

ARTFORUM

MAY 2010

I N T E R N A T I O N A L

SUMMER PREVIEW

MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ

MONIKA SOSNOWSKA



\$10.00



0 74820 64601 4

Reviews

FOCUS

- 240 Chus Martínez on *the Whitney Biennial*
242 Cameron Martin on *Dike Blair*
244 Alan Licht on *Iannis Xenakis*
245 Paul Galvez on *R. H. Quaytman*

NEW YORK

- 246 Suzanne Hudson on *Robert Ryman*
Johanna Burton on *Joan Jonas*
247 David Velasco on *Jamie Isenstein*
248 Michael Wilson on *Nicholas Di Genova*
and on *Simon Dybbroe Møller*
249 Robert Pincus-Witten on *Robert Morris*
David Frankel on *Willie Cole*
250 Alan Gilbert on *Franz Erhard Walther*
251 Frances Richard on *Kiki Smith*
Lauren O'Neill-Butler on *Nari Ward*
252 Donald Kuspit on *George Condo*
253 Nick Stillman on *Elisabeth Subrin*
Brian Sholis on *Alan B. Stone*
254 Alexander Scrimgeour on
Duncan Campbell

CAMBRIDGE, MA

- 255 Julia Bryan-Wilson on *Cristóbal Leht*

PITTSBURGH

Christopher Bedford on *Cecil Balmond*

CHICAGO

- 256 Michelle Grabner on *Scott Wolniak*

SAINT LOUIS

Ivy Cooper on *Jerstin Crosby*

LOS ANGELES

- 257 Natilee Harren on *Karl Haendel*
258 Michael Ned Holte on *"Joint Dialogue"*
Jan Tumlir on *Matt Mullican*
259 Catherine Taft on
Leonor Antunes and Amalia Pica

TORONTO

- 260 Dan Adler on *Hadley + Maxwell*

LONDON

- Gilda Williams on *Michael Landy*
261 Michael Archer on *Jost Múnster*

MANCHESTER, UK

Barry Schwabsky on *"Walls Are Talking"*

BERLIN

- 262 Dominikus Müller on *William E. Jones*
263 and on *Clemens von Wedemeyer*
Michèle Faguet on
Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri

COLOGNE

- 264 Astrid Wege on *Willem de Rooij*

DÜSSELDORF

- Sabine B. Vogel* on *Ana Torfs*
265 and on *Constantin Wallhäuser*

ZURICH

- 266 Hans Rudolf Reust on *Bernard Voïta*

MULHOUSE, FRANCE

Joanna Fiduccia on
"Les Sculptures meurent aussi"

MAASTRICHT, THE NETHERLANDS

- 267 *Saskia van der Kroef* on *Ettore Sottsass*

DEURLE AND MECHELEN, BELGIUM

Jos van den Bergh on *Narcisse Tordoir*

ROME

- 268 *Cathryn Drake* on *Terry Adkins*

STOCKHOLM

Ronald Jones on *Tomás Saraceno*

MADRID

- 269 *Pablo Llorca* on *Amaya González Reyes*

ANGRA DO HEROÍSMO, TERCEIRA ISLAND, AZORES, PORTUGAL

- 270 *Miguel Amado* on *José Maças de Carvalho*

BEIRUT

Kaelen Wilson-Goldie on *Walid Sadek*

TOKYO

- 271 *Midori Matsui* on *Tepei Kaneuji*
Julia Friedman on *Miwa Yanagi*

MUMBAI

- 272 *Zehra Jumabhoy* on *Nikhil Chopra*

for her. Or is this, rather, an attempt to have one's cake and eat it, too—a gambit so common in contemporary art?

—Pablo Llorca

Translated from Spanish by Jane Brodie.

ANGRA DO HEROÍSMO, TERCEIRA ISLAND, AZORES, PORTUGAL

José Maçãs de Carvalho

MUSEU DE ANGRA DO HEROÍSMO

One of the works that best defines the practice of the Portuguese artist José Maçãs de Carvalho is *To President (Drinking Version)*, 2005–2008. This is a video that manipulates a well-known sequence from the 1957 film *The Prince and the Showgirl*, set in 1911, in which the character portrayed by Marilyn Monroe toasts then-president William Howard Taft. Maçãs de Carvalho altered the clip in which Monroe murmurs the phrase “To President Taft” as she raises a glass of champagne; the action repeats itself endlessly as the subtitles replace Taft’s name with those of contemporary political leaders including George W. Bush, Tony Blair, José María Aznar, and José Manuel Durão Barroso. All these figures, in fact, met in 2003 at the US air base in Lajes, on Terceira Island in the Azores, to discuss the impending invasion of Iraq by US armed forces and their allies. The work exemplifies Carvalho’s broader aim: to critique mediated reality by playing with the image’s sign value as a kind of language game.

