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Stanley Donwood

Exclusive interview about his latest collaboration with Thom Yorke for their exhibition in London

James Holden

Continuing his 'altruistic collective vision' with his latest album: *Imagine This Is A High Dimensional Space Of All Possibilities*

Hania Rani

Identity, life, death and the thin line inbetween with her new album, *Ghosts*



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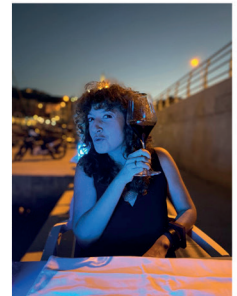
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Lisa Gwen

Lisa Gwen

Lisa is a curator of words and an editor of spaces. Her work and projects are the outcomes of these often overlapping and interchangeable roles which deal with space and its distribution; with aesthetics and design; interpretation and experience. One focuses on words and type, the other on artworks and installations. Both create images and visuals; both deal with narratives. Besides an innate passion related to all fields of visual art, Lisa loves playing 'local tourist'. She explores sites and spaces, scrutinising the natural, the built and the other landscape, through a camera lens. She has an ever-increasing hunger to make and create, to utilise her written voice, visually. She is a feminist, an activist and an aesthete, with an incessant need to share, communicate, inspire and inform. Lisa Gwen has a background in art history, cultural management, media and communications, project management and development.

Jaime Davis

Jaime Davis is a curator and writer living between London and San Diego. She is co-founder of the Occassionale, an arts festival in rural East Sussex, U.K. and PhD Candidate at De Montfort University. She regularly commissions co-designed projects, has organised exhibitions and public programmes with The Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki; The Photographers' Gallery, London, Osakusa-O, Tokyo; and Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Southeast Museum of Photography, Florida, as well as contributing writing to Art Agenda, 1,000 Words Magazine, Photomonitor, Blind, British Journal of Photography, CNN, and others.

John Twells

John Twells is a Berlin-based critic and journalist who's been examining underground and experimental music and culture for over two decades. John writes regularly for Manchester's boomkat.com, and has published articles, interviews and reviews in Crack, The Guardian, FACT and other outlets.

Contributing galleries / agencies / artists / photographers

Aus Fusinato, Bettina Korek, CO-MA, Dog Day Press, Frank Casillo, Ines Bahr, Jakub Stoszek, James Holden, Jorge Velez, Laura Lewis, Lily Agius Gallery (Malta), Matthieu Joffres, Rein Kooyman, Rowen Farrell, Serpentine Galleries (London), Stanley Donwood, Tin Man Art Gallery (London).

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Q&A

with

STANLEY DONWOOD

The man behind the visual art of Radiohead talks about his collaboration with Thom Yorke for their exhibition, **The Crow Flies at Tin Man Art** in South Kensington, London

How did creating this collection of paintings compare to your work in the past?

It was different in many ways... for the whole time I've been trying to be an artist, I've been unable to stick to any one style, so the nature of my pictures varies quite considerably both in emotional mood and aesthetic sensibility, ranging from 'actually

quite nice' to 'fucking depressing'. This inability of mine to settle into a recognisable and eventually familiar style was initially a bit frustrating, because its quite useful to be recognisable in a very crowded art world, but I've got used to it and pretty much accepted that its just the way it is; there is nothing I can do. So the way I make pictures has varied, and this time was the first time of using egg tempera, gouache, gesso and gold leaf on linen. I've mostly used acrylic paint in the past, although I've used oil too, as well as enamels. But the tempera is really very nice to use. I can't really explain why, but it's something to do with colour and fluidity and the fact that the painted surface stays 'alive' after it's dried - you can continue to work it if you just add water. Also it was the first time that Thom and I worked quite so closely on the paintings, taking turns to paint and taking the pictures in different directions - they're very much the work of two people.

EXHIBITION

The Crow Flies at Tin
Man Art in South
Kensington London.
6 – 10 December 2023



Photo by Rowan Farrell

Photo Courtesy of Christie's and TIN MAN ART



Before you began the works, did you both first decide on a plan, such as your roles, number of works, materials, subject matter, working schedule?

We had no plan. We never have a plan. It's quite possible that plans are anathema to any sort of interesting creativity.

Really, look at these terms; 'roles, number of works, materials, subject matter, working schedule'... they're restrictive notions, and don't allow for accident, error, mistakes...



and it's these, the unplanned and unexpected directions that art takes that are the interesting part of it all.

I think that's where it happens. If everything is planned and executed according to those plans then the result will necessarily be quite inert. We have no roles, we have no idea how many

pictures (if any) we might make, we don't know which materials might work, we've very little idea of the subject matter and we definitely don't have a working schedule.

“if you meet
the devil at
a crossroads
one dark night,
seriously
consider selling
your soul...”

What inspired you to use egg tempera and water-based gouache, and what's the idea behind it?

We painted with egg tempera and gouache because I got the idea from somewhere that these paints are essentially the same as what were used back in the 15th century.

I think that they're made with the same pigments that have been used for centuries; they're lovely to use, and the colours are really fantastically beautiful. The earlier phase of these pictures (ones like Besuch or Goom) were partly inspired by Arabic maps made around the 15th century by various sailors and pirates who happened to have incredible cartographic skills. Because they were made so long ago and were executed on vellum they have backgrounds that are kind of light brown. I had a memory of making fake 'old' treasure maps when I was a child by soaking paper in strong black tea or coffee, then letting it dry and drawing the map. You know, a map with 'here be dragons' and 'X marks the spot'; that kind of thing. So I thought it would be a good idea to do the same with the canvas, and we painted the canvases with a strong powdered coffee solution before we started painting

with the tempera. It looked great, pretty much exactly how I'd wanted it to.

The tempera worked well on it, and after painting for a while we began to erase parts of what we had painted with gesso, which also worked really well. We continued with gesso as a kind of erasing medium with the second phase of the painting, pictures like Somewhere You'll Be There or The Lakes.

The gesso sort of shifts the paint, not quite concealing what it's supposed to, and the effect is intended to be somehow reminiscent of badly restored Mediaeval frescos.

"Bad restoration" was what I kept saying **"Aim for a bad restoration!"**

What advice do you give anyone wanting to pursue a career in visual art?

I've often thought that learning how to be a plumber would be a good idea, but it's not like I took my own advice so, you know, I've no idea what I'm talking about.

But if you really, really want to be an artist of some sort you have to do whatever it is that you do a lot, and all the time. Don't give up.

If you meet the devil at a crossroads one dark night, seriously consider selling your soul and have a full and frank discussion about the relative merits and disadvantages of being a successful artist throughout a long and happy career, and then spending an eternity in unbearable torment.

Tell the devil thanks, but no thanks, and have another look at that plumbing course. Draw several portraits of the devil though, and try to get at least one of them exhibited.

In one word can you describe your life as an artist?

Odd.





Membranes

In another word, your experience working with Thom Yorke over the last 30 years?

Interesting.

Can you tell us more about the Flemish woven tapestry included in the show?

I was on holiday, cycling around northern France last summer and I went to Bayeux, and saw the very famous Bayeux Tapestry. I'd wanted to see it for absolutely years, since I was about 8 or something.

And it's incredible; I loved it. It took about as long to look at it all as it would to watch a movie. So afterwards, when I was back in the UK and painting with Thom I was going on and on about the tapestry and how I thought we should make one.

And so we did a bit of research and found out how we could make that happen. I think its very appropriate because a lot of the work we have made is partly inspired by Mediaeval Arabic maps and paintings, and tapestry as a medium is fairly strongly associated with that period in history.

What's next for you - any plans you can tell us about?

Hmm, okay. The year after next, me and Thom have got a big exhibition in a fancy musuem.

