporality / visible / invisible / transitory / construction / deconstruction / memory / imagination / monument / migration / transition / crossing / impermanence / decay

"time will turn everything into dust"

Carlos Bunga



Omer Fast

Omer Fast is a Berlin-based, American-Israeli artist, whose layered cinematic video works often explore types of storytelling, and the many ways we reconstruct and re-imagine the past. Taking key historic and contemporary events as his subject matter such as drone surveillance and warfare, Omer explores the ways memory is recounted, narratives retold and events represented.

Having spent his childhood moving between Tel Aviv and New York, between Hebrew and English, between the rituals of daily life in Israel and in the US, only to end up living in Berlin (a city transformed by the geopolitics of the last century) – Omer has a unique ability to understand the same story in different languages and from clashing cultural perspectives.

In his single channel, dual, and multiple projections, Omer is concerned with the spoken word. He questions the telling of stories that serve as both the foundation for spoken and documented communication (film, photography) as well as for the collection of narrated stories to communicate or prove historical events. How does a story become what it is? What elements within a narrative determine their interpretation and legibility, and how? What influence do memories have on a narrative?

“There’s a huge amount of freedom in the art world that allows us to create pieces that often stand obliquely to what we normally consume, in terms of film or TV, or what we watch on the internet. I think that there is a very urgent viability to having that space that allows us to reflect our world and our society, and what we do, and to try to think about new forms of how to reflect it and to try to make little stumbling experiments with cinematic language or any kind of language....”

Omer Fast

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

For Artes Mundi 6 Omer Fast presents his 2012 film *Continuity*. The film, installed at the National Museum Cardiff, follows a young Bundeswehr soldier just returning home from Afghanistan. We meet a provincial bourgeois German couple, who pick up their soldier son at the train station. What first appears to be an otherwise familiar domestic environment and narrative gradually unravels. The ritual of the train station is repeated over and over, again and again, with a seemingly endless series of 'sons,' hired by the couple to act out a soldier's homecoming. As the young man struggles to make sense of his increasingly surreal and alien home, it becomes doubtful whether he's ever actually returned from service.

Did the missing son die in Afghanistan? Is he still there, waiting for leave? Or missing in action? Does he even exist? Whatever the experience of the doubles, they tell war stories, adapting them to the couple's needs and to their peaceful surroundings, which seem to be haunted by traumatic memories that appear and disappear like mirages.

Think...

about something you have done with your family or friends –
do you remember the story in the same way they do?

Keywords

Trauma / identity / fiction / reality / war / the media / documentation / narrative /
fantasy / memory / conflict / uncertainty / choreography / routine / normalcy /
space / time / repetition

"conflict is interesting to me in as much as, I am able to understand it through the way routine is established in the presence of conflict. So very often the kind of subjects that I seek out are subjects that have been through some kind of conflict, or engaged in conflict, whether that's familial, marital, military, and so forth. Because of that engagement, or despite of that engagement, they have to restructure their lives, or to structure a life that involves a routine. So the choreography that I'm talking about is a kind of establishing a new normal in the midst of conflict..." - Omer Fast



Theaster Gates

Locating his home and studio on the South Side of Chicago, where the situation for a young, black male is particularly dire, Theaster Gates has evolved an artistic practice that makes social and cultural change happen. Trained as both a sculptor and urban planner, his works - which span pottery, performance, painting, installation, place-making, object-making and modification - are rooted in social responsibility and underpinned by deep belief-systems that aim to bridge the gap between art and life.

“The work of transformation not only involves inhabiting a new state, but also requires destruction, the stripping of layers of history, culture, personality and agency for the sake of “improvement.” - Jacqueline Najuma Stewart

“the projects that I’m working on over the next couple of years are going to be projects that think most about collections and the archive, and activating these archives like the Glass Lantern slides, and really trying to do as much as I can to read myself into the archive, either by inserting things into the collection itself, or by allowing the collection to come through my body in lecturing and in performance, so that whatever its real content is, through me, it becomes something else.”

