Wet Conceptualism

October 31 - December 19, 2026

Chapter I artists

Haseeb Ahmed, Lyndon Barrois Jr., Alighiero Boetti, Marcel Broodthaers, Jimmie Durham, TR Ericsson, Claire Fontaine, Andrea Fraser, Jef Geys, Mauro Giaconi, Liam Gillick, Mark Manders, David Maroto, My Barbarian, Warren Neidich, Studio Laure Prouvost, Rob Pruitt, Martha Rosler, studiokhachatryan, Walter Swennen, Ria Verhaeghe, Oriol Vilanova.

LEVEY利維郭KWOK

www.leveykwok.com | info@leveykwok.com | Rue Isidoor Teirlinck 65, 1080 Brussels, Belgium | @levey_kwok

On Wet Conceptualism

Text by Harlan Levey

How can an idea be more than an idea without ceasing to be one?

An idea needs a life. But it also comes from one. It emerges from a body, a history, a set of circumstances, a world already crowded with meanings. Eventually, it has to go somewhere and enter a world that may have other plans for it entirely. Along the way, it picks up associations, grows, or runs into a wall. Ideas make a mess. That's not a flaw in the system. That's the system.

Conceptual Art famously shifted attention away from the art object and toward the idea behind it. In the 1960s and 70s, artists like Sol LeWitt and Lawrence Weiner, alongside writers and curators like Lucy Lippard, helped establish a practice in which an artwork might exist as an instruction, a text, a proposition or a process, its material form secondary, even incidental. Lippard called this the dematerialization of the art object.

Dematerialization came of age alongside an economy built on the assembly line, where work was broken into repeatable steps. An instruction a stranger could follow without ever meeting the artist wasn't only a conceptual position. It was the spirit of the age in disguise. Even the cleanest idea needed somewhere to land, and someone to do the work.

Lippard herself later complicated the picture, acknowledging the limits of dematerialization as a way of escaping the art object. A photocopied sheet or the documentation of an ephemeral event could still be absorbed by the market. Dematerialization had changed how art circulated, but it had not freed art from the conditions of its circulation. When the idea entered the world, the world had its own uses for it.

Warren Neidich coined the term Wet Conceptualism in 2023, setting it against what he calls dry Conceptualism. Dry names the pull toward the autonomous idea, dematerialized and repeatable; wet brings into view the bodies, materials, histories and relations of power through which ideas take shape. For Neidich, this distinction also concerns how the mind itself is shaped and captured by the forces of cognitive capitalism, as attention, perception and thought become sites of production. The terms aren't opposites so much as competing tendencies within a history that is still unfolding.

The assembly line didn't disappear so much as move indoors. Our attention is measured, our preferences classified, our images fed into systems that decide what we see next. An invisible conveyor belt runs at all hours. The mind itself has become a site of production, its activity modeled, scaled and sold. Cognitive capitalism implies, among other things, work that never quite clocks out, because the thing being worked is you. The idea was never alone. Pretending otherwise was somehow easier, even cleaner.

Wetness is life before it's tidied up. It's messy. So is art, and for that matter, life. Belgium surely knows something about that. Clean is dry. A clean room has nothing left to spill. Dryness is what's left when a thing has finished happening.

Neidich's Wet Conceptualism offers a way to think about how art engages with these realities without being reduced to them. It asks what happens when an idea meets the world, and what the world does in return. Sometimes the answer is comic. In Jef Geys's *ABC Ecole de Paris*, a drawing course meant to teach taste is quietly mocked. In Oriol Vilanova's *Economical Poem, I. On 50%*, the simple phrase "I prefer the market" opens onto competing meanings. Sometimes it's bodily: in Martha Rosler's *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, an alphabet of kitchen utensils turns into something closer to protest than instruction. In Haseeb Ahmed's *The Fountain of Eternal Youth*, water appears to float upward, as if gravity itself had become unreliable. Sometimes it's historical, and heavier still: in *Congo Brass (after Henry Van de Velde)*, Lyndon Barrois Jr. reworks the packaging design for a nineteenth-century protein powder, exposing the colonial extraction economy entangled with the decorative language of Belgian Art Nouveau. Andrea Fraser's *Official Welcome* turns the ritual of institutional thank-yous into something closer to a vulnerable and irritable confession.

The artists in this exhibition approach these questions from different directions. Some work with language, where a word can mean several things or vanish just as someone thinks they've got hold of it. Walter Swennen's *Pouce*, for instance, turns a thumb into a linguistic puzzle, its title also suggesting a hitchhiker's gesture or a call to pause a game. Others examine the systems that organize culture, from museums and markets to archives and the standards holding up our technological infrastructure. Liam Gillick's wall-mounted sculptures, made from industrial aluminium extrusions used in data centers and automated manufacturing, bring the aesthetics of those systems into the gallery. Mark Manders's *Perspective Study*, made from fictional newspapers, asks us to decide what we're looking at: an image of space, or an object occupying it.

