

UTOPIAN TOMORROW

THE TRANSART EXPERIENCE



The concept of Utopia as a good place (eutopia), a space for artistic and cultural harmony, a stimulus for exploration and projection, is necessary for re-thinking the ways of constructing current and future realities.

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

JEAN-MARIE CASBARIAN
HONI RYAN
ABI TARIQ
CELLA
KLAUS KNOLL
JOSÉ DRUMMOND
OMAR SHOUKRI

CURATED BY
Herman Bashiron Mendolicchio

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Proxi.me

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EXHIBITION OPENING
05.11.2015, 19:00H

ON-GOING EXHIBITION
06.11.2015 - 31.1.2016

**GOETHE
INSTITUT**



Honi Ryan (Australia)
mindful encounters, 2013-2014
Photos and installation



Honi Ryan (Australia) & Abi Tariq (Pakistan)
Notes on Not-Knowing, 2014
Performance

Honi Ryan
Silent Dinner Party, 2007-2015
Performance



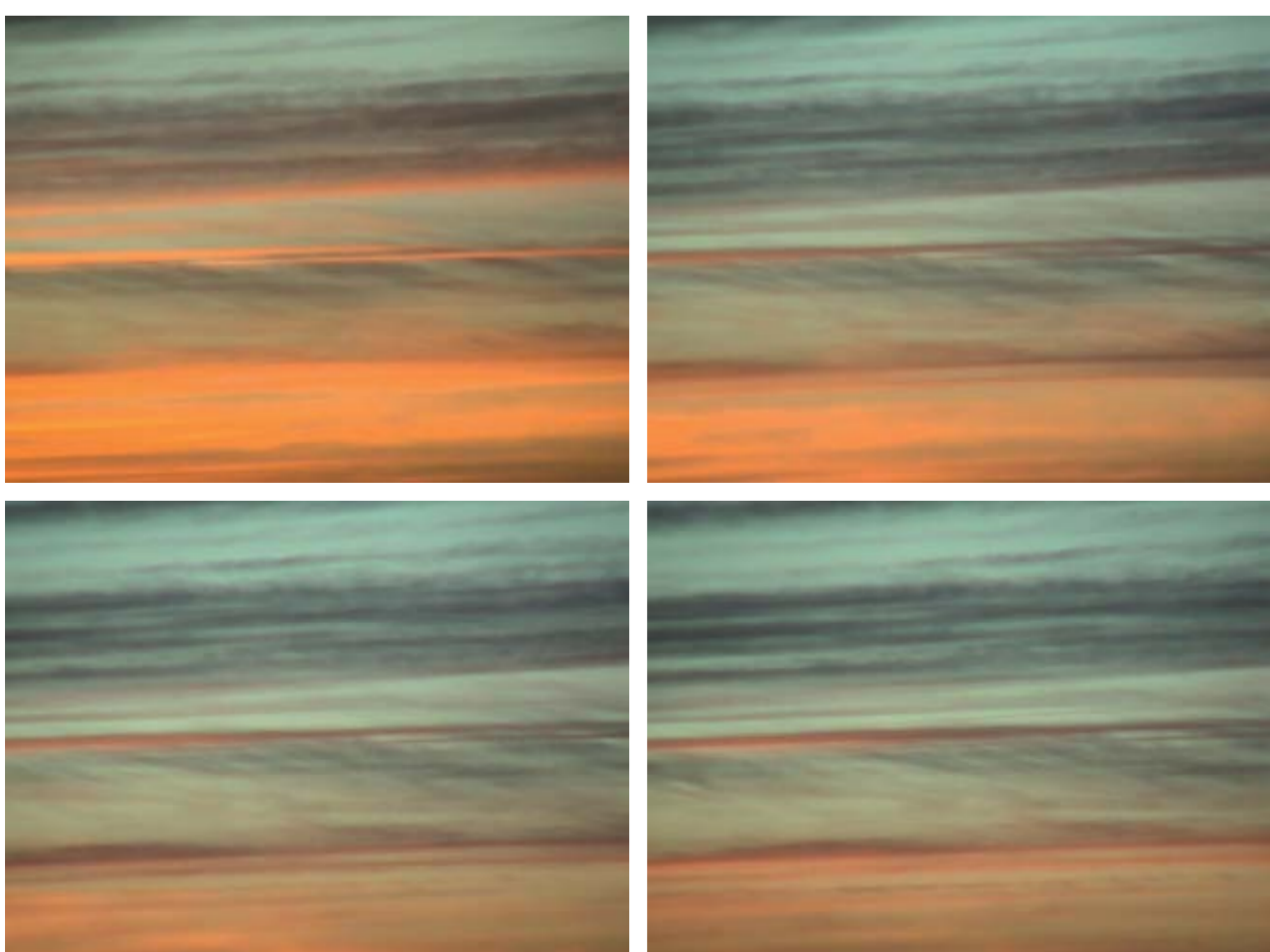
Celia (United States) & Klaus Knoll (Austria)
About Place, 2010-2015
Photos