Theaster Gates

Theaster’s ongoing work, titled *Dorchester Projects*, began with the purchase of an abandoned building on 69th and Dorchester Avenue on Chicago’s South Side. In collaboration with a team of architects and designers, Theaster proceeded to resurrect the structure using recycled materials – wood beams and posts, doors, flooring (from a bowling alley), windows, an archive of sixty thousand glass lantern slides dismissed by the University of Chicago, and of fourteen thousand volumes from an architecture bookstore that had been forced to close. The buildings have since become a hub for cultural activity, a place for discussion, celebration, communal eating, and a venue for musical performances in which Theaster sings with his band, the Black Monks of Mississippi.

For Theaster it is important that his art has a direct economic impact. He is a canny businessman, who openly acknowledges the complex systems of value and exchange that the art world and Capitalism is built upon. Key to this is that Theaster proves it is possible to intervene in social conditions by operating in careful alliance with systems and things.

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

“There was a goat, formerly used to help men get from rather obscure and uninteresting lives to believing that they had the right, and eventually, the information to change the world. The goat had power as it was the vehicle that led to enlightenment, brotherhood, sacred passage of the Masonic Order. At some point, the goat got old and was no longer used for ritual. At that point, it was a reminder of a period of power and an abject reflection on what is possible when the world believes in things...” - Theaster Gates

For Artes Mundi 6 Theaster Gates presents a new sculptural installation titled *A complicated relationship between Heaven and Earth, or When We Believe*, 2014, at the National Museum Wales. An eclectic mix of objects are brought together within the gallery spaces – a religious diagram, roof slates, a goat that circles a steel track, rubber playground mats and a Boli (an abstract figure traditionally belonging to the Bamana people of West Africa). Alongside these, a video plays - *Billy Sings Amazing Grace* 2013, featuring a Black male elder called Billy Forston, Theaster himself, and his ensemble the Black Monks of Mississippi, singing the quintessential hymn of Christian salvation.

This unusual collection of objects might seem strange when audiences first enter the gallery space, which is haunted by the sound of the ensemble’s strained rendition of *Amazing Grace*. Audiences who listen carefully will hear a similarly eclectic arrangement of percussive instruments being played in this recording at the El Dorado Ballroom in Houston’s Third Ward. For Theaster - who often uses spiritually infused musical performance to ‘activate’ spaces and objects - the real performance is in the rehearsal, a ritualistic space where transformations are taking place. In many ways the objects in this installation are representative of this process of transformation – through the ritualistic, spiritual and heavenly endeavour of people, these things have acquired mystical values far beyond their material form.

Think...

what special things do you have at home – do they have a story?

Keywords:

Religion / spirituality / artefact / brotherhood / order / belief / care / hospitality / renewal / archive / history / resource / transformation / Black / social agency / ritual / memory / labour / value / capital / archive / collection / identity / symbolism / regeneration /

“if the World is finally coming to Cardiff, what should it say, and what should it ask?” – Theaster Gates



Carlotta



Salvador Pung Andini



Rachel Corio



Chi Sumana



Giuseppe Pizzi



Sully Ieri



Victor Ieri



Tina Blowing Tiddi



Juliano Mar-Chiana



Robert Sandy



Raul Giron



Impero Asenore



Mirakli Maters



Robert

Sanja Iveković

Over the last four decades, Croatian artist Sanja Iveković has used her artwork to ask important questions about the role of art in society, political struggle, consumerism and identity – in particular female identity.

Sanja's early practice grew in response to the political and economic developments of her home country, the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, during the eighties and nineties. She was a founder and a member of a number of women's non-government organizations in Croatia such as Elektra- Women's Art Centre, The Centre for Women's Studies, B.a.B.e and the Women's Human Rights group.

