

18 Mar - 22 Apr 2017

CARSTEN HÖLLER TOBIAS REHBERGER ANRI SALA RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA

EXQUISITE TRUST (BLINDLY COLLECTIVE COLLABORATIONS)

You are one, and you are two, and then you are three, and you are four.

It's an old children's game. We have all probably done this before – you fold a piece of paper and draw... One starts with the head, and the next person with the torso, which is then followed by the lower part of the body, and one eventually ends with the feet. The idea is that this body could take different forms because you don't know what represents the head in somebody else's mind.

It was used by the Surrealists who made cadavre exquis drawings and paintings. I believe it was used in literature too and texts have been put together this way. In that instance, someone gets the last word or phrase and he/she is meant to continue it. It's very fantastical. It forces randomness into the picture, and you as a producer are forced to almost obey something that has been given to you. Only it is given and not given at the same time because you don't see the whole picture, just a tiny bit of it.

In our case, the first artist decides the format and the paper, which means the colour, texture, size etc. The other artists basically continue based on the hint received. And the hint makes the game. The preceeding artist decides how thick the hint shall be, how much information he wants to pass along. Based on that, we develop. What is important is to produce a continuity. One could then choose to do so by using the same technique or create a complete rupture and change it all together.

FOREWORD

There are many variables given the nature of the game. I intuitively felt that we must have tried to continue each other's technique as much as possible at the very least to ensure some sense of continuity in the corpse, amid all the differences. The rest is very open. It's not necessary for the body to look like a body, or the torso like a torso. Some of the formats are horizontal, one is vertical. In the work I began, the head is not a head, the

torso is not a torso. I was interested in producing some kind of syncopation, where something comes ahead of its place, unexpectedly.

But all these were more about the imagination, because at the end of the day, you might be able to imagine how the other sections would develop after working on your own, but then there would be three others changing your direction entirely. Your drawing might have lots of low frequencies,

but the next person suddenly adds a "soprano" drawing. You can't control the outcome – perhaps that's the best thing. We all agreed that it was a good format to find a way for everyone to work individually and that it would somehow all come together. It's like you've always wanted to do something together, but it rarely happens because everybody has such different schedules. It's kind of a mystery how it all came to be that the four of us ended up in one place at the same time. Well, almost. It's great that it happened, and of course,

I would want to do that more, but it's not so easy.

CARSTEN HÖLLER

TOBIAS REHBERGER

The 'Exquisite Corpse' embraced our togetherness without us being obliged to think or gather physically,

and of course, it brought the element of the game, the teaser, the hint. It was very interesting. A strip about one centimetre long was sent to me – it's two little things that looked like part of a coloured circle. And I thought, what should I do with this? It's impossible. I had to prepare something in advance too, which was also impossible. I found it very important to be there physically because it's not just the process. It's also about being there together, even though we're not sitting together all the time and exchanging ideas. It's very different. I took some resource materials with me – a folder of images I've been collecting that speak to me in some way. It could just be a momentary liking to an image for whatever reason. There aren't many things in this folder, and

I've actually never really looked at it until now.
They proved very useful as a basis to continue the work here, so I wasn't completely in the void. You work with your artistic ideas, of

course, but you also have to materialise it in some way – and so you add some personal things.

It's like a game of cards. It's always about letting go and yet being able to have an overall design in tact – which is what an artist does anyway. In terms of the experience of the artist who receives the hint and continues, it reminds me a little of the technique of the fresco, which is a technique I like a lot. It's one that requires you to learn giornata – what they call "a day's work". This daily part is a portion in the fresco that you must see through to completion. You cannot leave

it halfway and continue tomorrow; it should never get dry because if it does, that's it. It means your daily job ends there and then. It's about anticipating what you'll be doing the next day, and when tomorrow comes, you make sure you bring it in the same intensity of the colour you did the day before. So there is a lot of anticipation.

The 'Exquisite Corpse' process is like this. There is no expectation because you don't know what to expect – only lots of anticipation. When I conceived the drawings, the "letting go" went hand in hand with my intent to keep the ensuing figure developing as far as possible within the given space. When I saw I had exceeded the potential of the succession of the 'head' lines, I switched to the 'life' lines. Therefore I was – in a manner of speaking – oscillating between "letting go" and "aiming for" a figure that would stretch as much as possible across the drawings' surface.

We're good friends, we like seeing each other whether there is a reason to or not. But here, part of the game is not seeing what the other is doing, which jumbles that normality up. We have known each other for a long time and quite well, so all this guessing and speculating was quite fun, especially moments when we tried to trick each other by putting the other person on the wrong track. It's a playful way of trying to be serious. Of course, our own natures determine and influence the dynamics between us, but it also changes when the four of us are around, and when it's just

RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA

the two of us. And that's the case here, because again, we are not supposed to be here together all the time due to the nature of 'Exquisite Corpse'.

So you have this dynamics where you are

ANRI SALA

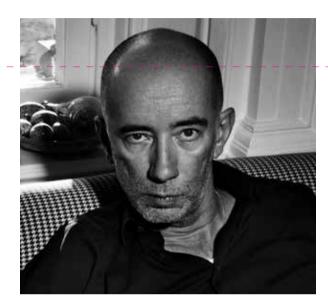
one, and you are two, and then you are three, and you are four.

Carsten Höller uses his past training as a scientist in his work as an artist, concentrating particularly on the nature of human relationships. Often creating situations that alter our interaction with the world, Höller explores human relations and perceptions through participatory works that prompt us to reimagine the way we move through the world. Born in

Brussels in 1961, he now lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden and Biriwa, Ghana. Notable installations and exhibitions include "Doubt" at Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan (2016); "Decision" at Hayward Gallery, London (2015); "LEBEN"

at TBA21-Augarten, Vienna (2014);

CARSTEN HÖLLER



CARSTEN HÖLLER © John Scarisbrick

"Experience" at the New Museum, New York (2011); a presentation of the "Revolving Hotel Room" at the Guggenheim, New York (2010); ABOUT a series of giant slides "Test Site" at Tate Modern (2006): an installation of full-size funfair rides "Amusement Park" at MASS MoCA (2006); as well as presentations at the Berlin Biennale, Venice Biennale and Gwangju Biennale.