Jean-Marie Casbarian (United States)
Overcast Blue (365 skies over Chicago), 2004-2014
350 Polaroids



José Drummond (Portugal)
Love is the Scariest Thing of All, 2014
Video, 9 minutes



Jean-Marie Casbarian (United States)
One Step Above the Grand Mesa, 2010
Video-projection, 42 minutes, no sound



Omar Shoukri (Germany)
The Water in Ourselves, 2015
Video, 18 minutes

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KLAUS KNOLL (1957–2014) received a PhD from the University of Salzburg for work on "Social and Private Use of the Photographic Medium". Klaus studied communications and literature at the Universities of Salzburg and Vienna, photography with Joan Fontcuberta, Roger Palmer, Thomas Joshua Cooper and Dörte Eißfeldt, creative writing with Hanne Landbeck and Margit Schreiner, amongst others. Klaus has taught photography and media studies in Europe, Japan and the U.S. He has works in the collections of the Cologne Museum Ludwig, Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, and Austrian National Fine Art Photo Collection. His exhibition record includes one man shows at the Tokyo Shinjuku Nikon Salon, Berlin Brennpunkt/DGPh, Alfred Lowenherz Gallery, New York, the Art Complex Museum in Boston. His short stories and essays have been published in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Artist **CELLA**, MFA explores living in liminality and memory in a phenomenologically-driven practice centered around architecture and the spaces and experiences it creates through post-documentary photography, installation, projections, experimental non-fiction and film. She exhibits internationally, most recently in the Lisbon Architecture Triennale, Tallinn Print Triennale, Rochester Museum of Fine Arts Biennale, Santorini Peace Biennale and Melbourne Photo Biennale. She co-founded the Transart Institute, *Eise Journal* and is currently co-curating the international Transartfest Triennale 2016.

The work *About Place*, by **CELLA** and **KLAUS KNOLL**, concerns the relationship between interior and exterior space. By superimposing projected images of outdoor areas – cities and spots familiar to the artists – onto interior spaces – non-places such as restaurants or hotel rooms – the final compositions search for the (im)possible union between inside and outside, between familiar and unfamiliar, creating a landscape of disorienting reflections and shadows. The space is transformed into a huge dark room and this fusion between interior and exterior also speaks of the increasingly mobile and temporary concept of "home".

JOSÉ DRUMMOND's *Love is the Scariest Thing of All* is a video based on the artist's reflections, history and personal experience. A Portuguese based in China for over twenty years, José considers nuances of contemporary cultural identities, moving from his own experience. There is no longer the place of the "I" and that of the "other", but rather a tertiary space where *in-between* identities float; places of connection, where the boundary between the known and the unknown becomes

JOSÉ DRUMMOND is a Portuguese artist and curator living in China. He is the director of VAFA, international video art festival in Macau. He holds an MFA in Creative Practice from Transart Institute in New York, Berlin and University of Plymouth (UK). He exhibited in China, Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Hungary and USA. He is represented in various public and private collections. He works with film/video, photography, objects, installation and performance.

subtle. In a landscape that is both exotic and natural, Drummond sings a popular Chinese love song without any desire to represent or reproduce, but rather, immersing himself in a context familiar to him and opening himself up to other forms of knowledge.

OMAR SHOUKRI's *The Water in Ourselves* is a video proposing – through an intimate story of five individuals – a collective spiritual narrative hinging on the common element of water. Five people with five different lives are united by a common desire, ambition and destiny. The diverse social and cultural superstructures, as well as the diverse urban and natural landscapes, give way to the purity of the desert and the uniformity of people already converted into a single group of equals. The search for the utopian harmony of the "good place" – be it physical, relational or spiritual – marks the end and purpose of the road. An absolute and revealing exploration that – as with the other works on show – draws a shared line constituted by multiple readings of the open concept of utopia.

OMAR SHOUKRI is active as a film director, music producer and educator. His Egyptian background and German origin influenced his studies in the creative field of Audio Engineering and Film production. His current research explores the boundaries between interdisciplinary art forms of experimental film, music, cultural awareness and anthropology. Since 1994 he had the honor of having worked at prestigious Broadcast TV Networks, event and film production companies. His passion for cultures and languages initiated a journey from recording basements in Stuttgart and Berlin (SAT.1 TV), to production studios in London (CNN / BBC Arabic), post-production houses in Los Angeles (Admusic), corporate head offices in New York (McKinsey & Co.) and Dubai (MBC). His academic path originated in 2006, when he taught various aspects of film and music production for undergraduate classes at Middlesex University. Since 2007 his classes have been featured at MTV Arabia (Made Show), Dubai 1 TV (2008), in Egypt (Tropfest 2013), and recently on the Abu Dhabi Classic Radio (2015). This journey led him to thrive in the multi-national community at New York University Abu Dhabi, where he is an Instructor / Advisor of the Arts and New Media. He is currently pursuing his PHD in creative practice at Transart Institute after completion of his MFA.