"as a young artist I was questioning myself, I was questioning my role as an artist starting from my own situation, but during the nineties I really tried to open myself to collaboration, first with women's organizations, with women, then with other people - because the collaboration is so rewarding, it's not about me expressing only myself, it's the collective that I like to build." - Sanja Iveković

As a feminist activist and involved organizer, she has since launched, and collaborated in, some important projects relating to art, culture and theory as well as personal involvement, in particular for women who are the target of violence.

Through her work, which often involves the appropriation of images and texts from diverse sources such as magazines, manifestos or family photographs, Sanja seeks to give a voice to people who suffer in repressive regimes in all their forms, and addresses the ways in which the personal and the political intertwine. In doing so, she also makes visible those who have spoken out against brutality and repression wherever and however it manifests itself. Sanja also focuses on the individual through the media, as well as the continued invisibility and erasure of women from the public sphere and from dominant historical narratives.

"I'm an artist who has made a lot of mistakes. I make mistakes, and actually I hope I will make more mistakes in the future because I think when you make mistakes you move forward, you do something that will discover new territory, you will not stay at the same place and you will not go in the same shoes. I think the fear of not making something that is perfect either in life or in art or in social life or in business, is something that we have to fight for. I hope the mistakes will continue to be made."

Sanja Iveković

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

A press photograph published in a German newspaper in April 1933 inspired *The Disobedients (The Revolutionaries)* on display at Ffotogallery. It shows a Nazi officer and a donkey, fenced in with barbed wire. The 'concentration camp for stubborn citizens' was constructed as a warning not to buy from Jews. For Sanja, the photograph stands as a simple metaphor for the Nazi propaganda. This image is juxtaposed with a display case filled with toy donkey's given names of individuals who have resisted injustice in Nazi Germany and elsewhere in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – a poetic archive of resistance.

In her second work presented at Ffotogallery, *Gen XX*, Sanja makes changes to existing magazine advertisements that feature professional models. By introducing the names, formal charges and execution dates of young female anti-fascist militants who fought against the Nazi regime in World War II to these posters, Sanja begins powerful conversations about representations of women and femininity in the media. Alongside, a printed publication titled *Women's House (Sunglasses)*, focuses on issues of social disregard and gender violence hidden in post communist Croatia. Advertisements for well-known brands of sunglasses have been altered to include short texts about the lives of women persecuted by domestic violence.

Sanja's final artwork for Artes Mundi 6 can be found in a cabinet at the National Museum Cardiff. Titled *Monument to revolution (After Mies)*, it is the starting point for a new project that Sanja plans to realise. In her proposal for remaking this monument Sanja focuses on the process of collecting the bricks, which will involve a number of international anti-fascist, workers' and leftist organisations, labour unions and women's organisations from around the world.

Think...

if you could be famous for doing something important, what could that be?

Keywords:

Feminist / activist / representation / power / media / equality / social struggle / image / consumerism / icon / femininity / identity / construction / fashion / popular culture / resistance / revolution / monument / democracy / public / private / sexuality / control / violence / collective / invisibility / role model

"Role models are something that we need – we need role models for women, for men, for the young people who are not blindfolded or brainwashed with just images of beautiful models. In my work they become real; they become fighters, and role models."

Sanja Iveković



Ragnar Kjartansson

Icelandic artist Ragnar Kjartansson is a performance artist who draws on a wide range of disciplines in his practice to explore the boundaries between art and life, fiction and reality. The histories of film, music, theatre, visual culture and literature find their way into his video installations and performances, which regularly incorporate painting, drawing, sculpture and music. The theatre and its staging become key tools in the artist's attempt to convey sincere emotion and offer genuine experiences to the audience.

“his both serious and brilliant snapshots are about romance and friendship, beauty and broken hearts, love and death, happiness and pain, heaven and hell – never about victories, often about defeats .”

