

Passages

September 6 - October 11, 2014

Sophie Calle
Hamza Halloubi
Stéphanie Saadé
Imogen Stidworthy

A passage implies transition. It involves a movement, a displacement from one point to another, from one state to another. It also implies time; a present point towards a past event. However, the past is not the point of focus, being incorporated into a movement towards the present and even hinting out to something beyond.

While considering the implications of 'Passages' in the exhibition, we remember Walter Benjamin's unfinished 'Passagenwerk', written between 1927 and 1940, in which he describes the covered arcades of 19th Century Paris. Benjamin's work was a collection of reflections. What is an arcade? In its classic sense, the term denotes a pedestrian passage or gallery, open at both ends and roofed in glass and iron, typically linking two parallel streets and consisting of two facing rows of shops and other commercial establishments - restaurants, cafés, hairdressers, etc. In pondering the *passages*, Benjamin sought at the same time to detect the past, understand the present and find a bridge to the future.

'Passages' brings together works by Sophie Calle, Hamza Halloubi, Stéphanie Saadé and Imogen Stidworthy, which focus on different moments at the two ends of the arcade, as well as the elapsing time between. Different forms of passage are linked, more concrete ones relating to places, situations and narratives, and abstract ones such as the passage of time, which in turn leaves tangible marks. The exhibition focuses on the moment when change happens. 'Passages' is about de-composing this flow, as the artist lays bare its mechanism, or finds anchor points in it, to fix a moment. Perhaps these are attempts to resist the elapsing of time, or to constitute a different past.