The exhibition, 'The Crow Flies' at the Tin Man Art gallery in South Kensington, is split into two parts, one which took place in September, and the second which runs from 6 – 10 December. For more information you can view the gallery website www.tinmanart.com



Two Moons

Text – Lisa Gwen

Pag.16

Sfumato. Sfumare. Sfumature.

Italian can be such a poetically seductive and suggestive language.

[sfu'ma:to] Say it... softly. As though it were a whisper; a secret to be disclosed in the lowest of decibels. Barely audible. Decidedly alluring.

This word, (and its derivations) above all others perhaps, best describes CO-MA's painting. This word is purposeful. Meaningful. And it is not one to have been callously selected. Coined during the Renaissance period, the sfumato describes a painting technique which denotes a softening of colour, medium or pigment, almost like a gentle blurring that adds contour to shape and line.

Leonardo da Vinci, the most prominent painter to adopt the sfumato technique, described

it as "without lines or borders, in the manner of smoke". CO-MA's work, although distinctly contemporary, harks back to the Old Masters in more ways than one.

Not only is his meticulous technique for shading and blending, reminiscent of the Italian fathers of the Renaissance, yet his ideal of beauty, and his portrayals of the female form, most especially in portraiture, retain that undying flavour of timelessness and unfaltering

Ghost



classicism which seemed so effortless in the 15th century. Yet, contrary to the Old Italian Masters, CO-MA does not merely idealise his figures by beautifying them, he takes it a step further; he is, perhaps somewhat secretly, a master manipulator... for, none of his 'sitters' are real; each one is literally a figment of his imagination; he 'handpicks' features, body parts, from various found images, and amalgamates, juxtaposes, enhances them. These figures are combinations, collages, hybrids, if you will. Fictitious, yet somehow, familiar. Because, it is this familiarity which makes them so attractive; it's almost as though we've seen them before, in another lifetime, in another era – just not as raw and bare, or unclothed; decidedly not tattooed, nor captured unabashedly sighing with pleasure.

CO-MA also incorporates the archetypes upheld by northern masters during this period in art history; the same masters who 'popularised' the psychological or the occupational portrait above the more traditional and conservative status portrait. Yet his genre deserves a 'title' of its own; his sitters are fantastical, completely conjured, quasi cyborg (in more than one instance), their enigmatism omnipresent. These are tenebrous portraits; they are obscure, sensual... nocturnal creatures given form through repeatedly soft brushstrokes.

However, to simply classify CO-MA's work as being indebted to these old masters, would be somewhat facetious. As the work he produces is grounded in a lot more complexity. His penchant for non-colour, and the strong shadows dominating the faces and features of his figures possess hints of the art deco period, or even film noir. His bodies, on the other hand, have a quasi sculptural quality; quite uncannily, he successfully mimics the tactility of marble – a quality achieved by combining the texture of the surface material with the medium of charcoal in order to achieve a quasi iridescence, which is



Photo by Ines Bahr

Work by CO-MA at a collective exhibition by Lily Agius Gallery
at The Malta Society of Arts in July 2023

Now I Can See



interview

quite haunting when viewed up close. Because that is how CO-MA's work has to be seen. Up close, and then from a distance, and then up close again, if only to reassure your eyes of the incredulity which beholds them. Since his debut show, not even two years ago (December 2021), there have been a number of significant progressions in CO-MAs work. He no longer seems (as) intent with masking or displacing his figures or even shielding their eyes; their faces and features are there to be admired in their full glory; every cheekbone, every cleft chin, every eyelash, and every pained expression. In fact, most of his figures seem to outwardly display an internal anguish of sorts. Ghost (2023), is perhaps the most haunting of his recent works. One can't help draw comparison to the stoic stance of the Mona Lisa; yet there is no mystery with CO-MAs Ghost; there is no hint of a smile at the corners of her mouth and lips, she's barely engaging with the viewer; she's demure, ambivalent... yet entirely bewitching.

Sitters generally agree to having their portraits painted. Unless one captures a snapshot, and executes a painting surreptitiously, there is an understood consensus behind the process. In this case, the sitters are all unknowns, they are all evocations, given 'corporeality' by the artist. The words of Oscar Wilde (The Picture of Dorian Gray) come to mind: "every portrait that is painted with

feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself." And what if the sitter is completely fictitious? Doesn't the painting become a complete reflection of the self, in some form or other?

The enigma shrouding each of his figures is the same in which the artist shrouds himself. He with no name; just a persona. Perhaps these paintings are a bold expression of admiration, yet also, of criticism towards the dwindling and lacking values of femininity and feminism. And yet, it's done with such subtlety, such ability – much like his use of the sfumato technique - that it is barely detectable. Yet so obviously there.

CO-MA will be exhibiting works in Denver, in 2024.
More info on: <https://www.coma-artist.com/>

DEEP LISTENING:

James Holden's new album draws us in with sonic awareness

Writer Jaime Davis speaks to DJ, musician and producer **James Holden** to discuss his approach to the new album, and attempts the impossible: to put the universal and personal experience of music into words.



Imagine This Is A High Dimensional Space Of All Possibilities hints at where James Holden might be taking us with his new album. Released on the Border Community label he founded nearly a decade ago as part of a “creative family more than a commercial venture,” this album continues his undeniably altruistic collective vision.

Holden has kept producing and composing close to his chest, and remade the increasingly locked-in process through a multidisciplinary practice that aims to future proof music from **“The hegemony of the DAW,”** and sustain a commitment to creating adventuresome experiences in sound.

Nothing about James Holden’s music—specifically, his approach to making it— is one dimensional. It is distinctly diffractive. Sounds swirl through and around each other to create textured patterns, yet are expressive and divergent. The album hints toward dialogue with more than human sensorial transmissions, emitting fragments that are divergent, reappearing elsewhere. This imaginative space of infinite possibilities has decidedly collective tendencies, and Holden reminds us that music is about being in space and time versus any

repetition of previously inherited cues. Nuanced in tendency towards shamanic offerings, the album is staggeringly virtuosic in its layers and transcendental geneology of electronic music. It folds aspects of Holden’s solid studio work along with his more recent improv practice heard in the previous album *Animal Spirits* album recorded live without edits and *The Outside Museum of Fractals*, the collaborative performance with Luke Abbot, created by programming a sequencer to create melodic patterns through a purposefully chaotic set of rules, when if mapped in mathematical space, would create the picture of a fractal—the structure of forms found in nature, such as snowflakes or DNA.

This album incorporates Holden’s field recordings and continued unlearning of formal training in classical music and mathematics.

No one track culminates as a victory lap for the album. Instead they are knowingly entangled states of becoming, all existing in some way within each other. Layered and complementary; relational, yet drifting under any sense of duress or closeness to more formal or representational cues. The album takes you to unfamiliar territory which still offers a sense of comfort through jazz samplings or pastoral, folk soundscapes. Tracks such as *You Are In a Clearing* are undeniably atmospheric whereas *Contains Multitudes* seems to receive and translate physical phenomena into electronic signaling. According to Holden, this first single of the album is a ten-minute synth and tabla creation inspired by the collages of John Stezaker, where windows open up to other worlds. It's unsurprising that Holden might look toward Stezaker for inspiration, another whose artistic practice was a response to pop culture, and a call to the audience for greater consciousness of the possibilities that surround them. There are interludes, such as *Common land* where brass echos as a call and response to more wavy, subterranean notes, evocative of deep listening and sonic awareness. There are also culling moments in the album, such as the keys a third of the way into *Trust Your Feet*—an unapologetically danceable track, especially with its slippery, deep bassline which approaches more aggressively towards the end of the track.



