

Hrair Sarkissian, Andrei Roiter, Basim Magdy,
Miguel Angel Rios & Meriç Algün Ringborg

Displacement

The word *displacement* defines a change in position, involving movement, speed, and time. There are many layers and connotations related to this definition. In first instance, being in a state of displacement seems to refer to the simple act of being put out of place. Looking deeper, however, *displacement* may also comprise topics as forced migration, emotions of loss and longing for a place one has left behind. In this exhibition, *displacement* is meant to function as a word that meanders in between what is lost and cannot be brought back. It refers to the kinetic energy which lingers behind velocity or change; how things just go into directions which become unpredictable as we never know where things finally end up. The artists contributing to *Displacement*—Hrair Sarkissian, Andrei Roiter, Basim Magdy, Miguel Angel Rios and Meriç Algün Ringborg—propose a narrative of subtle emotions and thoughts spinning around this elusive theme.

In his work 'Unexposed', London based Syrian artist Hrair Sarkissian (Damascus, 1973) explores the different phases of migration, persecution and displacement. This series of six photographs depicts the descendents of Armenian converts, who turned to Islam to escape the genocide that took place in the Ottoman Empire in 1915. Having rediscovered their roots but reconverted into Christianity, these descendants are forced to conceal their Armenian background. They remain invisible, unaccepted by Turkish society and partly excluded from the Armenian community. 'Unexposed' was presented in the Armenian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale last year, awarded with the prestigious Golden Lion Award.

Throughout the oeuvre of Andrei Roiter (Moscow, 1960), living and working in both Amsterdam and New York, the idea of being on the move has become a crucial subject. He is constantly mapping the world, as an observer, constantly creating a new order for his memories, and excavating them as an archaeologist. What is extraordinary about Roiter's paintings is the fact that he often depicts inhabitable dwellings as mysterious, solid objects—at times suspended in the air like in his painting 'A Place to Hide Above the Ground'—whereas his archetypical object, an old suitcase he took from Moscow when he moved to Europe in 1992, is hollowed out to become a spacious place.

In the poetic film 'Many Colors of the Sky Radiate Forgetfulness' Basim Magdy (Asyut, Egypt, 1977), living and working in Basel, conjures up a kind of dreamstate of imagery, cobbled together with seemingly unrelated footage. Magdy shoots his film with a 16mm camera, cultivating the character of found footage by applying manual distortions: from unhinging the focus for a kaleidoscopic effect, to allowing double exposure or deliberate light leaks to saturate the film with flares of colour, thus endowing each frame with an anachronistic antiquity. Often, his films are 'pickled' in household solutions of Coca-Cola, vinegar or yeast, enhancing their ambiguity. In *Displacement*, Magdy presents his film with photographs of his ongoing series 'Every Subtle Gesture'. Together, the works narrate a history of modernism seen from a few steps ahead, as a future in which the past occupies a ghostly presence. Magdy was recently awarded Artist of the Year 2016 by the Deutsche Bank.

The works 'Infinity' and 'Eternity' by Stockholm based artist Meriç Algün Ringborg (Istanbul, 1983), display a set of hands performing meditative and repetitious tasks; one ties and unties a decorative knot, the other endlessly enacts a trick with a pen. The decorative knot serves no use as a knot, the pen trick implies an endless interim of writing—the movement, not the outcome, serves as a place for contemplation. Over and over, Ringborg returns to the impulse that finds us forever trying to express ourselves to others, fitting words to ideas and emotions and the passage of time. Her work concentrates on issues of identity, borders, bureaucracy, language and translation through appropriated and 'ready-made' texts, collections, and archives; often composed with wry humour and playful delicacy.

Mexico based Miguel Angel Rios' (Catamarca, Argentina, 1943) film 'Piedras Blancas' ('White Stones') explores the perpetual momentum of a greater whole set in motion. Solid and heavy white stones rapidly roll down the slope of a mountain as they search for the paths of least resistance, their tracks determined by existing trails in the landscape, channels eroded by animals or streams of water created by rain. The surreal image is breathtaking in its beauty, but in fact proposes a powerful metaphor: is this an innocent game, or a catastrophe in the making? Do these white stones represent people caught in a migrating frenzy? Combining controlled acts with coincidence, Rios reveals the unstableness of human condition, expressing his primary concerns with social power struggles, violence and geopolitics on an intriguing, symbolic level. The questions he raises with symbolic imagery may never be answered, yet there is always a haunting sense of urgency in his poetic juxtaposition of motion and matter.