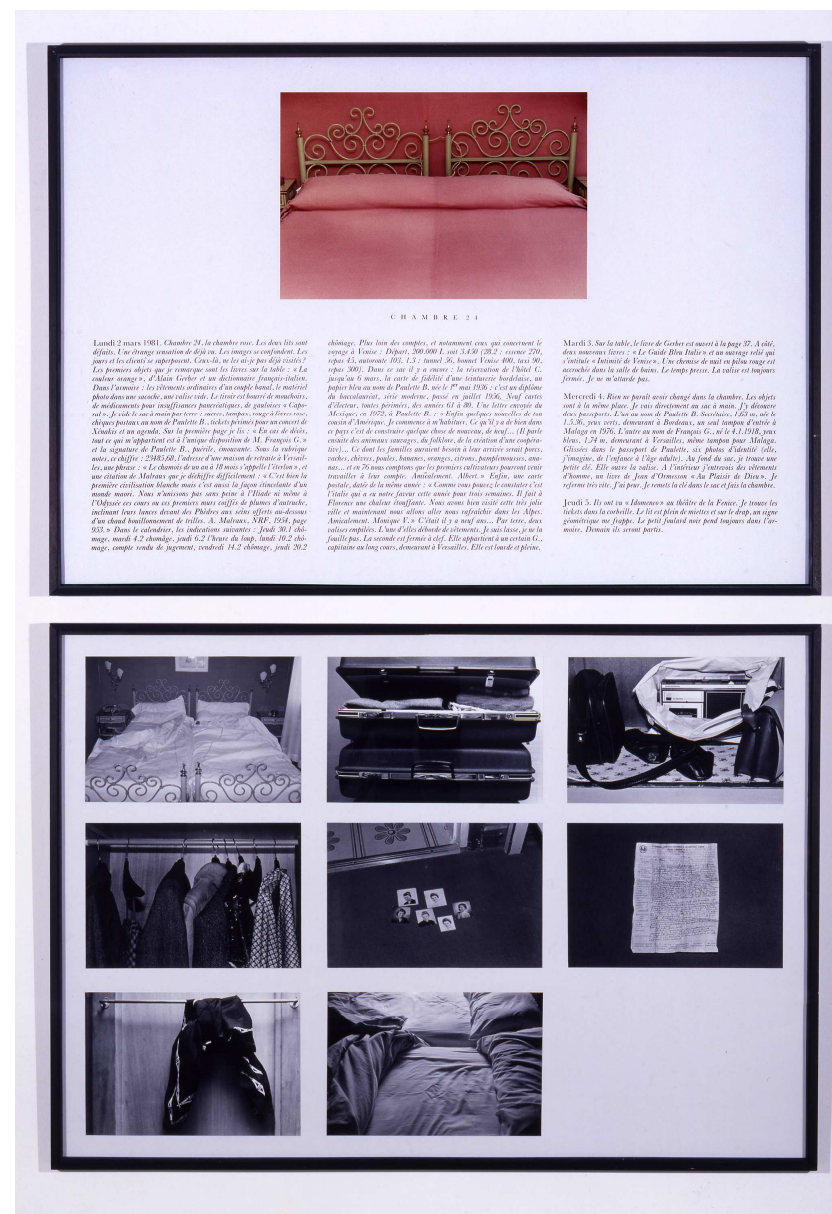


Installation view Passages at AKINCI Amsterdam

Sophie Calle's (France, 1953) work touches the presence of a narrative by the absence of a protagonist. Since the late 1970's Sophie Calle has been active as a photographer, combining text, image and conceptual installations. Her work amounts to a systematic laying bare of reality, whether it be her own or other people's, with a limited portion left to chance. Absence of others is a central theme in her work. However Calle's own existence plays an important role in her works. The documentary manner in which she presents her work suggests a high degree of factualness. In 'Passages' three works from the series *Last Seen* (1991), *The Blind* (1986) and *The Hotel*, will be shown.

For the series *The Hotel* (*Hotel # 24*, 1981), Sophie Calle works as a chambermaid in a Hotel in Venice. Her descriptions of the hotel rooms and their contents combine factual documentation along with her personal response to the people whose lives she glimpsed by examining their belongings. Each text begins with the chambermaid/artist's first entry into the room and a notation of which bed or beds have been slept in, with a description of the nightwear the guests have left. A list of objects usually follows, as the artist transcribes her activities in the room. Calle is unashamedly voyeuristic, reading diaries, letters, postcards and notes written or kept by the unknown guests, rummaging in suitcases, and looking into wardrobes and drawers. She sprays herself with their perfume and cologne, makes herself up using the contents of a vanity case, eats food left behind and salvages a pair of women's shoes left in the bin.

