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JIL BEOUFA

LI SHURUI, WANG GUANGLE, XIE MOLIN / STURTEVANT and LEO CASTELLI / ARCA / ANNE IMHOF / *Five questions on the future of auction houses*
plus Douglas Crimp / Lisa Spellman / The Haas Brothers / Bunny Rogers

Mona Marzouk

Gypsum Gallery / Cairo

The eight works in Mona Marzouk's exhibition consist of flat, dark silhouettes against colored backgrounds. These semi-abstract and rather discomfiting silhouettes are constructed of numerous combined forms, some of which are clearly identifiable and others less so.

We are informed that each painting is based on trials in which justice was not served. Marzouk includes no further contextualizing information, though we are told by the press release that the shapes are formed of "evidence, phrases, and uttered sentences" used within the trials. *Trayvon* is named after the unarmed African-American teen Trayvon Martin, who was killed "in self defense" according to the claims of the acquitted shooter, George Zimmerman.

There's an online image that fascinates me. It is a photograph of Martin's hoodie, brought in as evidence before the jury, displayed in a large wooden case. The hoodie is laid out in an awkward crucifix; thus mythology immediately attaches itself to this accident of display. But another aesthetic pre-exists and supersedes the accidental emblemizing of the hoodie: the racist myth of the violent black male that ultimately led to Martin's death. Marzouk's silhouettes may well combine these two dynamics, which undermine the claimed neutrality of the courtroom to produce a sense of inevitability: a life entwined helplessly with a corrupt justice system.

Abstraction of this kind clearly proposes a cool distance from concrete reality. The distance is furthered by the intellectualizing tendencies of the art world in general, a space consciously (and, in general, laudably) carved by Gypsum, a gallery only in its second year. But these aspirations loosen some of the horizontal class connections one might make between Martin and the many wrongful convictions that have taken place lately in Egypt. To oversimplify: What sort of conversation would we have with Martin's family around this exhibition? How many layers of aesthetics and pain would we have to traverse? These images clearly afflict the comfortable, but I am not sure they comfort the afflicted.

by Mia Jancowicz

Hema Upadhyay

Chemould Prescott Road / Mumbai

In nature there are neither rewards nor punishments, only consequences." These lines reverberate through Hema Upadhyay's exhibition. On entering one encounters an installation of *Modernization* (2014), a utopic vision of landscapes replaced with a sprawling city of socio-political, religious and urban symbols. This work dominates the exhibition with reminders of the ways that manmade systems come into conflict with nature. The show's title, "Fish in a Dead Landscape," is drawn from a realization had by the artist during a walk on Juhu Beach (Mumbai): amid urban filth, rows of drying fish looked more alive than the "dead landscape." In the thirteen panels that follow, Upadhyay addresses our relationships with landscapes beyond physical perception.

The reappearance of migratory birds from earlier works draws a parallel with contemporary migration, insecurity and displacement from familiarity. The rendition of abundant text reminds one of the Japanese ukiyo-e printmaker Hokusai's *The Great Wave* (c. 1829–32). Philosophical quotes minutely reproduced on three *Rice-Scapes* (2014) are metaphors for self-reflection. The works compel the viewer's intimate interaction — to see the details, one must use a magnifying glass (provided). Two panels include quotes on geographical landscapes, and one on mental landscapes. An adjoining work corresponds to mindscapes, with drawers of mundane elements suggesting the hopes, dreams and desires of people migrating to urban cities.

While moving through the space, fragile, fleeting visions occur — from a toy-gun landscape quoting *Oh war how beautiful*, to a helicopter at war with birds in a night sky. The last panel, of natural history stamps from around the world, mocks the conceptual myth of "one world." These symbolic images cross borders seamlessly, while we are stuck within a complicated system of identities. The exhibition demands that the viewer step in and out of works, experiencing the entire picture while attending to details. On leaving, the view of *Modernization* is slammed back into view, where it creeps up to the ceiling and into the private landscapes of our minds.

by Veeranganakumari Solanki

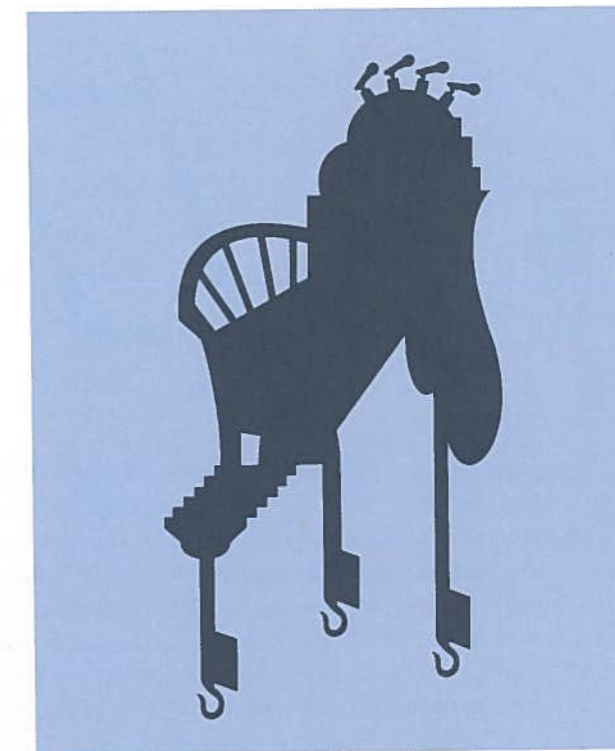
Zhou Tao

Pavilion by Vitamin Creative Space / Beijing

A giant turquoise dome with a human walking around it: this is not science fiction, but the opening shot of Zhou Tao's *Blue and Red* (2014), a film that sutures together documentary fragments of public squares in Guangzhou and Bangkok with clips of a polluted mining zone in Shaoguan, a city in northern Guangdong. The urban clips show people self-entertaining in Huacheng Square — a landmark in the new axis of Guangzhou — and activists during the 2013 Bangkok protest, revealing the functional difference between these public settings. The divergence is emphasized by light, mostly from enormous LED screens, cast upon the city dwellers and architectural facades. Individual features are eroded by this unbearable brightness, making light a kind of new urban shadow. In these cities, the cessation of production due to sleep is replaced by capital-generating nightlife. The images of the mining villages appear abruptly, yet these visions of soil ruined by polluted water — a landscape transformed by unnatural interference — parallel the urban parts of the film.

Blue and Red addresses topics like urban development and pollution, however the artist attenuates the intensity of the sociopolitical content: the volume of the slogans being yelled is reduced; the actual light sources are withheld from the camera's field of vision. The sociopolitical sense is further mitigated by the blurring of the real and the surreal: people enjoy massages during the protest; an acrobat walks on a tightrope over Pearl River on a typical day. *Blue and Red* accentuates the zoning of visibility through the purification of the elements in realpolitik. It looks at urban or rural spaces lit up by the tireless mechanical eyes of cameras and LED screens, not to reveal the constructed nature of reality, but to talk about the overexposure of the world to the world, while at the same time holding up a mirror to illuminate light's own image.

by Venus Lau



From top, clockwise:

Hema Upadhyay
Fish in Dead Landscape
(2014). Courtesy of the Artist and Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai
Photography by Anil Rane

Mona Marzouk
Trayvon #2 (2014)
Courtesy of the Artist and Gypsum Gallery, Cairo

Zhou Tao
Blue and Red, video still
(2014). Courtesy of the Artist and Vitamin Creative Space, Guangzhou