Photo by Laura Lewis

It's not a seamless, transcendental journey, leading inevitably toward a final resolution. *Worlds Collide* Mountains Form resuscitates the cliched kick drum into a bluegrass ensemble whereas *Four Ways Down The Valley* incorporates Holden's recordings of the Wiltshire landscape, tethering it to a familiar site. This, like other tracks, seem to respond to our continual state of flux, ever-mutating, absorbing emergent patterns out of chaos to emerge with a sonic awareness.

There are moments of return, though not quite to the same starting point. The songs' metronomic qualities become familiar enough to edge toward an affective language that develops throughout the album, creating an ephemeral yet haunting and at times faintly nostalgic undertone, such as the sound of a small aircraft or faint calls of children that introduce *Infinite Fadeout*.

With an undeniably sensorial curiosity throughout, *The Missing Key* plays as a testing ground for how elements of the track might correspond, and how the responsibility of making music is also an exercise in questioning how much control over time is really needed. It's compression, intentional adaptation—and alternatively, a release of that control, that makes space to and listens for the ability to respond as integral to the overall virtues of music.

Photo by Laura Lewis

Overall, the album is a layered murmur. *Continuous Revolution*, *In the End You'll Know*, and *You Can Never Go Back* contains the aural equivalents of seeing a flock of starlings. Strings of sound in each track somehow communicate, and collectively lead one another through correspondence. These become the sounds of a collective assembly within a multitude—an undulating, iterative, and playful movement, divergent in its transitions from one temporal space to another.





Amsterdam-based illus and musician talks us t his illustrative work for Holden's latest album / *This Is A High Dimensio Space Of All Possibilitie*

Jorge Velez in his studio



interview

trator
hrough
James
magine
onal



Q&A

with

Jorge Velez

How did you meet James Holden and collaborate on this project?

We met online - on Twitter of all places! I had been a fan of his productions and we follow each other on Twitter. Then we met in person when he played in Amsterdam with Waclaw Zimpel during one of the Lockdown eases. James got in touch when he'd finished his album and asked if I'd be interested to do the art. I immediately agreed. I was honoured and excited to be asked to be part of the release.

What was the brief? And what decisions did you take along the way?

The brief was to do the covers and, maybe, some type of booklet or a comic of some sort. I suggested an illustration per track. Sort of a narrative that takes place in twelve large panels instead of a wordy or overly fussy comic. He liked the idea. I sometimes think the "less is more" approach is especially effective when telling a story. Or, in the case of this album, helping to tell its story.

Did you encounter any difficulties?

Difficulties are always there for sure. They're almost always technical things that have to do with translating from digital to paper. Or vice versa. Just techy things. Colour balances and things like that. But as far as the real process of drawing and finishing the artwork and being sure James and the label were happy with my choices it was probably the most enjoyable one I've had yet as an illustrator.

How did you come up with the characters in the illustrations?

I work very spontaneously. If something bubbles up I immediately put it to paper and don't reject it. It could end up being important. You never know. You feel when it's right and when it communicates with the other elements. The same goes in making music. In this case I would run everything by James and he was immediately enthusiastic. The beings that populate the album art were what we both thought should be representing this music he had made. Colourful and varied - all united by sound. In my mind everyone just needed to be there at that great big endless rave. All kinds of beings from humans to animals to the unfamiliar.



The music from the album takes us into James Holden's fantasy world.

How would you say the artwork reflects that?



This would probably be a better question for James to answer! When I had that first video chat with James and read him my notes I remember him laughing and saying I was reading his mind! I honestly only listened to the album stream once before I had the physical album in my hands. And that was when I was given a link to the unmastered, sequenced

album so we could be introduced, so to speak. I wrote down my immediate visual impressions for each track as it played then never listened to it again until after it was released.

You are also a musician. Do you think being a visual artist has inspired you musically and vice-versa? And do they both give you the same satisfaction creatively?

Music and sound has always been visual for me. And visual art has definitely inspired my own music. At this moment I get more pleasure creating visual art. I get real pleasure putting a line down on paper. It's the same pleasure I had as a child when I was always drawing. I think it's so much harder now to have the world pay attention to music and the artists that make it. It's all meant to be embraced. My thoughts on where music is now are a bit cynical. I've pretty much stopped putting new things out there though I still make music for my own enjoyment. I'm happy there are some people making and releasing wonderful music, though. And there's so much great older music left to discover, too.

It's been said that the cover for the album is 'a vibrant surrealist image' – how would you describe your work and style in general and also for the album?

I don't really have one style. I like to have the context dictate how the art will look. If something moves me visually I'll usually draw from it (no pun intended) both consciously and unconsciously. I love everything and everyone from Manet to Nicole Claveloux to Tantric paintings to Peter Vos to Jack Kirby and on and on. In this case I was thinking of 19th and 20th century children's books. They're a big inspiration for the album art. The feelings those illustrations have always evoked in me is something I was going for. I wanted a use of color unlike how we rarely see anymore. Kind of how colour may have been used in the ancient world: intense and psychedelic but not Day-Glo, not "1967".



ALBUM FRONT COVER

Imagine This Is A High Dimensional
Space Of All Possibilities

Illustrated by Jorge Velez

How would you describe the whole experience of this collaboration?

The collaboration was joyful. We had a lot of fun discussing how things were unfolding as the drawings progressed. We had one or two short weekly video chats after I'd email James his updates. But I was able to work very freely and sort of let things flow out, refine them, present them, refine again if needed and then move on.

This party and parade you see in the booklet just kind of spilled out on its own! I think they were just waiting to be let loose to dance.

What are you working on now and what's next?

At the moment I'm trying to get the attention of art directors and agencies. Having an agent would be useful - a website only takes you exposure so far, so im trying to figure out how to let people know I'm here and ready to work with them. I'd like to work on a children's book or two or three!

Limited edition art prints and some of his self-published small books are available at Velezmedia.bigcartel.com

www.jorgevelez.art

What are you listening to at the moment?

Wayne Shorter Quartet - various - Fleetwood Mac - Alternate "Tusk" - Chez Damier & Ron Trent 12"s selections from the '90s - Boards Of Canada - Music Has The Right To Children - Zaho de Sagazan - La symphonie des éclairs - Always some French piano music (Satie,Ravel, Debussy and Fauré) - Lots of Neil Young and Crazy Horse



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The Venice
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CEO of the London
Serpentine Galleries, **Bettina
Korek** discusses the creation
of opportunities for artists
whilst connecting with
society - with
the galleries, the park, the
pavillion and beyond...

Serpentine CEO

Bettina Korek

Q&A



Portrait photo of Bettina Korek by Hugo Glendinning

bettina korek

What makes Serpentine unique?

Serpentine's mission is to build new connections between artists and society. To achieve this we are always looking for new ways to expand the impacts of our programmes globally while deepening our investment in artists and audiences locally here in London. What is most unique about Serpentine is probably our long-standing and constantly evolving commitment to nurturing interdisciplinary collaborations.

For twenty years we have commissioned an architect to build the Serpentine Pavilion in the park each summer, and for ten years our cutting edge Arts Technologies programme has supported artists working with advanced technologies. We have consistently changed the path of so many incredible creators' careers painters, sculptors and filmmakers, but also dancers, architects, computer programmers and even scientists.



Left Image

Yinka Shonibare CBE RA

Decolonised Structures (Kitchener), 2022

Fibreglass sculpture, hand-painted with Dutch wax pattern and wooden plinth

141 x 47 x 48.5 cm

Courtesy the artist and Stephen

Friedman Gallery, London.

Photographer: Stephen White & Co.