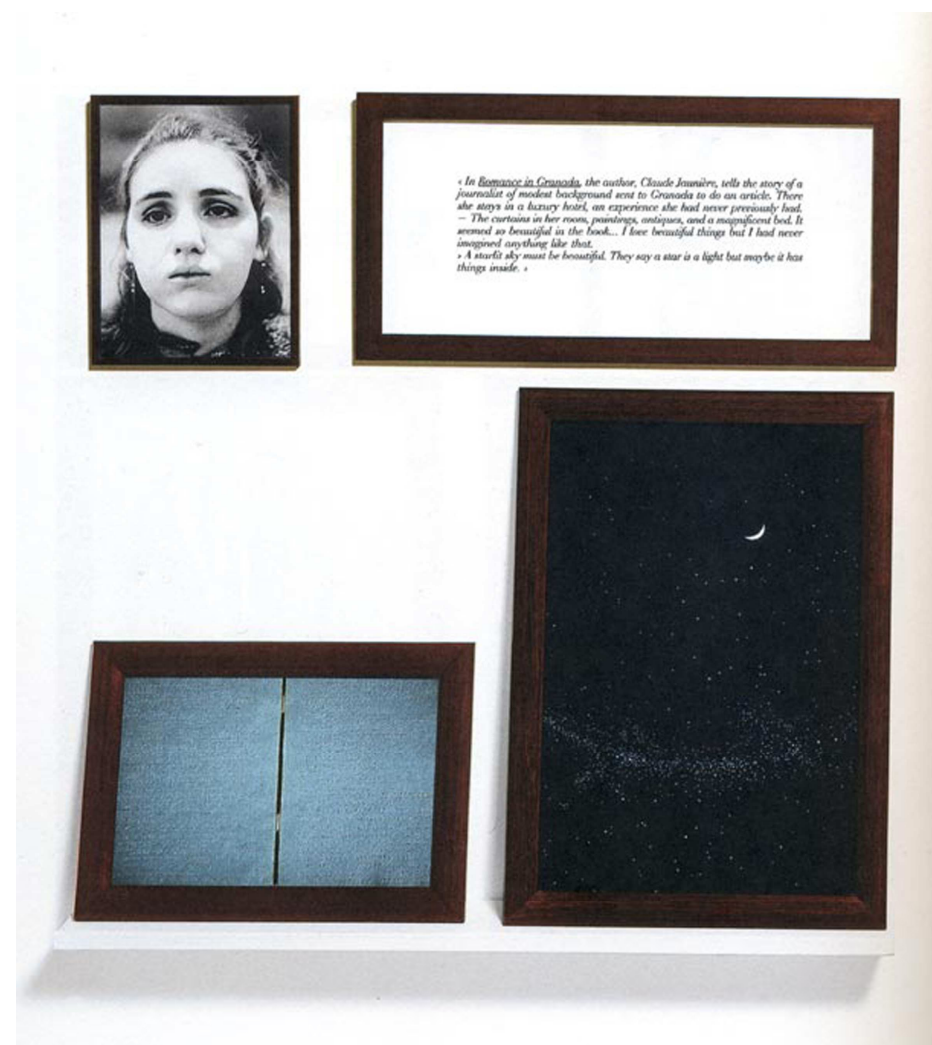
Sophie Calle, *Hotel #24* (2.-5. Mars 1981), 1981, from the series: *The Hotel*, diptych, framed photography and framed, text, (Part 2 of 2), each 102 x 142 cm
Edition 2/3 + 1 AP



In *Les Aveugles / The Blind* (1986), one of her most successful works, Calle collected the testimony of several people that were born blind as to what they think beauty was. Each piece consists of a photo-portrait of the person, along with another picture with that person's written testimony, and underneath, a picture of what the person has mentioned as a subjective impression of beauty. In this project, Calle juxtaposes black and white photographs, text and a color photograph of the object on which she interpreted the answer to the question about that person's image of beauty.

"I met people who were born blind. Who had never seen. I ask them what their image of beauty was. I worked on this in France and Australia. I do not know why I asked about beauty. Simply, I met a group of blind people in the street and one said to his friends: 'Yesterday I saw a beautiful movie'. It took me two years to finish this project. I was afraid of the element of cruelty implicit in asking a blind person what beauty is. Also, in this work we find again the idea of looking without being watched. This is not research into the idea of beauty. I am not interested in showing that the blind can see." Sophie Calle

Sophie Calle continued the series with *Blind Color* (1991) where she asked blind people what they see and compared their descriptions with artists's texts about the monochrome and a very recent one "The Last Image" (2010) where she met blind people whose loss of sight had been sudden. She asked them to describe the last thing they saw.



Sophie Calle, *Romance in Granada*, 1986, from the series: *The Blind*, one framed text 40 x 80cm, one framed, b/w photograph, 41 x 31cm, 2 framed, colour photographs 40 x 56 cm and 78 x 56 cm, one shelf
Edition 1/2 + 1 AP