Tobias Rehberger gained recognition with his Golden Lion Award for best artist in the 53rd Venice Biennale and is considered one of the most important contemporary German artists today. Drawing his subjects from quotidian

TOBIAS REHBERGER © Barbara Klemm



TOBIAS REHBERGER

objects, Rehberger creates situations and environments that disrupt our initial perception of objects and their functions, reconstructing our perspective, outlook and relationship with the subjects. He also challenges the fine line between art, architecture and design, working with geometry, colours and abstract forms, developing a distinctive style with works that reflect an interest in man's relationship to mass culture. Major exhibitions include the Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (2014);

Artelier Contemporary, Graz (2012); Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle (2011); Tobias Rehberger, MAXXI -Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo (2010); Kunsthalle Mannheim (2009); Kunstraum Innsbruck (2008); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2008); Fondazione Prada, Milan (2007); Tate Liverpool (2006); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2005); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2004); and Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2003), as well as The Gwangju Biennale, Venice Biennale, Manifesta, Berlin Biennale and the Yokohama Triennale.

Anri Sala is a French/Albanian contemporary artist who rose to international acclaim for accomplished videos and films, informed by his personal experience to reflect on the social and political changes taking place in native Albania. His remarkable workscomposed of documentary, narrative and autobiographical approaches-

ANRI SALA



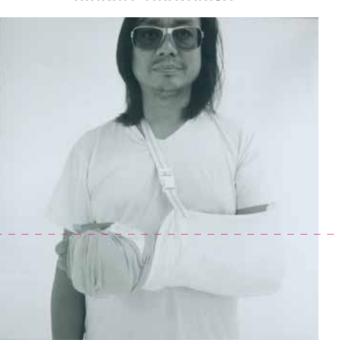
ANRI SALA © Jutta Benzenberg

highlight cultural transitions, history and collective memory, enhancing these recurrent themes through the use of sound and image. Sala has exhibited widely at institutions including Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; P.S.1 Center for Contemporary Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; the Art Insitute of Chicago and Tel Aviv Museum of Art; and has participated in the Venice Biennale, Bienal de São Paulo and Manifesta, among others. Numerous awards include the 10th Benesse Prize, The Vincent Award (2014), Absolut Art Award (2011), The Hugo Boss Prize (2002), and the "Young Artist Prize" at the Venice Biennale (2001). He has also won "Best Documentary Film Award" at Williamsburg Brooklyn Film Festival (2000), Filmfest in Albania (2000), International

Documentary Film Festival, Santiago de Compostela, Spain (1999) and at the Entrevues Festival in Belfort, France (1998), among many others. Sala had a major exhibition at the New Museum in February 2016, which marked the most comprehensive survey of his work in the US.

RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA

THE



RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJA © Anette Aurell

Born in Bueno Aires, raised in Thailand, Ethiopia and Canada, and educated in Chicago and New York, Tiravanija's life is a constant negotiation of cultures and

ARTISTS

languages from which he draws inspiration for his practice. His most iconic work "Untitled (Free)", (1992) transforms museums and galleries worldwide into kitchens and a place of communion where he serves rice and Thai curry to visitors. A recipient of the Hugo Boss Art Prize, his works are part of notable public

collections such as The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Migros Museum, Zurich; Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin; and TATE, London. He has exhibited widely at renowned institutions such as the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Kunsthalle Bielefeld;

Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Chiang Mai University Art Museum; Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, Oslo; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Philadelphia Museum of Art; and at biennales such as the São Paulo Biennal (2006); the Liverpool Biennial (2002 and 2004); the Whitney Biennial (1995 and 2005); and the Venice Biennale (1993 and 1999).



from exquisite corpse to exquisite truth

Carsten Höller, Tobias Rehberger, Anri Sala & Rirkrit Tiravanija, (dreams that money cannot buy), 2016

Life happens and we are part of its happening¹

By Ute Meta Bauer and Anca Rujoiu

In 1969, George Perec publishes A Void,

¹ A rephrasing of poet John Ashbery's description of his approach to writing: "When I write a poem, I have no idea or I have a very sketchy idea, of what it's going to be about, and it may be just that I have a few phrases in mind, or it's a simple idea; and in connecting these things the poetry happens. In fact the original thing I began

a 300-page novel deliberately missing the vowel 'e', the most commonly used letter of the Roman alphabet in many languages including French and English. Content embraces form-this lipogrammatic novel's plot evolves along the story of a missing person, furthermore the critics associated the theme of disappearance with

Perec's own experience of loss and absence as

both his parents perished during World War II.

with, I may decide to cut out of the poem. It's getting from one place to another, from one