Many of these artists would also be described, accurately but not very precisely, as having research-based practices. It's a phrase that covers almost anything: an archive consulted, a scientist interviewed, a footnote followed home like a stray dog. What it rarely explains is what the research becomes once it leaves the page. Wet Conceptualism is interested not just in the gathering, but in the metabolizing: a wind tunnel transformed into a scroll, or, in Ria Verhaeghe's *Glenden* series, two unrelated newspaper photographs made to bleed into each other and give birth to a third meaning.

Belgium has been rehearsing a version of this argument for a long time, usually without raising its voice. Magritte gave us a pipe that wasn't a pipe; Broodthaers, a museum that was mostly an idea. Even the country itself has never quite agreed on what it was, or in which language to talk about it. Surrealism wasn't an import here. It was closer to a native dialect, a way of saying that the official version and the actual one rarely match. That's not a crisis. That's just Tuesday.

These are only a few points in a much richer local history, one Jef Geys, Walter Swennen and Ria Verhaeghe all belong to in their own ways, among many others this exhibition doesn't have room to name. What unites the exhibition is not a common identity or a single Belgian school, but an insistence that ideas cannot be separated from the conditions that made them.

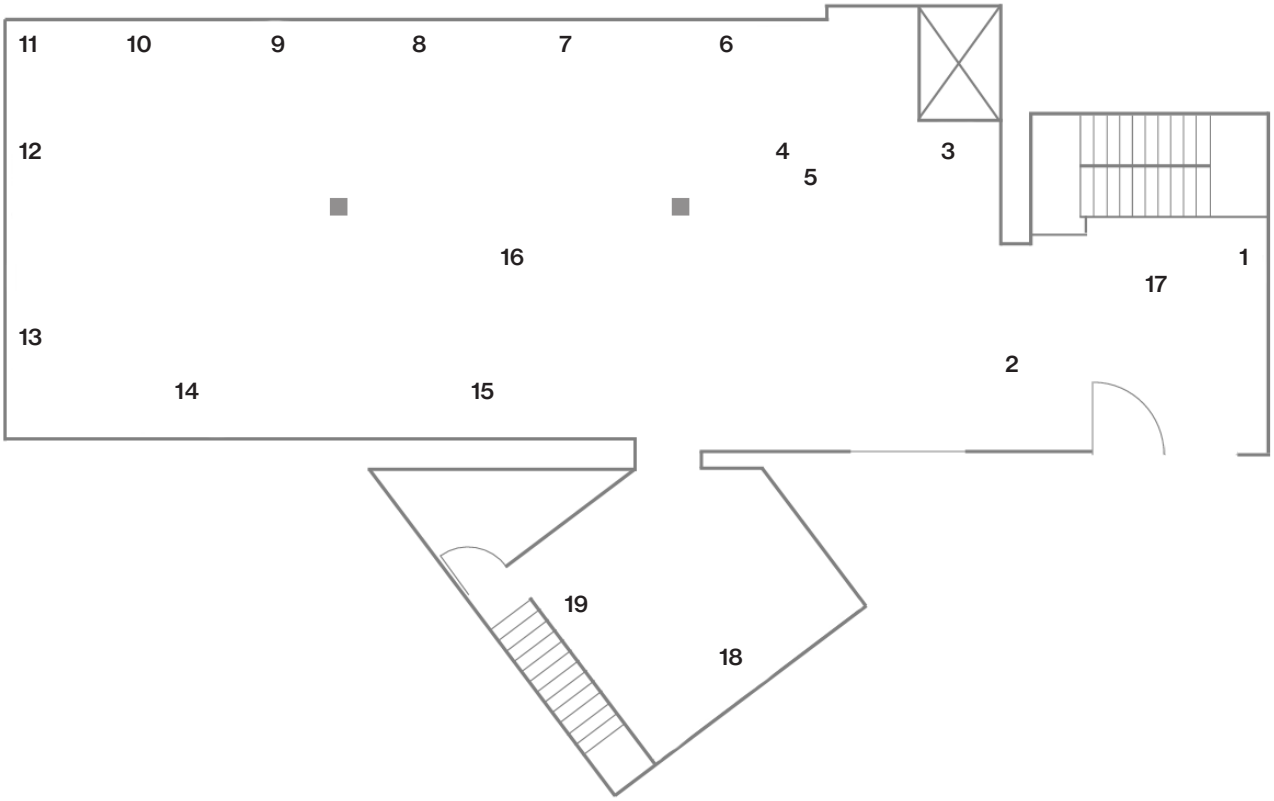
It's a strange kind of current for a country this size to generate. Laure Prouvost, Oriol Vilanova and Haseeb Ahmed weren't born here and didn't have to stay. They've built their practices in Belgium long enough that the place has stopped being a subject and started being a condition. Others have found their way into Belgian art and history by choice rather than inheritance. TR Ericsson has never lived here, but he's been reading this country for years, a longtime admirer of Chantal Akerman and, by his own account, shaped by Belgian art as much as by anything closer to home. His portrait *Chantal Akerman (My Mother Laughs)* feels less like a discovery than an overdue correspondence finally answered. Small country, strong current. Apparently you don't have to be born in the weather to get wet in it.

