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Press Release

## On Destruction and Preservation

Group Show with works by Geoffrey de Beer, Maija Blåfield, Bram Braam, Stefanie Bühler, Gabriella Disler and Kerstin Honeit

March 29 to May 24

Vernissage | March 28 | 18 to 20h

Finissage and Gallery Talk with Artists | May 24 | 18 to 20.30h

The exhibition “On Destruction and Preservation” presents six artists who work in different areas of representation and means of production. They share the deep reflection on parameters of change - sometimes obvious, but also subtle and even hidden. The exhibition does not pretend to solve problems and give answers to urgent questions; instead, it aims to open lines of communication.

We hear and read the following statement on a daily basis and we cannot act as we did not know this before: The world as we know it now will no longer exist in the near future! We have entered a period of instability when many of our cherished assumptions and certainties are questioned. Every day, expectations and predictions – political and otherwise – are called into question. This should always be kept in mind while looking at the different artists' work.

The exhibition is political, but not programmatic and by no means comprehensive. The art itself remains the focus of the show and works are selected for their artistic and poetic qualities, in addition to their political message. Several pressing issues are being highlighted: Destruction and preservation in urban and natural environs, the perceived need to modify political and social architecture and the utilization of architectural meanders for political propaganda. Capitalism, corruption, inflated technological advancement, but also ignorance and negligence bringing ecological and humanist catastrophes of unexpected dimensions.... This is the underlying subtext of this show.

The conceptual core is shared by Kerstin Honeit's film “my castle your castle” (2017) and the film “On Destruction and Preservation” (2018) by Maija Blåfield.

“On Destruction and Preservation” consists of five separate stories. The narration ranges from essayist film to direct documentary while stories vary from a sex scene of fungi to a sightseeing tour into the signs of global warming in the arctic Svalbard. This guided tour takes place on a mild and rainy February day. The focus of the sightseeing changes to something not originally intended and becomes an introduction to the climate change. The identifiable and endearing humanity of the characters makes the topic easier to address. The rest of the stories correspond and react to this setting in different ways. Essentially, “On Destruction and Preservation” tells about humanity and how it feels like to live somewhere between destruction and preservation.” (Text: Maija Blåfield)

“my castle your castle” investigates the construction site of the Berlin Stadtschloss, which was rebuilt on the substructure of the demolished Palace of the Republic - the parliament of the GDR, as a place where national hegemonies supposedly transform into identity-generating

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architectures and so appear as spaces which can be conquered and restaged. "However, the material and machinic vocabulary of construction site itself resonates the massive urban reconstructions, redistributions of properties and redefinitions of political meaning through architecture that have followed the disappearance of state socialisms in Europe." (Text: Suza Husse)

Destruction and preservation in urban environs are explored by Gabriella Disler, Bram Braam and Geoffrey de Beer. The perceived need to modify political and social architecture – dealt with by Kerstin Honeit and Stefanie Bühler as well as the use of urban planning for political propaganda. Capitalism, corruption, inflated technological advancement and greed bringing ecological and humanist catastrophes of unexpected dimensions - a gradual move into the Anthropocene and the change in ecology brought on by man-made environmental interventions are especially explored by Maija Blåfield and Stefanie Bühler.

## About the Artists and Their Work:

Geoffrey de Beer (\*1978, Belgium) lives and works in Antwerp (Belgium) and La Roche Morey (France). He graduated in 2002 from the Sculpture Department at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp. In 2010, he started a Ph.D. in Arts entitled "The artist as a Hub-hopper", focusing on young artists' need to network at the beginning of their career. In 2017 de Beer had his first solo show at Balzer Projects. Among other places, his work was included in the 'Exposition Xxv Aniversario De Arte Santander', Museo d'Arte Contemporaneo de Santander and London Art Fair, curated by Natasha Hoare, London, both in 2016.

Since 2016, de Beer breaks with previous conceptual and performance-based artistic strategies and treads radically new territory. His most recent work consists of abstract installations with iridescent glass panels. His installations now use three types of material – glass, concrete and oak. In some of the work, glass panels are placed on oak shelves as bas-reliefs. In others, the glass panels are placed next to each other; again in others, they are overlapping. He also collected the molds of decorative wall elements from the 1960s (manufactured by a Belgian concrete factory), cast them and combined them with stained glass. Here, de Beer juxtaposes the fragile and poetic colored glass with the "brutal" and rough concrete. All of his works have beautifully poetic, funny, ironic, symbolic or literary titles. On view are "The Brutalist I and II" (2019).

Maija Blåfield (\*1973, Finland) lives and works in Helsinki. She is a media artist and her works have a creative documentary perspective with strong storytelling and subtle humor. Blåfield works with experimental documentary film, photography, writing and collective processes. Recent works include short films "On Destruction and Preservation" and "Golden Age". She was granted the Finnish State Prize for the Media Arts in 2014 and was nominated for Ars Fennica award in 2017.

Blåfield's chief medium is video, yet she represents a breed of contemporary artist that constantly pushes the boundaries between different genres. Her works can justifiably be defined as experimental film, yet they also represent a new type of documentary. (...) Blåfield is a documentarist. She collects, saves and preserves. Her works are a collection of private memories, each one unique and exclusive to the artist. No one can claim they are false, because memories are always true. (...) Her ability to see the story behind the event allows us to see a real and intriguing world without recorded footage intervening as the focus of the narrative. (Veikko Halmetoja, translated by Silja Kudel) On view in the cabinet of the gallery is

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“On Destruction and Preservation”.