Brigitte Huck ‘A short story of dishwashers in Iceland’

Born into a family of actors and theatre people (his father a director, his mother an actress), Ragnar draws upon his many experiences of life and its characters – from the playful to the banal; the sentimental to the obsessive; the absurd to the romantic; between dream and reality. Collaboration is an important part of his artistic process and he’ll often work closely with musicians, designers, actors and other artists.

Ragnar has become known for videos and performances in which repetition plays a crucial role. Songs are repeated and performed over and over again, sometimes for hours, sometimes for days, even for months. Scores are played in loops until they attain the hypnotic quality of a droning buzz. For Ragnar, the strain of repetition in the voices and actions of the performers creates a series of endearing encounters, through which we are reminded of our human limits and imperfections.

“I was sitting with my father at Christmas, staying up late drinking Cognac and smoking cigars, watching the rain falling onto the snow and my father suddenly looks at me in the most serious way and said “Ragnar, I need to tell you something, and it is the most important thing that I will ever tell you my son. It is beautiful and sad to be a human being.” That has sort of been my beacon in my art.”

Ragnar Kjartansson

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

For Artes Mundi 6 Ragnar Kjartansson presents his nine-channel video installation, *The Visitors* (2012), at Ffotogallery. The work is based on a musical performance staged at Rokeby farm, a bohemian mansion situated on the banks of the Hudson River in upstate New York.

At Rokeby House Ragnar assembled a group of his closest friends, some of the most renowned musicians from Reykjavik and beyond, for a performance that responds to its beautiful setting. The home has stood for almost two hundred years and is run by family members who have become the artist's friends and also perform in the film. They have made it their goal to preserve the traces of the past and welcome bohemia and spirituality in all its forms.

Each screen captures a portrait of one of the nine musicians playing the same song from different corners, in and around the house, repeating lyrics such as 'once again I fall into my feminine ways' from a poem written by artist Ásdís Sif Gunnarsdóttir, Ragnar's ex-wife. From the kitchen a drummer plays, on the landing a young woman plays a cello, Ragnar himself is in the bath playing a guitar.

For Ragnar music is also a visual art, and this artwork in particular, is about visualising the feeling of making music amongst friends. Shot in one take at sunset, the film is extraordinary and intense, tragic yet joyful, and combines the sweetness of romantic despair with collective togetherness and the beauty of being human.

Think...

what colour is your favourite song?

Keywords

Longing / nostalgia / repetition / duration / fiction / sorrow / joy / despair / solace / romance / friendship / relationships / music / time / memory / fantasy / experience / feeling / mortality / limits / imperfection / humanity / history / reality / improvisation / innocence / boredom / beauty / the performer / femininity / everyday life

"Performance is presence, the precious moment in which art happens"

Brigitte Huck



Sharon Lockhart

Sharon Lockhart is a Los Angeles-based artist working in photography and film. Her artistic process often begins with research into wide-ranging topics and different communities, including the visual legacy of the working class, choreography, the human rights of children, and ideas about education for children. Her photographs and films go on to frame the quiet moments and details of everyday life while exploring the subtle relationships between photography and cinema.

Another layer of Sharon's practice consists of close collaborations with local and often unseen communities and individuals, which have previously included American factory workers (*Lunch Break*, 2008), Japanese basketball playing girls (*Goshogaoka*, 1997), dancers in Israel who perform and practice in isolation (*Five Dances and Nine Wall Carpets by Noa Eshkol*, 2011), and disadvantaged children located in such far apart places as *Pine Flat* (2005) in Southern California or contemporary Poland as in *Podwórka* (2009).

For Sharon, the themes of labour and play - fundamental characteristics of human life and experience - often take centre stage in her work. Collaborations sometimes unfold over the span of years, during which time Sharon works with her subjects to understand aspects of their lives, and share with them the images and histories that join us. Together, they make films and photographs that explore common creative experiences. The friendships Sharon forges in sharing and understanding the existence of the people she works with give us valuable insight into the lives of others. In this way we are not merely viewers looking in, but share common experiences as human beings.