This is not a comprehensive account of Neidich's Wet Conceptualism, nor does it encompass everything happening across the exhibition. Think of it instead as a map with room to wander: a set of connections to follow, question or leave behind as the works take you elsewhere.

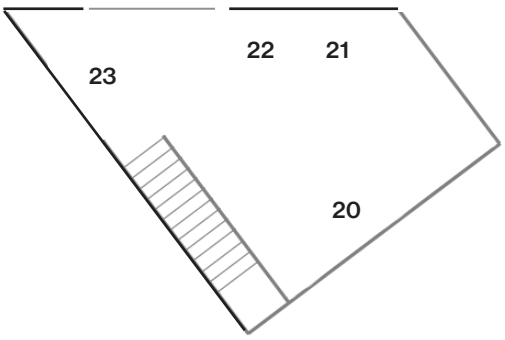
Wet Conceptualism is not a style. It's a way of paying attention to what happens when ideas meet materials, people and circumstance, when a clean proposition goes out into a wet world and comes back changed, or doesn't come back at all. The works gathered here are what remains after that encounter: a word that wouldn't stay still, water that forgot, briefly, how to fall, a painting that produces an Afterimage.

So: how can an idea be more than an idea without ceasing to be one? By getting wet, and staying itself anyway.

Gallery one



Gallery two
Upper floor



1 & 21- Liam Gillick

Red Phase of Modeling, 2024
Powder coated aluminium
31.5 x 32 x 8 cm
12 3/8 x 12 5/8 x 3 1/8 in

Grey Phase Node, 2024
Powder coated aluminium
31.5 x 32 x 8 cm
12 3/8 x 12 5/8 x 3 1/8 in

Red Phase of Modeling and *Grey Phase Node* are wall-mounted sculptures created from aluminium T-slot extrusions, an industrial material commonly used in server farms, data centers, laboratories, and automated manufacturing lines. This material is central to Gillick's work, and he explores it in a range of shapes and colours. By bringing the T-slots to the forefront, Gillick strips them of their intended industrial application to explore corporate aesthetics and what he has called the "semiotics of built environments".

The aluminium is coated with a grid of vivid colors drawn from RAL, a system of standardization which was conceived in Germany in the 1920s. If RAL is used globally today across many industries, it still falls short of the ambition which created it, to develop a system of universal communication, with applications beyond simple commercial use. The optimism of this time contrasts with the century of history which followed as Gillick reminds us of how ideologies are carried in architecture and design, and how far we are from one unified language.

2- Rob Pruitt
TBD, 2026
Print on voile
243.8 x 243.8 cm
96 x 96 in

Rob Pruitt's gradient paintings began with a desire to move beyond found imagery and invent characters of his own. Initially, he paired rapidly drawn, expressive faces with sprayed fields of color, using gradients to suggest different moods and emotional states. Over time, the faces disappeared, leaving the color fields to stand alone. Pruitt began to see these paintings as portals or windows onto another dimension, a direction he explored in his *Suicide Paintings* before turning to the more familiar spectacle of sunsets and changing daylight.

His subsequent *Month of Sunsets* works tracked the sky across an entire month, with each panel representing a different sunset. Across these evolving projects, Pruitt returns to a deceptively simple idea: however different our individual lives may be, we all live beneath the same sky. His gradients offer a vivid, artificial rendering of nature's light show, at once an image of shared experience and, as Pruitt wryly observes, an ideal backdrop for a selfie.

3- Andrea Fraser
Official Welcome, 2001 - 2003
Color video, sound
29 min. loop
Unlimited edition

Official Welcome is the documentation of a performance commissioned by the MICA Foundation, and first performed in November 2001 at the home of prominent collectors in New York City. Dressed elegantly in black, Fraser opens by gratefully thanking her hosts, the Foundation, her assistants, and the staff of the host museum, mimicking the ritual of official ceremonies. She then abruptly shifts voice and attitude, speaking aggressively about herself in the third person.