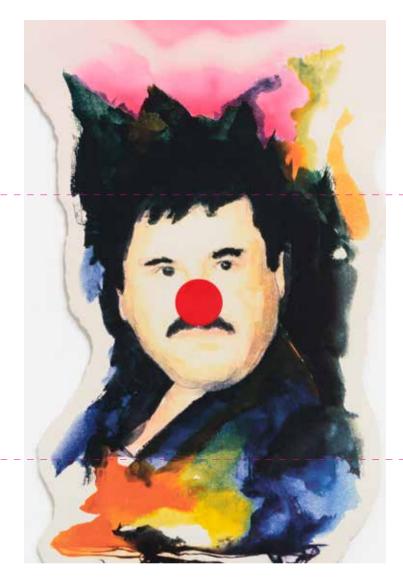
moment to another. Life is very difficult, and it seems very often that we're in a situation that

is impossible to deal with, but somehow it

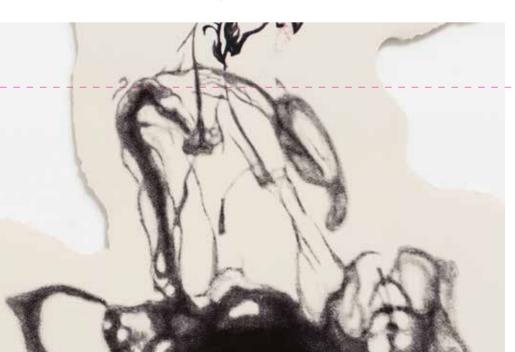
does go on, so it's very

difficult and easy at the same time. It happens by itself and we're part of its happening [italics added]." John Ashbery "An interview in Warsaw", with Piotr Sommer, in Michael Palmer, ed., Code of Signals: Recent Writings in Poetics (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1983).





Several years after, Anne F. Garréta publishes *The Sphinx* (1986), a novel that was only recently translated into English and distributed outside the French-speaking context.





Positively received by the Queer community, the novel progresses out of another language game—this time the writer chooses to conceal the gender of the main

protagonists.

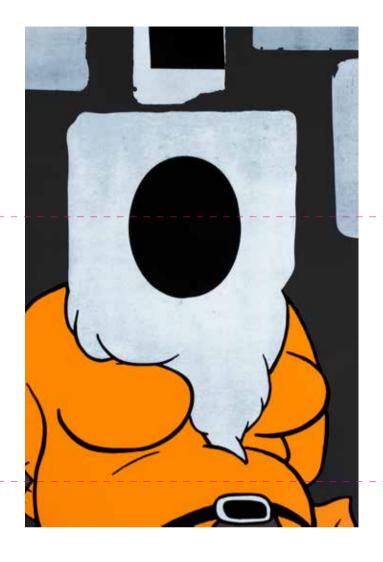
The Sphinx is a short love story



that generates multiple, amorous

scenarios in the reader's imagination: a boy falls in love with a girl, or a girl falls in love with a girl, etc. We don't know and throughout the story we stop caring; that's the main achievement of the book.

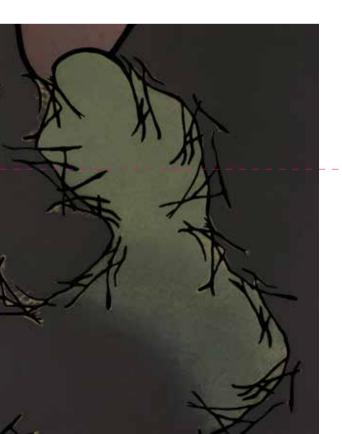






'l'écriture

automatique'
(automatic
writing). Yet this
delimitation from
the Surrealists
was not as
radical as the
Oulipian members
wished for.



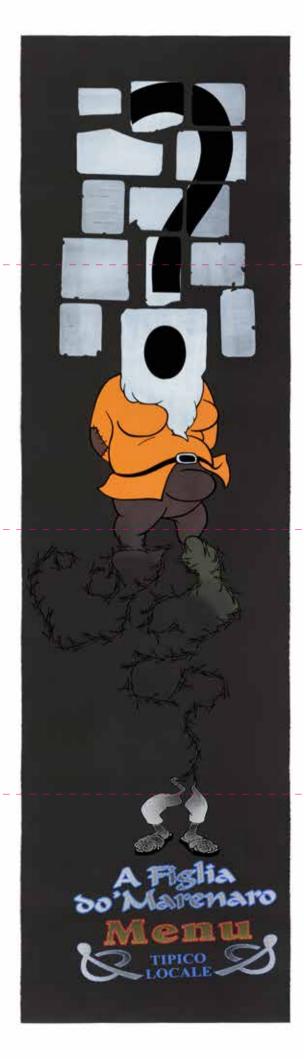
The intensity of the story and its relatable experience renders secondary the mystery of gender identity.

Perec was part of the experimental literary movement 'Oulipo' that Garréta also joined as its first female member. Established in the 1960s, the movement was committed to

the approach of 'writing under constraints', which vary in range from the lipogram as applied in Perec's novel, to permutations as in the founder of Oulipo, Raymond Queneau's poem *Hundred Thousand Billion Poems* (1961).

Writing under constraints was a counterresponse to the Surrealists' process of

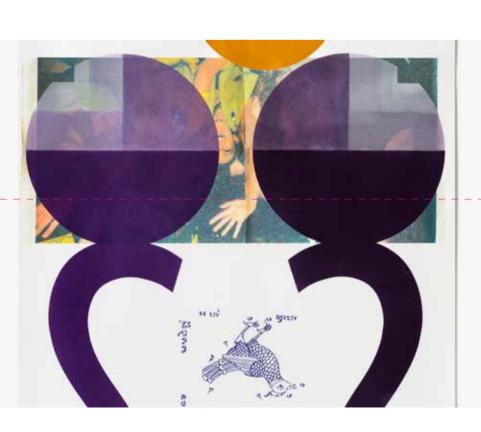




Carsten Höller, Tobias Rehberger, Anri Sala & Rirkrit Tiravanija, Transgender Question Seafood Vaporiser, 2016

Carsten Höller, Tobias Rehberger, Anri Sala & Rirkrit Tirav All Tooether, In Your Way, Out of Hands.. 2016





If one perceives the process of automatic writing to be a form would be curtailed; both groups showed a communal interest of constraint itself, the borders between the two movements in a creative process emerging out of self-imposed rules.

