

30/6 – 15/8/2022

Curators of the exhibition:

Laura Amann  
& Aziza Harmel

# A WINDOW A BLACK BOX

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# Do Nothing, Feel Everything

Rastislav Bibza / Christoph Bruckner /  
Tony Cokes / Patricia Domínguez / Rahima  
Gambo / Jakob Jakobsen / Niklas Lichti /  
Shana Moulton / Tom Seidmann-Freud /  
Anna Zemánková

*For the second iteration of Do Nothing, Feel Everything which was conceived in collaboration with Kunsthalle Bratislava some changes were made since its first presentation at Kunsthalle Wien. The artistic positions were carefully rebalanced in order to include further geographies and histories while also using the specificity of the spaces at hand to their best advantage. Nevertheless, the original premise stays very much the same because we may not all sit in the same boat, but we are all still in the same storm.*

The title of this group exhibition is originally borrowed from a commercial for tampons, except that the original slogan read: “Do Everything. Feel Nothing.” This promise of numbness is more than symptomatic of our times, but the attempt is, through the inversion of the slogan, to express—apart from demanding a different pace of life—a need for a different kind of space and time framework, in which it might be possible both to feel intensely and to process the emotional impact of what we all witness around us, following the temporality of the “never-ending end of the world”.

Currently, every crisis, every catastrophe, every threat is instantly overridden by another. This state of constant emergency, often translated into apathy and exhaustion, makes passing through coherent stages of emotion impossible and makes us realize that our physical and mental well-being is not an individual matter anymore but that we were sharing a state of insanity before we even knew we were insane.

The works in this exhibition examine and present a wide range of affects, ambitions, and risks. *Do Nothing, Feel Everything* thus looks into art practices that understand insanity as a common condition and as a dynamic form of knowledge with something crucial at stake—art practices that, through careful bruising, find ways to soothe and to bear.

*Laura Amann & Aziza Harmel*

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**Rastislav Bibza** started drawing at an early age and went through several phases of artistic expression during his life. He mostly reduces his colour palette to tonal nuances, with combinations of individual colours being controlled by his momentary psychological state of mind. Between 2004 - 2014, as part of his creative practice, Bibza worked extensively with the League for Mental Health.

**Christoph Bruckner's** work often points not only to the precariousness of artistic production but also the psyche of their author as they are achieved by humble means and made within his domestic context. Being a heavy smoker, he used the nicotine of his hand rolled cigarettes to slowly but steadily - within the period of several months - create a subtle coat where the canvas was left unprotected and in so doing, created a full-blown series of formal declensions unfazed by everyday quotidian life. The smaller work was created during a period of residency in Chicago. As Bruckner was suddenly very restricted in his usual daily smoking routine, he had to resort to nicotine gum to satiate his addiction, which in turn were used to chronicle the artist's sojourn and survival in a place that has no mercy for those addicted to nicotine.

**Tony Cokes's** unmistakable practice is one that undermines, inverts, and samples visual and textual components and turns them into forms that upend the common perceptual habits of a culture usually dominated by images. A central element of his installations is quoted text, delivered in a precise rhythm and presented in bold colours borrowed from modernist colour schemes. In *Testament A: MF FKA K-P X KE RIP* (2019), Cokes quotes from a eulogy for cultural theorist Mark Fisher delivered by Kodwo Eshun at Goldsmiths, University of London, in 2018, one year after Fisher's death.

**Patricia Domínguez's** practice straddles the line between ancestral knowledge, myths, and rituals and modern-day technology and digital culture. Bringing together experimental research on ethnobotany, healing practices, and the corporatization of well-being, she focuses on how neoliberalism perpetuates colonial practices of extraction and exploitation. Domínguez's *Madre Drone* (2019–2020) recounts the encounter of a woman-serpent and a robot in a dreamlike, cosmic annunciation, illuminated by lights akin to the laser pointers used by Chilean student protestors to blind spy drones.

**Rahima Gambo's** work *A Walk* is a fragment of a wider practice that includes visiting sites of Boko Haram attacks in Maiduguri.

At the Shehu Sanda Kyarimi government school, which was closed from 2013 to 2015 following a terror attack, Gambo photographed ten of its pupils after leading a seven-day storytelling workshop there. The workshop and the resulting series of images, titled *Tatsuniya* (2017) that intends to go beyond traditional linear narrative approaches to addressing the students' traumatic memories.

**Jakob Jakobsen's** project *Hospital for Self Medication* focuses on an experimental approach to care and treatment, not only of mental illnesses, but of all kinds of illness that lack representation in the general healthcare system. The main objective of the project is a critique of capitalist and neoliberal practices—a critique that regards normativity and relentless demands for productivity and optimization as part of a structural problem, and hence places the responsibility to change things not on the individual but on a society that is failing many people.

**Niklas Lichti** fuses issues of mental health, artistic writing, and publishing in his multimedia practice. Literary self-descriptions of artists provide the starting point for his video works, drawings, and installations. One of these is *Life*, the autobiography of sixteenth-century Italian sculptor Benvenuto Cellini. Lichti examines how such notions of solipsistic genius translate into capitalist concepts of individualism and self-actualization and, in turn, shape the stigmatization of mental health issues, particularly in the media.

**Shana Moulton** uses video, performance, and installation to playfully reflect on practices of wellness and self-actualization. Performing as her alter ego, Cynthia, who is desperate for meaning and spirituality, the artist tries out all sorts of routines such as Pilates, reflexology, bubble baths, healing potions, and crystal healing to seek relief from the anxieties and ailments of an accelerated, capitalist world. But the resulting improvements don't seem to go beyond quick and often trippy fixes, with Cynthia spiraling back into self-doubt and stress.