In her photo and text series entitled, *Last Seen* (1991), Sophie Calle explores the lingering life of thirteen works of art stolen in 1990, from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. The museum, the once private residence of the wealthy Bostonian philanthropist, Isabella Stewart Gardner, became a public institution in 1924, with the caveat that the exhibition display of Gardner's collection of objects within the building was to remain intact, preserving the authentic layout of Gardner's palatial home. The widely publicized art theft of 1990, dramatically challenged the laws of Gardner's will, in the end forcing the curators of the museum to leave actual "holes" within the exhibition space where the stolen five drawings by Degas, six paintings by Rembrandt, Flinck, Manet and Vermeer, a Napoleonic eagle and an antique vase were once housed. Calle's 1991 project, *Last Seen*, investigates the tension between the haunting absence and phantom presence of these missing works within the context of the museum. Calle pairs for each work a large-scale photograph of the now "empty" space with an accompanying text panel, which contains excerpts from interviews she conducted with museum staff about the missing works. In a conceptual manner, Calle's *Last Seen* indexes a host of definitions for one single object based in part upon the occupational character of her interviewed subjects, which included museum curators, conservators, security guards, etc.

"On March 18, 1990, five drawings by Degas, one vase, one Napoleonic eagle and six paintings by Rembrandt, Flinck, Manet and Vermeer, were stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. In front of the spaces left empty, I asked curators, guards and other staff members to describe for me their recollections of the missing objects."

- Sophie Calle



Sophie Calle, *Last seen ... Degas, drawing, 1991, from the series: Last Seen, Color print, frames, Photo: 182x116 cm, text: 146x80 cm, 182 x 116 cm, Number 1 in English from an edition of 2 English and 2 French Edition 1/2 + 1 AP*



Installation view Passages at AKINCI, 2014



Still life 1957.

Hamza Halloubi, Nature Morte, 2013, Single-channel video installation, 11:24 min., color, sound
Edition 5 + 2 AP

Hamza Halloubi's (Morocco, 1982) poetic video works manoeuvre between documentary and fiction. Guided by the artist-author's voice, all of his works maintain a philosophical aspect that refers both to theoretical knowledge and to personal memories. In *Letter From Tangier* (2013) Hamza Halloubi explores with his camera the dusty remains of the once famous Gran Teatro Cervantes of Tangier. It is a film about the journey of images, the difficulty of working, and the boundary between fiction and documentary. *Letter From Tangier* analyses the failure of creating a fiction film when reality is more complex, to be reduced to a documentary work.

Nature Morte by Hamza Halloubi is a film about the Italian painter Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964). It shows his images, paintings and photographs in a book. The film juxtaposes the still life paintings made by the artist with striking images drawn from art history and events of the 20th century. It is a reading of Morandi's work in relation to the unstable history of the last century, termed by the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm 'the age of extremes'. The film questions the relationship between the artist and the political and artistic news of the time.



In 1957, The Battle of Algiers started.



is showing its ultimate spectacle;

*Hamza Halloubi, Letter from Tangier, 2014, Single-channel video installation, 13 min., color, sound
Edition 5 + 2 AP*

Stéphanie Saadé's (Lebanon, 1983) works take as a departure point the moment when one becomes *estranged* from his surroundings. This estrangement allows to perceive objects which in the past would have blended in. In the series *Re-Enactment* she reproduces objects fabricated by others, appropriating a *foreign* logic, and establishing a physical archive of disregarded objects. Created for practical purposes, they would disappear if the artist wouldn't reproduce them. By this act, these ephemeral manifestations of logic are given a form of eternity. In Stéphanie Saadé's *Re-Enactment LB / Chandelier with Plum Blossom Energy Saving Lamp*, an arrangement seen by the artist in a traditional Lebanese house, is reproduced. The work consists of an old Murano glass chandelier, now broken and serving merely as a support for another lamp. The second lamp, cheap and economic, provides the light now. Its electric cable lies along a branch of the old chandelier, marking its obsolescence and the passing of time. A conflicting relationship is established between the lights as each element pushes in a different direction. The chandelier pushes towards a past splendour which it mimics, while the cheap bulb lights the perspective of a dark future.

