

More on the Artists and Nominators.

Josh Bitelli and Felix Melia nominated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Co-Director of Exhibitions and Programmes and Director of International Projects at Serpentine Gallery, London.

Hans Ulrich Obrist nominated **Josh Bitelli and Felix Melia** on the strength of their work *Place of Dead Roads* (2014) which he saw at the Marrakesh Biennale 2014. Bitelli and Melia had also been invited to take part in the *89plus Marathon* (2013), the eighth in the Serpentine Gallery's annual marathon series which brought emerging practitioners, born in or after 1989 together with influential thinkers of all generations.

Hannah Clayden, nominated by Dave beech, artist, writer, and Lecturer in Fine Art at Chelsea College of Arts.

Hannah Clayden, who has worked off and on with Mario D'Agostino since studying at Chelsea, and who now also collaborates with Rosalie Schweiker and Jo Waterhouse, is a young artist who works with non-commercial forms of publishing, participatory modes of social relation, uninstrumentalised flows of resources and non-economic forms of exchange. Her projects seem to accomplish their alternative social fabric effortlessly and artlessly but the work achieves a certain tone that is rare among socially engaged art. **Dave beech**

Jay Delves, nominated by Emily Speed, artist.

I came across Jay Delves' film work at her Sculpture degree show at Wimbledon School of Art this year. The film she exhibited, *Improvisation for a Sports Club* was projected onto a large goal-shaped structure and presented an examination of this specific club environment, where the real-life customers were given only short instructions to use for improvisation. Certain characters seem like people you already know and the whole thing is strange but ultimately very familiar.

The way in which Delves slows things down to allow examination feels luxurious, although the slowness also has the effect of making everything she films seem absurd; everyday rituals and activities are revealed to be totally nonsensical. *EAD banging* comprises a voice-over reading instructions for head banging, while the camera follows a person doing the movements so slowly that it becomes meditative, more like yoga. There is a formal choreography at work in some of her set-ups too, for example in *5 bodies 5 objects*, where the relationship between bodies and objects is explored and deconstructed in a way that is reminiscent of Bauhaus dance rules. The consistent pace in all of Delves work, broken only by slight crescendos, is frustrating yet compelling. Her sophisticated and careful avoidance

of any editing techniques that might play to the viewers' expectations leave me both captivated and infuriated by the wait for something to break. **Emily Speed**

Kathrine Elkin, nominated by Francis Mckee, Director at the Centre for Contemporary Arts Glasgow, and research fellow at The Glasgow School of Art

Francis Mckee was first introduced to Kathryne Elkin's work whilst she studied at Glasgow School of Art and has since followed her exploits across Glasgow and further afield. Mckee feels Elkin is making interesting work that is hard to define and which stands out amongst her peers.

Samuel Fouracre Nominated by JJ Charlesworth, associate editor of Art Review.

Somewhere between a Michael Jackson video (one of the early, good ones), a convention of Bryan Ferry fans, a Clapham Common house party of ex-Oxbridge girls who all work in PR, a Dior fragrance ad aimed at the Asian market, the mirrored fragments of a Beyoncé hit and a Shakespearean soliloquy – Samuel Fouracre's videos are high on dance, music, sex and romance. *D.M.S.R. (Dance.Music.Sex.Romance)* is the common title of his currently evolving group of video clips, which stitch together a glossy, kaleidoscopic, twilight world of camped-up heterosexual desire: the curve of a woman's hip against a deep orange background; a sharp red blazer and slicked-back hair; an Aston Martin DB9; the flair of a cigarette; sexting.

It's an unreal world, of course, full of dualities, of reflections in infinite regress, and extreme, unbelievable, hypnotic shades of colour, that illuminate individuals as if becoming their perfect self-images, inhabiting a world of glamour, success and euphoric self-confidence. It's the colour and shade of narcissism, of the world as we want to see it, with ourselves at the centre.

Fouracre gets that images are seduction, and that seduction is the business of acting oneself perfectly as an image, so that there's no distance between what one is and what one appears to be. He sets out first to appropriate, then remake those cultural forms that compose the landscape of contemporary desire – the aspirational life-style formations of dance music, cosmetics, car culture, cocktail aesthetics, gaming fantasy and pornography. Fouracre's act of remaking – in the studio, under lights, with actors and models, or in the CGI render – is critical: Fouracre makes images whose quality is indistinguishable from the forms of culture he devours, making it his own, making it, in some sense, real, ordinary life. In this utopia, romance and narcissism circle around each other, somewhere between the individual and the social world, where brands are strangely nowhere to be seen. Making his own world might be utopian, but who wouldn't want the world to be more glamorous than it is, us included? Fouracre's videos celebrate pleasure, and their question is whether desire binds us, or sets us free. **JJ Charlesworth**

Danny Fox, nominated by Sue Webster, artist.

Danny Fox invited me to his studio in London's Kentish Town on Halloween just over a year ago and as I climbed the creaking wooden staircase that lead to the room upstairs I realised immediately that this was no usual studio but in fact a tiny and lonely bed-sit with piles of ambitious looking paintings stacked against all four walls.