Hrair Sarkissian (1973), born and raised in Damascus, was trained in his father's photo studio before completing his Photography studies at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. His work has been shown worldwide at a.o. the Armenian Pavilion during the 56th Venice Biennale—awarded with the Golden Lion; the African Biennial of Photography, Mali (2015); Tate Modern, London (2014-15); New Museum, New York (2014); Photo Museum Antwerp (2013); and Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (2012). Solo exhibitions were held at KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015); Mosaic Rooms, London (2015)—accompanied by the publication of his monograph 'Background'; La Spezia, Italy (2015); SALT Beyoglu, Istanbul (2011); The Museum of Photography of Thessaloniki, Greece (2007), and repeatedly at the Kalfayan Galleries in Athens. Sarkissian currently lives and works in London.

Born in Moscow and educated at the Moscow Architectural Institute, Andrei Roiter (1960) currently lives in New York and Amsterdam. He exhibited at MMOMA, Moscow (2013); Jack Hanley Gallery, New York (2012); Regina Gallery, Moscow (2011); Kunstmuseum Solothurn, Switzerland (2011); The Stedelijk Museum Schiedam (2010); Stedelijk Museum Den Bosch (2010); Laura Bullian Gallery, Milan (2010 and 2014), Laura Bartlett Gallery, London (2008), and several times at AKINCI, Amsterdam. He participated in group exhibitions in the Hermitage, Amsterdam (2013), Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (2013); SCHUNCK, Heerlen (2013); David Nolan Gallery, New York (2012); Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam (2012); Centraal Museum, Utrecht (2006), Kunsthalle Recklinghausen, Germany, (2004), and repeatedly at the Moscow Biennale. His work is part of numerous private and public collections across the world.

Basim Magdy (1977) completed his studies of Fine Arts at the Helwan University, Cairo. He has received several awards for his work, including the Abraaj Art Prize Dubai (2014), and was announced 'Artist of the Year 2016' by the Deutsche Bank. He has had numerous solo exhibition at a.o. The Green Parrot, Barcelona (2015); Art in General, New York (2014)—where subsequently completed a residency; Centre d'Art Contemporain, Roubaix (2013); Platform Sarai, Frankfurt (2012); KÖR Kunsthalle Wien (2010); and ARCO Projects, Madrid (2007). Group shows include MoMA, New York (2015); Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, Moscow (2015); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw (2015); Royal Institute of Stockholm (2014); Seoul Museum of Art (2014); Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (2013); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012); Centre Pompidu, Paris (2011); and, repeatedly, artsümer, Istanbul. Magdy has numerous publications on his name. He lives and works in Basel, Switzerland.

Meriç Algün Ringborg (1983), born in Istanbul, currently lives and works in Stockholm, where she completed her Masters of Fine Arts at the Royal Institute of Art. Her work has been exhibited at a.o. Kunstverein Freiburg (2015); Llandudno, Wales (2014); Art in General, New York (2013); and Witte de With, Rotterdam (2012). She has participated in group shows across the world, including SALT Beyoglu, Istanbul (2015); Kunstverein Hannover (2013); Malmö Konstmuseum (2012/13) and numerous Biennales, amongst which the 56th Venice Biennale (2015), 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015), 5th Thessaloniki Biennial (2015), and the 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014). Her work is part of several collections in Sweden, Turkey and abroad.

Miguel Angel Rios (1943) has had solo exhibitions at museums across the world, including ASU Art Museum, Arizona (2015); Museum of Fine Arts, Texas (2013); Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Mexico City (2013); Des Moines Art Center, Iowa (2012); Museo Carrillo Gil, México (2011); Museo de Arte Latinoamericano de Buenos Aires (2009); Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris (2009/11); Fries Museum, Leeuwarden (2008); and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington (2005). His videos have been screened during La Biennale de Lyon, France (2015), Liverpool Biennial (2011), and the Biennale of Sydney (2010). He participated in group exhibitions at a.o. Centro del Carmen, Valencia (2014), New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (2014), Musée d'Art Contemporain de Nîmes, France (2013), Busan Museum, Croatia (2012), Tranen Contemporary Art Center, Denmark (2012), Molaa Museum of Latin American Art, USA (2011), The National Museum in Warsaw (2010), and Daros Exhibitions, Zürich (2009). He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and has received numerous awards, including the John Guggenheim Fellowship (1998) for his work exploring the mediums of painting, drawing and collage.