Stéphane Saadé, *Re-Enactment LB / Chandelier with Plum Blossom Energy Saving Lamp*, 2012, old chandelier, plum blossom energy saving lamp



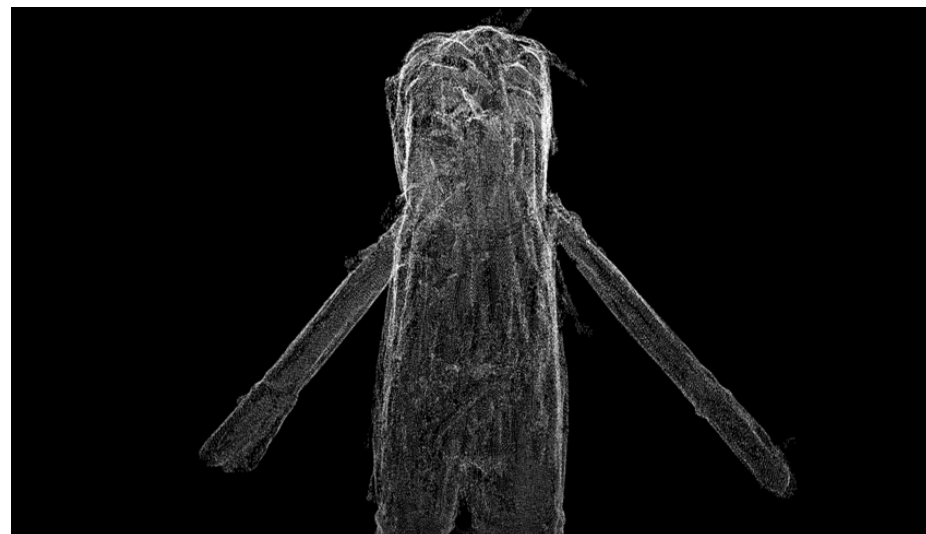


Installation view Passges at AKINCI, 2014



Stéphane Saadé, Second Nature, 2014, gold leaf on broken glass, 6x7,5cm.