Photo: © Yinka Shonibare CBE

Planning and time spent on the pavilions must be an extraordinary experience, especially once seen completed. Can you discuss the process from choosing someone to design them and the work involved?

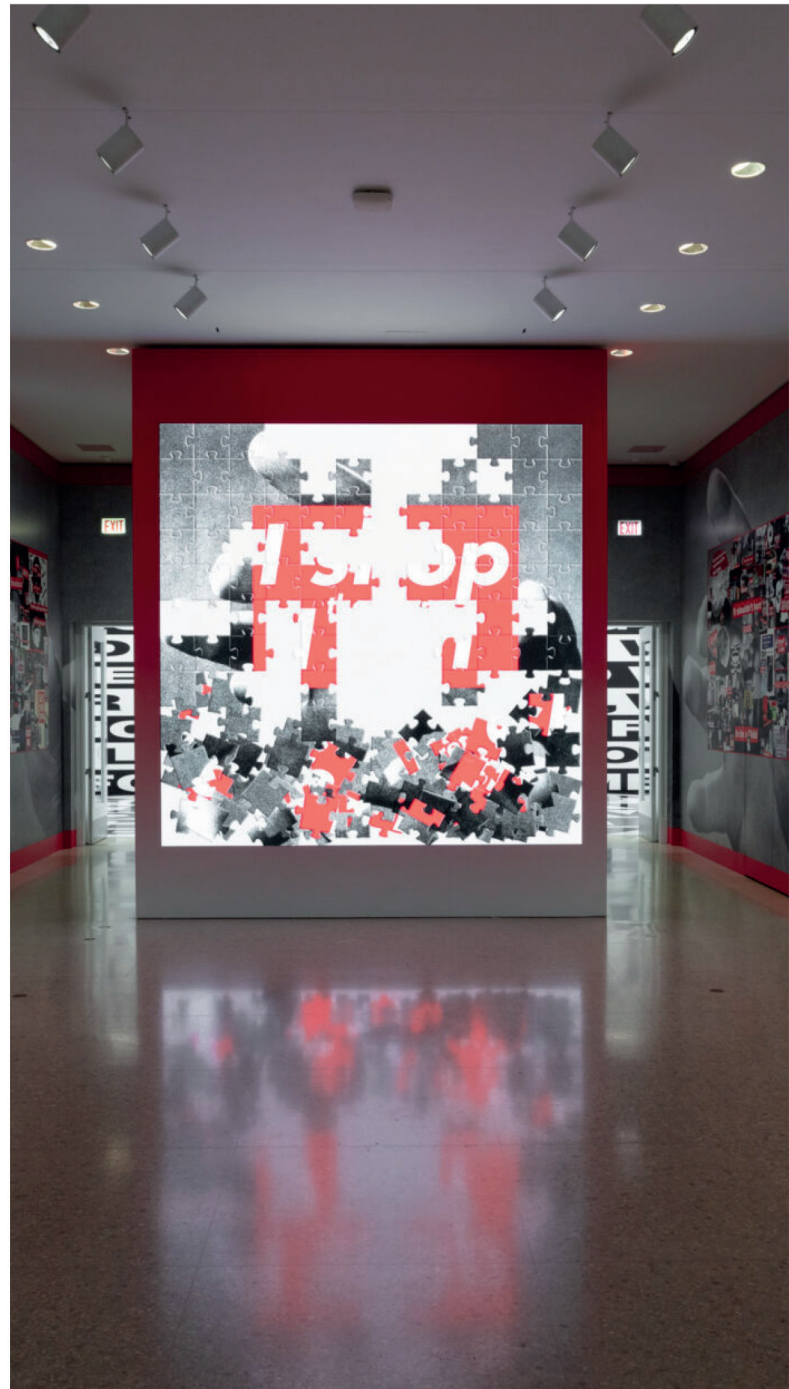
When the Pavilion began in 2000, all participants were major international architects who had yet to build on British soil. In the second decade of the programme, its success, and the generous support of our partners like Goldman Sachs supporting the annual project for the 9th consecutive year this year Julie Burnell, Stage One, AECOM, David Glover and others, has enabled the commission to be extended to up and coming architects.

Now we invite promising architects to submit proposals, and this is what drives the selection process. We look to architects who employ interdisciplinary practices that reflect Serpentine's

own artistic programme. We solicit proposals from those who are tackling timely themes and challenges with their work, from methods of bringing people together in real space, to matters of sustainability and the environment.

It's hard to believe that Lina Ghotmeh's *À Table* is already my third Serpentine Pavilion! A throughline I've observed has been how each commission addresses the functional themes of gathering and meaningful human interactions in different ways. Titled *À table* the French call to sit down together at a table Lina Ghotmeh's Pavilion formally alludes to this spirit of unity, as well as serve as an interface that invites visitors to sit down at its central table, where we look forward to hosting a range of memorable programmes and conversations. Building upon the legacy of so many before it, this Pavilion will offer a celebratory space for community - a place to eat together, reflect and converse.

Barbara Kruger; BARBARA KRUGER: THINKING OF YOU, I MEAN ME, I MEAN YOU Installation view, The Art Institute of Chicago - AIC, Chicago, September 19, 2021–January 24, 2022 Courtesy the artist and Sprüth Magers Photo: The Art Institute of Chicago



How can an audience play a part in supporting the arts in general and in what ways do you think you have achieved this in your life's work and at The Serpentine?

Audience engagement is crucial to supporting the arts. Throughout my career I have remained committed to the goal of making art a bigger part of everyday life. At Serpentine, we consider the role of audiences from every angle. The third issue of Future Art Ecosystems, the annual briefing published by Serpentine Arts Technologies, explores the concept of The User Experience of Art.

This is a reframed focus on the art experience beyond the physical artwork as a rare object, instead centering the diverse spectrum of users who encounter the content we present, and encouraging cultural institutions to develop a deeper integration with artistic production processes. Not only do we seek to connect with a broad range of visitors, or users our goal is to sustain contact with each one, and provide them with a variety of different experiences, both in person and online. Some of our recent

experiments spearheaded by Arts Technologies have utilised blockchain concepts to pilot new models for audience-driven support. In conjunction with our 2023 show by Argentine artist Tomás Saraceno, we worked with RadicalxChange on a Partial Common Ownership (PCO) project to raise funds for the Salinas Grandes and Laguna de Guayatayoc communities in Jujuy, Argentina.

Our gaming exhibition by Brazilian artist Gabriel Massan and collaborators features an option for players to mint their memories from the game, which is powered by the energy efficient blockchain Tezos. We've yet to see the pull potential of decentralized technologies to be harnessed for arts patronage, and this is an exciting time to introduce some of these new concepts to audiences in hope that they will produce new, sustainable models for support.

How would you compare the art scene in LA and London?

Like London, LA is spread out and the geography of the city impacts the way artists think.

Both cities are incredibly innovative, diverse, cross-pollinating, risk-taking and both have amazing entrepreneurial qualities. Both are also national hubs for entertainment industries, and entertainment and art are naturally symbiotic fields - two interrelated layers of the culture industry that contribute to the overall richness of the city's landscape. They also both have distinctly strong networks of arts schools. These are cities where students and graduates can immediately put their ideas into action.

Some of the most compelling qualities of LA as a city are embodied by the Serpentine as an institution: intrepid innovation, fluidity across disciplines, an irrepressible preoccupation with the future. I'm invested in building bridges between the two cities and I'm so happy to announce that in 2024 we'll be presenting the first UK exhibition of LA-based artist Lauren Halsey which will delve into similarities and differences between both. One thing I've noticed recently is that everyone in London is so keen to collaborate, share knowledge and reach out to people. I think there's a lot of enthusiasm for finding sustainable ways to help artists that aren't operating within

the market but are doing the work that we are all passionate about, which is making new connections throughout this amazing city.