The Surrealists' game of 'Cadavre Exquis' (Exquisite Corpse) group of participants (often four players) subject themselves belongs to the same family of creative constraints where a

unanimous consent, lose control over the final outcome to the experience lof collaboration and chance, and in



several individuals into a process of surprising associations that please The Exquisite Corpse game is participatory and enjoyable; it brings

of a collective piece.

framework of play and the concept of "homo visual arts have been discussed under the literature and the Of course, such endeavours in ludens" --

and we should not

underestimate the power of play to reveal basic mechanisms of our society.











Yet what it discloses is the complexity of

creative production and the unfolding of our lives as an experience of continuities

and ruptures.

We know this already from the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu—the creative activity is part of a wider process where several

factors and contingencies impact its trajectory and final outcome. Working or writing under constraints is a condition *de facto* in the creative act, and such experiments stage and highlight what is inherent in any process of cultural production.



at STPI - Creative Tobias Rehberger, (2016) produced constraints to be project Exquisite Gallery, the four Rirkrit Tiravanija In the collective Collaborations) deliberately set Carsten Höller, Anri Sala, and artist-friends Trust (Blindly up particular Workshop & Collective







Carsten Höller, Tobias Rehberger, Anri Sala & Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Jitterbugs Tangofiy Tagplan*ts, 2016



Carsten Höller, Tobias Rehberger, Anri Sala & Rirkrit Tiravanija, (dreams that money can not buy), 2016, Screen print, gelatine sheet transfer on Saunders paper, torn by hand, 345 x 131 cm



Carsten Höller. Slide House Project (Central Business District Corner House, Singapore), 2015, Pencil on screen print on Schut Salland paper, 38 x 48.5 cm





Carsten Höller, Slide House Project (River Reflective High Rise, Singapore), 2015, Pencil on screen print on Schut Salland paper, 76 x 98 cm



Carsten Höller, Slide House Project (Cedi House, Accra), 2015, Pencil on screen print on Schut Salland paper, 38 x 48.5 cm





Carsten Höller, Tobias Rehberger, Anri Sala & Rirkrit Tiravanija, Jitterbugs Tangofly Tagplants, 2016, Coloured paper pulp, screen print on STPI handmade linen paper with acrylic disc and metal frame, Frame: 146.5 x 269 x 7.4 cm, Installation: 211.3 x 289.3 x 39.5 cm



Carsten Höller Slide House Project (Central Business District Airport Tower House, Singapore), 2015, Pencil on screen print on Schut Salland paper, 56 x 72 cm



Carsten Höller, Slide House Project (Round Tower, Brazzaville), 2015, Pencil on screen print on Schut Salland paper, 98 x 76 cm



Carsten Höller, Slide House Project (Central Business District High Rise, Singapore), 2015, Pencil on screen print on Schut Salland paper, 56 x 72 cm



Tobias Rehberger, free speech, 2016, Screen print on coloured pressed paper pulp, 76.5 x 102.5 cm

Tobias Rehberger, free dumpling, 2016,

102 x 127 cm

Screen print on coloured pressed paper pulp,





Tobias Rehberger, freedom, 2016, Screen print on coloured pressed paper pulp, 252.5 x 356.5 cm



Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled 2017, (bodhisattva reflections in the silver seas), 2016, Water-based monotype, metal foil on Saunders paper, 114 x 140 cm



Tobias Rehberger, free beer, 2016, Screen print on coloured pressed paper pulp, 132 x 167.5 cm



Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled 2017, (the perfect kiss) (fig.2), 2016, Water-based monotype, metal foil on Saunders paper, 154.5 x 114 cm



Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled 2017, (the perfect kiss) (fig. 1), 2016, Water-based monotype, metal foil on Saunders paper, 155 x 114 cm



Anri Sala, Lines on Black (Marisol,

paper, 128 x 128 cm

Anri Sala, Lines

on Black (Afif.

Sala, Flavien),

2016, Screen

print and

Stonehenge paper, 128 x 128 cm

Warhol, Lichtenstein), 2016, Screen

print and flocking on black Stonehenge

Anri Sala, Lines on Black (Höller, Tiravanija, Rehberger), 2016, Screen print and flocking on black Stonehenge paper, 128 x 128 cm







Anri Sala, Lines on Black (Jung, Huxley, Stravinsky), 2016, Screen print and flocking on black Stonehenge paper, 128 x 128 cm





Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled 2017, (the days remain the same), 2016, Water-based monotype, metal foil on Saunders paper, 151 x 114 cm





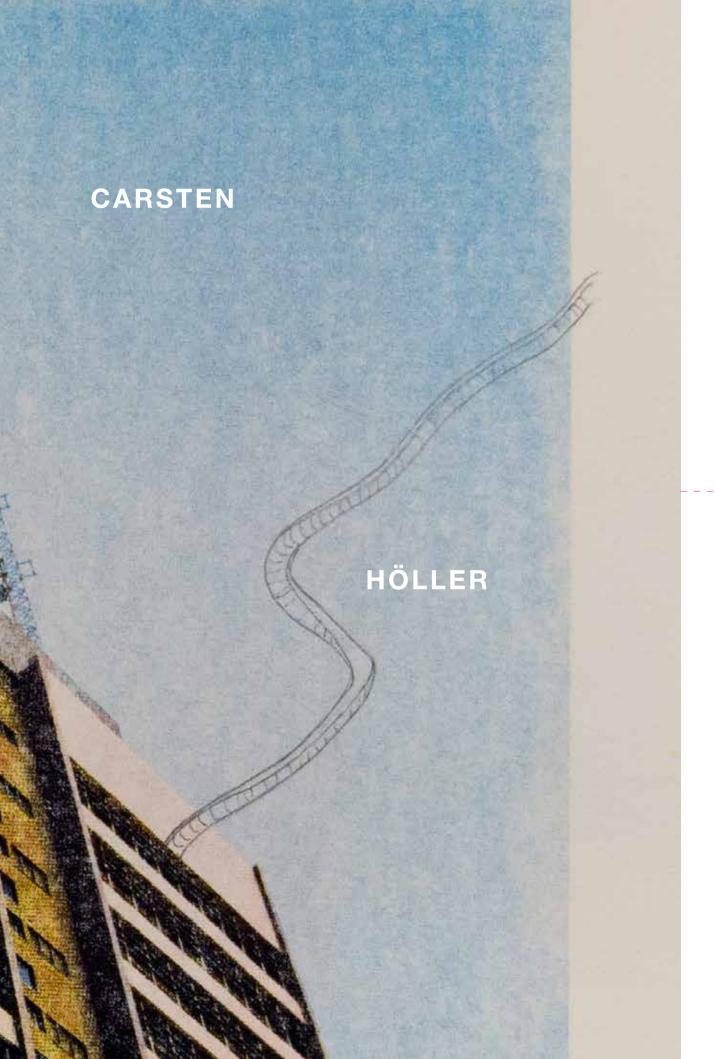
Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled 2017, (bodhisattva appears in crimson tide), 2016, Water-based monotype, metal foil on Saunders paper, 114 x 140 cm



Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled 2017, (a drop in the drain can change the ocean), 2016, Casting with STPI handmade mulberry paper, 55 x 75 x 85 cm

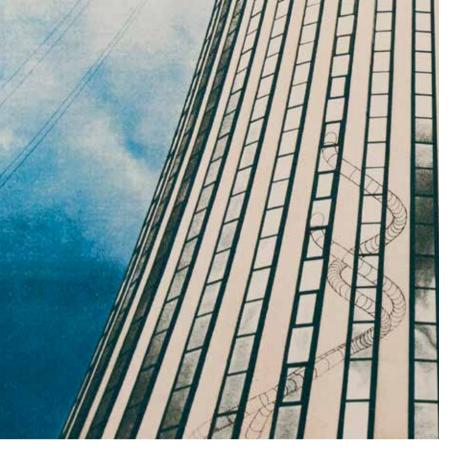












applied in the art-making process. The artist who begins the work chooses the format, texture, colour, and size of the paper; the section that is completed by one of the contributors would then be covered

(rather than folded);
a strip of paper with a hint
would be revealed;

none of the artists could discuss or disclose their intentions to one another in



² Rirkrit Tiravanija in a discussion with the authors, February 2017.

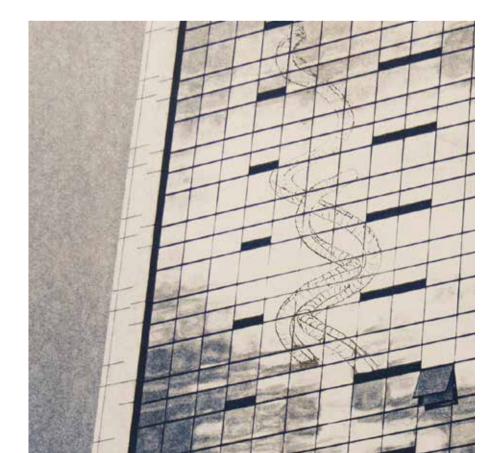
strip of paper



the process-

the only "secret" witness to each individual contribution, as well as the development of the pieces was STPI's master of print, Eitaro Ogawa.² This laborious process was further complicated with the

containing the hint being shipped from one studio to another—from Singapore to Berlin, from Berlin to Stockholm, from

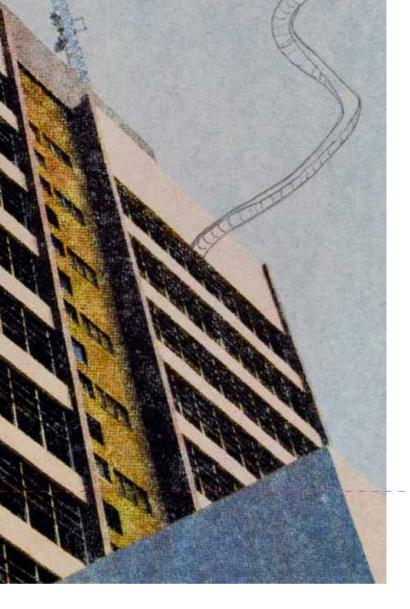










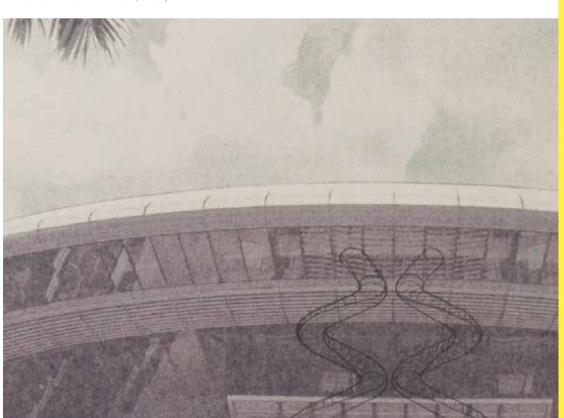


Stockholm to Chiang Mai-to develop the artwork.