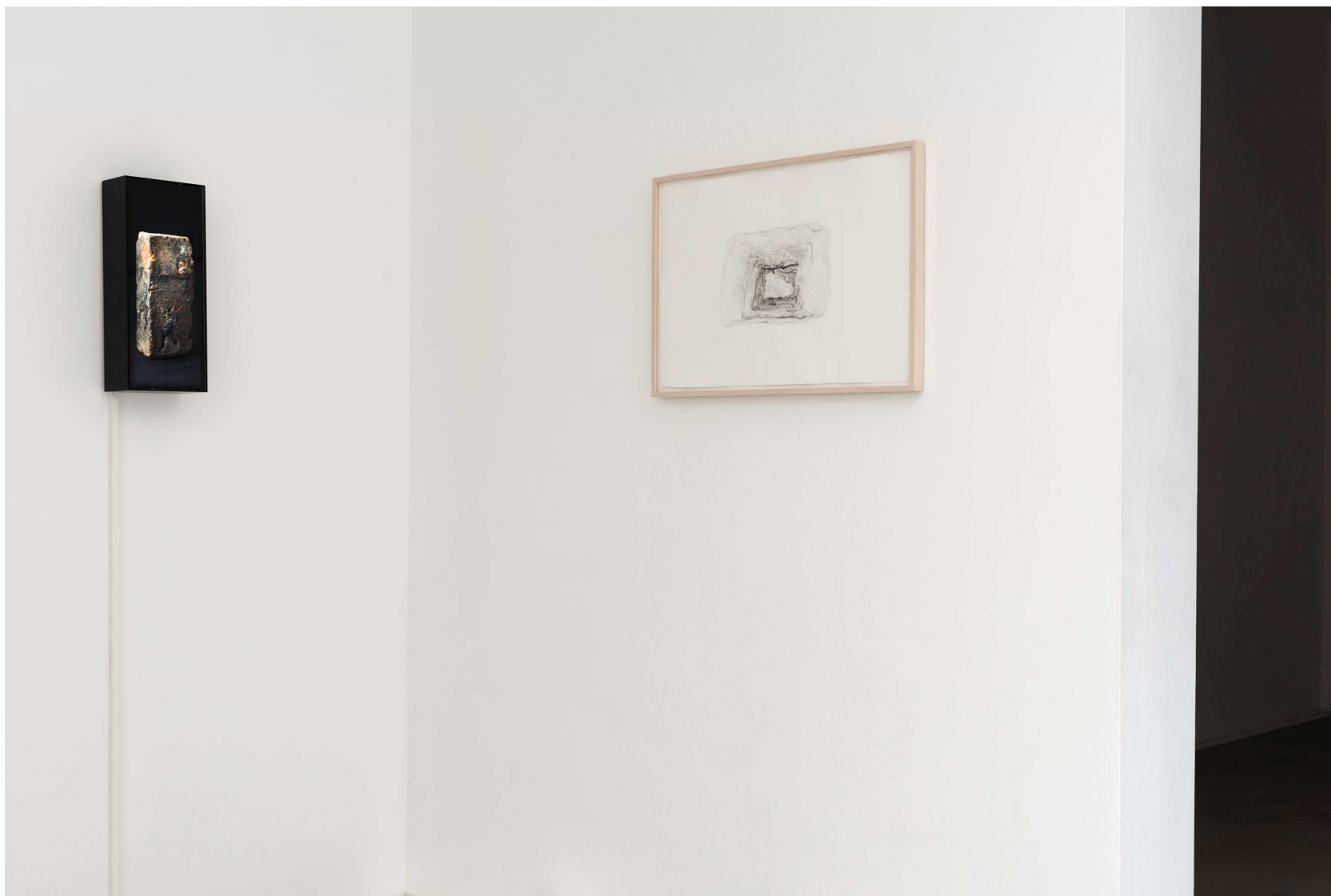
Imogen Stidworthy's (UK, 1963) Imogen Stidworthy's (UK, 1963) work *Speaking in the Voices of Different Gods (Soon Deok)* reconfigures elements from a larger installation made in 2012 (commissioned by Busan Biennale). The work involves a story which formative moments in personal and historical events are intertwined. The installation includes a shamanic straw doll, used to cure diseases, and a 3D laser-scan navigation of the object. The technological mapping of the object appears to reveal its hidden interior, yet what we see is only the skin of the object, viewed from a virtual inside. This scan echoes the situation in Korea where shamanism and other ancient beliefs are a powerful reference alongside the more contemporary belief-systems of hyper-capitalism and technological progress. Shamans act as mediums, channelling the voices of different gods to speak through them directly to advise their clients. In a video sequence the shaman *Soon Deok* remembers traumatic events related to her involvement in pro-democracy protests during the military dictatorship of the 1980's, which led to her losing her voice. The shock of this temporary muteness during her political awakening, prompted a reassessment of her personal and spiritual formation.



Imogen Stidworthy, Speaking in the Voices of Different Gods (Laser), 2012-2014, 8:08 min.
Edition 1/3 + 2 AP



Installation view, Imogen Stidworthy, Speaking in the Voices of Different Gods, 2012-2014, 8:08 min.



Installation view, Imogen Stidworthy, Traumatised Material (Brick), 2012-2013
3D Laser scan etching, edition 2/3 + 2 AP,
Lightbox, edition 1/5 + 1 AP,

Sophie Calle (France, 1953) gained an international reputation through participating extensively for nearly thirty years in major solo and group exhibitions and Biennials. She was invited to be the official representative of France at the 2007 Venice Biennial. Her project for "Venice Prenez soin de vous" was later exhibited again at the Bibliothèque National de France Richelieu, Paris, France (2008), at the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia, Salvador and SESC Pompeia, São Paulo, both Brazil (2009).