I soon became consumed with thoughts of Picasso's first studio on the Parisian hill of Montmartre, where he painted at night by the flickering light of a single electric bulb.

One painting of Danny's in particular caught my eye, *White Girls Sleep Standing Up* – executed from an original sketch of a gang of strippers posing between shifts at the White Horse Gentleman's Club on Redchurch Street, a convenient drinking haunt near to my studio I might add.

The pale tones of their veal-like skin that rarely ever saw the light of day brought me once more to Picasso and his *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)* painted in 1907, an unsettling image of five pink and naked prostitutes flaunting their breasts whilst waiting for a customer, Danny Fox's version, painted some 107 years later is executed in a rather cheap and nasty fashion – tit's out for a night out, legs spread in skinny Primark blue jeans, the obligatory bounty jar of coins teetering on a nearby pub table replaces the display of fruit in Picasso's original.

There was simply no more room to breathe and I felt a duty to exhume these unseen masterpieces before their author died a tiny little death – another undiscovered artist suffocated by the toxicity of his own genius. **Sue Webster**

Timothy Foxon, nominated by Ryan Gander, artist and Patron of Castlefield Gallery.

I first met Timmy 10 years ago teaching at Wimbledon, where he studied. His work as an extension of his personality was instantly intriguing to me. It was both quick-witted and intelligent, but also spastic with energy and possibilities. Timmy has his studio in a friend's garage in the suburbia of Chester, the work that is born from this geographic and consequential context is idiosyncratic to that state, it speaks of private housing estates, the exotic from a localised perspective, it smells of Lynx deodorant, it wears a suit in a room full of people wearing football shirts and reminds us that we only stand out as an exception to the norm, when we are in fact surrounded by norms. **Ryan Gander**

Evan Ifekoya, nominated by Lubaina Himid, artist and Professor of Contemporary Art at the University of Central Lancashire.

Evan Ifekoya is the kind of artist who will fulfil her desire to change the way we think about the politicalisation of culture whether we are ready for her or not. She is energetic, intelligent, irreverent and yet respectful of the efforts of women artists to make a difference, whatever the lost cause.

She recently completed the Emerging Artist Residency at Kingsgate Workshop, has worked with Tate and Camden Arts Centre as part of their education programme, is a member of Collective Creativity: critical reflections into QTIPOC creative practice and has investigated our material on Maud Sulter at the Making Histories Visible Archive project at the University of Central Lancashire. She has performed in London at *Richmix* and the *BFI*, as well as *Badbrokproject space*, Stroud. She is in the Bristol Biennial from 12 - 21st September and in Bradford on the 20th 21st September .

The work she has made during the past couple of years includes *TEXTME@KWT: HOME* a performance in which she invited members of the public to respond to the question of what home meant to them via text message or 'tweet'. **Lubaina Himid**

Sam Keogh Nominated by Pil and Galia kollektiv, artists, writers, curators, and Lecturers in Fine Art at the University of Reading.

*"So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will vomit you out of my mouth".
Revelation 3:16*

"[driving into a junkyard] This is where I wanna be - grouch paradise! Just look it at. It's like a work of art". Oscar the Grouch

Revelation 3:16 is traditionally understood to be a warning against complacency. It is not fiery passion or icy hatred but lukewarm contentment that is disgusting. Sam Keogh's little patches of puke, which neatly embalm bits of food, rubbish and everyday objects in latex, are directed against the smugness of the art world. Caught in the grip of irony, between a modernist ethos of art as social transformation and the existing order in which art is nothing more than a receptacle to capture excess wealth, guilt and reputation for elites, art is frequently experienced as an impasse. Keogh, ventriloquizing the figure of Sesame Street's Oscar the Grouch, refuses to accept this constipating blockage, preferring to enjoy the disgusting half-digested remnants of art's old promise to liberate the self and liberate all. This promise is recited without authenticity and without conviction, a historical reenactment of the figure of the artist as a cypher of transgression: even vomiting is just one more gesture in the well-studied repertoire of gestures available to the post-conceptual artist. But if abjection is a boundary crossed or matter displaced, Keogh suspends this crossing in sticky aspic. The bile is not there merely to draw attention to the line between interiority and exteriority, between food and excreta. It is lovingly captured and crystalized, archived for future use and reference. This suspension is performed in Keogh's sculptural installations, but also sculpted through his performance work, words hewn from text through a half-memorised utterance that struggles to convey conviction, but struggles with alarming force.

Pil and Galia kollektiv

John Henry Newton, nominated by Ryan Gander, artist and Patron of Castlefield Gallery.

John Newton is obsessed with languages and systems of the everyday, as well as the clumsiness and inadequacies in being able to articulate ideas as eloquently as the spoken

word. He is by all means a sociologist, a phenomenologist at that, a researcher, an explorer and an investigator, his practice can be seen as a body of try-outs. Toying with behavioral norms and systems and picking apart their social, historic and emotional resonance. The artifacts collected from his interests delve into the public / private, the local / global as well as class conflict, executed with the poetics of a songwriter and the nuances and fluency of a linguist. **Ryan Gander**

Yelena Popova, nominated by Mary Griffiths, artist and Curator of Modern Art at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.