What would you say that it takes to be a leading figure in the arts and what are the challenges?

There are many different art worlds, and something I think is precious about each of them is how the interests and perspectives of so many different unique stakeholders are held in balance from artists to collectors to galleries, schools and the myriad audiences that activate everything that happens therein.

A leader in the arts needs to be adept at talking with - and listening to - all these disparate players and constituencies. This can be challenging when the circumstances and experiences of some of these stakeholders are drastically dissimilar. Nevertheless, a good leader should be able to help translate competing concerns and sensitivities, and initiate collaborations that are equitable and generative.

What was the aim for the Los Angeles organisation ForYourArt that you founded in 2006 and why did you feel it was needed?

ForYourArt was founded in 2006 as an experiment in patronage. Consisting of a website, a weekly email compiling art events and openings across all of L.A.'s galleries, museums and artist run spaces (at a time when such a resource did not yet otherwise exist), and a range of discursive, publication, strategic and exhibition projects, I'm proud of all that ForYourArt did to make L.A.'s evolving art communities of the 2000s and 2010s more legible, navigable, and plugged into new audiences and systems of support. From projects with legends like John Baldessari and Barbara Kruger, to work with brands, local governments and the Getty on the groundbreaking initiative Pacific Standard Time—I wore many hats for ForYourArt and developed a nuanced perspective on how artists' practices, cultural tourism, corporate sponsorship and traditional forms of patronage all are so incredibly different, yet must somehow be brought together to sustain art ecosystems.



Georg Baselitz, Sing Sang Zero, 2011. © Georg Baselitz
2023. Photo: Jochen Littkemann, Berlin

Since your move to London to serve as the CEO of Serpentine, has your attention turned to any living artists in the UK and have any ideas been further sparked by the surrounding artistic environment?

There are so many incredible artists living and working in London, so many of whom have played roles in shaping what we do at Serpentine. Lynette Yiadom-Boakye serves on our Board of Trustees and has been an invaluable friend to me as well as the institution's. A British artist that is front of mind currently is Yinka Shonibare CBE RA, who will be featured next year at Serpentine South. Shonibare's interdisciplinary practice explores cultural identity and post-colonialism within the contemporary context of globalisation.

Through his signature use of African batik fabric, Shonibare comments on the complex interrelationship between Africa and Europe. The exhibition will include installations of sculptures, pictorial quilts and woodcuts, presenting his explorations on the ongoing effects of boundaries 'whether psychological,

physical or geographical'. Shonibare's most recent body of works explores sites of refuge, debates about statues and their place in our cities, and the European legacy of war and consequential attempts at peace.

How is the schedule and the choice of artists presented at Serpentine put together?

Our ambitions follow the ambitions of artists. We create new opportunities for artists to connect with society, whether in the galleries, the park, the pavilion or beyond. Our aim is to create a supportive context for it that allows artist's ideas to flourish and spread beyond the traditional limits of the art world, and increasingly this means thinking more about how we can work with artists beyond the exhibition as the central product of our collaboration. Like all institutions, we hope to schedule our exhibitions and events with plenty of time for the artists to cultivate their ideas and in order to convene proper support around challenging proposals. Our curatorial team is led by Hans Ulrich Obrist, and the constant cross-pollination of ideas across our departments means that Serpentine's programme always remains uniquely interdisciplinary.

What's up next?

In February 2024, Serpentine is thrilled to present Barbara Kruger's first institutional exhibition in London in more than twenty years.

This show will extend beyond gallery walls to engage Kensington Gardens and other sites around London, building on a history of public art collaborations I am proud to have facilitated with Kruger in Los Angeles—from wrapping school buses with her signature larger than life graphic texts in 2012 to staging massive billboards and murals in 2020 for the second edition of Frieze Los Angeles.

BARBARA KRUGER: THINKING OF YOU. I MEAN ME. I MEAN YOU, the exhibition at Serpentine South will be a site-specific iteration of works presented recently at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, LACMA (2022), the Art Institute of Chicago (2021–2022) and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, MoMA (2022–2023), adapted each time to respond to the space and its context.

The exhibition will feature a number of iconic pieces from the 1970s and 1980s, including *Untitled (I shop therefore I am)*, 1987, and *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, 1989, reconfigured as video works in recent years. It will also include the London premiere of *Untitled (No Comment)*, 2020, an immersive three-channel video installation for which Kruger combines text, images and audio clips with a barrage of found images and memes ranging from blurred-out selfies to animated photos of cats foregrounding twenty-first century modes of content creation and consumption.

For updates on their exhibitions, live programme and limited editions, please visit serpentinegalleries.org



BERLIN

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

ATONIAL

Tresor founder Dimitri Hegemann put together the first edition of Berlin Atonal in 1982, bringing iconic acts like Einstürzende Neubauten and Malaria! to Kreuzberg's relatively modest SO36 club. Since then, the festival has gone through significant changes. In 1990, Atonal went on hiatus for over two decades as Hegemann pivoted his attention towards Tresor. But when the club moved from its original location in a vault beneath Potsdamer Platz to nestle in the basement of Kraftwerk, a vast decommissioned power plant on Köpenicker Straße, it was only a matter of time before Atonal rose from the ashes once more. The festival threw open the doors of the multi-floor industrial building in 2013, placing techno legends like Moritz von Oswald and Juan Atkins next to experimental voices like Glenn Branca and Kurt Schwitters and comparative newcomers Kangding Ray and Raime.

Text – **John Twells**

The festival threw open the doors of the multi-floor industrial building in 2013, placing techno legends like Moritz von Oswald and Juan Atkins next to experimental voices like Glenn Branca and Kurt Schwitters and comparative newcomers Kangding Ray and Raime. Atonal attempted to balance a precarious line, paying respect to the past while simultaneously highlighting the creativity of Berlin's ever-changing experimental landscape. Once you get through a checkpoint in front of the complex, an armband makes traveling between spaces relatively pain-free.





Photo by Frank Casillo

Tresor and Globus are already linked, and there's a passage to Ohm via Kraftwerk's ground floor with large, comfortable beanbags to soothe weary dancers. Outside the front doors, street food vendors and bars supply fuel for the brief down-time between shows. It's certainly bigger than ever before, but the expansion comes at a price. In 2019, festival passes were €150, this year they cost over twice that. Inflation has hit Berlin hard - a döner kebab can now set you back €7 - but many of my local friends have skipped the event altogether, or just picked a single night. I have to wonder who it is who might end up attending the event.