"It's about shining a light on something that someone is doing, and the minute they look through the camera and see the beauty in their movements, they become collaborators."

Sharon Lockhart

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

One of Sharon's major works is *Lunch Break* (2008) which features 42 workers as they take their midday break in a corridor stretching nearly the entire shipyard. Over the course of the lunch break we see workers engaged in a wide range of activities - reading, sleeping, and talking in addition to actually eating their midday meal. Together, picture and sound provide an extended meditation on a moment of respite from productive labour.

For Artes Mundi 6 at Chapter, Sharon shows one of two films from *Lunch Break* entitled *EXIT*. Filmed over a five-day working week, each of the five takes that comprise *EXIT* shows the long progression of workers leaving the Bath Iron Works at the end of their shift. Over the week, we see a number of workers walking into the frame, moving away from the camera and vanishing at a point near the centre. We don't get to see the worker's faces, instead we are left to speculate about the contents of their lunchboxes and back packs, about the kind of work these workers are doing and about the time of the day and season of the year.

Alongside the film *EXIT*, Sharon also presents a series of photographs at Chapter, which depict groups of workers during their midday break, and their individualized lunch boxes. The project is a meditation about how time off from work, time to relax and rest, to play around and 'chill', is determined by structure, invoking the regulations imposed by factory work. While the slowness of *Lunch Break* elongates the thirty minutes of break time - this fixed period of time, that coordinates the daily routine in a factory - the repetitive structure of leaving the factory during the five working week days reinforces the connection between work and play, regulated labor and unstructured time off.

Think...

what would you like to put in your lunchbox?

Keywords:

Relationships / collaboration / break / exit / voice / respect / people / time / worker / labour / workplace / family / factory / / routine / lunchbox / play / care / manifesto / body language / relax / rest / socially engaged / body / self / choreography / narrative / movement / gaze / community /



Renata Lucas

Brazilian artist Renata Lucas often makes temporary changes to built environments using architecture and urban spaces to ask questions about how our day-to-day lives and behavior are affected by the spaces that surround us. Using basic building materials, often plywood, bricks, and concrete, Renata makes subtle changes to surfaces, walls, doorways, roads and walkways both inside the gallery and out into the city. Through these changes she invites us to explore the differences between inside and outside, public and private, past and present.

“I try to displace myself from a certainty about things. [...] It’s like exploding the balance around things. The artwork is a mystery. It’s about creating a situation where you don’t have control.” – Renata Lucas

In big cities our choices about where to live, where to work, where to socialise, and how to move have often already been decided by the political and economic systems that we are a part of. The vastness and overpopulation of today’s cities mean we all have to follow and abide by certain rules, for example; crossing the road at a certain point and following pathways that have been put in place for us by architects, planners, property owners and developers.

For Renata art presents opportunities to radically and playfully subvert these routes and approaches to our surroundings. Our actions, behaviour and social relationships are telling signs – she works to break up the standard and expected forms of everyday surfaces and structures. In this way her artwork changes the rules, offering us alternative perspectives through which we can begin to imagine possible spaces where barriers and social boundaries break down.

“They are provisional works, ephemeral works, even when constructed in very permanent materials they stay there for a while, but normally I prefer not to construct, I prefer to use existing situations, existing materials, existing architecture, existing things – not to put more things in the world which is absolutely over-constructed.” - Renata Lucas

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

For Artes Mundi 6 Renata Lucas presents *Falha (Failure)* at the National Museum Cardiff - an ambitious installation that invites interaction with, and reconfiguration of the gallery space.

Falha (Failure) is a mobile, false floor constructed from a series of plywood panels that have been organised as a layered weave on top of the existing gallery floor. Using handles attached to these panels, visitors are invited to play with and manipulate the structure. Visitors can alter the configuration of the gallery by opening and closing, layering, and even propping up the floor panels by leaning them against adjacent walls or pitching them in the middle of the space to create new substructures out of an otherwise two-dimensional surface.