Yelena Popova's paintings are paradoxical in that from subtly painted canvases she makes bold and unexpected installations. A lot is asked of her canvases. Shaped as conventional rectangles and (less usual) circles, they balance and teeter on top of each other and on what look like the remains of their making. These pieces of curved board, found wood and picture frames have their painted versions too, featuring as arabesques and shadows on the canvas surface. The 'supports' of the canvases and the support that they derive from each other and the boards between them are the bare bones of Popova's work. Through these materials and modes of presentation, conventions of art from the Old Masters to Constructivism collide, collapse and reform, the artist drawing together forms and images to create complete and harmonious works of art. **Mary Griffiths**

Evangelia Spiliopoulou, nominated by Pavel Büchler, artist and Professor of Fine Art on the MA programme at Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Evangelia Spiliopoulou says that all her work is inspired by the experience of daily life. She sees her recent drawings as a speculation on the nature of physical labour and its role in shaping both the world in which we live and, almost literally, what we make of ourselves. The slow and patient work invested in the making of the drawing takes and gives time. It takes days and weeks of a concentrated effort to build the drawing line by line, dot by dot, but as a monotonous mechanical task it also gives the time to think. The thinking may have nothing to do with drawing. It may not be registered in the drawing and it is not decipherable from it as information. And yet this parallel process of solitary contemplation does inform what the drawing is - a record of a conscious exploration of creative boredom and mundane working habit, which is an incitement to thought.

As soon as a drawing is finished the artist begins to make a copy of it. The duplicate soon slightly diverts from the original. There are small imperfections here and there, slight variations of line, density and tone, minor irregularities in the geometric pattern. It is a reproduction rather than reproduction, a re-enactment rather than a replica. Through the repeated action, the abstract qualities of time, labour and the wandering thought become the artist's materials which almost like a physical substance hold the two drawings in a fragile equilibrium. They maintain a tension between the process and the outcome and give the work a sense of introspection and inner necessity. The results are convincing. They make no attempt to please and yet they give much pleasure. They are as modest as they are

rigorous, as direct as they are enigmatic, they demand nothing but reward a close attention. A time well spent. **Pavel Büchler**

Nye Thompson, nominated by Bob and Roberta Smith, artist, Royal Academician, trustee for the National Campaign for the Arts, and a Patron of the National Society for Education in Art and Design.

Nye Thompson attempts to reveal to us the visual nature of the physical and virtual internet. In this journey she shows us beautiful things.

I see her as rather like a contemporary Jacques Cousteau, the 1970's TV marine biologist. She is showing us glimpses of quite extraordinary networks, structures, debris and possibilities that somehow we know exist but ordinarily we have no access to.

Thompson is an important member of a new generation of artists who are opening up ideas and concepts, which are transforming our society. The role of the artist in issues affecting free speech connected with the digital age is quite daunting. Institutions want to harvest our data but when we want access to that data, artists and activists start going to prison from Ai Wei Wei to Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning.

Thompson reminds us that the past and the future is about controlling imagery. The artist's role in the mediation of that imagery is now more than ever contested. **Bob and Roberta Smith**

Finbar Ward Nominated by Corin Sworn, artist, represented Scotland at Venice Biennale 2013, and winner of the Max Mara Art Prize for Women 2013.

In Finbar Ward's work the palpable qualities of dry paint, its mottling, roughness and a certain dull dusty finish meet the rough but pristine edges of basic unused building materials. Many of his sculptures compress and stack simple timber, it is only while moving around the work that one finds this raw wood interrupted by the makings of paint and canvas. In contrast, his paintings while appearing simple in surface tend to have strange and irregular dimensions, perhaps suggesting an architectural plan or the floor outline of some interior space.

In the meeting between these mundane two by fours or a cube of poured concrete and the painter's dry pigment, textures of the old and new are conflated. While the paint edges of the timber might speak of the wood's past life as a wall support or its extraction from demolition, its shocking newness all too quickly contradicts this. Instead the paint becomes not a remnant but a speculation, a possible alterity to the material's designation. Repeatedly in Ward's work readings are deferred, details are put out of reach and elements used for demarcation turn out to be sensory tromp l'oeil. A basic block of colour seemingly marking the space might turn out to be a chalky colourfield, a panel of hovering dust that the eye sinks into rather than moves across or finds any definition in.

In these works the traditional support structure of the a painting meets the invisible skeleton within the galley walls and the relation that begins to develop suggests a latency to the basic space they stand in. Neither seems to hold their bounding structures comfortably and it is only with future work that Ward may begin to reveal the alternate possibilities his work presently murmurs about. **Corin Sworn**

Thomas Yeomans nominated by Kate Jesson, Curator at Manchester Art Gallery.

Kate Jesson nominated Thomas Yeomans after seeing his film, *Eternal September* (2013), at Rouge Project Space as part of *Aversion Management* 2013 curated by Manchester based artists and curators Ahmed & Carpenter (Taneesha Ahmed, Annie Carpenter).