When I track up Kraftwerk's brutalist concrete staircases on the first day, the main area is littered with motionless bodies painted by yellow light as Laurel Halo plays dreamy renditions of pieces from her new album 'Atlas'. Perched in front of a grand piano while Leila Bordreuil plays cello, Halo avoids any obvious orchestral or post-classical tropes. She works into her textures like a sculptor, carving filigree phrases into immense, trembling sonic structures. Across the way at Ohm, I'm shocked out of my serenity by a stylish, physical performance from French artist Laure Boer, who crossbreeds extreme noise, post-punk and folk using a horizontal, single-stringed instrument, a modified rotary phone and a table full of effects boxes and homemade synths. Holding the phone's receiver up to her

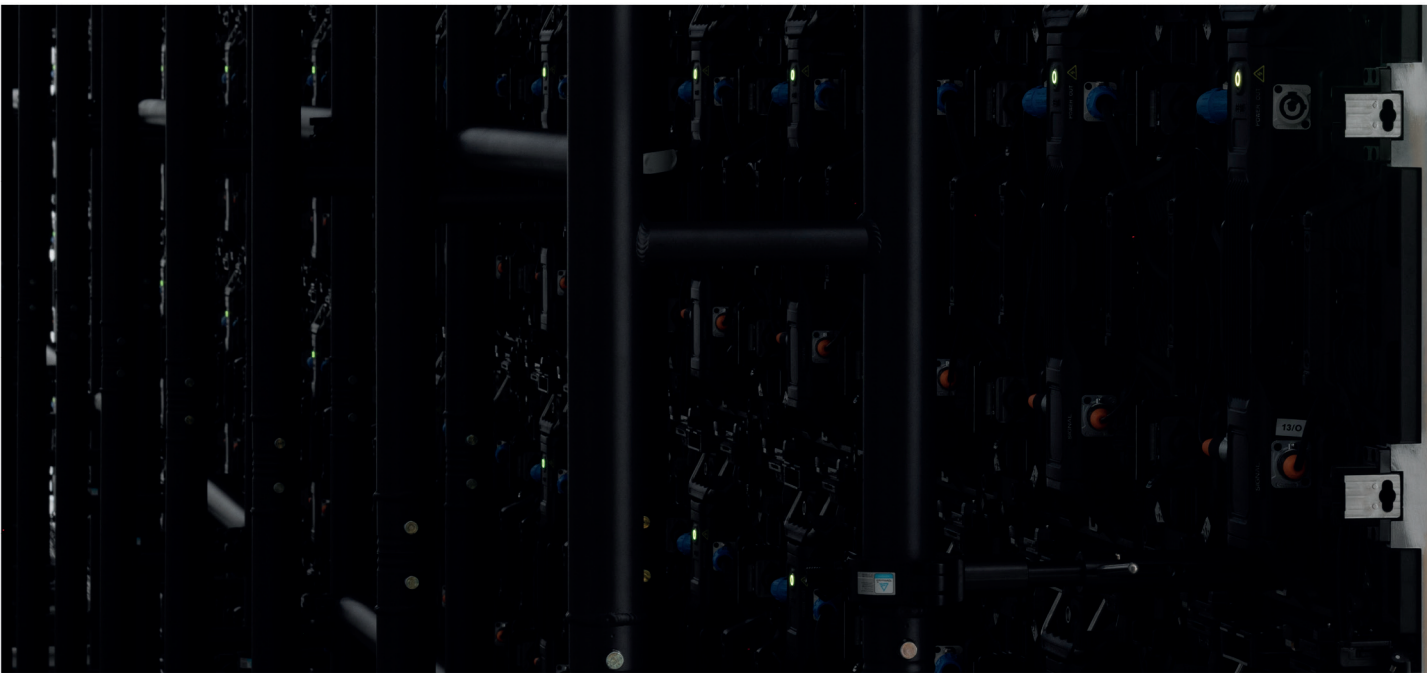
monitor speaker to force out swirling feedback, or flicking a flashlight over her small arsenal of photosensitive oscillators, Boer controls her racket with the elegance of a puppeteer. It's an impressive start.

Each day of the first weekend, controversial Austrian artist Florentina Holzinger performs 'Étude For Church', a short but shocking spectacle that campily skewers our perceptions of religious imagery. Holzinger has been performing her 'études' in various locations for the last three years, and here hangs a two tonne iron bell from Kraftwerk's high ceiling, directing two angelic nude bodies to hit it with hammers while another dangles from the inside like a clapper. Mid-way through, two more figures drop from the heavens, this time suspended by metal hooks that pierce their skin. It's Hellraiser directed by Peter Greenaway, and I'm not completely surprised when an audience member collapses in front of me at the sight of bloody trails oozing down the performers' backs. Preston's Rainy Miller also confronts audience expectations with his one-off performance 'A Fugue State', avoiding the room's two stages to wander listlessly and slither across the sticky floor, right past my legs. He eventually situates himself on a balcony above the bar, AutoCrooning while evocative images and phrases flash on a nearby screen. Comparatively, Space Afrika and Caterina Barbieri take a more traditional approach with their debut

collaboration, poising themselves confidently on the central platform, backed up by Marcel Weber, aka MFO, on lights. Barbieri is uncharacteristically casual, and wanders freely around the stage with her acoustic guitar, picking, strumming and occasionally singing over British teammates' fractal loops and syrup-coated synths.

As good as the music is, the mood during the first two days is eerily muted. When Berlin-based British bass alchemist Shackleton plays a transcendent set with Polish clarinet player Wacław Zimpel and prodigious young Hindustaani classical vocalist Siddhartha Belmannu, there's so little movement from the crowd that they may as well have been in freeze-frame. And although I'm personally left cold by techno trio Sandwell District's much-touted A/V performance, I still expect a Berlin audience to give the dancefloor some attention. So thank goodness for aya, who administers a much-needed shot of adrenaline, prompting shrieks and howls with her lopsided re-constructions of tracks from last year's 'im hole' album.

"Isn't this better than techno?" she giggles cheekily, crashing wobbly, asymmetrical kicks into spiraling hard dance stabs. Over at Globus, Berlin-based Welsh-Greek DJ/producer Rhyw keeps the momentum barreling with his first German live set, hypnotizing the dancefloor with futuristic percussive workouts before turning the room into a 22nd Century Balkan wedding.



Loraine James starts things off on Saturday, performing songs from her new album 'Gentle Confrontation' in front of a screen showing concrete tower blocks, cloudy skies and birds flying past satellite dishes. Wearing a Björk tee-shirt, James sounds as confident as I've ever seen her, singing wistfully over jerky, IDM-influenced rhythms and garbled samples. Parisian sound designer Aho Ssan meanwhile presents a more byzantine vision of electronic music, teaming up with Sevi Iko Dømochevsky, who compliments the crunchy, digital detritus with organic cyberpunk visuals. Almost operatic in its scope, the piece - called 'Rhizomes' - is remarkably well conceived, splitting elements of drill with glassy drones, soaring vocals and blistering white noise. Later on, Nkisi's set is

deep, hypnotic and bold; I've seen her perform a few times before, but never like this. She sings in deadpan cycles over spine-tingling bleeps and noises, and a dancer interprets the sounds by cutting slow, intentional shapes at the front of the stage.

Shadowy PAN artist Honour poises masked under a Black Jesus, using a lighter to illuminate his switches and dials. Shifting loops and cutting up blues, soul, jazz and jungle into a plunderphonic jumble of bumps and groans, Honour eventually grabs the mic, rapping through a voice-changer like Madlib. And when Zebra Katz takes the



Photo by Aus Fusinato

spotlight downstairs, he uses his limitless charisma to turn the Null Stage into a sweaty rave dungeon. "All I wanna do is keep the dancefloor jumping," he shouts, and he follows through. The tempo shifts a little over at Globus, but the dancing continues, with a dextrous, bass-heavy set from dizzying South African gqom innovator DJ Lag, and at Tresor, OK Williams reinforces the interconnectedness of contemporary dance music, cutting Brazilian funk with East Coast club, and drill with undulating industrial techno. It's an exhausting, enthralling night, capped off for me by a sensitively psychedelic, cross-genre

set from French DJ and producer rRoxymore, who keeps my legs moving until they're almost ready to buckle. On the second weekend there's a different crowd, this time clustered around Ohm and itching to dance. Unfortunately, a near-permanent line creates makes movement difficult, but the masses aren't far from the mark. Ziúr's set on Friday is particularly brilliant, and I feel sorry for anyone who doesn't get to witness her full-hearted, punk-y chatter, and Egyptian singer Abdullah Miniawy's surprise guest appearance on the mic. Afterwards, the great DJ Marcelle keeps the tiny dancefloor vibrating with one of the entire festival's wildest selections, stitching together divergent sounds using vinyl and CDJS. Upstairs, NYC-based noise operative Dreamcrusher is visibly annoyed by the venue's tough volume limitations, and tries hard to coax movement from

the difficult main stage crowd. "Y'll too stiff out there," they shout, sardonically. "If you're tryna get active, step to the front." Thankfully, even if they can't play at their usual ear-destroying level, they still bring an important message from the American underground to Berlin, mangling shoegaze, hip-hop, industrial music and activism. Emptyset have played at Atonal multiple times, and their performance on Saturday feels like the entire festival's headline set; the room is thick with bodies, all of them fixated on James Ginzburg and Paul Purgas's wrecking ball drums and Theresa Baumgartner's balletic laser show.