Calle's exhibitions include; "Take Care of Yourself" at the Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Monterrey, Mexico (2014), "Last Seen" at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, MA, USA (2013), "For the Last and First Time" at the Hara Museum, Tokyo, Japan (2013), "Take Care of Yourself" at the Stavanger Kunstmuseum, Stavanger, at the Lillehammer Kunstmuseum, Lillehammer, Norway (both 2013) as well as at the Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Helsinki, Finland (2012).

Calle participated at the Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, China (2012) and in the same year exhibited "Historias de pared" at the Museo de Arte Moderno, Medellin, Mexico.

Further solo exhibitions were "Earth: Art of changing World" at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK (2009) and "Souci" at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bruxelles, Belgium (2009), "Talking to Strangers" at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, UK (2009), travelling to the De Pont Foundation, Tilburg, Netherlands (2010) and to the Louisiana, Humblebaek, Denmark (2010).

Hamza Halloubi (Morocco, 1982) studied at the HISK Higher Institute for Fine Arts, Ghent, Belgium between 2012-14 after receiving his Master in Visual Arts. ENSAV la Cambre, Brussels (2004-2010).

Hamza Halloubi has had solo shows at KIOSK, Gent, Belgium (2014), La CENTRALE for contemporary art, Belgium (2014), Nature morte, BOZAR Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium (2013), C'est le commencement qui est le pire, Galerie Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels, Belgium (2012), Modest Expectations, Monty ABN, Antwerp, Belgium (2011).

Hamza Halloubi participated at the Marrakech Biennale, Morocco (2014), Nass Belgica, Botanique, Brussels, Belgium (2014), Portrait of the Artist, Works and References, curated by Katerina Gregos, HISK, Gent, Belgium (2013), Watou Kunstenfestival (2012), Rencontres Internationales, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2012).

Stéphanie Saadé (Lebanon, 1983) is currently an artist in residence at the Jan Van Eyck Akademie, Maastricht, the Netherlands. She studied Fine Arts at ENSBA Paris (École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts) from 2005 to 2010, and obtained the DNSAP. After graduating, she attended the China Academy of Arts, Hangzhou until 2012, before moving back - and forth - to Lebanon.

Her work has been exhibited at M HKA, Antwerp (2014) / Le 59e Salon de Montrouge, France (2014) / Akinci gallery, Amsterdam (2013-2014) / Vitrine gallery, London (2013-2014) / Grey Noise gallery Dubai (2013) / The Beirut Art Center, Exposure 2011 / The Running Horse Gallery, Beirut (2012 and 2013) / The Beirut Exhibition Center, Beirut (2013) / Workshop Gallery, Beirut (2013) / A.M. Qattan Foundation, Ramallah (2012) / Q.I. Qalandyia International Biennial.

Imogen Stidworthy's (UK, 1963) work has been exhibited in major exhibitions such as the Sao Paulo Biennale (2014), Busan Biennale (2012), October Salon (2011), Liverpool Biennial (2010), Documenta 12 (Kassel, DE, 2007), and has had solo shows at Matts Gallery London; (2011, 2006, 2003), The Arnolfini, Bristol, AKINCI, Amsterdam (2013, 2010, 2005)) and Kunstpavillon, Innsbruck (2010-11). Stidworthy has curated two exhibitions addressing the borders of language through art works by many artists, which were shown alongside her own work and other materials such as musical notation and censored books: In the First Circle, in collaboration with Paul Domela, at Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona (2011-12), and Die Lucky Bush at MUKHA, Antwerp (2008).

Stidworthy has been shortlisted for several awards including the Jarman Award 2011, Becks Futures 2004 and The Northern Art Prize 2008; in 2008 she won the Liverpool Art Prize and in 1996, the Dutch Prix de Rome for Film and Video.

Her work is in public and private collections, among others Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; FRAC Bourgogne, Dijon, MUKHA, Antwerp and Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, Netherlands