Fraser goes on to rapidly cycle through personas, in increasing states of undress: the urgent, lyrical political artist, the doubtful and sombre figure, the rebellious creator insulting the audience, until, naked, she suddenly exits. The performance's power lies in her masterful range, from impeccable imitation to excess, and in a script pieced together from art essays, museum directors' official texts, and artists' statements. Fraser restaged it in 2003 at the Kunstverein, Hamburg, and in 2009 at the Pompidou Centre, Paris; this video captures the 2003 performance.

4- studiokhachatryan

façadism, 2026
Solid wood with a black matte oil finish, natural stone
220 x 78 x 67 cm
86 5/8 x 30 3/4 x 26 3/8 in

This tower-like shelving object sits between functional furniture and architectural element, taking its cue from “façadism,” the practice of preserving a building’s exterior while rebuilding what lies behind it. Common in Brussels, this approach is both a pragmatic compromise between preservation and progress and an ideological statement, one that echoes a society increasingly shaped by virtual façades and constructed identities. Translated into furniture, the façade becomes a deliberate misrepresentation. From the front, the piece appears solid and enclosed; from the side, its open, modular structure reveals its true nature. A frontal panel of raw, brutalist natural stone acts as a visual shield, detached from the logic of the framework it conceals. Built from solid wood with a matte black oil finish, the work stages an encounter between two material states: the living, growing nature of wood against the cold, unyielding nature of stone. The stone’s opacity is more than visual: behind it, the wood frame opens into functional shelving, invisible from the front and legible only once you’ve moved around the piece. That tension, between what a surface promises and what it hides, is the work’s central concern, and here it is also literal.

5- David Maroto

The Book Lovers
2011 - ongoing

David Maroto’s practice treats the novel as a medium in its own right, asking what happens when fiction moves out of the page and into the space of contemporary art. Since 2011, Maroto has developed The Book Lovers with curator Joanna Zielińska, an ongoing research project built around the artist’s novel: a form that sits at the edge of literature and visual art, neither quite one nor the other. Over more than a decade, the project has grown into a collection and bibliography, assembling novels written by visual artists from around the world, alongside publications, performances and exhibitions that treat the novel itself as an artwork, not a text about one. A small selection from that collection is presented here. Each book carries its own argument for what a novel can do once an artist, rather than a novelist, decides to write one: build a world that doesn’t yet exist, return an existing one from an unfamiliar angle, or blur the line between author, artist and reader until none of them quite hold their shape. Taken together, they ask a question closer to Wet Conceptualism’s own than it might first appear: what happens to an idea once it’s asked to behave like a story, with a body, a voice, a reader turning its pages in their own time and place, rather than remaining a proposition on a wall.

6- Lyndon Barrois Jr.

Congo Brass (after Henry Van de Velde), 2025
Oil on Belgian linen with artist frame, plywood, solvent transfer and gold pigment
82 x 74 cm
32 1/2 x 29 in

In Congo Brass (after Henry Van de Velde), Lyndon Barrois Jr. interrogates the visual language of Belgian Art Nouveau through the lens of colonial history. The painting takes its design from packaging for Tropon, a protein powder developed in the late nineteenth century by Belgian architect and designer Henry van de Velde, whose work helped define the movement’s distinctive decorative vocabulary. Barrois translates the original graphic into painting, altering its colours and introducing a palette inspired by the interiors of Victor Horta.

The work engages with art historian Debora L. Silverman’s research into the colonial entanglements of Belgian modernism. In Art Nouveau, Art of Darkness: African Lineages of Belgian Modernism (2011–13), Silverman argues that the movement’s organic forms and decorative motifs were unconsciously shaped by the extraction economy of rubber and ivory that defined the Congo Free State under King Leopold II, an era now widely documented for its brutality toward the Congolese population. By revisiting these designs, Barrois Jr. draws attention to the uneasy relationship between modernist beauty, material wealth and the colonial systems that helped create them.

7- Oriol Vilanova

Economical Poem, I. On 50%, 2026
Vinyl wall text
Variable
Edition of 5 plus 1 artist's proof

For Oriol Vilanova, the flea market is not a subject but a studio. For over a decade, he has combed markets for postcards, assembling an archive of many thousands of images that he sorts, classifies and recomposes into slide projections, installations, books and other configurations. Writing runs alongside this practice. Vilanova approaches language with the same patience he brings to an image, turning a phrase over until its ambiguities begin to surface.

Economical Poem, I. On 50% applies this method to a single sentence. Built around the repeating phrase "I prefer the market," the work seems straightforward until the word market opens onto competing interpretations. Vilanova has the flea market in mind: a place of informal negotiation, unexpected encounters and constantly shifting value, the same terrain he has explored for years as a collector.

The phrase offers no explanation of what is being preferred, or why. Its meaning depends on the person reading it, and on the associations they bring to the word market. What begins as a statement of preference becomes a reflection on how value is formed, who gets to determine it, and how differently the same words can be understood. Like the objects that pass through a flea market, the phrase remains in circulation, open to new readings and new meanings.