The duo's new music is some of the best of their career, and this expression of physicality and technical showiness encapsulates what it is the Atonal audience craves. The most excitement tonight though comes from the Null Stage, where Virginia rap duo Prison Religion make rap and techno sound like basement noise, playing a chaotic, brilliant set from the middle of the dancefloor. It's impossible to see what's going on without barging through the crowd; Prison Religion are surrounded by giddy moshers, and give us an idea of what Public Enemy might sound like if they were as influenced by Lightning Bolt as they were James Brown. "We got a party started?" they ask, already knowing the answer. By Sunday, even a seasoned festival-goer like myself is feeling the exhaustion and

...overstimulation, but plenty of things to hear from performance from M who brings her new a life, playing live analog and shimmy through

ut there are still
ear. There's a moving
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then Berlin-via-Nairobi sound artist KMRU connects with Welsh vanguard Elvin Brandhi for the first time, developing a rusted tangle of machine-gun kicks, wordless, animal hums and airlock whooshes I can only describe as dystopian dadaism. The Bug and Flowdan also provide a crowd-pleasing set, and Mala is tight and enjoyable, but I'm out of steam. Atonal's a marathon that can provide a lot to think about, but it's so big, it can be hard to streamline the experience. It's so big that there are multiple Atonals; if you don't make it past the long line into Ohm, you could end up in Tresor for the rest of the night, surrounded by a completely new group of people and completely different music.

In many ways this neatly reproduces the reality of the Berlin experience: plenty of choice, but an element of chaos that can lead to annoyance or serendipity. You're always missing something, but there's a chance you'll stumble on something mind-boggling. Atonal curates a Berlin experience that's both magnified and in miniature; it doesn't feel like being at Berghain, or even Tresor on a usual weekend, but it's close enough to give visitors a rough template. The intimacy you might expect from Berlin's notorious club spaces is replaced by awe, and their expected long-form soundtracks are trimmed down and served in bulk. This creates its own psychedelic experience, pushing a level of confusion that'll have you thinking you've been posted up in the venue's dark halls for weeks, wandering listlessly from venue to venue. It's the Venti cup of coffee to Italy's espresso, not without its charms, but you'll be buzzing for longer than you thought, and there'd better not be a line for the bathroom.



Photo by Jakub Stoszek

**IN CONVERSATION WITH
HANIA RANI**

hania rani

Hania Rani,
about exploring
memories, identity,
stories, beliefs and
ultimately, life, death
and the thin line
inbetween, with her
latest album

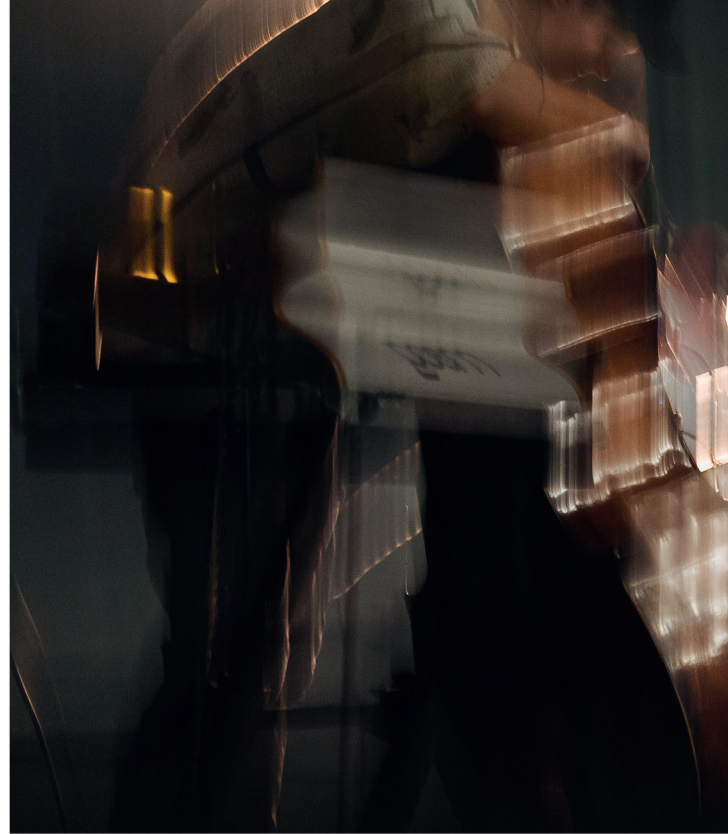
GHOSTS

Q&A

You've had an extensive touring schedule for the new album Ghosts. Which was the most memorable performance and why?

Touring for a new album is a unique experience and it brings out special emotions. Every night feels special because we are presenting the set with some new set design and visuals. In winter we are mostly visiting big cities which means meeting friends I haven't seen for a while, and this usually makes the show even more special. But obviously there are places that are particularly significant to me like Berlin, where I used to live, or Paris

Photo by Matthieu Joffres



How would you describe the power of music and its ability to move a listener, and what elements or structure do you prefer to use when composing an album.

I'm a firm believer in the power of music. It's a bit of an idealistic approach but I have seen so many examples of it and heard so many stories from my listeners as well... Personally, music has a healing force, and it has always carried me through the most turbulent moments of my life. I very often hear from my audience that my music helped them get through some difficult moments... It always surprises me because I keep my musical language utterly personal, almost private, so the fact that so many 'strangers' can relate to my stories is just mind blowing. And I think this is my way of composing - I am keeping it extremely personal. I am sharing the things that personally move and amaze me. I am not "creating" on a big scale, I am always thinking very locally, but on the other hand - inclusively. My language is personal and intimate but the stories I am sharing are universal, I guess.

What have been your sources of inspiration for the album?

Ghosts certainly :) Once I composed the first track, which was Dancing with Ghosts, I liked the idea of researching the theme of spirits so much that I felt like it's the right direction and an extremely vast topic to explore. I was trying to stay away from the most direct references that come from horror movies. I was more interested in exploring topics of memories, identity, stories by other people, beliefs which obviously directed me to even more deeper things: life, death and the thin line between. I can't lie that I was also deeply moved by conflicts and wars happening around us last year, which escalated to even more extreme forms this year. I think the third album is the right moment to speak out about things that really matter to me, things that scares me and that I'm deeply fearing or admiring.