In an interview with STPI, the artists address the Exquisite Corpse as a strategy to overcome the constraints of language.³ This recalls the language players' activity of Western avant-garde art groups such as the Dadaists, Surrealists, or even the Futurists, that no surprisingly started off as literary movements: Tristan Tzara

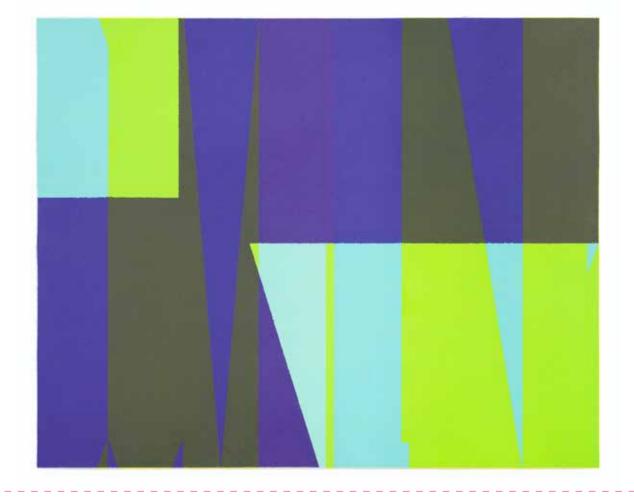
was a poet, André Breton, a prolific writer, and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, respectively, a poet.

³ The artists in an interview with STPI, January 2015.



TOBIAS

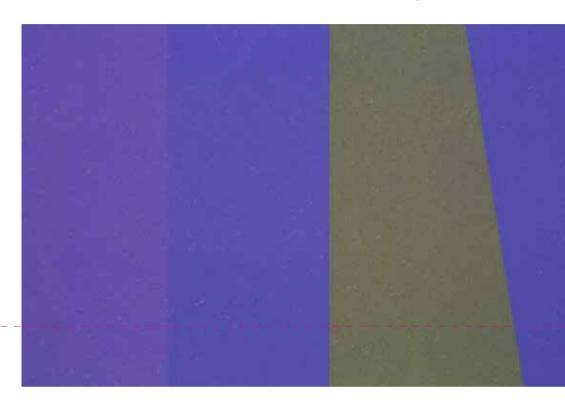
REHBERGER

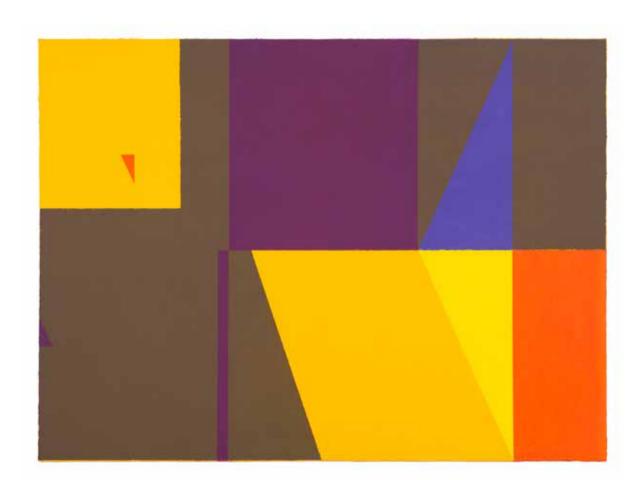


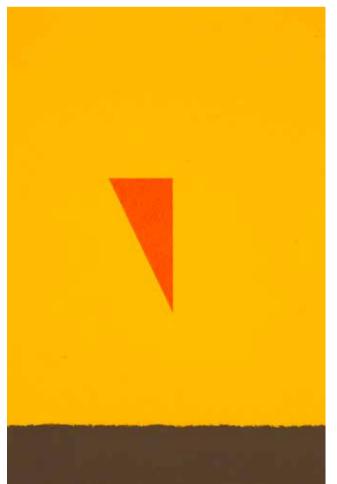
For apart from social intersections and cultural affinities, what brought these writers and artists together was the shared attempt to rebel against and undermine the mechanisms of language

itself.

Explaining the properties



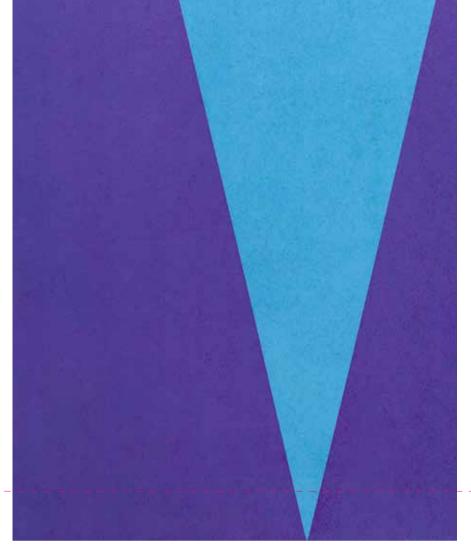




⁴ Noam Chomsky, What kind of Creatures Are We? (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 10.

of language, the linguist Noam Chomsky draws attention to the bizarre yet linguistically complex, cognitive mechanism he describes as "minimal structure distance".4

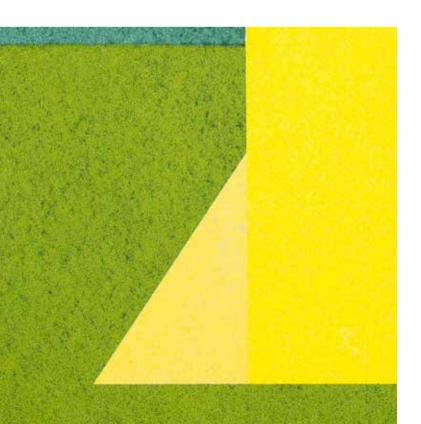
Rather than following a simpler linear sequence, language makes use of a structural construction where the order of words in a sentence is not determined by their proximity, but by their





⁵ Ibid, 13.

the noun 'eagles' refers to the ability to fly rather than its closely-situated verb 'swim', exemplifying Chomsky's point that "much deeper cognitive properties

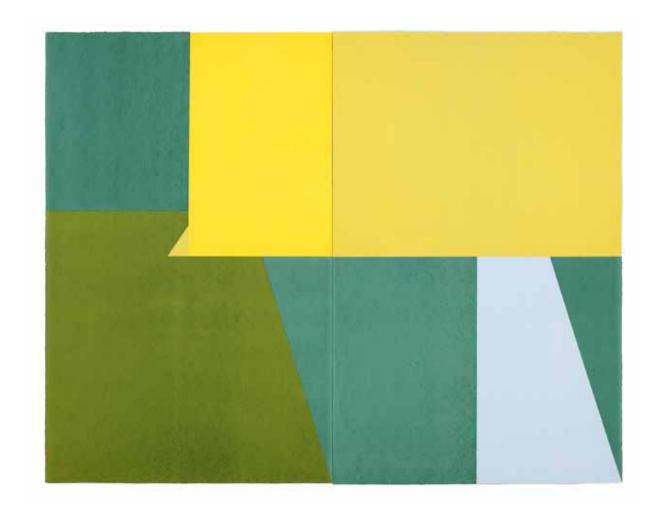


semantic relation.