Format and rights of use

The work is acquired as a digital file for production as vinyl lettering. The collector determines the dimensions and may arrange for the text to be produced and installed for personal, non-commercial display. The file may be shared with a printer solely for the purpose of producing the work on the collector's behalf, but may not otherwise be shared, distributed or made publicly available.

The collector may reproduce the work as needed to replace damaged vinyl, relocate the work or change its installation. The collector may photograph the work and share such documentation. The licence may be transferred to a subsequent owner together with the work. Commercial reproduction and use are not permitted. Copyright and all rights not expressly granted remain with the artist.

8- TR Ericsson

Chantal Akerman (My Mother Laughs), 2026
Silver graphite on canvas
50.8 x 40.6 cm
20 x 16 in

Created in connection with American Greetings, TR Ericsson's *Chantal Akerman (My Mother Laughs)* pays tribute to one of the most significant figures in Belgian and international contemporary art. Born in Brussels, Akerman transformed cinema through her radical approach to time, domestic life, memory and women's experiences, from the three-day interior world of *Jeanne Dielman, 23, quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975), set in Molenbeek, a short distance from this gallery, to *News from Home* (1976), her documentary portrait of New York built from her mother's letters, read in her own voice. Her influence extends well beyond film, making her an essential reference point for Brussels' wider cultural history and for the questions of intimacy, duration and truth that also run through Ericsson's own practice.

Akerman was not originally part of Ericsson's plan for this exhibition. Reading around the premise of Wet Conceptualism, Ericsson came to feel her work belonged in it, and the portrait was made specifically to bring her into the show.

The portrait is accompanied on its reverse by a passage drawn from Akerman's *My Mother Laughs*, in which she describes the rare sensation of encountering a truth that has stayed obscure for a long time, until, she writes, "suddenly you find yourself light and calm." Together, portrait and text offer an intimate encounter with an artist whose work continues to reveal itself long after the initial experience.

9- Walter Swennen
Pouce, 2008
Oil on canvas
150 × 130 cm
59 x 51 1/8 in

Walter Swennen's *Pouce* features a magnified thumb print near the center of its thinly colored canvas, as if a giant had visited the studio and left its trace in the wet paint. Its title plays on the several lives of the French word "pouce": a thumb, the gesture of a hitchhiker, and the cry children use to pause a game, "pouce!", a brief suspension of the rules. This kind of linguistic slippage, a single word pulling in several directions at once, runs through Swennen's work more broadly. For over five decades, the Brussels-born, self-taught painter treated language itself as a found object: words, puns, misprints and mistranslations surface in his paintings the way a found image might in someone else's, less illustrated than simply placed, left to generate meaning, or refuse to, on their own terms. Swennen came to painting relatively late and from an unusual route. After working as a translator and briefly training as a psychoanalyst, Swennen turned to the studio in his thirties, a background which shows in the way his paintings treat sense and nonsense as working materials rather than opposites. A title like Pouce is characteristic: playful, slightly off-kilter, pulling the viewer toward an interpretation it never quite confirms. - Collection Beatrice de Gelder

10- Ria Verhaeghe
Glenden series

For more than three decades, Ria Verhaeghe has collected, classified and re-examined press images, building *Provisoria*, an evolving personal archive drawn from the vast and largely ephemeral flow of news photography. Her practice investigates how images shape collective memory and how unexpected connections can emerge between events, people and histories that might otherwise remain unrelated. Rather than treating photographs as fixed records of reality, Verhaeghe approaches them as material whose meanings can shift through acts of selection, juxtaposition and transformation.

Glenden is one of several series through which Verhaeghe interrogates this self-assembled archive. Working with newspaper photographs printed on opposite sides of the same page, she allows images from unrelated stories – perhaps a terrorist attack, a sporting triumph or a political event – to bleed into and merge with one another. The result is a third image, one that belongs to neither source alone.

Verhaeghe describes this process as "1 + 1 = 3." The encounter between two images produces something beyond their individual meanings, unsettling their original contexts and generating new, sometimes unexpected associations. In these works, the newspaper becomes more than a vehicle for information: it is a space where separate narratives converge, revealing how meaning is formed not only by what an image depicts, but also by what it encounters.