This modus operandi was found in Maçãs de Carvalho’s latest exhibition, “Video Killed the Painting Stars.” The title echoes a 1979 song by the British group the Buggles, “Video Killed the Radio Star,” appropriately enough the first music video shown on MTV. If the replacement of one medium by another is a familiar art-historical process,

Maçãs de Carvalho’s analysis addresses a more specific phenomenon that has recurred from the Protestant Reformation through the French Revolution to the dictatorships of the twentieth century: iconoclasm. Here he exhibited eleven videos made in 2007, nine of them titled *Video Killed the Painting Stars* followed by the name of an artist, and showing attacks on or transformations of reproductions of famous works by artists from Caravaggio, Velázquez, and Manet to Andy Warhol, Jeff Wall, and Helmut Newton. Two

contrasting pieces are titled *Iconofilia*. One shows a forest being invaded by heart-shaped balloons; the other, two women being photographed in Hong Kong.

Consider, for example, the triptych dedicated to paintings by Velázquez (*Las Meninas*, 1656–57), Manet (*Un Bar aux Folies-Bergère*, 1881–82), and Wall (*Picture for Women*, 1979), a sequence in which each work explicitly refers to and deforms its predecessor: All play with mirror reflections, the presence of the artist in relation to the picture, and problems of composition and opticality. Through special effects, Maçãs de Carvalho changes the structure of the historical works by, respectively, focusing on a detail, correcting the perspective, and inverting the position of characters. In other videos, like those dedicated to Warhol and Newton, there is a real obliteration of the image: In the first case, the artist pours water over a portrait of Marilyn

Monroe, causing her face to slowly fade away; in the second case, his and someone else’s fingers spread a kind of lye over the mirror reflection of the photographer’s body as well as that of the photographed nude model. But it is the video based on Caravaggio’s *Medusa*, 1597, that best expresses the artist’s destructive impulse toward the image. To the rhythm of electronic music, the painting is systematically mutilated: The heads of the snakes are nailed, the Medusa’s eyes are drilled, and so on. This staging of ritualistic violence exponentially heightens the mythological vision of the original work, but it also suggests the allegorical potential of Maçãs de Carvalho’s project as a derisory interpretation of Western pictorial heritage. This contradiction runs through all the works in the exhibition and encapsulates Maçãs de Carvalho’s politicized art, which engages the deconstruction of contemporary ideologies of visual culture as no other Portuguese practice does.

—Miguel Amado

Translated from Portuguese by Clifford E. Landers.

BEIRUT

Walid Sadek

BEIRUT ART CENTER

Walid Sadek’s first solo exhibition, “Place at Last,” came relatively late in the career of an artist and writer who has been active, if not exactly prolific, for more than fifteen years. In the mid-1990s, Sadek produced a number of fiercely influential and foundational works that helped set the tone and agenda of Beirut’s then-fledgling contemporary art scene. Many of those early pieces were text-based interventions—posters, postcards, diminutive publications, a few delicate broadsheets—and most were conceived either for a series of public projects initiated by arts organization Ashkal Alwan between 1995 and 2000, or for the annual Ayloul Festival, which ran from 1997 through 2001. Their very form anticipated alternative channels of distribution.

Sadek’s first proper show, by contrast, fully depended on the cavernous, postindustrial space of the Beirut Art Center, where he arranged a collection of untitled works made (or modified) since 2004 into three categories: “Learning to See Less,” “Love Is Blind,” and “Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse.” With the help of local craftsmen, he created a muscular, notably architectural installation, designing walls, doorways, and an angular partition that cut through the space like a scar. But the work still asserted itself lightly, so lightly that some wondered whether what was on view in the space—texts printed on paper and silk-screened onto the walls, a faint pencil drawing, a broken black circle painted seemingly in a single stroke on the floor, a selection of wall labels that seemed to indicate a collection of missing paintings—was in fact the work, or art at all. One could have easily decided that, no, this was not art but rather an attempt to make literary thought spatial. “Learning to See Less,” for example, included a series of eleven aphoristic texts, each identified (or imagined) as being on the back of a canvas depicting the story of Cimon and Pero, the Roman Charity, in which Pero clandestinely breastfeeds her father, Cimon, who has been sentenced to death by starvation.

“Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse” featured a black circle on the floor around a column adorned with a Plexiglas label reading WALID SADEK (B. 1966), KOZO OKAMOTO RESIDES IN GREATER BEIRUT, 2008–2009. Another label, affixed to a wall just outside the circle, read KOZO OKAMOTO (B. 1947–D. 1972, 1985, 2000), TO HEAR A WEATHER-VANE SAY YES, C. 2009. Okamoto was one of three members of the Japanese Red Army (JRA) who perpetrated the Lod Airport Massacre in 1972. Okamoto was tried in Israel and sentenced to life, but as part of a prisoner swap with Palestinian factions, he was released



José Maçãs de Carvalho, *Video Killed the Painting Stars (Caravaggio) #9*, 2007, still from a color video, 3 minutes 50 seconds.