In the question "Can eagles that swim fly?",

are involved in language acquisition and design", and that "fundamental language design ignores order and other external arrangements."5

The Exquisite Corpse activates a linearity rejected by language itself, pushing







the construction of meaning through a mechanism of proximal associations rather than semantic dependencies. Reading or looking

at the results of an Exquisite
Corpse, one is challenged to
create associations between
elements that follow each other
in a linear order. In the scroll
Transgender Question Seafood
Vaporiser (2016), a question
mark outlined by Rirkrit evolves
into the torso of an overweight
character created by Tobias,
and it continues with a series of
palm lines assembled by Anri.

This hybrid figure becomes a full body with "a pair of feet" added by Carsten.











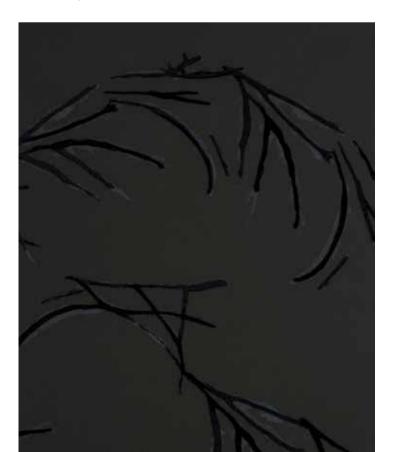
Such a fortuitous situation that is capable to surprise and make sense at the same time challenges one to accept that life itself is punctuated by similar random accidents that carry meaning.

In ever-busy lives, this group

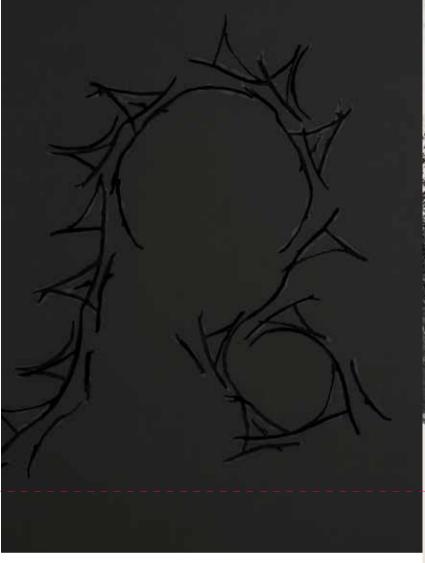
of artist friends found in the Exquisite Corpse a response

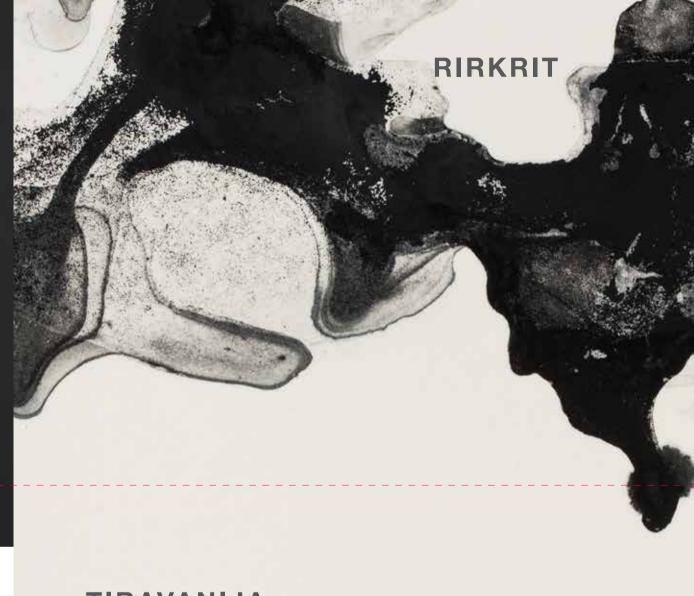
⁶ Rirkrit Tiravanija in a discussion with the authors, February 2017.

to their "desire to work together" despite distances and different schedules.⁶

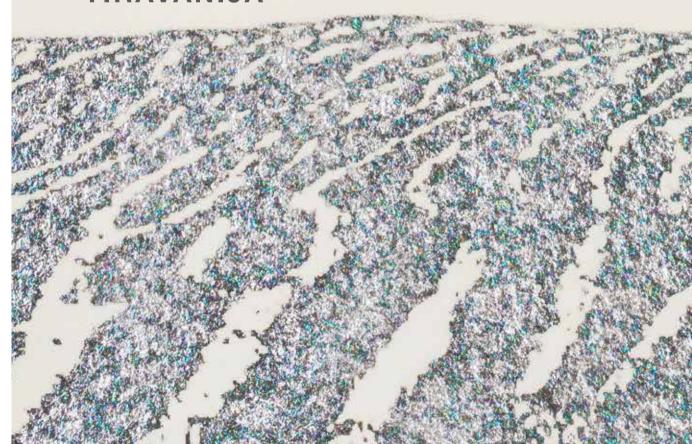


This game allowed the artists to open up their individually established practices to a process of collective experimentation—





TIRAVANIJA







⁷ In 2005, *The Land* became The Land Foundation.

a reminder of another artist-initiated collaboration, *The Land*.