11- Martha Rosler
Semiotics of the Kitchen, 1975
Video (black and white, sound)
6:09 min

In *Semiotics of the Kitchen*, Martha Rosler stands behind a kitchen counter, unsmiling, in an apron, and works her way through the alphabet, from A to Z, naming and demonstrating a kitchen utensil for each letter. An apron becomes a bowl becomes a chopper; by the time she reaches a nutcracker and a rolling pin, her gestures have turned from demonstration into something closer to violence, hacking and stabbing at the air with the deadpan intensity of a TV cooking show gone wrong. Of the piece, Rosler has said: "As the woman speaks, she names her own oppression." The work takes direct aim at two targets at once: the televised domesticity popularized by cooking programs of the period, and the formal, instructional language of early Conceptual art, its systems, alphabets and deadpan delivery, which Rosler turns back on itself to expose what those systems leave out. Described as a mockery of both TV cooking shows and Conceptual art, it remains among the most important video works of the twentieth century. Language here doesn't describe the woman at the counter; it produces her, word by word, gesture by gesture, as a figure assembled entirely out of domestic labor. Nearly three decades later, in 2003, Rosler revisited the piece at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, inviting an open call of participants, actresses, artists, curators and museum staff among them, to re-enact her original script in their own way, a restaging she later edited into a separate work, *Semiotics of the Kitchen: An Audition*.

12- Mark Manders

Perspective Study, 2010
Offset print on paper, graphite on paper, chicken wire and wood
91 × 53 × 7 cm (35 7/8 × 20 7/8 × 2 3/4 in)

In *Perspective Study*, Mark Manders transforms a fictional newspaper into an experiment in space, language and perception. The newspaper belongs to his Notional Newspapers, invented publications with no date or place of origin. Their columns consist of English dictionary words arranged at random, accompanied by close-up photographs of objects from the artist's studio. Neither text nor image describes anything specific, yet together they suggest meanings that remain elusive.

Here, various newspapers are stretched over a structure of chicken wire and wood, creating a surface which appears to recede towards a vanishing point. The result is both an illusion of depth and a physical object with space behind it. The title refers to the Renaissance tradition of the perspective study, approached with Manders' characteristic deadpan humour: "Since the Renaissance every artist should make at least one perspective study. This study is made of fake newspapers".

This work belongs to Manders' longstanding project of constructing a self-portrait as a building, using objects, images and fragments of language rather than conventional autobiography. By removing identifiable dates and places, his invented newspapers seem suspended outside historical time, belonging together to one singular moment, always attached to the here and now.

13- Claire Fontaine

Untitled (Carl Andre's Bricks), 2012
Acrylic and silkscreen on canvas
142 x 200 x 3 cm
55 7/8 x 78 3/4 x 1 1/8 in

William Packer's review "Tate Gallery: Carl Andre's Bricks" was published in the Financial Times on May 3, 1977, at the height of the infamous "Bricks in the Tate" public controversy. This media and public uproar had been sparked by the Tate Gallery's purchase of Carl Andre's minimalist sculpture, *Equivalent VIII* – a rectangular arrangement of 120 firebricks, which has since become a classic example of conceptual art. With *Untitled (Carl Andre's Bricks)*, the artist duo Claire Fontaine pulls this critique from the archive and brings it back into scrutiny as a large-scale silkscreen.

Previously, the collective restaged one of the *Equivalent* sculptures by laying rectangular blocks of 120 bricks on the floor, and covering each brick with a book cover. This artwork, *Equivalent (I)* (2007), is held in the collection of the Centre Pompidou (Paris, FR). With Untitled (Carl Andre's Bricks), Claire Fontaine furthers their investigation into Andre, inviting a contemporary reading of this figure whose work is both seminal for art historians and mired in controversy. - Collection Filiep and Mimi Libeert.

14- Mauro Giaconi

Bandera [Flag], 2026
4 drawing layers made of silicone treated with graphite, pigments, and cinnamon
115 x 90 cm
45 1/4 x 35 3/8 in

Mauro Giaconi's *Bandera [Flag]* is a three-dimensional drawing, made from lines of silicone traced using a hot glue gun, and tinted with graphite powder and other pigments. The materiality of the line gives it body and volume, allowing the drawing to stand on its own, without the need for a support. Its appearance evokes that of wire, creating an illusion that challenges the relationship between what we see and what the object actually is. The image is constructed through the overlapping and intersection of different wire and fence textures, forming a surface whose pattern evokes the structure of a woven fabric.

This work is part of Giaconi's most recent period of research, which maintains a continuity with earlier fence works while exploring simulation more deeply as a strategy for transforming reality, at least temporarily. In this case, the exploration focuses on the materiality of the work, and its ability to create an illusion that alters our perception of our surroundings and opens up the possibility of imagining other ways of relating to the world.

15- Warren Neidich

Afterimage [Berthold Brecht], 2019
Acrylic paint on canvas, glass tubes, neon gas
278 x 90 x 8 cm
109 1/2 x 35 3/8 x 3 1/8 in

In his *Afterimage* series, Warren Neidich examines how political power determines who is remembered, celebrated or erased. Drawing on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the work reimagines the familiar star as a monument to those excluded from official recognition. This painting's reference to Bertolt Brecht, the German playwright and poet who fled Nazi Germany and later faced political scrutiny during the Cold War, places artistic freedom within a broader history of ideological persecution.