Utopian Tomorrow is an exhibition that moves from the experience and wealth of knowledge created and developed by Transart Institute, a utopian and nomadic project based on creative, interdisciplinary and independent education.

Though Transart is "nowhere" (utopia), it exists in the new space that is "everywhere" (the Web), promoting meetings and encounters between New York and Berlin.

The concept of Utopia as a good place (eutopia), a space for artistic and cultural harmony, a stimulus for exploration and projection, is necessary for re-thinking the ways of constructing current and future realities. The world of artistic practices and education carries within its very ontology, at the centre of its constituent form, a utopian perspective. Questioning what is possible, flights of imagination,

openness to the unknown, searching for an alternative, exploring different forms of knowledge and vision, are some of the actions and ideas that characterize the journey to supposed "new worlds".

In the first book of *Utopia* Thomas More famously wrote: "if you had been in Utopia with me, and had seen their laws and rules, as I did, for the space of five years, in which I lived among them, and during which time I was so delighted with them that indeed I should never have left them if it had not been to make the discovery of that new world to the Europeans, you would then confess that you had never seen a people so well constituted as they."

Beginning with the example of Transart, and its strong ties to the city of Berlin – project headquarters where international artists meet during the summer residency –, the exhibition

looks forward and thinks about the meaning of utopia, imagining new cross-connections, forms and methods between art and education.

The Transart community brings together artists, academics, curators and theorists in a *unicum* of artistic vocation and research, allowing them to influence each other and form a creative network where disciplines, cultures and generations intersect.

The selected works speak of – and from – different constellations and contemplations of knowledge, pushing us to imagine and perceive that other utopian space.

Through actions and installations, **HONI RYAN** investigates human communicative and relational potential beyond basic verbal tools. The exploration of alternative forms of interaction among people and the search for a space where art and life intersect, are integral elements of her work. *mindful encounters* finds the artist joining with others to create – through a process of time exchange and through a series of performances – a relational experience that is conscious and reflective. Listening to heartbeats through a stethoscope, sharing a meal in silence or strolling aimlessly through a quiet and peaceful place, are some of the actions the artist performed together with those selected for her mindful encounters.

HONI RYAN is an interdisciplinary artist based in the Blue Mountains Australia, and Berlin, Germany. Ryan's nomadic social practice draws from many disciplines: performance, sculpture, media, installation and writing. She is interested in socially engaged art for its capacity to explore and reveal alternative models for living. Her work has intercultural concerns, and examines the contemporary body in light of digital media, a body that is both individual and collective. Ryan has exhibited and performed in 12 countries, received a BVA from Sydney University, and an MFA from the Transart Institute, New York/Berlin.

ABI TARIQ is a conceptual artist concerned with alternative modes of communication – His recent research situates his practice within the overlap between mysticism and the absurd. Through existential thought, mixed-media installations and performances he uncovers an awareness of already embedded, unconsciously assimilated understandings present in our relations. He claims organic telepathy to be a mutual understoodness nurtured over time through intimacy. Born in Karachi, Pakistan and based in Paris, France, Tariq is currently pursuing an MFA at the Transart Institute, Berlin/ New York. His consistent geographical displacement makes it imperative for him to create site/culture-specific and collaborative work.

The *Silent Dinner Party* – one of the Australian artist's most famous performances – is a dinner where the public/ guests are deprived of their words and voices, nor can they read or write or interact with technology. Those attending the dinner are invited to use other forms of communication and relating; the verbal act suspended, the imagination is soars.

Notes on Not-Knowing – a performance developed in collaboration with the artist **ABI TARIQ** – consists of an indirect dual process of communication. Sitting one in front of the other, the two artists engaged in a telepathic transmission of ideas, taking notes of each other's thoughts.

JEAN-MARIE CASBARIAN

immerses us in a utopian landscape *par excellence*: the unreachable horizon of nature. In *Overcast Blue (365 Skies over Chicago)*, the artist depicts – through Polaroid photographs – the sky above Chicago. Day after day over the course of a year, the work develops until it forms a mosaic of blues, clouds, lights and rays.

JEAN MARIE CASBARIAN was born to an Armenian father and a German mother on a military weapons testing ground in Aberdeen, Maryland. Her nomadic lifestyle has led her through various lives in the U.S. including Chicago, California, Colorado, Massachusetts and New York. Along with exhibiting her works throughout the United States, Europe, Central America and Asia, she has received a number of awards and artist residencies. As an educator, Jean-Marie currently teaches and advises graduate students at Transart Institute, a low-residency MFA program based in Berlin and New York City and is also a faculty member with the ICP-Bard MFA program and the General Studies Program at the International Center of Photography in New York City. She has taught in the film and photography departments at Hampshire College and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Jean Marie currently lives and works in New York City.

The video projection *One Step Above the Grand Mesa* presents a horizontal layering of the warm and cool colours of clouds and sunsets, of light and twilight tonalities, give way to contemplative landscapes, enveloped in a total silence that stimulates the imagination.