

# THIRD SPACE

Skånes konstförening

Nov 14—Jan 17

ENGLISH

**Participating artists:** Ranya Asadi, Moncef Henaien, Anna lau, Maria Kim, Yahia Saleh, Rasmus Raphaëlle Östebro

## Curatorial Statement

*Third Space* is part of this autumn's focus on video art at Skånes konstförening. The exhibition title refers to Homi K. Bhabha's theory on the postcolonial condition of hybridization of societies, spaces, and within people themselves. Alternatively, this term has been used to describe spaces of agency for marginalized people. While the effects of unjust power structures provide the backdrop, the use of “third space” here is a reflection on the ways in which marginalized voices can form spaces where they are not only the subjects of a conversation but the authors of it.

The works in the exhibition all touch on agency and embodiment. In her work *#Pretty papada*, Anna lau focuses on the comedy and creepiness of voluntary and involuntary information sharing on social media platforms. In *Tell me everything*, Maria Kim explores the coloniality of mainstream adoption narratives as an adult adoptee herself. Ranya Asadi's *Transient Global Amnesia* uses kitsch to examine her own experience as an immigrant time capsule—that the places we leave behind become crystalized in time for us. In *The Black Gazes Back*, Yahia Saleh dives into a Facebook comment thread and Black queer embodiment (or lack thereof) in public spaces in Europe.

Rasmus Raphaëlle Östebro's *Femme Desires* and Moncef Henaien's *ŠUKA* each approach their exploration of power and embodiment through the utopic. Using the movements of dancer and choreographer Šuka Horn, Henaien's work creates an emotional haven through hypnotic repetition and dreamy editing. Östebro presents a world structured by femme signifiers—an alternate future space using drag strategies and play as empowerment. Side by side, the two works present an interplay between protection and vulnerability, between agency and marginalization. The potency in the spaces created by the artists lies in the imagination and its discursive effects.

*Third Space* is the result of a 2-month video art residency for QTBIPOC artists in Malmö, led by artist Roxy Farhat and curator C. Grace Chang. The overall aim was to redistribute some of the power, opportunity, and space that a gallery provides—and to foster talent in our backyard and letting them shape the conditions of the exhibition space. Ranya Asadi, Anna lau, Maria Kim, and Yahia Saleh participated in the residency, and their works are presented here in a group exhibition alongside local visual artists Moncef Henaien and Rasmus Raphaëlle Östebro.

C. Grace Chang, Curator



Skånes konstförening's public program and exhibitions are supported by Malmö Stad, Region Skåne, Swedish Arts Council, and ABF.

## **Transient Global Amnesia** (2020), Ranya Asadi

In her installation, Asadi uses 1990s kitschy interior design details to explore how immigrants become time capsules of our families and of the places we leave behind. About this phenomenon, she explains, “I can be just as old as other Iraqis who came later, but we can’t understand each other, because my Arabic is stuck in the 90s.”

Asadi looks into the tensions of how we develop in our new countries, even as our language, culture, and values feel permanently stuck in that first moment of migration. The work is guided by the vital question: can nostalgia be a tool for future growth?

*Ranya Asadi is a dancer, DJ, and artist based in Malmö. She works across media to explore new perspectives and expressions.*

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## **ŠUKA** (2020), Moncef Henaïen

“The internal origin of my will to focus is to be able to control a flow. In this video I’m introducing some lost images to a new rhythm, in order to create an emotion or a thought.

The mind always aims for greater satisfaction, so I kept experimenting with my ideas to reach a feeling that I believe me and the audience can share.

It started with a struggle between the image and the sound, just like a couple figuring out how to co-exist. *ŠUKA* displays how they finally meet at the same frequency.”

*Moncef Henaïen is a Filipino-Tunisian artist based in Malmö who makes use of his hip-hop background in his multidisciplinary expressions. Moncef invites the audience to reach new energies and worlds, in his logical but dreamlike work.*

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## **#Pretty papada** (2020), Anna lau

*#Pretty papada* explores the dichotomy of posting private images and unwanted information sharing—and the requirement of giving away some of your information in order to consume any type of online content.

*#Pretty papada* is an installation that uses humor to scrutinize data gathering. We often feel as if we choose what information we share. In this installation, lau pushes back against that comfort, using her own form of unwanted information sharing as the interaction. As visitors view a video of selfies being taken and submitted, they forfeit some of their own privacy via the webcam, streaming to the computer behind them.

*Anna lau is an interdisciplinary artist using video art, sound & light design, installation, and photography. She is fascinated by social media and the ways in which people relate to it. In her artistic practice, she tries to break established relationships and find other possibilities of use.*

## **Tell me everything** (2020), Maria Kim

As an adoptee, there is an inherent challenge to criticising adoption. The response is always a rebuttal: would you rather be dead or aborted? This work highlights this particular conundrum and the mainstream adoption narratives that shape how adoptees are supposed to exist in the public sphere.