Each module of the floor is like a word in a language that can be translated to create new meanings. Rather than a passive experience of looking, which has become the norm in the gallery space, Renata invites us to interact and play with this work. Theoretically it can be packed up and shipped in order to create a familiar environment in a foreign place, though it needs constant re-creation as it must be fitted precisely to each location using local materials and building traditions.

For Renata *Falha (Failure)* is a monument unable to stand up: a sort of portable, pliable floor that you can open and stretch on any surface, that is as flexible, adaptable, and unstable as the ground we are used to walking on.

Think...

how many different ways can you move across a room?

Keywords:

Play / manipulation / behaviour / order / failure / control / power / architecture / sculpture / limits / space / city / rules / movement / memory / imagination / surface / floor / wall / inside / outside / public / private / pathway / plans / barrier / portable / change / puzzle /

“Architecture is the body of a place – it directs the use, the possible pathways, the flows through which information, light, air, and communication will pass”

Renata Lucas, interview with Adriano Pedrosa



**Renzo Martens
and the Institute for Human Activities**

Renzo Martens is a Dutch artist, filmmaker, and director of The Institute for Human Activities (IHA), an organisation that runs an arts-based development program in Democratic Republic of Congo. He lives and works in Brussels and Kinshasa and has become known for his disturbing and controversial documentaries in which he travels to war-torn countries and places himself at the centre of the action.

His work, which includes film, photography, sculpture and installation, challenges the way the Western world consumes distant trauma – often through the media, journalists, news items, photographs, and aid organisations. Sometimes Renzo appears as a journalist himself, other times; an ambassador, diplomat, activist, missionary, or artist.

“I don’t want art to be this place where a group of people who already have everything they need then get fed with beautiful fairytales about how great we are staging beautiful collaborative projects here and there. I think that’s a farce, I think it obscures what the ruling dynamics in this world are, and I see it as my task to show what these ruling dynamics are.” – Renzo Martens

Renzo and his work with The Institute of Human Activities, based on a former Unilever plantation, draws on our colonial past and the havoc the West continues to cause in the DRC and across Africa. He questions what is meant by ‘socially engaged practice’, its adoption by the art world, and its failure to effect real change in the place where the artwork takes place. He forces us to rethink how this type of art and the global art market operate.

Renzo believes that for us to make real change it would require constant awareness of how our decisions and actions affect those around us, and a willingness to oppose the dominant practices of Western societies. By reporting on conflict, the West is indirectly contributing to it, and Renzo asks us to question these systems and cycles of inequality.

“empathy as a reaction allows you not to see their suffering and your agency to look at that suffering. It allows you to not put it on the same map, as if it belongs to another world.” – Renzo Martens

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

"I am defined by the education I have, by the racism and the feeling of agency that I've grown up with, I'm defined by the idea that I think it's normal that I have a cup of coffee every day and it's normal that other people don't drink coffee but work for me anyway. [...] I am a representative of a world which allows people to die of hunger on one hand and allows other people to be terribly rich. That's the institution I talk of." – Renzo Martens

For Artes Mundi 6 Renzo Martens presents new work in collaboration with The Institute for Human Activities at the National Museum Cardiff and Chapter.

In 2012 Renzo set up the Institute of Human Activities (IHA) to work on 'A Gentrification Programme' on a settlement near a former Unilever plantation at Boteka in the DRC, near Kinshasa. From 1911 on, Unilever - now known in the developed world as a patron for the arts with a good philanthropic record - confiscated existing palm oil groves and conscripted inhabitants into forced labour. These plantations were essential to the establishment of Lord Leverhulme's business empire. Under this type of colonial oppression in many countries across the world, rich traditions of indigenous art were often deemed tribal and heretical - and yet the best objects were typically exported to Europe for the delight and inspiration of artists such as Matisse and Picasso.