**Tom Seidmann-Freud** was a children's book author, painter, and illustrator, whose work, despite its seemingly cheerful genre, profoundly reflects on themes of trauma, depression, and gender. Together with her partner Yankel Seidmann, they founded the small children's book press Peregrin. The book *Die Fischreise* (1923), follows the young Peregrin into a dream in which a fish takes him to an underwater utopia where children never go hungry, and everybody gets along. Seidmann-Freud's work favoured a minimalistic drawing style in line with the emerging New Objectivity.

**Anna Zemánková's** urge to create art arose in her middle age when she got depressed and was deeply frustrated. Zemánková was encouraged to draw by her sons, after they discovered a suitcase in the basement containing works that she had made in her youth. The result is Zemánková's artwork *Untitled (Hanging Room Divider with Panels Painted on Both Sides)*, 1970s. Zemánková constantly surrounded herself with flowers in her home. In her paintings she often depicted images of fantastical extraterrestrial plants.

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## CURATORS

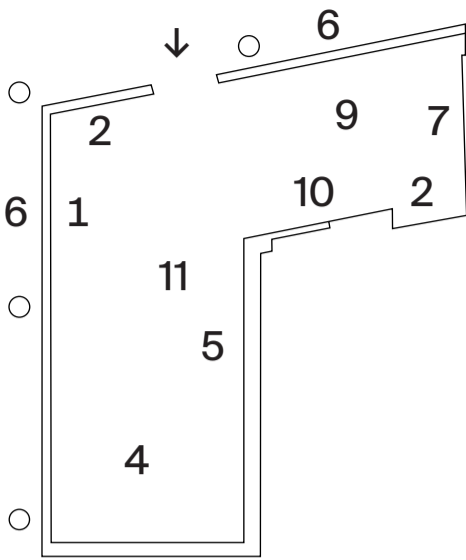
**Aziza Harmel** (1985) is a curator and writer. Aziza worked at Documenta 14 and Steirischer Herbst 2018. In 2019 she co-curated a research program on curatorial knowledge, Qayyem, which was roaming between Alexandria, Amman and Tangier. She also co-curated the 12th edition of the Bamako Encounters, African Biennale of Photography in Bamako, Mali.

**Laura Amann** (1986) is a curator and architect. Laura co-founded Significant Other, a project space which looked at spaces inhabited by art and architecture, she taught at the Technical University of Vienna, and she is a graduate of De Appel Curatorial Programme, Amsterdam. Recent projects have looked at acts of joy, intimacy, desire and sensuality and how they produce spaces for disobedience.

Aziza and Laura are both currently part of the curatorial team at Kunsthalle Wien.

## A WINDOW

↓ entrance from the street



## Rastislav Bibza

- 1 *Portrait 1 - 4, early 2000s*  
(Courtesy the artist and the Nezábudka Gallery, founded by the League for Mental Health in Bratislava.)

## Christoph Bruckner

- 2 *Untitled, 2014/2015*  
*Untitled, 2014/2015*  
*Untitled, 2016*

## Tony Cokes

- 3 *Testament A: MF FKA K-P X KE RIP, 2019*  
(Courtesy the artist, Green Naftali, New York, Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, and Electronic Arts Intermix, New York.)

## Patricia Domínguez

- 4 *Green Irises, 2019-2020*  
*Madre Drone, 2019-2020*  
(Commissioned and produced by Gasworks, with support from Lazo Cordillera, Fundación Engel, Fundación AMA, and SCAN.)

## Rahima Gambo

- 5 *A Walk, 2019*  
Several photographs from the series *Tatsuniya and Tatsuniya II, 2017-2019*  
(Courtesy the artist and Tatsuniya Art Collective.)

## Jakob Jakobsen

- 6 *Hospital for Self Medication, 2020*

## Niklas Lichti

- 7 *Gore Capitalism, 2019*  
*Ingwer & Selters, 2019*  
*International Gothic, 2019*  
(Courtesy the artist and Galerie Emanuel Layr, Vienna.)

- 8 *Appropriate Sentiment, 2019*  
*Concrete Quarterly, 2020*  
(With support from Diana Duta, Adam Grey, and Tomas Rydin.)

## Shana Moulton

- 9 *The Pink Tower, 2019*  
(Courtesy Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich and Crèvecoeur, Paris.)

## Tom Seidmann-Freud

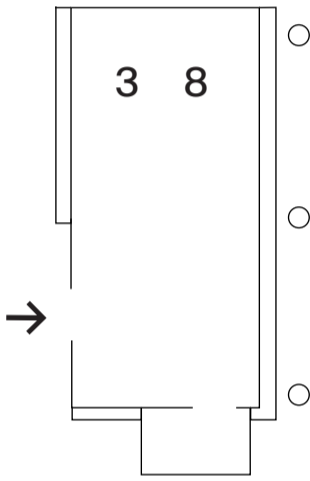
- 10 *Buch der Hasengeschichten*  
(Book of Hare Stories), 1924  
*Die Fischreise* (The Fish Journey), 1923  
Several scans of Tom Seidmann-Freud's oeuvre (In memory of Aviva Harari (Seidmann), Tom's only daughter, 1922-2011. Courtesy Tom Seidmann Freud's grandchildren: Amnon Harari, Ayala Drori, and Osi Gevim.)

## Anna Zemánková

- 11 *Untitled (Hanging Room Divider with Panels Painted on Both Sides), early 1970s.*  
(Courtesy the family of Zemánková and her granddaughter Tereza.)

## A BLACK BOX

→ entrance from the first floor of the building



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Laura Amann & Aziza Harmel

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Mon-Sun: 12:00-19:00  
Tue: closed

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