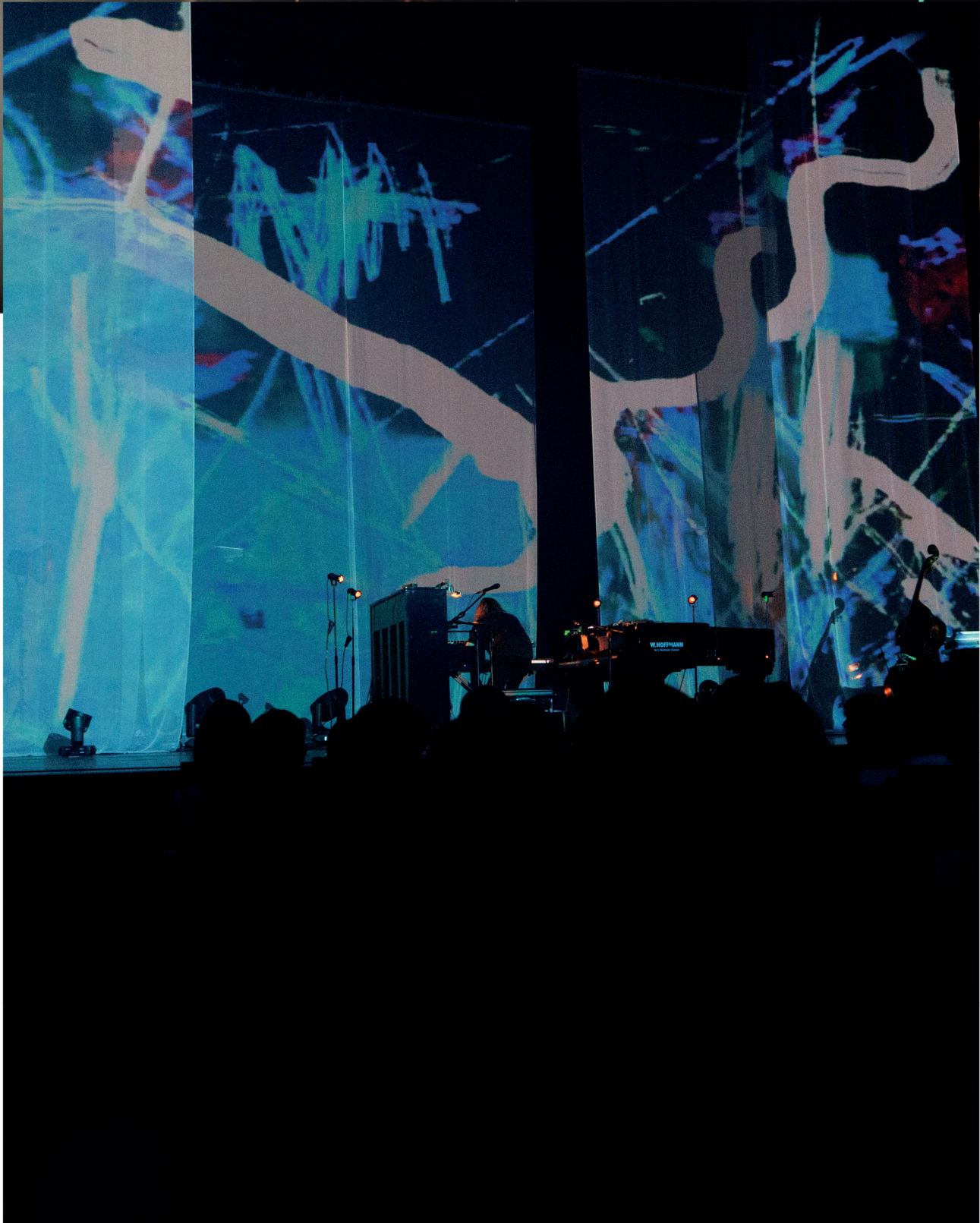


Photo by Matthieu Joffres

Can you discuss your writing and composition process for this album?

The process was very long and required a lot of patience. I was putting the songs together for many years, selecting the right tunes and moods. Some of the tracks were composed already in 2017 but needed to wait for the right arrangements - for instance, Hello and Don't Break My Heart. Some of them were almost improvised during the recording session and four of the songs I composed in collaboration with amazing artists that agreed to contribute to this album - Duncan Bellamy from Portico Quartet, Olafur Arnalds and Patrick Watson. Once I grasped the main concept and mood for "Ghosts" mustering the right colours and soundscapes was easier. I had a very clear picture of the universe that I wanted to invite my listeners to.

Where was Ghosts written and produced?

Any guest musicians featured on the album?

"Ghosts" is the most chaotic and complex album so far, recorded in many, many places by many sound engineers including myself. I was literally collecting all the necessary sounds for a couple of years and mixing them together without limits. I recorded most of the vocals and piano in Amsterdam with Gijs van Klooster, strings and moog synthesiser at Polish Radio in Warsaw with Viktor Arnason. The rest was recorded in Switzerland, Iceland for Whispering House by Olafur Arnalds, London with Duncan Bellamy, and Canada with Patrick Watson. After producing the album I went to Berlin for almost 3 weeks to mix it with Greg Freeman who managed to put all these different sounds together and create a cohesive, wholesome soundscape of the album. After, the record was mastered by John Davis from Metropolis Studios in London.

What was the creative process of making the video. And how would you say it reflects, or adds another element to, the music.

The visual aspect of my music is extremely important to me because I think it tells a lot about the music itself but also about the artist. It also allows me to challenge my audience with something that is beyond music and make them familiar with my inspirations and visual references. We are highly visual creatures, I think, which means that the visual side of anything really stays with us and talks to our imagination. That's why I think the visual aspect of the album needs to be chosen extremely carefully, in order to avoid banality and the direct aspect of it.

I am really proud of the Dancing with Ghosts video which was directed - for the first time in my experience - by women, Sara and Nadia Szy, two polish artists currently living in Paris. I think we managed to bring the true spirit of the song with this video, telling the story of two lovers, who are meeting secretly as ghosts in a surrounding of the empty, almost abandoned city.

What music do you listen to in your free time?

I listen to all sort of different music - I try to always have my ears open to some new tunes. When I am working I listen a lot to very avant garde and experimental music such as Ligeti, Penderecki. Their exceptional art of orchestrating and searching for new sounds are just timeless and it makes total sense that artists like Johnny Greenwood keeps on returning to their tunes as well. It is just an endless source of knowledge to me. But I try to listen to basically everything that comes to my hands. I try to keep my ears fresh and open, staying critical but also trying to expand my own 'sound bubble'.

3 favourite albums of all time to listen to?

Definitely Portico Quartet - Terrain, but to be honest, all of their albums, Nils Frahm - All Melody and Radiohead - The Moon Shaped Pool. But this is a difficult question, because we are missing hundreds of my favourite tunes, including some jazz and classical music, for instance Beethoven Symphonies or Ravel Piano Concerto for the left hand performed by Krystian Zimerman.

What does your typical work week consist of? And how or where do you take a break!?

I really love to be back home and in my studio, which is in Berlin right now. I usually wake up pretty early and start the day with reading the news with a cup of coffee. Around 11am I go to my studio and stay there until the evening. I like the simplicity of the process. Sometimes I have to fulfil some deadlines of course, or compose commissioned pieces, but my favourite days are those without a certain plan, just spending time in a studio making music, researching or reading.

What is your studio and stage equipment set up? What do you use and why?

The key elements of both my studio and stage equipment are keyboards - grand piano, upright piano and synthesiser, joined right now with a drum machine as well. This is enough for me, allowing me to create sketches of new compositions and expand on the arrangement later with some other instruments like brass or strings. In my studio I have a simple but nice set up of microphones which allows me to freely improvise and move from one instrument to another. Once the instrumental base is there I like to experiment with my voice, very often recording the demo version just with my iphone. Afterwards I just spend a lot of time playing with earlier recorded samples and ideas.

For more info on Hania Rani and her latest album look up www.haniarani.com

Photo by Jakub Stoszek

The image captures the interior of the Cathedral of St. John in Valletta, Malta. The view is from a high angle, looking down into the nave. The most striking feature is the dome, which is covered in intricate frescoes and stucco work. The arches are also highly decorated with gold leaf and detailed carvings. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures and colors of the architecture. In the background, the altar area is visible, featuring a large organ and a statue on a pedestal.

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