The work draws on the optical phenomenon of the afterimage, in which an image persists in the eye after the original stimulus disappears. The left panel of the triptych instructs the viewer on how to create an after-image on their retina, and use this vision to temporarily place Brecht's name on the Hollywood star. Neidich uses this fleeting effect to propose a form of recognition that exists only briefly and only in the mind's eye, asking what it means to remember those whom institutions have chosen to marginalise. Here, visibility is not simply a matter of fame, but a question of who controls cultural memory.

16- Alighiero Boetti

Zig Zag, 1966
Aluminum framework and fabric
54 x 54 x 54 cm
21 1/4 x 21 1/4 x 21 1/4 in

Zig Zag belongs to the first body of sculptural work by Alighiero Boetti, made in Turin in the mid-1960s as one of four cubic sculptures made between 1966 and 1968. Each one is built from the fabric of a beach chair woven inside an aluminium cube. The cloth is striped cotton in blue, yellow, red, green, purple, and black, the kind of material associated with deck chairs and summer leisure. The aluminium frame is plain and industrial, and it contains the cloth like a display case. Like the other Arte Povera artists, Boetti turned to humble, everyday and industrial materials instead of the traditional materials of sculpture such as bronze and marble. The sculpture has also been read as a playful critique of Colour Field abstraction and of Minimalism's preoccupation with the grid and the "specific object." Boetti's own comments help explain the work. He wrote that "the individual perceptual experience is an end in itself." In *Zig Zag* that experience comes from looking at the colours and folds, and the work does not call for interpretation beyond that. - Collection Frederic de Goldschmidt

17- Studio Laure Prouvost

Ouigrow, ongoing
Mixed-media installation (paintings, potted plants)
Dimensions variable

Studio Laure Prouvost's *Ouigrow* is a grass-roots, ongoing philanthropic project run from her neighboring studio in Molenbeek, where proceeds from donations and art sales are used to increase vegetation in urban areas. Human connection to the natural world is central to Prouvost's practice; *Ouigrow* celebrates this relationship by encouraging flora to trespass into human-made structures, bringing greenery to inner city neighborhoods which often have been deprived of plant life. The project takes many forms, including installation, performance, song, collective plantings, seed giveaways, and pop-up flower shops. Here, *Ouigrow* is represented by an installation combining paintings and potted plants, in a play on the labels found in plant nurseries and flower shops. The proceeds from each painting sale will go to creating a new green space in Molenbeek. Rather than simply depicting nature, *Ouigrow* invites viewers to take part in making cities greener, so that art and living things grow into each other.

18- Marcel Broodthaers
La Pluie (projet pour un texte), 1969
16 mm black-and-white film, silent.
2 min.

Marcel Broodthaers began as a poet and came to visual art only in his forties, famously declaring that his first sculpture, made from unsold copies of his own poems embedded in plaster, marked the moment he gave up trying to "sell something and succeed in life." *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)* returns directly to that rupture. Filmed in his own garden, with the words *Département des Aigles* visible on the wall behind him, a reference to the fictitious museum Broodthaers had founded the previous year, the artist sits beneath artificial rain, pen in hand, trying to write on paper that the water instantly ruins. Like Sisyphus, he persists anyway, dipping his pen again and again as the ink lifts and pools, until he finally sets the pen down in what reads as resignation. A final inscription appears: projet pour un texte, "project for a text." The film is less a document of failure than a quiet joke about it. Writing, Broodthaers suggests, has become structurally impossible, worn away as soon as it's attempted, yet the artist keeps at it, producing not a text but the record of its own erasure. The piece both expresses the precarity, if not the impossibility, of writing and alludes ironically to the position of the contemporary artist, freed from the need to deliver any message. - Collection S.M.A.K.

19- Haseeb Ahmed
A Fountain of Eternal Youth VIII, 2025
IV bag, Human Growth Hormone, strobe lights, 3D prints, polycarbonate, polyethylene, MDF, aluminum, electronics, and custom software
199.5 x 54 x 54 cm
78 1/2 x 21 1/4 x 21 1/4 in

Water-infused human growth hormone, a widely used but unregulated anti-aging drug, flows through Haseeb Ahmed's *A Fountain of Eternal Youth*. Using stroboscopic techniques, Ahmed appears to suspend water droplets mid-air, making them float upward, defying gravity and reversing the passage of time. Since antiquity, the flow of time has been closely linked to the flow of fluids. Early water clocks, which measured time by gradually emptying, are echoed in this work by a water clock modeled after Japanese shishi-odoshi devices that continuously fill and empty. While the artwork creates the illusion of reversing time, the clocks remind us that time inevitably moves forward. This paradox of cause and effect reflects humanity's desire to preserve life through pharmaceuticals, alongside the unintended ecological consequences these efforts provoke. Ahmed's exploration of time and fluidity recalls artistic investigations by Belgian artist Panamarenko, who experimented with kinetic and water-based systems to question natural forces, as well as the symbolic use of water in René Magritte's surreal works, which challenge perception and reality. Through these references, *A Fountain of Eternal Youth* situates itself within a broader dialogue on time, environment, and human intervention.