For Artes Mundi 6 IHA presents a new series of self portraits made by Congolese plantation workers. These plantation workers produce raw material for Unilever products and Belgian/ Swiss chocolate producers, and have been doing so for over one hundred years. The material used to reproduce the sculptures is the chocolate that comes from this and other similar plantations.

At Chapter Renzo presents an earlier work, *Episode 3 (Enjoy Poverty)*. The film focuses on one observation: poverty is Africa's biggest export, and as with other natural resources, it is exploited by the Western world through the media. Through it he lectures locals about poverty as commodity and encourages them to sell their own photographs of starvation and death rather than let Western journalists profit from their humanitarian disaster.

Think...

what could you make your self portrait out of? What does this say about you?

Keywords:

Exploitation / market / value / suffering / poverty / money / cocoa / raw material / export / conflict / contradiction / inequality / power / capitalism / reporting / struggle / production / media / image / privilege / superiority / relationships / empathy / other / Africa / journalism / human / plantation / labour /

YOU ARE THE PRIME MINISTER

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler

Karen Mirza and Brad Butler are an artist-duo based in London. Their layered practice consists of filmmaking, drawing, installation, photography, performance, publishing and curating. Their work challenges terms such as participation, collaboration, and the traditional roles of the artist as producer and the audience as recipient.

In 2004, Karen and Brad formed *no.w.here*, an artist-run organization that explores film production and conversation about image making. It supports the production of artist works, runs workshops and holds discussions. *no.w.here* also curates performances, screenings, residencies, publications, events and exhibitions. *no.w.here's* role as a cooperative environment is directly related to Karen and Brad's practice which is based on collaboration, conversation and the social.

Since 2007, Karen and Brad have been developing a body of work entitled the *Museum of non Participation*. The artists have repeatedly found themselves surrounded by important moments of change, protest, and debate. For Karen and Brad the term 'non participation' challenges us to think about political involvement and resistance. For them 'non participation' is a slogan, a banner, a performance, a newspaper, a film, an intervention, and an occupation: it is a scenario that allows the Museum (of non participation) to 'act'. For them 'non participation' is not a failure to engage, but is a space of possibility – an opting out, in the same way as strikes, boycotts and other forms of withholding.

“what are the languages of resistance? How can there be new languages of resistance? How has our very imagination to think about other ways that society could work other than Capitalism been colonised? Art becomes this incredible space for thinking about tools and tactics for languages of resistance.”

Brad Butler

Artwork in the Artes Mundi 6 exhibition

For Artes Mundi 6 Karen Mirza and Brad Butler present an exhibition and two other projects. At Chapter you will find their exhibit *The Unreliable Narrator*, an exhibition of two installations and video works. In *You are the Prime Minister* a prominent neon work becomes an empowering invitation to take up the title role in a fantasy fiction. It is soon revealed to be misleading: the statement belongs to a larger text from a scholarship exam for thirteen years-old boys entering Eton College, an elite school that trained 19 of Britain's Prime Ministers and 12 members of the current Government.

In the video installation *The Unreliable Narrator* a voice speaks of the 2008 Mumbai attacks alternately from a position of the terrorists and of a seemingly impartial commentator. The video sourced from CCTV recordings of the siege together with telephone conversations between the attackers and their controllers suggest that the event was performed for the benefit of news cameras: 'this is just a trailer; the main feature is yet to come'.

Artes Mundi and Chapter also present *The Exception and the Rule* a reworking of one of Bertolt Brecht's 'Learning Plays' at the Temple of Peace as part of *Experimentica*. Karen and Brad also present a one night event for invited guests, titled the *Patriarchal Clock* - a nocturnal gathering of women at the National Museum.

Think...

you are the Prime Minister, what will you change?

Keywords:

Resistance / participation / archive / production / gathering / workshop / power / conflict / image / re-enactment / non-participation / challenge / question / performance / collaboration / act / action / occupation / text / performer / actor /