The dominant narrative for transnational adoption is that a child was tragically abandoned, but saved and given a better life. An abundance of popular culture feeds off of this misperception. *Tell me everything* is composed of clips from *Spårlöst*, one of many reality TV shows based on transnational adoptees' search for their birth families.

This form of white saviorism overshadows the complexities of adoption and the plurality of voices, and suppresses stories about adoptees' negative experiences. This narrative also masks a global industry that profits off of separating children from their birth families. This narrative is more of an alternate reality—but still one that impacts my life. I invite you to sit with me in this uncomfortable space.

*Tell me everything* explores the ways in which adoptees are emotionally exploited for entertainment purposes. Throughout the creation of this piece I've considered the ethical dilemma of showing the adoptees in the video.

I thought about blurring their faces to respect their privacy but decided against it, since this would erase us from the context. The dominant narrative already anonymises and dismisses the adoptee as an individual. The piece is not meant to criticize or focus on the adoptees' choice to appear on the show, but rather on the negative effects of this dominant narrative being reproduced and upheld.

Transnational and transracial adoption has given me access to white spaces. While I might be accepted, I'm not sure if I'm respected. I am both central to and estranged from the mainstream idea of adoption, moulded to fit an audience regardless of how I actually feel. I have chosen to dedicate this work to my adoptee friend Agnes 효신 who died by suicide in October 2020. I won't let your story be overshadowed.

*Maria Kim is a Swedified Korean, who came to Malmö in the mid 1980s through romanticized immigration.*

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## **The Black Gazes Back** (2020), Yahia Saleh

When I was first contemplating the ideas I wanted to explore with this piece, I read the chapter "The Return of the Black Body: Seven Vignettes" from *Black Bodies, White Gazes* by George Yancy. These words talked deeply about my thoughts:

*To have one's dark body penetrated by the white gaze and then to have that body returned as distorted is a powerfully violating experience. The experience presupposes an anti-Black lived context, a context within the lived experience of the Black unfolds.*

My initial idea was to film the presence/absence of black queer bodies in a busy public spaces with huge architecture. Right when I started filming, I realized the massiveness of the white presence. I decided to go further with just filming the everyday life flow of the white contexts I exist in now.

As a black queer person, I've always struggled to gain more visibility and representation in the public discourse wherever I lived. It was not until recently that I realized that in any moment—on the street as a police car passes, during passport control in airports, in clubs, in shopping malls, in restaurants, and many other places—I just wish that I could control my visibility and avoid the white gaze. But how can a black body be unseen?

I created a physical setup that further emphasizes this tension between visibility and invisibility, and the conscious navigation required to exist with that. To experience the work, the audience must accommodate the visible projector, walking around it as they listen to my monologue and watch the world through my own imposed gaze.

*Yahia Saleh is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, and educator. Using mobile videos to explore and question the visibility/non-visibility of queer BIPOC and power structures in public space.*

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## **Femme Desires (2018), Rasmus Raphaëlle Östebro**

*Femme Desires* invites spectators into a realm where the ultra-feminine reigns. Ruthless but deliberate, earnest but playful, Östebro uses this installation to present this femme realm with acerbic wit. Drawing from ASMR-culture, the work delves into issues of affections and desires in connection to identity construction and gender performativity.

As in their other works, *Femme Desires* references issues of identity construction, social power relations, and utopian discourses. The practical and theoretical implementation and (con)figuration emerges from an empathetic but rebellious gaze—seductively transgresses borders while moving fluidly between contexts and niches, such as visual art, performance art, and the performing arts. This gaze has, in essence, an interdisciplinary approach in its core.

Repeatedly characterised by abstracted strategies originating from drag, *Femme Desires* exhibits a grave but playful attitude towards the notion of the real, which is enhanced by merging fiction and documentary elements in the work. As in other works of theirs, a recurring theme and strategy is the feeling of the stage as a physical residence and mental hiding place. A space where the stage has been and remains as a prospect for something else: a remedy, a splinter, a rift where something else has the opportunity to arise and persist.

*Rasmus Raphaëlle Östebro is a visual and performance artist who works interdisciplinarily with an array of artistic expressions, such as sculpture, video, photography, performance, choreography, costume, installation, scent, audio, and text. In conversation with one another, these artistic languages resonate through spatial stagings and narratives that contextualise and connect physical, conceptual, and ephemeral elements with each other.*

*An aspiration in Östebros' artistic practice is to create spaces, spheres, and situations that encourage its audience to be present in the temporality of the moment. This invitation derives, in particular, from the artists' devotion to, and recurring themes of the multifaceted topic of presence.*

*Östebro was educated at Konstfack - University College of Arts Crafts and Design (SE), Bergen Academy of Art and Design (NO), Stockholm University of the Arts/ DOCH (SE), Gothenburg School of Art (SE), and The Swedish National Ballet School (SE).*