Bram Braam (\*1980, The Netherlands) lives and works in Berlin. Braam graduated from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Den Bosch, The Netherlands in 2009. He has exhibited internationally at venues including Cacao fabriek Helmond (NL) Marissa Newman Projects New York (USA), Galerie Burster Berlin (DE) N.B.K. Berlin (DE) Galerie Frank Taal Rotterdam (NL) Another space Kopenhagen (DK) Import Projects Berlin, Stedelijk Museum Den Bosch SMS (NL), B-art Seelevel gallery Amsterdam (NL), Freies Museum Berlin (DE), Rijkswaterstaat Maastricht (NL) Minimal Gallery Chiang Mai (TH). Braam was awarded a one-year scholarship by the Berlin Senate and won the Jung-Art prize Berlin. He has been supported by different funding programs from the Mondriaan Foundation in The Netherlands and received four years scholarship for proven talent.

Braam's art practice focus on sculptural and spatial based installations. He investigates our experience of time and space, the construction of our environment and our perception of this reality. He looks at urban environments and has a fascination for edgy sides of our cities and their antithesis. In his new line of works, entitled “Surface Matters”, the artist is reconstructing the “left-overs” of our built environments. On view is his most recent “Surface Matters No.7”. It partly consists of weathered black plates that are used for the pouring of concrete into a construction, juxtaposed with old rough materials and high gloss acrylic. The work plays with contrasts: from control to coincidence, from rough to glossy.

Stefanie Bühler (\*1976, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. She studied sculpture at the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts, after being involved in various opera productions. She graduated from the master class of Martin Honert. She is the recipient of the Marion Ermer Price and several public grants. She co-founded project spaces and has been showing in numerous international galleries and art institutions. Her work is on view in the permanent collection of the Kunsthalle Mannheim. Bühler's sculptures and collages are part of public collections, such as the collection of the Free State of Saxony and Kunsthalle Mannheim as well as many private collections.

Stefanie Bühler works with materials such as polystyrene and epoxy resin, and she orientates herself on nature when she creates artificial puddles, a cave, a piece of the sea, a pile of greenery or a section of the deep sea. She also makes carefully crafted collages. These spatialized still lives come together to form the somewhat melancholic tableaux and form introspective islands in the present. At once, they are reminiscent of models in natural history museums and parts of an abandoned film set or theatre props without a stage. Scientific models of atoms or, for example, of planetary systems serve as a possible form to make highly complex contexts appear plausible. They have also always aroused artistic aesthetic interest. On view are “Lost” (2017), “Topografie” (2015) and several collages.

Gabriella Disler (\*1963, Switzerland) lives and works in Basel. She has undertaken residencies in Tokyo Wonder Site/JP, in Cologne/DE and in Nairs, Scuol/CH and received national and international scholarships. 2015 She graduated from édhea, école de design et haute école d'art du Valais, Sierre/CH with a MA Fine Arts – Public Sphère. Since 2017 she held a Master of Research in Art & Design, Sint Lucas

University Antwerp, BE. Her works has been showing in international galleries and art institutions and are a part of public and private collections.

Gabriella Disler about her work: "...it is important to me to take in the obvious, to understand and capture it. It is perhaps way of searching for the natural presence of the 'found'. I capture  
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the seemingly insignificant of everyday life with the camera. It is the peripheral zones that elude fleeting perception. (...) The works follow structures of the spaces and refer to continuative contexts; I "draw" situational places in space and time in which what has happened connects with what is remembered. Connections and superimpositions, which did not exist from the outset, arise between space and image, in which the images rub in new contexts and charge the spaces in between." On view are photographs from Tokyo from two series, entitled "Disappearance Memories I and II" (2012) in an *in situ* installation.

Kerstin Honeit (\*1977, Germany) lives and works in Berlin. She studied Fine Art and Theatre Design at the Kunsthochschule Weissensee in Berlin. Since 2014 Honeit has been teaching at the Kunsthochschule Kassel (künstlerische Mitarbeiterin, class of Bjørn Melhus). Her work has been shown at: Berlinische Galerie - Museum of Modern Art Berlin, International Short Film Festival Oberhausen, Arsenal - Institut für Film u. Videokunst Berlin, Monitoring – Dokumentarfilm- u. Videofest Kassel, Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Videonale.15 Kunstmuseum Bonn, Les Complices\* Zurich, Kunstverein Leipzig, Gallery 400 Chicago, CCNY New York, Site Gallery Sheffield.

Using video works, performance and installations in her artistic research, Honeit examines worlds of hegemonic image production in the media of information technology and pop culture. Intervening at the boundaries of representation and reception, she questions the construction of social norms.

Honeit's work is mostly research based. She negotiates personal stories, issues of gender, identity construction and stereotypes, drag; time and again, disembodied voices in film-dubbing and lip-syncing are made the subject of her videos, installations and performances. On view are "my castle your castle" and some accompanying film props.

For further information, visuals and additional material, please contact:  
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Gallery hours: Wednesday to Friday | 13-18h | Saturday | 11-16h

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