20- Haseeb Ahmed
Sunset Scroll I, 2025
Graphite, gouache, kozo paper, cotton, wood, cord
150 x 150 cm
59 x 59 in

On the left, a papyrus motif derived from a rubbing of the ironwork of Brussels' Art Nouveau landmark, Ancienne Maison Verhaeghe, intertwines with a double helix pattern discovered by Ahmed in a wind tunnel at the von Karman Institute for Fluid Dynamics. This turbulence pattern, which he calls the "vortex-faced being" or "face of the wind," recurs throughout his work as a talisman against wind's destructive power. Red and blue forms evoke pressure systems and temperature, while geometric traces suggest attempts to impose order on open space.

On the right, rows of papyrus evoke the Egyptian hieroglyph for life, while a blue fragment beneath them suggests the Nile. Their stems bend in invisible currents, echoing the dunes of the Sahara. Golden ochre drifts across the surface like dust, carrying nutrients that sustain distant ecologies from the Amazon to Europe. Moving between desert, river and architecture, the scroll traces the connections through which wind, matter and life continually transform one another.

22- Jef Geys
ABC Ecole de Paris, 1990
Marker and chalk on kraft paper
128 x 83 cm
50 3/8 x 32 5/8 in

In the mid-1980s, Jef Geys enrolled in the École ABC de Paris, a mail-order drawing course promising to teach perspective and basic form in the popular "School of Paris" style. Geys followed its lessons to the letter, then reproduced the entire curriculum as a series of schematic drawings, publishing the result in 1990. The piece mimics the format of an inexpensive, amateur instruction manual, with its subdivisions by genre and its categories of taste, while quietly mocking the very system of classification and connoisseurship it imitates, one that stood in direct contradiction to the transgressive spirit of the Parisian avant-garde it claimed to teach. The work is characteristic of Geys's lifelong practice: made from the periphery (he lived and taught in the small town of Balen for most of his career), skeptical of hierarchy, and committed to using the ordinary structures of pedagogy and bureaucracy as material for conceptual art. - Courtesy Greta Meert Gallery.

23- My Barbarian
Universal Declaration of Infantile Anxiety Situations Reflected in the Creative Impulse, 2013
Video (color, sound)
29:02

My Barbarian's video fuses elements from two texts which rarely meet: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), co-authored by Eleanor Roosevelt, and Melanie Klein's 1929 psychoanalytic essay on how infantile anxieties surface in works of art and in the drive to create. The collective (Malik Gaines, Jade Gordon, and Alexandro Segade) pairs a charter of public, collective rights with a theory of the private, early-life origins of making. The result treats the mother as a foundational figure for both art and politics.

The video is organized as six short episodes in which the three members perform alongside their own mothers, as well as two artists they count as forebears, Eleanor Antin and Mary Kelly. The casting makes the work personal and genealogical: family relationships sit next to artistic lineage, and the piece traces what My Barbarian calls a modernist precedent "along a maternal line." The scenarios are playful but carry real stakes. They show feminist, conceptual, and familial projects moving through generations, with both continuity and change visible. The artists appear as daughters, sons, students, teachers, and working mothers, so no single role holds still.

The final episode is the most striking. The three members take turns holding one another in a pose that recalls Michelangelo's Pietà. This quintessential image of maternal grief and care is redistributed among the group, so that each person becomes both the one who holds and the one who is held, and the collective itself stands in for the mother.

The *Universal Declaration of Infantile Anxiety Situations Reflected in the Creative Impulse* was presented in the 2014 edition of The Whitney Biennial (New York, US).

24-Jimmie Durham
Mäßige Materialfehler, 2000
9 etchings and an accompanying text, numbered and signed
Each 42 x 32 cm - 16 1/2 x 12 5/8 in
Edition of 6 arabic and 6 roman

*viewing on request

Jimmie Durham's *Mäßige Materialfehler* (2000) pushes language back toward its most physical origin. The nine etchings are made using prehistoric flint tools Durham found near the Baltic Sea, alongside broken glass and sandpaper. "Scratching words backwards into a hard surface is an odd experience," Durham wrote of the process. "It makes clear that written language is drawing, and that, like stone tools, it comes from work and play." Durham's claim that language begins not with naming but with action, search, help, run, dance, work, is as clean a statement of this exhibition's premise as any curatorial text could offer.

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