Established in 1998 as an open space by Rirkrit and Thai artist,



The project started as a utopic experiment in the possibilities of thinking, working, and (temporarily) living together within the means farming can provide.

structures on The Land-all







propositions of social environments. Outside the controlled setting of a museum, and subject to the climate and passage of time, these artworks have aged and changed over the years. Throughout the art world, *The Land* project reached the status of a mythologised story; it lived off the written and the spoken—descriptions and word of mouth.

Remotely away from the conventional Western art centres, *The Land* was the subject of mediated experiences, what Plato would refer to as,



"at a third remove from the truth".8



Visiting The Land Foundation almost twenty years after it was established, one is confronted with the recognition that this project, whether experienced in its immediate form or mediated presentation, always





⁸ According to Plato, truth originates in Ideas, the physical object is an imitation of an Idea whereas the representation of an object whether in visual or written form is an imitation of an imitation, hence at a third remove from the truth.





housing structures, as well as imagine their latent functionality. Such a process exemplifies what Rirkrit often underlines

process exemplifies what
Rirkrit often underlines
as the attempt to blur
the distance between the
viewer and the work, but



Social interactions and the potential of art to stir exchanges have always been a driving force in his practice, likewise in the work of Carsten, Tobias, and Anri. But what such works instigate is also a reflection on the artistic process and how it "happens" in its encounter with the viewer.





⁹ Marcel Duchamp, "The Creative Act", in *The Essential Writings of Warcel Duchamp*, eds. Marchand du Sel and Salt Seller (London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd, 1975), 140.

interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative \arctan°

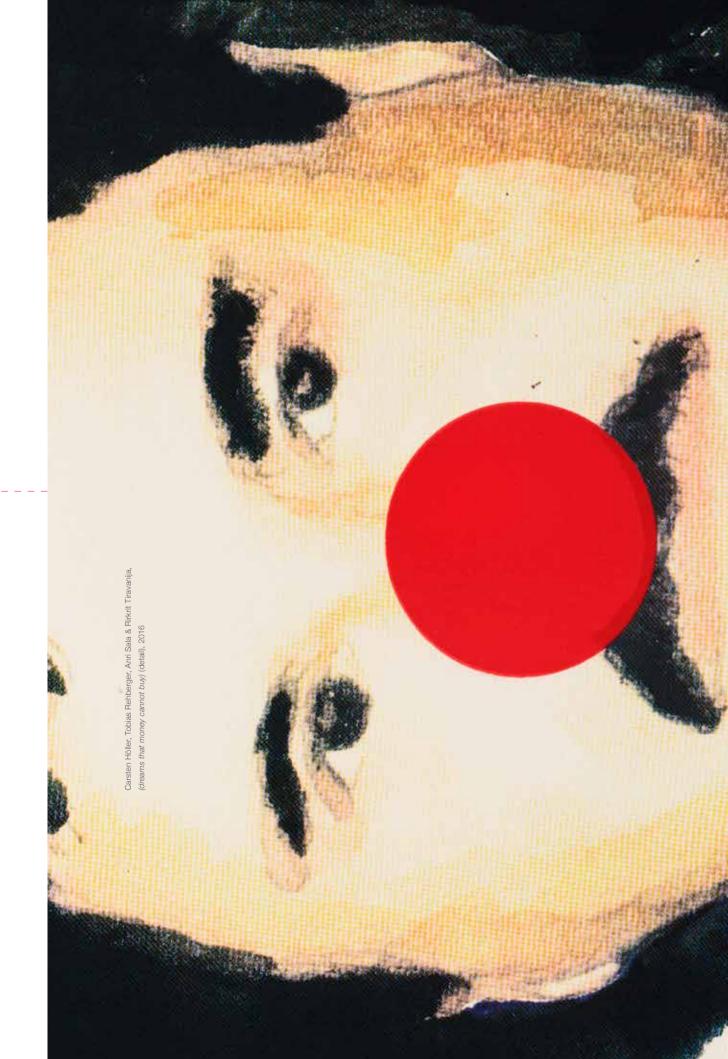
spectator brings the work in contact with the external world by deciphering and

not performed by the artist alone; the

Marcel Duchamp's voice still echoes today: "all in all, the creative act is



And so it is with the Exquisite Corpse.



This booklet is published on the occasion of the exhibition "Exquisite Trust (Blindly Collective Collaborations)" at STPI - Creative Workshop & Gallery, from 18 March - 22 April 2017.

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ABOUT STPI

STPI is a dynamic creative workshop and contemporary art gallery based in Singapore. Established in 2002, STPI is committed to promoting artistic experimentation in the mediums of print and paper and has become one of the most cutting-edge destinations for contemporary art in Asia. STPI sits alongside National Gallery Singapore and the Singapore Art Museum as part of the national Visual Arts Cluster of leading institutions in the region.

STPI Creative Workshop is a rigorous incubator for pushing the boundaries of various print and papermaking techniques. Bolstered by specialised facilities and a highly qualified workshop team, STPI Creative Workshop produces unique collaborations with leading international artists to challenge conventions in

art, explore new trajectories in their practice and share their experience with the public.

STPI Gallery is an active platform that fosters the exchange of ideas in contemporary art with its diverse exhibitions and public programme. The gallery hosts specially-curated exhibitions of works produced in the STPI Creative Workshop and regularly participates in international fairs. This enables it to nurture and sustain local and international interest in both its collaborators and in the mediums of print and paper. The gallery's public programme aims to engage and broaden visitor understanding of contemporary art, while exchanges with a variety of international curators, collectors and gallerists provide a holistic experience for audiences on a global level.

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